

# ZIONISM

## THE REAL ENEMY OF THE JEWS

### A book for Peace

#### THE MONSTER OF ANTI-SEMITISM –HOW TO DESTROY IT

Feature Article by Alan Hart.

Nothing is more important for diaspora or non-Israeli Jews - the majority of Jews in the world - than stopping the monster of anti-Semitism from going on the rampage again in the mainly Gentile lands of which they are citizens. The question in desperate need of an honest answer is - *Who* can stop it and *how*?

In my view this question cannot be addressed seriously without an understanding of the difference between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism; an understanding that requires knowledge of the difference between Judaism and Zionism.

The significance of the difference is impossible to exaggerate because (despite Zionism's assertion to the contrary) one can be profoundly and passionately anti-Zionist without being in any way, shape or form anti-Semitic, and without being anti-Israel as a state for some Jews inside its borders as they were on the eve of the 1967 war. In this context it is worth noting that the most perceptive and devastating critics of Zionism were and are Jews.

- It was one of them, the American writer Lenni Brenner, who in 1983 made the statement that "Zionism is not now, nor was it ever, co-extensive with either Judaism or the Jewish people."
- And it was another of them, the American diplomat Henry Morgenthau Senior, who said in 1921 that "Zionism is the most stupendous fallacy in Jewish history." He added, "I speak as a Jew!"

Judaism is usually described as "the religion of the Jews", by implication *all* Jews. In fact by no means all Jews subscribe to Judaism. It is the Jewish religion. And Zionism, what, actually, is it?

Zion, *tsiyon* in ancient Hebrew, was the name of one of the hills around Jerusalem in the time of biblical Israel. The life span of that Israel, the united Jewish kingdom of David and then Solomon, was not more than 70 years. In 1897, nearly 2,500 years after the end of institutional Jewish rule in Palestine and the dispersal of the Jews, Zionism came into existence as a political movement for the *physical return* of Jews to the land of biblical Israel. Zionism can therefore be defined as Jewish nationalism as the creating and sustaining force of modern Israel.

- In the paragraph above I emphasised physical return because all Jews everywhere who subscribe to Judaism could regard themselves as being *spiritual* Zionists, meaning that from the mainly Gentile lands of which they are citizens by choice, they look upon Jerusalem as the centre of their religion and spiritual capital. It would therefore be possible to argue that what could be called spiritual Zionism – *spiritual return* – is a part of the essence of Judaism, which Jewish nationalism as the creating and sustaining force of modern Israel (or what could be called political Zionism) most definitely is not. In other than the spiritual sense diaspora Jews, who have chosen not to live in Israel and by definition are not Jewish nationalists, are not Zionists.

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At its birth in 1897 Zionism was a Jewish *philosophy of doom*. How so? Its founding fathers were driven by the belief that the Gentiles among whom most Jews lived in Europe and North America could never be trusted, and that it was only in a state of their own that Jews would be guaranteed security and freedom from persecution.

Before Zionism there was a Jewish *philosophy of hope*. It was given concrete expression by the coming into being of the Haskala (Enlightenment) movement of the 18th century. The Haskala solution to the problem of anti-Semitism – the persecution of Jews in their Eastern European (mainly Russian) homeland - was emigration and assimilation. This, the Haskala movement reasoned, was most likely to be the best form of protection for Jews. The giant of anti-Semitism would never die, but in the West he might well be encouraged to remain asleep if Jews contributed to Western societies and demonstrated their loyalty to the states of which they became citizens. In other words, if Jews made the effort, they would in time be accepted and permitted to lead fulfilling and secure lives in the Western nations of which they became citizens.

It is a matter of historical fact that prior to Hitler's unleashing of the demons of anti-Semitism, most informed and thoughtful Jews everywhere were anti-Zionists, meaning that, in addition to their preference for the philosophy of hope, they were opposed to Zionism and its colonial enterprise. And their opposition was rooted in three fears.

One was that the creation of a state for Jews would require the doing of an injustice to another people – the Arabs of Palestine – and would compromise the moral integrity of Judaism. Another was that the creation of a state for Jews in Palestine against the wishes of the entire Arab and wider Moslem world would lead to great and possibly unending conflict. The other and main fear was primordial in origin. It was that *the creation of a state for Jews would provoke anti-Semitism in the mainly Gentile lands of which the Jews were citizens*. How so?

