



WOMEN FOR PALESTINE  
MELBOURNE - AUSTRALIA

## What is Zionism?

by Mazin Qumsiyeh

(from his book “Sharing the Land of Canaan”, 2004 –  
Chapter 6: Zionism)

PROMISED LAND  
PROMISED LAND

*by Ahlam Shalhout*

*I was taken to a foreign land.  
A land believed to be full of promise.  
I was told it bore fruits with the sweetest of nectar.  
Its soil so rich with olive branches of peace.  
Where the streets were paved with golden orange groves.*

*The nectar though sweet to my tongue  
Brought tears to my bowels.  
The peace bearing olives were pressed  
To make oil of bullfights. Ole!*

---

Zionism is variously looked at as a salvation or as a catastrophic power. Yet all agree that Zionism was and is at the center of the conflict that now has raged for over 100 years in the Land of Canaan. No lasting solution can be approached without an honest examination of origin and consequences of this phenomenon that still shapes events, not only

locally in Palestine/Israel, but in the region and the world. The origin of Zionism is often described as initiated in the 19th century by European/Ashkenazi Jews. But this political movement had an earlier and more dramatic history, some of it distinctly un-Jewish origin. In dealing with the problems plaguing the Land of Canaan today, we must have a clear handle on Zionist history and the forces that challenged or promoted it.

## **Christian Zionism and Colonialism**

Napoleon first attempted to construct a network of Jews loyal to the French Empire throughout Europe. More concrete planning and action from the British Empire quickly replaced this initial gesture from the French empire (ref 1). It should be noted that during this time very few Jews lived in Britain or France. With the loss of the American Colonies, British colonialism focused on India as “the Jewel of the Crown” and perhaps as importantly on the road to India (ref 2). In the words of a London Times’ correspondent in 1840 “the proposition to plant the Jewish people in the land of their fathers, under the protection of the five Powers, is no longer a mere matter of speculation, but a serious political consideration” (ref 3). This quote from the Quarterly Review of 1838 shows that British, non-Jewish Zionist plans were instituted primarily for the benefit of the British Empire:

The growing interest manifested for these regions, the larger investment of British capital, and the confluence of British travelers and strangers from all parts of the world, have recently induced the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to station there a representative of our Sovereign, in the person of a Vice-Consul. This gentleman set sail for Alexandria at the end of last September—his residence will be fixed at Jerusalem, but his jurisdiction will extend to the whole country within the ancient limits of the Holy Land; he is thus accredited, as it were, to the former kingdom of David and the Twelve Tribes. The soil and climate of Palestine are singularly adapted to the growth of produce required for the exigencies of Great Britain; the finest cotton may be obtained in almost unlimited abundance; silk and madder are the staple of the country, and oil-olive is now, as it ever was, the very fatness of the land. Capital and skill are alone required: the presence of a British officer, and the increased security of property which his presence will confer, may invite them [the Jews](#) from these islands to the cultivation of Palestine; and the Jews, who will betake themselves to agriculture in no other land, having found, in the English Consul, a mediator between their people and the Pasha, will probably return in yet greater numbers, and become once more the husbandmen of Judæa and Galilee ... Napoleon knew well the value of an Hebrew alliance; and endeavoured to reproduce, in the capital of France, the spectacle of the ancient Sanhedrim, which, basking in the might of imperial favour, might give laws to the whole body of the Jews throughout the habitable world, and aid him, no doubt, in his audacious plans against Poland and the East That which Napoleon designed in his violence and ambition, thinking ‘to destroy nations not a few,’ we may wisely and legitimately undertake for the maintenance of our Empire (ref 4)

