

# **Manipulated History**

Past Version vs. Present Subversion: The Growing Bias against Israel on Wikipedia

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## **Preface**

A well-known fable tells of two frogs put on a sizzling frypan, one in already boiling oil and the other in slowly heating oil. Shocked by the sudden heat, the first frog leapt out and survived. The second, enjoying the gradual warmth, remained until it was too late to escape. This offers a helpful metaphor for understanding bias on the English Wikipedia. A platform designed to make shared knowledge accessible, Wikipedia has slowly drifted from its core value of neutrality and has become one-sided. This change occurred so subtly that the shift went unnoticed until its biases became entrenched, making it difficult to restore its credibility and trust.

Wikipedia, a multilingual, open-source platform, was founded on the noble mission of enabling the public to participate actively in creating free and accessible information. Its vision, which embraces the idea of free knowledge, touches on a fundamental human value individually and collectively, as knowledge empowers us to actualize ourselves, confront global challenges, and safeguard our shared future. Through the collective pursuit and responsible use of knowledge, we can strive toward a more just, sustainable, and compassionate world. In so doing, we uphold freedom of thought, grounded in access to accurate and unbiased information.

While the pursuit of knowledge has long been a cornerstone of advanced societies, its misuse and manipulation by totalitarian and fascist entities have led humanity into some of its most hazardous moments, spreading antisemitism, racism, and misogyny under the guise of science and distorted claims of fact.

Wikipedia is often heralded for its ideals of neutrality and free access to information; however, on sensitive and disputed topics, it has become a battleground on which competing narratives are fought, shaped, and sometimes distorted. This is exacerbated by the platform's endorsement of anonymity and the absence of professional mediation mechanisms. The phenomenon is particularly evident in politically charged articles, especially those concerning Israel and the conflict, an arena in which ideological biases against Israel and sometimes against the Jewish people frequently undermine Wikipedia's stated commitment to impartiality.<sup>1</sup>

The World Jewish Congress report "Bias Against Israel" on Wikipedia, released in March 2024, documents the persistent and troubling patterns of anti-Israel bias on the English Wikipedia.<sup>2</sup> Drawing on in-depth research, content analysis, and interviews with Israeli volunteer editors, the report reveals the way in which the platform's core values of neutrality and open knowledge are undermined through biased language, concerted efforts to erase or distort content, and terminology that delegitimizes Israel.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See ADL, "Editing for Hate: How Anti-Israel and Anti-Jewish Bias Undermines Wikipedia's Neutrality,"2025, <a href="https://www.adl.org/resources/report/editing-hate-how-anti-israel-and-anti-jewish-bias-undermines-wikipedias-neutrality">https://www.adl.org/resources/report/editing-hate-how-anti-israel-and-anti-jewish-bias-undermines-wikipedias-neutrality</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Aharoni Lir, 2024.



Ten months later, in January 2025, the Wikipedia community has taken some action to address the issue of biased editing, including the imposition of topic bans on six prominent, partisan anti-Israel editors.

Additionally, in March 2025, the Wikimedia Foundation announced its acceptance of one of the key suggestions in the report, declaring that "to support the Wikimedia communities and reaffirm our commitment to neutrality," it "will convene a working group of active editors, Trustees, researchers, and advisors to explore recommendations for common standards for NPOV<sup>3</sup> policies that can protect Wikipedia, increase the integrity of the projects, and equip the volunteers trusted to administer these policies with more support."<sup>4</sup>

However, underlying biases, manipulation, and the use of Wikipedia as a platform for advancing one-sided narratives concerning Israel and the conflict remain a persistent challenge. The unresolved issue of restoring heavily manipulated articles and the deletion of entries that uniquely scrutinize Jewish people and the State of Israel, such as "Weaponization of antisemitism," or "Comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany" raises serious concerns. These pages, which have the potential to shape the perspectives of billions through Google search results and AI systems that rely on Wikipedia content, remain far from balanced or accurate; they are dangerously distorted.

The images accompanying this report, presented in the exhibition *Manipulated History: Past Version vs. Present Subversion—The Growing Bias Against Israel on Wikipedia* aim to illustrate this phenomenon by showcasing side-by-side screenshots of two versions of seven articles, captured at different times, defining key historical movements, places, and events, most of which have long since concluded. Through these comparisons, the exhibition reveals that key information has been dramatically altered, demonstrating the way in which the portrayal of these articles has been manipulated to reinforce a one-sided perspective. It highlights the radicalization of ideas and concepts regarding Israel and conflict-related issues, highlighting which words were omitted from earlier versions and which were added in later ones. Also exposed is the way in which these changes subvert the truth and abandon neutrality in favor of deliberately biased content, a trend that has become entrenched over time.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Neutral Point of View

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> https://diff.wikimedia.org/2025/03/27/strengthening-wikipedias-neutral-point-of-view/.



## **Articles in View**

Anti-Israel bias and skewed representations of the Israel–Hamas conflict have permeated much of the English Wikipedia. This trend became especially pronounced after the Hamas terrorist attacks of October 7, 2023, when significant revisions were made across most related entries. Given the vast number of affected articles, selecting the ones to feature was a complex task.

Ultimately, seven entries were chosen that reflect a range of editorial distortions, from selective terminology to framing tactics and blurring of facts. These articles demonstrate the breadth and depth of bias regarding Israel and the conflict.

As the comparison of dates indicates, most of the narrative shifts occurred within the past two years, though some began much earlier:

- "Zionism": July 9, 2023 vs. March 28, 2025
- "Jerusalem": September 28, 2008 vs. March 28, 2025
- "History of Israel": September 29, 2022 vs. March 28, 2025
- "Israeli-Palestinian conflict": July 9, 2023 vs. March 28, 2025
- "Israeli-Palestinian peace process": January 8, 2023 vs. March 28, 2025
- "1948 Palestine war": October 14, 2022 vs. March 28, 2025
- "Mujahideen Brigades": September 4, 2024 vs. March 28, 2025

Each image in the exhibition presents the first few paragraphs of the article, capturing the immediate tone, emphasis, and perspective that frame the article and set the chosen narrative.

To emphasize the deliberate and biased changes made to these articles over time and to expose how key aspects of history have been manipulated, **green** highlights indicate content **removed** from earlier versions, while **red** highlights mark content **added** in recent revisions.

This catalog presents a brief analysis of each of the seven articles featured in the exhibition. In some instances, it also includes insights from the articles' "Talk" pages and relevant statistical data. Full transcriptions of the quoted excerpts, along with exact references, are available through the articles' revision histories.



#### **Zionism**

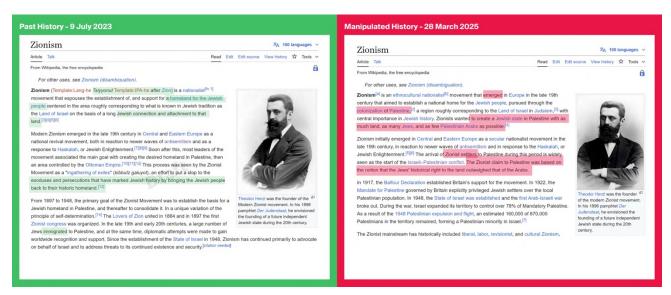


Figure 1 - Before & After: Edits to 'Zionism' page on Wikipedia

George Orwell wrote in *Politics and the English Language* (1946) that "**the most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history."** In many ways, this is precisely what has happened over the years to the "Zionism" Wikipedia article. The page was radically altered after October 7, 2023, and now presents a one-sided, misleading, and plainly inaccurate view.