Between 1881 and 1915 about three million Jews left their Russian homeland (the biggest mass migration in history) in search of a more secure and better life in Western Europe and America. They were taking the Haskala route to salvation. Experience taught them that anti-Semitism was never far below the surface in all the Gentile nations of which they became citizens. That being so, and if a state for Jews was created, there was a danger that the Gentiles of the host nations among whom Jews lived would say something like: "We didn't want you Jews here. Now you have a state of your own there's no reason for you to be here. Go to your state." The most publicly prominent "Jewish Englishman" to put this fear into words (in a Secret memorandum to the British Cabinet) was Edwin Samuel Montagu, Secretary of State for India and the only Jew in Lloyd-George's wartime coalition government. Montagu described Zionism as a "mischievous political creed."

Also a matter of fact, and as noted by Yehoshafat Harkabi in his seminal book *Israel's Fateful Hour*, is that Zionism - the physical return of Jews to the land of biblical Israel by the efforts of men - was "proscribed" by Judaism. According to one of three Talmudic oaths God required after the Jewish state of the ancient Hebrews had ceased to exist, *there was to be no mass movement of the Jews from the lands of the diaspora to the land of Israel*. As Harkabi put it, "the task of achieving statehood – the Redemption – was assigned to divine providence and to the Messiah." This law of Judaism was promulgated to prevent Jews taking an initiative of the kind Zionism eventually took.

More than 30 years before Hitler came to power, Zionism's founding fathers decided that waiting for the Messiah to come was not an option. In effect Zionism was to be the Messiah.

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It can be said without fear of contradiction that Zionism would not have commanded sufficient Jewish support to achieve its aims but for the obscenity of the Nazi holocaust. It gave Zionism, for a while, the appearance of being right. But it did much more than that. The slaughter of six million Jews also closed down mainstream debate about the wisdom or folly of Zionism's enterprise throughout the whole of the Judeo-Christian world.

Because the Nazi holocaust was a Gentile crime, there was nothing any decent Gentile in publishing, the media in general and politics feared more than being accused of anti-Semitism. Zionism played on this fear by asserting that criticism of its child, Israel (a unilaterally declared state for some Jews but claiming to be the state of all Jews), was by definition a manifestation of anti-Semitism - i.e. an attack on all Jews everywhere. This was, as it still is, propaganda nonsense, but it worked wonderfully well for Zionism. I mean that out of fear of being falsely accused of anti-Semitism, mainstream publishers, most media people and virtually all in public life shied away from truth-telling about Zionism and its contribution to catastrophe in-the-making.

It was to force the re-opening of informed and honest debate closed down by the Nazi holocaust that I spent more than five years of my life researching and writing *Zionism: The Real Enemy of the Jews*.

The underlying thesis of the book is that because of the settlement facts American support for Zionism right or wrong has allowed to be created on the ground, in defiance of UN resolutions and international law, it's now *too late* for any U.S. administration to call and hold nuclear-armed Israel to account; *and that only the Jews of the diaspora have the influence to do it* – cause Israel to change its ways and make peace on terms which almost all Palestinians and Arabs everywhere can accept. But...

I also say that it's unreasonable and unrealistic to expect the Jews of the diaspora to play their necessary part in bringing Israel to heel and averting a Clash of Civilisations (Judeo-Christian v Islamic), *unless and until they receive the maximum possible in the way of reassurance about their security in the lands of the mainly Gentile world of which they are citizens*. What, really, do I mean?

Though I am myself a *goy* (non-Jew), I know that deep down almost every diaspora Jew lives with the unspeakable fear of Holocaust II (shorthand for another great turning against Jews) and thus the perceived need, if only in the sub-consciousness, for Israel as an insurance policy - the refuge of last resort. And this is one of three related reasons why only a very few diaspora Jews are prepared even to criticise Israel's behaviour, let alone engage in activities to cause Israel to be serious about peace based on an acceptable minimum of justice for the Palestinians. Though they will never say so in public, the vast majority of diaspora Jews, because of the past, are too frightened to do or even say anything which they think would be interpreted as antipathy to Israel and could have the effect of undermining the wellbeing of Israel as the refuge of last resort for all Jews. The second reason for the silence of so many diaspora Jews on the matter of Israel's behaviour is the fear that if they speak out and appear to be divided, they will encourage anti-Semitism. The third reason is fear of the reactions of fellow Jews.

So what if anything can be done to encourage diaspora Jews to play their necessary part in calling and holding Israel to account?

In my Epilogue, *The Jews as the Light Unto Nations*, I call for a New Covenant, not between the Jews and their God but between the Jews and the Gentiles.