British diplomacy with the Ottoman Sultan starting in the 1830s included explicit requests to encourage and facilitate the settlements of Jews in Palestine. Many Jews were rightly wary of these schemes by European gentiles. Zionism failed to convince large segments of European Jews in the 19th century. The few Jews who were interested in living in Palestine arrived for various reasons: religious individuals relocating near Safed and other centers of religious Judaism in Palestine, some enticed by financed relocation, and some idealistic socialist Zionists who felt assimilation failed and enlightenment was best developed alone until the rest of the world catches up. These early converts to Zionism were vastly outnumbered by non-Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews. Many were even fearful that Zionism was merely another scheme by gentiles to remove them from their countries. Yet, Zionism as a colonial venture could not really succeed without Jews taking it up as a cause in much larger numbers. The first attempt was the formation early in 1809 of a new organization by the name of The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. Its aims included educating Jews on their own history and promote Eastern European immigration to Palestine as a fulfillment of Christian theology. These early attempts were the true antecedents of the Christian Zionists movement, which remains influential both in Britain and the United States to this day. Colonel Charles Henry Churchill, the British Consul in Syria, stated in 1841 that success of Zionism depended on, "Firstly that the Jews themselves will take up the matter, universally and unanimously. Secondly that the European powers will aid them in their views" (ref 5).

To achieve such goals, the British Empire employed the services of one Lieutenant Colonel George Gawler (1796-1869). Gawler was a colonization expert who successfully founded a penal colony in Australia and after whom a major city and state in Australia are named. In 1845, Gawler published his vision for how this might be accomplished. His treaty was titled: "Tranquilization of Syria and the East: Observations and Practical Suggestions, in Furtherance of the Establishment of Jewish Colonies in Palestine, the Most Sober and Sensible Remedy for the Miseries of Asiatic Turkey" (ref 6). In 1852, the Association for Promoting Jewish Settlement in Palestine was founded by Gawler and other British officials and later evolved it into the Palestine Fund (ref 7). Winston Churchill wrote in 1920 immediately following his assertion that Bolshevism is led and initiated mostly by Jews:

But if, as may well happen, there should be created in our life time by the banks of the Jordan a Jewish State under the protection of the British Crown, which might comprise three or four millions of Jews, an event would have occurred in the history of the world which would, from every point of view be beneficial, and would be especially in harmony with the truest interests of the British Empire (ref 8)

## **Zionism Taking Root among European Jewish Communities**

There is much to be learned about the transition in the 19th century from a movement sponsored and promoted by non-Jews to a Jewish led movement that then took strong initiative to change the course of history. The number of Jews who looked with favor to Zionism fluctuated depending on circumstances of their residence and the political and economic situation. 19th century nationalism gave Zionism a more race and nationalistic tone. Yet, Jewish advocates of Zionism remained in the minority throughout the 19th century and early in the 20th century. And the movement clearly continued to depend on imperial interests for its very survival and this need for better cooperation with British colonial interests grew. The movement's strength in the Ashkenazi communities was largely related to levels of anti-Ashkenazi feelings. Thus, Moses Hess (1812-1875) argued that there is no cure for the "illness" of this Jewish hatred other than to establish their own state in Palestine. A man with similar views, Judah Leib (Leon) Pinsker (1821-1891), became a co-founder (with Moses Lilienblum) of Hibbat Zion, an early Zionist movement. In 1882, he wrote anonymously a pamphlet titled: "Auto-Emancipation: An appeal to his people by a Russian Jew." In it he argued that anti-Ashkenazim (known in Europe as anti-Semitism) was a pathological phenomenon beyond the reach of any future triumphs of "humanity and enlightenment." Here are relevant quotes of why he believed in Zionism:

This is the kernel of the problem, as we see it: the Jews comprise a distinctive element among the nations under which they dwell, and as such can neither assimilate nor be readily digested by any nation. Hence the solution lies in finding a means of so readjusting this exclusive element to the family of nations, that the basis of the Jewish question will be permanently removed.

Having analyzed Judeophobia as a hereditary form of demonopathy, peculiar to the human race, and having represented Anti-Semitism as proceeding from an inherited aberration of the human mind, we must draw the important conclusion that we must give up contending against these hostile impulses as we must against every other inherited predisposition.

Our future will remain insecure and precarious unless a radical change in our position is made. This change cannot be brought about by the civil emancipation of the Jews in this or that state, but only by the auto-emancipation of the Jewish people as a nation, the foundation of a colonial community belonging to the Jews, which is some day to become our inalienable home, our country.