The first sign of the old version's greater integrity is the inclusion of a necessary and commonly used language template, (e.g., <u>Template:Lang-he</u> "Tsiyyonut" <u>Template:IPA-he</u> after "<u>Zion</u>") that enhances understanding of the term's etymology.<sup>5</sup> The old version provided the Hebrew pronunciation and a hyperlink to the article "Zion," allowing readers to learn that the term is a biblical synonym for Jerusalem and the Land of Israel. Its removal not only erases linguistic and historical context but subtly, yet deliberately, severs the deep-rooted cultural and religious connection between Zionism and Jewish heritage.

Another notable shift in the current version is the framing of the Zionist movement. The previous version reflected the agreed central vision of its, leaders who thought: "the establishment of, and support for a homeland for the Jewish people centered in the area roughly corresponding to what is known in Jewish tradition as the Land of Israel on the basis of a long Jewish connection and attachment to that land."

The earlier version affirmed the Jewish people's indigenous connection to the land. This was later deleted and replaced with claims that Zionism is "pursued through the colonization of Palestine."

This redefinition not only distorts the foundational ethos of the movement but also reframes Zionism through a modern ideological lens, disconnecting it from its historical, cultural, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See, for example, the article "Benghazi," https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benghazi.



religious roots. However, the most notorious sentence, and the only one on Wikipedia currently protected under a "moratorium enforcement," which prohibits any changes until February 21, 2026, is the assertion that "Zionists wanted to create a Jewish state in Palestine with as much land, as many Jews, and as few Palestinian Arabs as possible." This misleading characterization, based on selective secondary sources, was introduced on November 11, 2024, by a user named Levivich, who has since been indefinitely topic-banned from editing in the Palestine–Israel conflict area due to disruptive behavior, including "consistently non-neutral editing."

#### Current consensus (January 2025):



- In this RfC it was found that there was consensus that the sentence "Zionists wanted to create a Jewish state in Palestine with as much land, as many Jews, and as few Palestinian Arabs as possible" is compliant with NPOV and should remain in the lead.
- In this discussion there was consensus that a moratorium be in place until February 21, 2026 regarding [a]II discussion about editing, removing, or replacing "Zionists wanted to create a Jewish state in Palestine with as much land, as many Jews, and as few Palestinian Arabs as possible."

Figure 2 - Enforcement of a moratorium on a biased phrase in the Zionism article

Given the bias evident on the "Zionism" page, as reflected in the authorship statistics showing which editors contributed to the article, it is not surprising that the article is shaped by the dominance of certain editors known for their anti-Zionist perspectives. Most notably, the user DMH223344, who is responsible for over a third of the current page content, has been widely criticized for introducing a biased framing of Zionism. In October 2024, he was temporarily suspended for violating Wikipedia's editing rules on the "Zionism" page, but his contributions remain largely intact and unreversed, and he continues to enforce his own views on the article to this day. Similarly, the page shows sustained editorial influence from other users with documented anti-Zionist positions, such as Selfstudier, Levivich, Onceinawhile, Iskandar, and Nishidani, most of whom were topic-banned in January 2025 from editing articles related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after extended periods of editing. Despite these bans, the content they shaped continues to form the basis of much of the article's current narrative and is based on sources frequently criticized for severe anti-Israel bias, such as Norman Finkelstein, Rashid Khalidi, and Joseph Massad, all known for their anti-Zionist views.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Obligatory suspension of an editing activity on a page or phrase.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> As can be seen, the editors have developed an internal lexicon composed of abbreviations and technical terms that can exclude newcomers to the platform. In this section, they refer to: **RfC** (Request for Comment), **NPOV** (Neutral Point of View), Consensus (the supposed "agreement" reached among editors after discussion), and Moratorium (a temporary suspension of changes or discussions concerning a specific issue).



#### Authorship [hide]

Authorship attribution, measured by character count, excluding spaces

Rank	Username	Links	Characters	Percentage
1	DMH223344	Top Edits · Edit Counter	97,512	36.2%
2	Cdjp1	Top Edits · Edit Counter	47,399	17.6%
3	Selfstudier	Top Edits · Edit Counter	14,847	5.5%
4	Bobfrombrockley	Top Edits · Edit Counter	14,091	5.2%
5	Levivich	Top Edits · Edit Counter	11,943	4.4%
6	Onceinawhile	Top Edits · Edit Counter	8,337	3.1%
7	DancingOwl	Top Edits · Edit Counter	7,776	2.9%
8	skandar323	Top Edits · Edit Counter	3,411	1.3%
9	Emir of Wikipedia	Top Edits · Edit Counter	3,042	1.1%
10	Nishidani	Top Edits · Edit Counter	2,852	1.1%
	349 others		58,204	21.6%

Figure 3 - List of the 10 top authors (editors) of the article on Zionism

The debate surrounding the page's content highlights a deeper flaw in Wikipedia's consensus-based decision-making model, which can devolve into a tyranny of the majority. This is evident particularly when pro-Israel editors, who represent a minority on the platform, are consistently outnumbered by opposing voices. Many face aggressive behavior from other editors and selective enforcement of rules when trying to balance the article.<sup>8</sup>

Eric Mechoulan, ENS alumnus with a Ph.D in contemporary history, visiting professor of International Affairs at the University of Paris-Dauphine, critically examines the misleading statements in the article's opening paragraphs. His analysis demonstrates that each concept conveyed in these lines is either anachronistic, inaccurate, or misleading:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> The ADL reports commented on that: "Among this group of 30 bad-faith editors, a smaller core regularly engaged in harassment and bullying against other editors, often spending more time reporting other edits than actually editing". Published: 03.18.2025.



Zionism is an ethnocultural nationalist - those two words apply an anachronistic and methodologically inappropriate concept to a multimillennial reality that is the desire of the Jews to return to the land of their ancestors to exercise sovereignty and rebuild their society. In the same anachronistic vein, Zionism could perfectly well have been described as a Jewish anti-colonial movement fighting against the colonization of the land of Israel by the Arabs, then the Ottomans, and even the British under the Mandate - movement that emerged in Europe in the late 19th century – certainly not, since the idea dates back to the time of the first exile. As soon as the Jews were driven out of their land, they never stoppedyearning to go back. This last part of the sentence is a crude lie, as it implies that Zionism materialized in the second half of the 19th century, thus concealing its millennia-old reality. Similarly, "antisemitism" was present long before the term was coined in 1879 - and aimed for the establishment of a Jewish state through the colonization - you can't colonize without a metropolis! There was no Jewish state from which to send settlers (unlike the European colonial powers that colonized the Americas, Africa, Oceania or South and Southeast Asia) - of a land outside Europe - But Jews were never originally Europeans, since Europe has always been a land of exile for them, a fact for which antisemites have always reproached them, urging them to return "home," i.e., to the Middle East.

With the rejection of alternative proposals for a Jewish state, – The alternatives proposed (Birobidjan, Uganda) were far-fetched (conceptually and geographically). There is no serious alternative to a homeland – it eventually focused on the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine – Again, this is an anachronism, for when the Jews renewed the project to return to their land, it was not called Palestine. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the region was, according to the Ottoman administration, the Sanjak of Jerusalem, which was a sub-province within larger administrative units like the Vilayet (province) of Syria.

Zionists wanted to create a Jewish state in Palestine with as much land as many Jews and as few Palestinian Arabs as possible – This sentence is both an obvious statement and a gross lie. It is obvious, because when a human group (in this case the Jews) seeks to constitute a political entity for itself, by definition it does not seek to do so for others (the Arabs). But at the same time, it's a double lie: first, because the Jews have accepted all the land-sharing plans that have been proposed to them, and the Arabs have never accepted any of them, and second, because there were no "Palestinian Arabs" as a people or a nation before it was invented in the 1960s.

Zionism initially emerged in Central and Eastern Europe as a secular nationalist movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, in reaction to newer waves of antisemitism and in response to the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment – *This sentence is largely correct but also incomplete, because the term "Zionism" is merely the 19th-century name of a trend that goes back thousands of years.* 

The arrival of Zionist settlers to Palestine during this period is widely seen as the start of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. – In the early days of Jewish immigration, the Arabs welcomed the new arrivals, who at last made it possible to speed up the economic and public health development of a stricken region of the Ottoman Empire.



