

## How Israel brought Gaza to the brink of humanitarian catastrophe

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The only way to make sense of Israel's senseless war in Gaza is through understanding the historical context. Establishing the state of Israel in May 1948 involved a monumental injustice to the Palestinians. British officials bitterly resented American partisanship on behalf of the infant state. On 2 June 1948, Sir John Troutbeck wrote to the foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, that the Americans were responsible for the creation of a gangster state headed by "an utterly unscrupulous set of leaders". I used to think that this judgment was too harsh but Israel's vicious assault on the people of Gaza, and the Bush administration's complicity in this assault, have reopened the question.

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