The international Jewish question must have a national solution. Of course, our national regeneration can only proceed slowly. We must take the first step. Our descendants must follow us at a measured and not over-precipitant speed (ref 9)

Pinsker became a leader of the movement and with funds from the wealthy British philanthropist, Baron Edmond de Rothschild developed the first Jewish agricultural settlements in Palestine at Rishon LeZiyyon south of Tel Aviv, and Zikhron Yaaqov, south of Haifa. By 1891, about 10,000 Jews had relocated to these settlements in Palestine (then part of the Ottoman Empire). Yet, in the period of Jewish emigration from Europe 1882-1903, a tiny fraction left for Palestine, most went to North and South America.

Nathan Birnbaum (alias Mathias Ascher) coined the term "Zionism" based on the ideas of Hess and Pinsker as a political movement for Jewish "self-emancipation" and nationalism. In 1893, he published a brochure entitled "Die Nationale Wiedergeburt der Juedischen Volkes in seinem Lande als Mittel zur Loesung der Judenfrage" ("The National Rebirth of the Jewish People in Its Homeland as a Means of Solving the Jewish Problem"). Later, Theodore Herzl's work formed further ideological underpinnings for the movement. Similar to his intellectual fathers, he also "recognized that anti-Semitism would be harnessed to his own -Zionist- purposes" (ref 10). Thus, proponents of Zionism, non-Jews and Jews alike, built their popularity on Jewish fears of anti-Jewish sentiments and actions. Zionism, they were told is the best solution to the "Jewish problem".

## **Zionism after 1948**

While Zionism as a political program was thus supposed to "emancipate the Jewish people" by having their own state, once the state was established and native people largely removed, new roles and arguments were to be resented to sustain and reinvent Zionism. The "protection" of the "Jewish people" from the "outside" remained essential philosophical and political underpinning to Zionism. But a bit more was needed. The Jerusalem Program for Zionism adopted in 1951 and revised by the World Zionist Congress in 1968 adopted this as a definition of the goals of Zionism:

The aims of Zionism are:

- The Unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in Jewish life;
- The ingathering of the Jewish people in the historic homeland, Eretz Israel, through aliyah from all countries;
- The strengthening of the State of Israel, which is based on the prophetic vision of justice and peace;
- The preservation of the identity of the Jewish people through the fostering of Jewish, Hebrew and Zionist education and of Jewish spiritual and cultural values;
- The protection of Jewish rights everywhere.

In June 1968, the Zionist Congress, held in Jerusalem, redefined the aims of Zionism in the "Jerusalem Program" rather broadly:

1. Unity of the Jewish People and the Centrality of Israel in Jewish life;
2. The ingathering of the Jewish people in its historic homeland Eretz Yisrael through Aliyah from all countries.
3. The strengthening of the State of Israel, which is based on the prophetic vision of justice and peace;
4. The preservation of the identity of the Jewish people through the fostering of Jewish, Zionist and Hebrew education and of Jewish spiritual and cultural values;
5. The protection of Jewish rights everywhere.

Note the wide mandate dictated by key words of power, strength, and protection against any perceived threat to Jews. One need only substitute Jew/Jewish with Christian or "White" to see the inherent unfairness and racism in both the program of 1951 and 1968. After all, what is this idea of ingathering of Jewish "people" mean? What does it mean when many Jews have converted to Christianity and many to Islam? What does it mean for the majority of Jews who are converts over the ages from Christianity, Paganism etc.? How is he "ingathering" and taking land from natives via the "strengthening" of the State of Israel in the name of the "Unity of the Jewish people" help in the "protection of Jewish rights everywhere"?

The government of Israel still mindlessly talks about Zionism as a solution to "anti-Semitic" (anti-Jewish) hatred instead of working to advance equality for Jews and non-Jews everywhere:

The Zionist movement aimed to solve the 'Jewish problem,' the problem of a perennial minority, a people subjected to repeated pogroms and persecution, a homeless community whose alienism was underscored by discrimination wherever Jews settled. Zionism aspired to deal with this situation by affecting a return to the historical homeland of the Jews - Land of Israel.... The Zionist national solution was the establishment of a Jewish national state with a Jewish majority in the historical homeland, thus realizing the Jewish people's right to self-determination (ref 11).