In 1917, the Balfour Declaration established Britain's support for the movement. In 1922, the Mandate for Palestine governed by Britain explicitly privileged Jewish settlers over the local Palestinian population – This sentence is a gross lie, as the British unilaterally created an Arab state in Palestine in contradiction to the original promise of the Balfour Declaration (the Emirate of Transjordan, in 1921), and restricted and then stopped Jewish immigration to Palestine (three White Books).

In 1948, the State of Israel was established and the first Arab–Israeli war broke out. During the war, Israel expanded its territory to control over 78% of Mandatory Palestine – This is obviously false, since Jordan (the new name for the Emirate of Transjordan) already covered two-thirds of the original Mandate of Palestine. We should be talking about what remained in 1948 and was destined by the UN Partition Plan to become the second Arab state. Israel conquered around half of this territory.

As a result of the 1948 Palestinian expulsion and flight, an estimated 160,000 of 870,000 Palestinians in the territory remained, forming a Palestinian minority in Israel – *This sentence* is again anachronistic, since there were no "Palestinians" in 1948. It should read: "As a result of the 1948 Arab expulsion and flight, an estimated 160,000 of 870,000 Arabs in the territory remained, forming an Arab minority in Israel."

Following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Zionism became Israel's national or state ideology. – This sentence reverses cause and consequence, since it was the idea of returning to create a state (Zionism) that enabled the creation of this state. It is therefore absurd to say that the state has adopted the ideology that is at the foundation of its existence.

Overall, the current version of the Wikipedia page employs rhetorical strategies that distort the historical and cultural meaning of Zionism, portraying it as antithetical to Judaism and severed from Jewish identity, history, and tradition. Efforts to introduce alternative perspectives are routinely dismissed, making the article increasingly biased over time.



#### **Jerusalem**

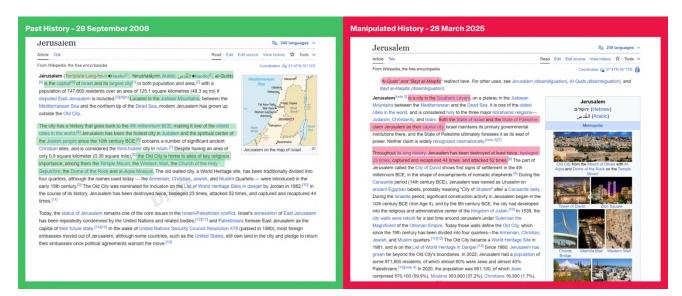


Figure 4 - Before & After: Edits to 'Jerusalem' page on Wikipedia

Similar to the article on Zionism, the older version of the "Jerusalem" article from December 2008 opens with a language template that provides readers with the pronunciation of the city's name in both Hebrew and Arabic. The omission of this important and commonly used template in later revisions suggests an intent to conceal information and restrict access to it, including the ability to recognize that the name "Jerusalem" is etymologically related to the Semitic Hebrew biblical name "Yerushalayim."

Beyond the omission of linguistic information, the current version of the article no longer unequivocally states that Jerusalem is Israel's capital. Instead, it asserts that "both the State of Israel and the State of Palestine claim Jerusalem as their capital city," flattening the political complexity and blurring the distinction between West Jerusalem, which is generally recognized as under Israeli sovereignty, and east Jerusalem, the status of which is contested.

The second paragraph of the older version offers a cohesive and comprehensive description of Jerusalem. It begins by noting that it is one of the oldest cities in the world, continuing with its role as the "spiritual center of the Jewish people since the 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE," and then acknowledging its significance to Christianity and Islam. However, the current version illustrates the way in which even accurate information can be arranged in a way that subtly undermines the reader's understanding of the city's historical and contemporary relevance.

The current editing, which can be characterized as subversive, arguably aims to share information in a way that conceals and blurs rather than reveals and clarifies, and is symbolically evident in the dubious choice of opening the second paragraph with a description that highlights absence and violence, stating that the city "has been destroyed at least twice, besieged 23 times, captured and recaptured 44 times, and attacked 52 times." Rather than offering sound and important context, the blurring continues throughout the paragraph, with a disjointed array of historical information from various eras piled together and presented in unordered succession.



This form of counter-writing obscures the longstanding and profound connection between the Jewish people and Jerusalem, a city that has served as the cultural, religious, and political heart of Jewish life for over 3,000 years, known by more than 70 Hebrew names and deeply embedded in Jewish historical memory, religious heritage, literature, and identity.

This shift in presentation is not merely a matter of editorial style; it reflects an intentional reframing. By omitting direct statements about Jerusalem's historical role as Israel's capital and its longstanding significance to the Jewish people, and by distributing various religious associations without context or chronology, the revised version constructs a narrative that minimizes Jewish historical continuity in the city.

After thoroughly reading this RfC and the arguments expressed for and against each draft, we have found a consensus for Draft 7 and have decided that it is within our mandate to insert the geographical information from Draft 14 in place of the ellipses of Draft 7. There was a consensus that it is not compliant with NPOV policy to state in the article "Jerusalem is the capital of Israel", nor is it compliant to state "Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, though not internationally recognized as such". There was no consensus for any phrasing of Jerusalem's location in either Israel or Palestine.

We have decided to act under the broad mandate given us by the Arbitration Committee to set the first paragraph of the article in stone to best ameliorate the conflict, rather than instigate further conflict and edit-warring over what should replace the ellipses. Therefore, we have set the first paragraph of Jerusalem as follows:



"Jerusalem", located on a plateau in the Judean Mountains between the Mediterranean and Dead Seas, is one of the oldest cities in the world. It is considered holy to the three major Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Israelis and Palestinians both claim Jerusalem as their capital, as Israel maintains its primary governmental institutions there and the State of Palestine ultimately foresees it as its seat of power; however, neither claim is widely recognized internationally.

To reiterate, this decision is binding for 3 years and no one may add information about Jerusalem's capital status or location in either Israel or Palestine to the lead.

Figure 5 - Discussion regarding Jerusalem as the capital of Israel

The current version also downplays the significance of Jerusalem to the Jewish people by removing key information about its historical role as the capital of the ancient Jewish kingdoms, being as it was not only a spiritual center where the Temples once stood (and the ruins of which remain), but also a political and national center.



## **History of Israel**

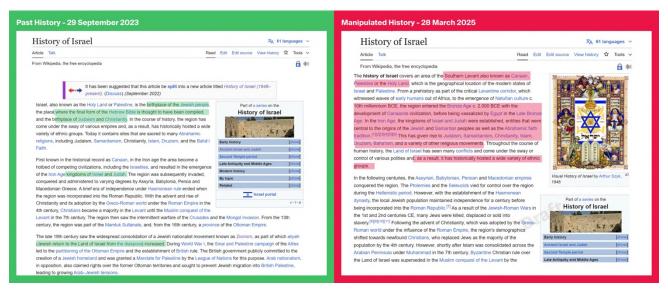


Figure 6 - Before & After: Edits to 'History of Israel' page on Wikipedia

The comparison of the September 2022 "History of Israel" article with that of March 2025 version reveals a consistent pattern of editing that, much like the revisions to the "Jerusalem" article, serves to undermine the historical connection of the Jewish people to its land. The opening paragraph of the 2022 version is cohesive and establishes the connection between the Jewish people and the land from biblical times, while simultaneously asserting its importance the land's importance to other nations:

The Land of Israel (also known as the Holy Land or Palestine) is the birthplace of the Jewish people, the place where the Hebrew Bible was composed and the birthplace of Judaism and Christianity. It contains sites sacred to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Samaritanism, Druze and the Bahá'í Faith.