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The New Covenant I propose is a deal between the two parties – the Gentiles who are the majority in the many lands of which most diaspora Jews are citizens and those Jewish citizens (Jewish Englishmen, Jewish Frenchmen, Jewish Germans, Jewish Americans and so on). And the essence of the deal is this. In return for diaspora Jews using their influence to cause Israel to be serious about peace on terms the overwhelming majority of Palestinians and all Arabs can accept, and actually accepted a long time ago, the Gentiles commit to destroying the monster of anti-Semitism. (I write that it will not be enough for us Gentiles to put the re-awakened sleeping giant back to sleep, and that we must drive a stake into the monster's heart, to kill it for all time).

What, actually, is required of diaspora Jews in terms of their New Covenant obligations?

They must begin by recognising modern Israel for what it is – a Zionist state, not a Jewish state. If it was a Jewish state – i.e. one governed in accordance with the moral principles of Judaism - Israel could not have behaved in the way it has since its unilateral declaration of independence in 1948; behaviour which can be described, objectively, as (at times) brutal and cruel, driven by self-righteousness of a most extraordinary kind, with contempt for UN resolutions, without regard for international law and which, all up, makes a mockery of the moral principles of Judaism.

Thereafter the main New Covenant obligation for diaspora Jews would be to make common cause with the forces of reason in Israel for the purpose of changing it from a Zionist state into a Jewish state.

- Some Jewish anti-Zionists on the left of the political spectrum are, as they always have been, opposed to the idea of a Jewish state in any form. I take issue with them on the pragmatic grounds that a state for some Jews exists, and that the real post-Zionism question to be addressed is what sort of Jewish state – alongside a Palestinian state – it should be. In my view the Israel of a genuine two-state solution has to be one which guarantees equal rights for all of its non-Jewish citizens and which scraps the Law of Return that allows Jews from anywhere to become Israeli citizens.

Why should diaspora Jews commit themselves to such action?

Part of one answer is to be found in *Israel's Fateful Hour*. When the English edition of it was published in 1988, Harkabi was properly described as having been "Israel's foremost authority on the Arab-Israeli conflict." (He was Israel's longest serving Director of Military Intelligence). He wrote:

Israel is the criterion according to which all Jews will tend to be judged. Israel as a Jewish state is an example of the Jewish character, which finds free and concentrated expression within it. Anti-Semitism has deep and historical roots. Nevertheless, any flaw in Israeli conduct, which is initially cited as anti-Israelism, is likely to be transformed into an empirical proof of the validity of anti-Semitism.... *It would be a tragic irony if the Jewish state, which was intended to solve the problem of anti-Semitism, was to become a factor in the rise of anti-Semitism.* Israelis must be aware that the price of their misconduct is paid not only by them *but also Jews throughout the world.* In the struggle against anti-Semitism, the front line begins in Israel. (Emphasis added).

The other part of one answer, confirmed by events since Harkabi wrote those words, is that the Zionist state's behaviour – *its arrogance of power - has become a factor in the rise of anti-Semitism: in my view the prime factor.*

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The other answer is that provided by a very remarkable and most courageous Jewish lady, Cecile Surasky, director of Jewish Voices for Peace. An article by her for *The Jordan Times* under the headline SPEAKING OUT ABOUT ISRAEL TO SAVE THE JEWISH SOUL included the following.

Remaining silent is no longer an option. We can no longer let our trauma, our deep fear of anti-Jewish hatred implanted in us through generations of persecution, make us quiet at the expense of truth. Our continued silence perpetuates the fiction that all Jews are of one mind when it comes to Israel – that we think it can do no wrong; that we believe the Israeli government is innocent of war crimes... Our silence puts us in more danger, not less. Through it we give our consent not only to the obliteration of the Palestinian people, but to the end of our own people. If not our bodies, then certainly our spirit... The truth is that if we don't "come out" about Israel now – speaking openly and clearly about our heartache and outrage, about the injustice we see, the unspeakable wrongness of Israel's pursuit of land over peace – then in the future there will not be a Jewish tradition left to defend... And Jews like me have to ask: If we can no longer stand up for moral courage and call injustice when we see it, regardless of who commits it, then what do we stand for?

In the Epilogue of my forthcoming book I offer the following concluding observation of my own.

If the Jews of the diaspora can summon up the will and the courage to make common cause with the forces of reason in Israel before it is too late for us all, a very great prize awaits them. *By demonstrating that right can triumph over might, and that there is a place for morality in politics, they would become the light unto nations.* It is a prize available to no other people on earth because of the uniqueness of the suffering of the Jews. Perhaps that is the real point of the idea of the Jews as Chosen People... *Chosen to endure unique suffering and, having endured it, to show the rest of us that creating a better and more just world is not a mission impossible.*

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