Historical information beginning with the Iron Age is succinctly and chronologically presented in the second paragraph.

In the March 2025 version, the connection previously made between the land and the people is completely deleted. Instead of referring to Israel as a state or a nation, the article begins with the region's history, broadening the topic to a regional and civilizational overview while diluting and deflecting focus from what is supposed to be the actual topic of the article: Israel.

This calculated subversive effort blurs meaning through various tactics, including logical inconsistencies, chronological and structural confusion, anachronism, and the purposeful omission of key facts. The illogical nature of the article is evident from its very first sentence, "the history of Israel covers an area," which implies that a nation's history is defined by geography rather than by the history of its people within a geographical area. The article obscures rather than clarifies the subject, scattering attention as the first paragraph jumps from prehistory to the Bronze Age to Iron Age, without showing how these developments relate to the rise of ancient Israel or the Jewish people.



The obscuring of Jewish historical continuity also occurs through a disarray of times and names, placing "Canaan, Palestine, or the Holy Land" side by side as if they share the same historical and cultural footing. Canaan is an ancient name from the second millennium, dating back to the Bronze Age. Its placement in the opening line is not surprising, as it is often used politically to undermine the legitimacy of Israel by referring to a time long before it existed. Palestine, short for Syria Palaestina, was the name imposed by the Romans shortly after the Bar Kokhba revolt, replacing the province of Judaea as a form of punishment and erasure. "The Holy Land" is a term rooted in biblical tradition, first mentioned by the prophet Zechariah as God's chosen place as was the chosen city of Jerusalem in the 16<sup>th</sup> century BCE and should have appeared before "Palestine" if chronological accuracy were considered. The broader pattern of minimizing Jewish historical presence in the region can be inferred not only from the names mentioned but also from those conspicuously absent, which are most directly tied to the history of Israel as a nation: Judaea and the Land of Israel. The latter appears in the Book of Samuel, which scholars date to the seventh-sixth centuries BCE, ,and is used throughout Jewish history in prayers and literature to express the enduring aspiration to return to the land after exile. These terms appear only later in the paragraph, somewhat obscured in the clutter of historical events, with the statement that "in the Iron Age, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were established."



## Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

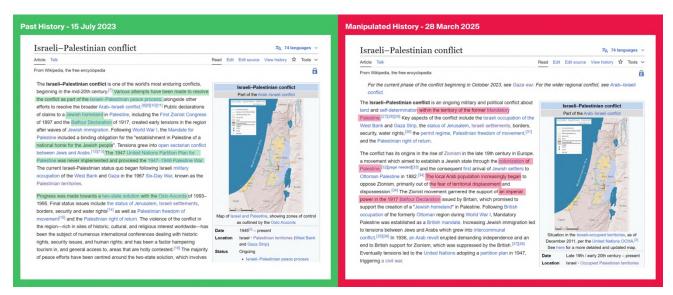


Figure 7 - Before & After: Edits to 'Israel-Palestinian conflict' page on Wikipedia

In examining the two versions of the article on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, it is evident that the language used and the omission of references to Palestinian militant attacks indicate a bias against Israel. This concern was raised in November 2007 by a user named Jaakobou, who advocated for changes in terminology and a more nuanced representation of the situation. However, the community ultimately rejected his proposal in a debate in which he was heavily outnumbered (see Figure 4).

#### Preference not to use term occupation · I believe the term occupation, is a politically charged term, and should be avoided when there is no intention or need to expand on the topic WP:TOPIC. Israel won territory (and lost other territory) in a war imposed upon her by the surrounding nations, to insist on the politically charged, legal terminology within' this context, seems to promote anti-israeli POV. therefore, i suggested this as a replacement (when using the term 'captured' was under contention). Jaakobou Chalk Talk 10:08, 30 November 2007 (UTC) original suggested replacement Israel declared its independence. Local Arab nations and Israel fought in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, in which Israel won control over borders which Israel declared its independence. Local Arab nations and Israel fought in remained in place until during the Six Day War, it seized control over the the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, in which West Bank (Jordan) and the Gaza Strip (Egypt). However, during the the Israel won control over borders which 1948 war, Jordan captured Jerusalem, expelled Jewish population, and Jaakobou remained in place until its victory in the vandalized many Jewish holy places, including synagogues, and the Six Day War led to the occupation of cemetery on the Mount of Olives, and from 1948-1967, prevented Jews the West Bank and Gaza Strip. from visiting Jerusalem. (See also: Rule of the West Bank and East Jerusalem by Jordan, Rule of the Gaza Strip by Egypt)

Figure 8 - A user's request to neutralize the article



Yet, comparing the July 2023 version to the March 2025 one reveals that the article has become significantly more biased over time. In the 2023 version, the opening paragraph states that "various attempts have been made to resolve the conflict as part of the Israeli–Palestinian peace process, alongside other efforts to address the broader Arab–Israeli conflict." While earlier edit also mention Israel's success in making peace with Arab countries such as Egypt and Jordan, the 2023 article is less biased than the current one, as it emphasizes the overall attempts made for reconciliation.

In the opening paragraph of the 2025 version, the peace process is entirely absent. Instead, the opening line frames the conflict as focused on "land and self-determination."

The first paragraph of the July 2023 version states that "the Mandate for Palestine included a binding obligation for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," while in the March 2025 version, this significant assertion is relegated to the second paragraph, subtly downplaying the legal-historical basis of Jewish national claims and reshaping the narrative hierarchy of the article.

The growth of bias over time is most evident when examining the second paragraph of both versions. While the older version focuses on the Oslo Accords of 1993–1995, the March 2025 article presents a one-sided perspective that attributes the conflict to Zionist "colonization," neglecting to mention that the Jewish people are native to the land; that they have no other motherland that is part of the conceptualization of colonization, and that Jews have lived on the land for thousands of years as a minority, encountering violence long before the Zionist movement consolidated, such as in the Hebron massacre of 1834.

The paragraph's conclusion that "eventually tensions led to the United Nations adopting a partition plan in 1947, triggering a civil war," misrepresents the sequence and causes of events. It fails to acknowledge that the war was initiated by Arab nations and began when they rejected the UN Partition Plan and initiated violence, despite the Jewish community's acceptance of the proposal. By framing the war as a consequence of the Partition Plan itself, the article obscures the Arabs' part in the events, contributing to a distorted understanding of the conflict. It illustrates the way in which historical narratives can be shaped to reinforce political biases, which in turn can fuel antisemitism and perpetuate the conflict.

Similar to the "Zionism" article, here, too, the authorship statistics reveal the takeover of one user, DMH223344, who is in fact the same anti-Israel editor who was later temporarily topic-banned and who is responsible for about a third of the article's content.



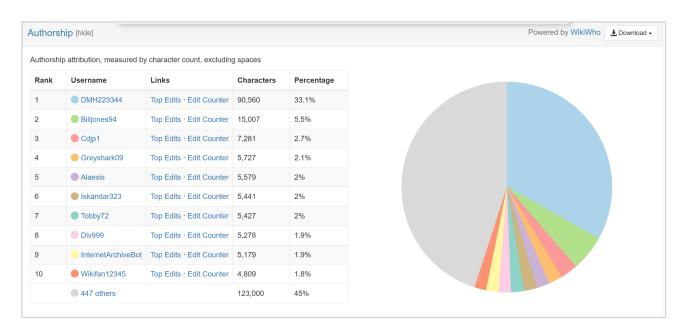


Figure 9 - User DMH223344, an editor later temporarily topic-banned for anti-Israel bias, is shown to be responsible for 33.1% of the article's content, a disproportionate amount that suggests a takeover.



#### Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process

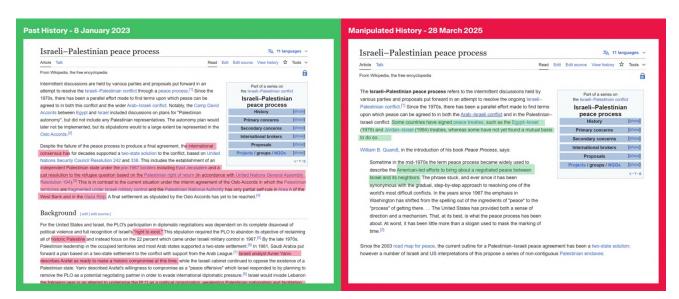


Figure 10 - Before & After: Edits to 'Israel-Palestinian peace process page on Wikipedia

The first striking difference between the two versions of the article on the Israeli–Palestinian peace process is the shift from clarity to increased ambiguity and potential bias. The January 2023 version opens with a clear, direct definition: "The Israeli–Palestinian peace process refers to the intermittent discussions held by various parties and proposals put forward in an attempt to resolve the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict." This sentence sets a neutral and informative tone, defining the topic in a straightforward manner.

In contrast, the March 2025 version—despite citing the exact same source—alters the structure and tone in a way that introduces ambiguity: "Intermittent discussions are held by various parties and proposals put forward in an attempt to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict through a peace process." This revision not only reverses the sentence structure, making it more convoluted, but also subtly shifts the focus away from a clear definition of the peace process. The result is a disjointed opening sentence exemplifying a recurring trend in recent edits on the conflict that obscures rather than clarifies.

The act of concealment regarding the efforts and progress represented in the peace process is especially evident when comparing the continuation of the first paragraph. <sup>9</sup> In the older version, the paragraph not only acknowledges the origins of peace efforts dating back to the 1970s, but it also explicitly highlights concrete achievements by naming key peace treaties Israel has signed:

Since the 1970s, there has been a parallel effort made to find terms upon which peace can be agreed to in both the Arab–Israeli conflict and in the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. Some countries

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The first paragraph is the most important section of any Wikipedia article, as it is the one usually read and the one that frames the article's content.



have signed peace treaties, such as the Egypt–Israel (1979) and Jordan–Israel (1994) treaties, whereas some have not yet found a mutual basis to do so.

This framing offers a sense of hope and situates the talks within a broader historical context, acknowledging both the progress made and the challenges that remain.

In contrast, the 2025 version uses the same starting point but omits any mention of these landmark peace agreements. This absence erases important milestones from the narrative and shifts the tone from one of documenting progress to one that suggests perpetual failure or stalemate. By removing references to successful diplomacy, the revised article downplays the complexity of the peace process and diminishes Israel's role in achieving regional agreements. This subtle editorial choice contributes to a broader pattern of omission that undermines a factual and balanced understanding of the conflict.

The revised version also includes two additional notable omissions: the pivotal role of the United States as a mediator and a clear articulation of Israel's core requirements within the peace process. Notably absent is the quote by American scholar William B. Quandt, who underscored that the term "peace process" regarding treaties ranging from 1970 to 1994, stating it primarily refers to: "American-led efforts to bring about a negotiated peace between Israel and its neighbors." The removal of this framing diminishes the reader's understanding of the United States' central and sustained involvement.

Instead, the second paragraph of the current version closely mirrors pro-Palestinian advocacy narratives, effectively misappropriating Wikipedia and using it as a platform for partisan messaging. It adopts the language, framing, and assumptions characteristic of political advocacy, while presenting them as a neutral, consensual account despite the fact that the topic concerns a contested process between two parties:

Despite the failure of the peace process to produce a final agreement, the international consensus has for decades supported a two-state solution to the conflict, based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 and 338. This includes the establishment of an independent Palestinian state under the pre-1967 borders including East Jerusalem and a just resolution to the refugee question based on the Palestinian right of return (in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194).

The one-sided propaganda narrative persists with an explanation of the reasons the Oslo Accords are not beneficial for the Palestinians:

This is in contrast to the current situation under the interim agreement of the Oslo Accords in which the Palestinian territories are fragmented under Israeli military control and the Palestinian National Authority has only partial self-rule in Area A of the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. A final settlement as stipulated by the Oslo Accords has yet to be reached.

As can be seen, there is no explicit reference to Israel's conditions for peace: its concerns, demands for security, and counterarguments over land and terms. Instead, the readers are presented with highly selective and ideologically driven framing.



It is only in the third paragraph that Israel's demands are briefly mentioned. However, the description carries a cynical tone: Israel's right to exist is placed in quotation marks, subtly casting doubt on its legitimacy, and the requirement to renounce violence is framed as a price for abandoning the goal of reclaiming all of "historic Palestine"

- a highly charged and political term in itself:

For the United States and Israel, the PLO's participation in diplomatic negotiations was dependent on its complete disavowal of political violence and full recognition of Israel's "right to exist." This stipulation required the PLO to abandon its objective of reclaiming all of historic Palestine and instead focus on the 22 percent which came under Israeli military control in 1967.

The bias continues in the "Background" section of the March 2025 version. This time, a one-sided viewpoint is bluntly promoted through heavy reliance on a single source, presenting a single scholarly interpretation as authoritative without indicating that it reflects only one analytical perspective. In this manner, the article excludes the alternative viewpoints of Israeli decision-makers, security analysts, or historians who might interpret the same events through different lenses.

Assertions based on one critique are framed as a factual narrative rather than as contested political interpretations. As a result, the section portrays Israeli policy as deterministic and cynical, ignoring the broader strategic and political context, including ongoing acts of terrorism, the ambiguity of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) declarations during the period, and internal debates within Israel about security and diplomacy. This fails to meet Wikipedia's standards of balance, attribution, and verifiability.



#### 1948 Palestine War

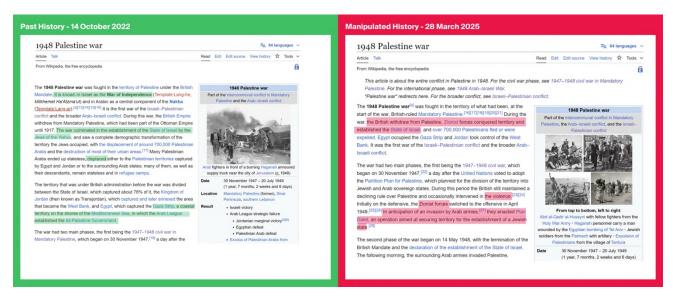


Figure 11 - Before & After: Edits to '1948 Palestine war page on Wikipedia

A first glance at the March 2025 version of the "1948 Palestine war" article reveals a clear bias, and not just in the one-sided title. Even before reading the content, the influence of anti-Israeli editors is evident from the fact that a single historical event has been split into three separate articles, on October 2022, all of which seem to promote an ideological narrative through the misuse of Wikipedia as a propaganda tool.

This article is about the entire conflict in Palestine in 1948. For the civil war phase, see 1947–1948 civil war in Mandatory Palestine. For the international phase, see 1948 Arab–Israeli War.

"Palestine war" redirects here. For the broader conflict, see Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Figure 12 - A Wikipedia disambiguation notice

The page split was initiated by a user named Iskandar323, who was later topic-banned from editing conflict-related content due to his blatant bias. Notably, on the same day and the next, three additional editors known for their consistently anti-Israel editing activity also became involved; this is consistent with the repeated suggestions that a coordinated effort has been made to reshape the framing of conflict-related articles in a way that further amplifies a one-sided perspective. 1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> However, as in similar cases, his 48,213 edits, many of which seem extremely biased, remained intact.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> See, for example, the ADL report and the writings of journalists such as Aaron Bandler and Ashley Rindsberg.



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15:05, 17 October 2022 ZScarpia (talk | contribs) . . (68,006 bytes) (+92) . . (→Background: -- CN) (undo | thank)

23:14, 16 October 2022 Huldra (talk | contribs) . . (67,914 bytes) (+6) . . (direct link) (undo | thank)

16:58, 16 October 2022 AndreJustAndre (talk | contribs) . . (67,908 bytes) (-1,642) . . (Undo - 1948 Arab-Israeli War is a separate article.)

(Tag: Undo)

13:25, 16 October 2022 Onceinawhile (talk | contribs) . . (69,550 bytes) (+1,642) . . (alternative name with sources) (undo | thank) (Tag: Reverted)

11:18, 16 October 2022 Iskandar323 (talk | contribs) . . (67,908 bytes) (+161) . . (Adding hatnote) (undo | thank)
```

Figure 13 - A log of recent edits to the article on the conflict in Palestine in 1948

Upon reviewing the content of both versions, it is important to note that each can be considered highly biased against Israel, as they employ various framing strategies that emphasize Palestinian displacement while downplaying the broader historical and political context.

The article's title in both versions can arguably be regarded as biased, especially when compared to editions of Wikipedia in other languages, which refer to the war either as the "Israeli War of Independence" or the "1948 Arab–Israeli War." However, the October 2022 version of the article mitigated this by offering essential balance in its opening sentence, stating that the war is "known in Israel as the War of Independence ... and in Arabic as a central component of the Nakba." This crucial contextual information, which typically belongs at the beginning of an article to orient readers, has been relocated in the 2025 version to a separate section on terminology, thereby depriving readers who focus on the introductory paragraph of necessary background and perspective. In addition, while there is no separate article on the Israeli War of Independence from the Israeli viewpoint, a new article was published on the Nakba in 2023, further duplicating content already published in articles on the war and the 1948 Palestinian exodus,, thus serving as yet another way to use Wikipedia as a propaganda tool.

In continuing to compare both versions, the biased emphasis on Palestinian perspectives and the lack of broader historical and political context—including the rejection of the UN Partition Plan, the coordinated invasion by surrounding Arab states, and the existential threat faced by the Jewish population—becomes strikingly apparent.

Neither version's introductory paragraph includes a single mention of the crucial fact that the first phase of the war began when the Arabs of Mandatory Palestine launched attacks against the Jewish community in an effort to prevent the implementation of the UN Partition Plan.

Instead, in the first two paragraphs of both versions, the war is portrayed as if it emerged out of nowhere, a *deus ex machina*, without reference to the escalating violence between Arab militias and the Jewish community or the broader geopolitical dynamics that led to the invasion by neighboring Arab states. The 2022 version omits any mention of who initiated the violence, while the 2025 version frames it subversively, stating that "in anticipation of an invasion by Arab armies, they enacted Plan Dalet, an operation aimed at securing territory for the establishment of a Jewish state." This framing distorts the sequencing of events and ignores the fact that at the war's outset, armed militants targeted mixed cities and Jewish transport routes in an effort to spread terror and weaken the Jewish community. Plan Dalet was formulated in direct response to these attacks to secure key regions that had been cut off, with some settlements entirely isolated. The missing, or rather deliberately concealed information transmits a false impression



that accountability for the fate of the Palestinians lies solely with Israel, erasing historical complexity and reinforcing a one-sided narrative.

While both versions display a pronounced bias against Israel, the differences between them reveal a growing pattern of editorial intervention, with the 2025 version reflecting an even more distorted and one-sided narrative.

In the 2022 version, the Jewish fighting forces are accurately referred to as residents of the *Yishuv*, Jews who were living in Mandatory Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, some of whom had roots in the land going back generations. In contrast to that, the 2025 version replaces this terminology with the more politicized "Zionist forces," which appears twice in the opening paragraphs, the first time, in an extremely shallow depiction of the events: "During the war, the British withdrew from Palestine, Zionist forces conquered territory and established the State of Israel." This editorial change is not merely semantic but rather aligns with narratives that delegitimize the Jewish historical connection to the land by framing Jewish presence as that of colonial actors. In so doing,, the article seems to echo the rhetorical patterns of new antisemitism, which cloaks traditional antisemitic tropes in the language of anti-Zionism.

While both articles withhold crucial information, focusing primarily on the heavy price paid by the Palestinians without offering readers sufficient context about the broader causes and developments of the war, the 2025 version also omits a notable detail that appears at the end of the second paragraph in the 2022 version: "

The territory that was under British administration before the war was divided between the State of Israel, which captured about 78% of it, the <u>Kingdom of Jordan</u> (then known as Transjordan), which <u>captured and later annexed</u> the area that became the <u>West Bank</u>, and Egypt, which captured the Gaza Strip, a coastal territory on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, in which the Arab League established the All-Palestine Government. Whereas that "All-Palestine" government was short-lived and largely symbolic, its mention in the 2022 article points to attempts at Palestinian political organization in the immediate aftermath of the war.

Its absence in the updated version may reflect a broader editorial trend that centers on Palestinian dispossession while downplaying internal Arab political dynamics and agency.



## **Mujahideen Brigades**

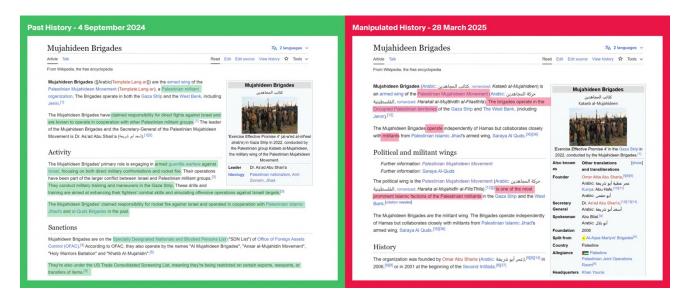


Figure 14 - Before & After: Edits to 'Mujahideen Brigades' page on Wikipedia

Wikipedia does not clearly identify terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah as such, and instead seemingly legitimizes their actions through the so-called more neutral term "militant groups," and sometimes, not even that. The 2024 version of the article on the Mujahideen Brigades refers to them as a "militant group" in the opening paragraph. In contrast, the 2025 opening describes this deadly organization merely as a Palestinian "movement," obscuring its violent nature.

In the third and fourth paragraphs of the 2024 version, under the title "Activity," the the organization's destructive intentions and violent acts aimed at Israel are described:

The Mujahideen Brigades' primary role is engaging in **armed guerrilla warfare against Israel**.... They conduct military training and maneuvers in the Gaza Strip. These drills and training are aimed at enhancing their fighters' combat skills and simulating **offensive operations against Israeli targets**.

The Mujahideen Brigades' claimed responsibility for **rocket fire against Israel** and operated in cooperation with Palestinian Islamic Jihad's and al-Quds Brigades in the past.

In contrast, the 2025 version only implicitly references the Mujahideen Brigades' violent actions, framing them within the organization's ideological context under the heading "Political and Militant Wings," and describing the group merely as "one of the most prominent Islamic factions of the Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank."

While the next section in the 2024 version addresses the sanctions against the organization, stating that it is "on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List" and that "they're being restricted on certain exports, reexports, or transfers of items," this information appears only toward the end of the 2025 version, before the focus shifts to the organization's history.



The concealment of essential facts by placing them later in the article rather than in the opening paragraphs, which receive the most attention from readers can reflect bias through omission. Research indicates that the median visitor stays for only 25 seconds after opening an article, <sup>12</sup> which means that it is unlikely that many readers will venture beyond the first paragraphs.

The downplaying of critical information in the 2025 version is evident not only in the choice to use understatement when describing the organization but also in the editorial decision to position vital facts toward the end of the article. For example, the section entitled "Militant activity," which is essential to understanding the nature of this terror organization, appears only after nine preceding paragraphs.

Crucial information regarding the organization's role in the abduction of the Bibas family's mother, Shiri, and two children, Ariel and Kfir, on October 7, 2023, appears only toward the end of the article.

Moreover, in this instance as well, the article assumes the role of a spokesperson for the terror organization, narrating events almost exclusively from its point of view. For example, it states:

On 19 February 2024, the Mujahideen Brigades' spokesperson Abu Bilal **confirmed** that three members of the Bibas family had been killed in an Israeli airstrike about three weeks after being kidnapped by the Mujahideen Brigades on 7 October 2023.

However, the article fails to mention that according to the official Israeli forensic report, Shiri, Ariel, and Kfir Bibas were brutally murdered, not killed in an airstrike.

The article also fails to mention that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) was ultimately correct and that the body of Shiri Bibas had, in fact, been misidentified and replaced:

When the bodies were returned to Israel, Israeli operatives **claimed** that the body returned as Shirin Bibas **was not the best**. They claimed ruled out any other hostage with DNA testing and the IDF posted a tweet that described her as an "anonymous unidentified body."

The Mujahedeen Movement and Hamas Movement issued several statements in response.

The only critical tone in the article is directed toward the Western media in stating that "some major news sources in the Western media, and far right leaders in the United States, falsely claimed the family had been captured by "Hamas" (the political wing associated with the Qassam Brigades), which contradicted even Israeli sources."

Finally, a closer look at the article's top contributors presents a troubling picture of nearly 50% of the article having been written by just two individual editors: one edited 28.1% and the other, 21.1%.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> See Wikimedia's research on reading time.



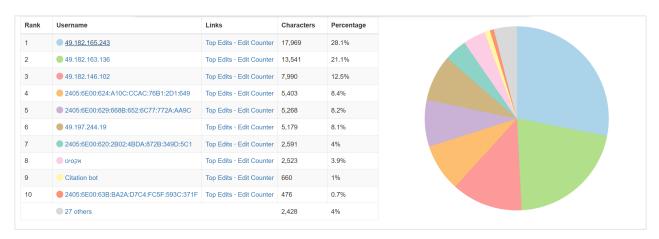


Figure 15 - Authorship statistics for the 'Mujahideen Brigades' article on Wikipedia



## **Closing Reflections**

In the early days of the internet, the new medium was closely associated with techno-utopian visions. Drawing on Habermasian conceptualizations, these visions emphasized the web's potential to serve as a transformative public sphere in which digital spaces amplified civic voices and challenged traditional power structures that had long excluded or silenced the broader public. Wikipedia's founding vision aligns with this ethos, embracing the democratic promise of the digital realm to expand participation in the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

Over time, however, it has become increasingly clear that alongside its potential for empowerment, the digital space can also reflect early techno-dystopian warnings that it may replicate existing social inequalities and, in some cases, intensify them. In the context of Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Wikipedia has sadly embodied the darker side of the digital age. The platform has been exploited by a group of anti-Israeli editors who have increasingly used it as a tool of propaganda, as demonstrated by the articles presented in the exhibition and discussed in this catalog.

These articles and the biases they display are not manifestations of occasional lapses, but rather systematic and deliberate patterns of editing that have solidified over time, making it increasingly difficult to correct misinformation or uphold the platform's stated principle of open, good-faith participation. This long-term distortion of content has a profound impact on readers, many of whom rely on Wikipedia as a primary source of information and are unaware of the ideological framing that shapes what they read in articles related to the conflict.

While politicized manipulation is often expected on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, or X, where emotional appeals and ideological bias can easily replace facts, Wikipedia reveals the way in which similar dynamics can surface through more subtle mechanisms such as in the framing of information, selective sourcing, and a consensus-driven editing process in which pro-Israeli editors are frequently marginalized or met with suspicion and hostility. However, unlike social media, biases in articles related to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict often go unnoticed by readers. The very title 'encyclopedia,' together with the promise of neutral knowledge, creates the illusion of objectivity,while in fact what is often presented is a one-sided interpretation due to the limiting of more balanced voices.

These misleading narratives are further reinforced and amplified by AI systems and Google's search algorithms, subtly shaping public consciousness and preventing individuals from forming independent judgments grounded in unbiased information. Even more concerning, these anti-Israel messages have contributed to rising anti-Jewish hatred and, at times, antisemitic violence.

With antisemitism on the rise once again and cognizant of the lessons history has taught us, it is more important than ever to take thoughtful steps to address this challenge.



## **Special Thanks**

Many individuals share the mission of raising awareness of the urgent issue of the bias against Israel on English Wikipedia. Some initially proposed the idea for the exhibition, while others were available to consult on the topics. Although they chose to remain anonymous, I am incredibly grateful to each of them for their help with this project.

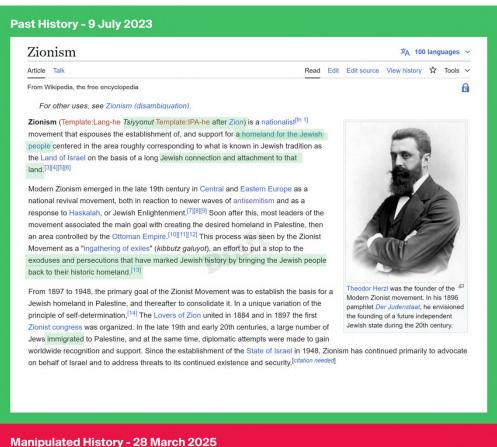
Special thanks to Yfat Barak-Cheney from the World Jewish Congress for believing in the project, to Ella Kenan and Livne Dgani from BrightMind for their encouragement, and to Prof. Eric Mechoulan for his insightful comments on the article on Zionism.



Dr. Shlomit Aharoni Lir is a scholar specializing in the political dimensions of knowledge. A lecturer and research fellow at the University of Haifa, she has published in leading international academic journals and received numerous awards for academic excellence and literary contributions. In addition to her scholarly work, she is a published essayist and poet.



## **Appendix**



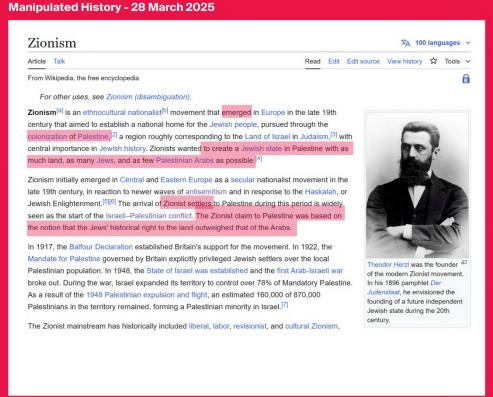


Figure 1 - Before & After: Edits to 'Zionism' page on Wikipedia



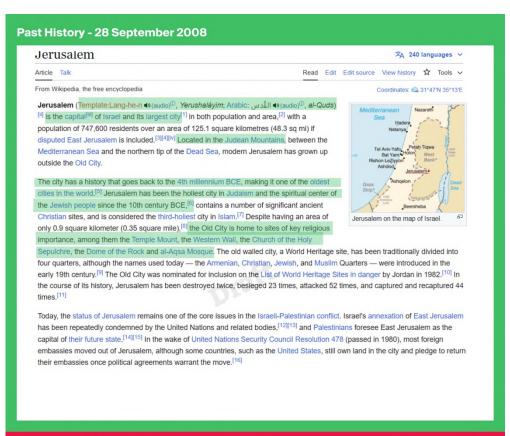




Figure 4 - Before & After: Edits to 'Jerusalem' page on Wikipedia



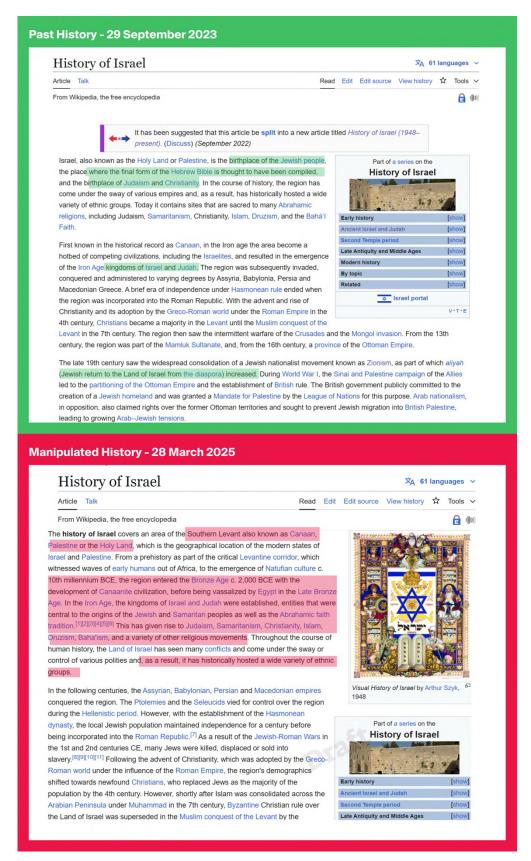


Figure 6 - Before & After: Edits to 'History of Israel' page on Wikipedia



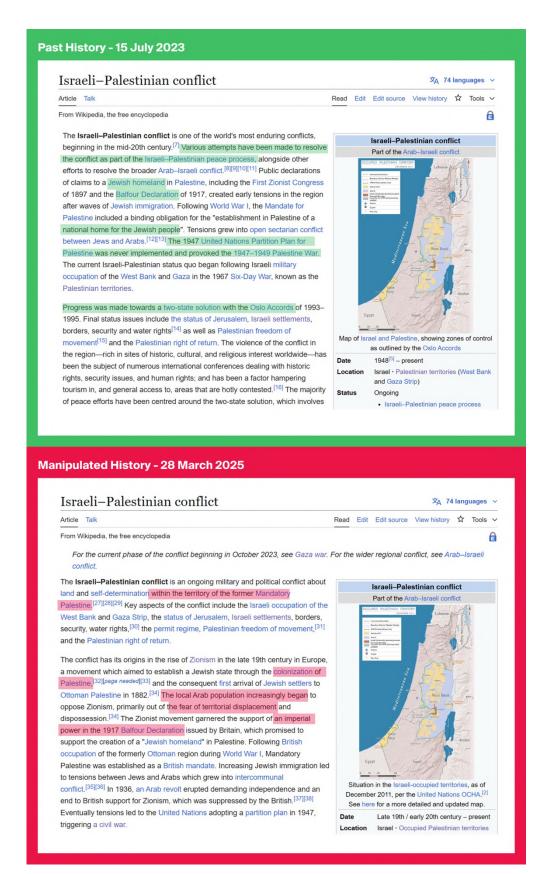


Figure 7 - Before & After: Edits to 'Israel-Palestinian Conflict' page on Wikipedia



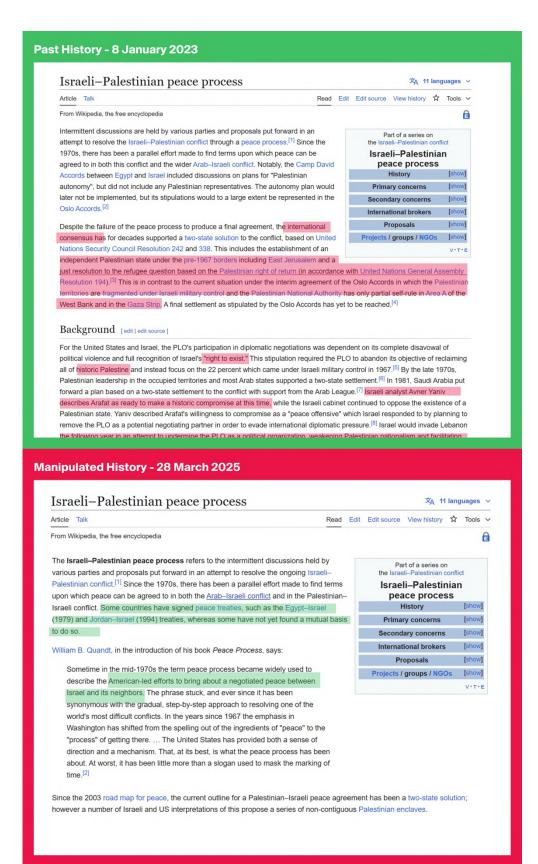


Figure 10 - Before & After: Edits to 'Israel-Palestinian peace process page on Wikipedia



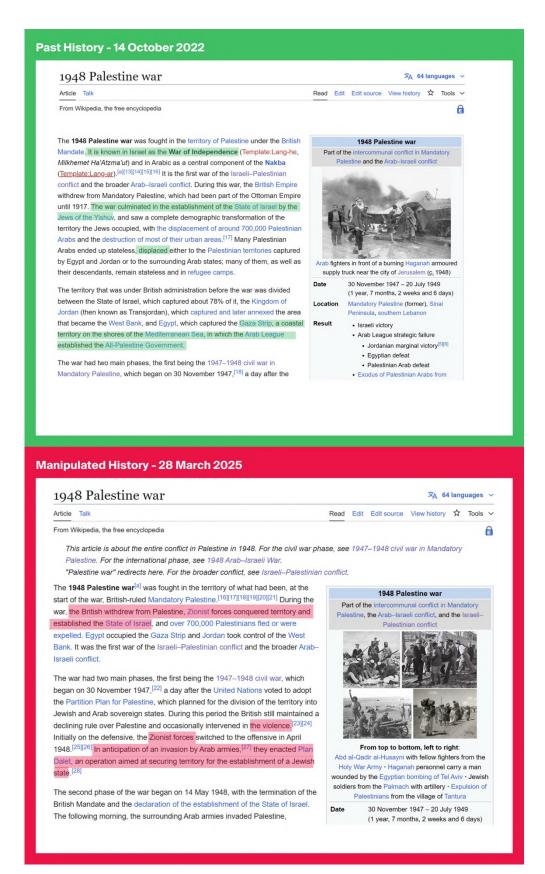


Figure 11 - Before & After: Edits to '1948 Palestine war' page on Wikipedia



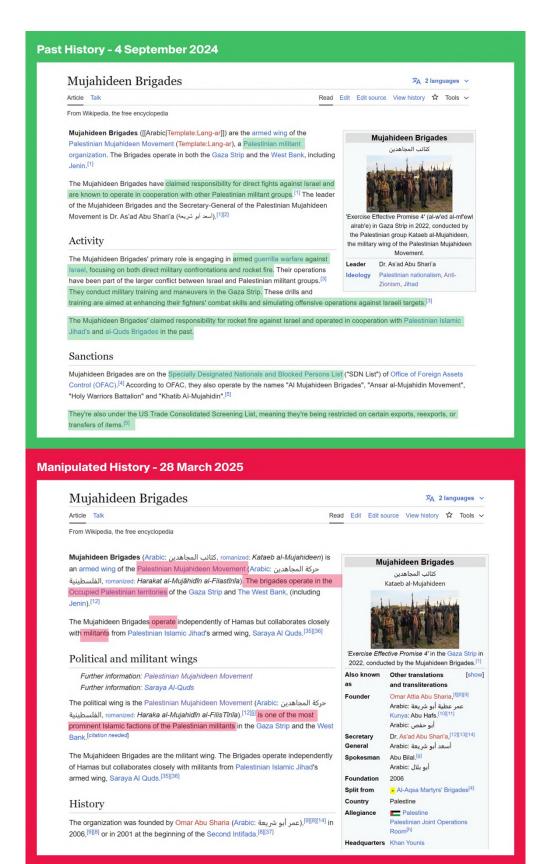


Figure 14 - Before & After: Edits to 'Mujahideen Brigades' page on Wikipedia