Note the sweeping generalizations and sense of perpetual victimization that reflects the theology of Hess, Pinsker, and Herzl that discrimination against Jews is pathological and has no cure other than a powerful state with a majority Jewish population. Amnon Rubinstein wrote in Haaretz on March 13, 2002:

... the new secular Jewish nationalism, which was the foundation on which Israel was built, is a nationalism of no choice. It is true that on the basis of the lack of choice were piled on additional traditional national elements: the

memory of the biblical past, the impact of the revival of Hebrew, the concept of a return to Zion, and the characteristic accoutrements of other national movements. But the major strength of Zionism stemmed from its sense that there was no other choice, from this inability to be like everyone else. Without the locked gate, the Zionist gate would not have opened very wide and the longing for Zion would have stayed in the prayer book (ref 12)

So do Jews really have no choice other than Zionism to prosper in this world? Did Zionism help or hinder the case for tolerance in the world (Jews towards non-Jews and vice versa)? Jews grappled with such questions for decades and arrived at different conclusions with anti-Zionist Jews arriving at completely opposite conclusions to those reached by Herzl, Pinskery, Hess and their followers. As history would prove, the critics were right. Today, after over 150 years of Zionism, there is only one place where Jews are threatened with annihilation and that is this self-declared "Jewish state". In Israel, one finds a government that is preparing public parks as sites for possible mass graves in case of biological or chemical attacks. In Israel, one finds unrealistic attempts at assuring the public that they can survive such attacks. Why are Jews safer in America or France than in Israel? Are anti-Jewish sentiments around the world stoked or diminished by the Zionist program and its effect on the native Palestinians?

The answers to these questions make many Jews now rethink the deceptions of the militaristic Zionist program. Political Zionism was far more catastrophic for the indigenous Palestinians (Christians and Muslims alike). In public articles and books, Herzl was careful in describing what Zionism meant in practice and how it was to be implemented in an already inhabited Palestine. But, as we discussed in Chapter 4 on refugees, Herzl's diaries and diaries of other early Zionists are now available and shed light about the colonial nature of Zionism and its true intentions.

Herzl, understood the need for a concrete program to realize his the goals he articulated. For this a new group of people participated in the practical application of Zionism. This included people like Nachman Syrkin and Ber Borochov who developed the labor Zionism as a dominant force in Zionist quarters. This brand of practical Zionism exists in a form represented by the labor party and some other minor parties in Israel today. Labor Zionists criticized the Rothschild-supported settlements on purely capitalist terms (e.g. hiring Arab labor). They called for Jewish settlement based on socialist modes of organization: the accumulation of capital managed by a central Jewish organization and employment of Jewish laborers only. A key pillar of this was the need for a "Jewish power" (physical, material) which can then translate into state and political power without dilution by non-Jews.

Labor Zionists knew that power is needed, but they also knew that to achieve their goals required skillful political maneuvering around existing powers in the region of their settlement. For many ardent Zionists, this somehow smacked of compromise that they were not willing to accept. This set the stage for the evolution of other methods to achieve the goals of Zionism. Some argued that strong economic and military power is all that mattered to realization of the Zionist dreams. Jabotinsky was the founder of this ideology of "revisionist Zionism" that Begin, Netanyahu, Sharon and other Israeli leaders identify as their ideological underpinning (now represented by the Likud party and other Right Wing parties in Israel). A reading from one of Jabotinsky's 1923 writings clearly demonstrates his mode of thinking:

Every reader has some idea of the early history of other countries which have been settled. I suggest that he recall all known instances. If he should attempt to seek but one instance of a country settled with the consent of those born there he will not succeed. The inhabitants (no matter whether they are civilized or savages) have always put up a stubborn fight. Furthermore, how the settler acted had no effect whatsoever. The Spaniards who conquered Mexico and Peru, or our own ancestors in the days of Joshua ben Nun behaved, one might say, like plunderers.

... Compromisers in our midst attempt to convince us that the Arabs are some kind of fools who can be tricked by a softened formulation of our goals, or a tribe of money grubbers who will abandon their birth right to Palestine for cultural and economic gains. I flatly reject this assessment of the Palestinian Arabs. Culturally they are 500 years behind us, spiritually they do not have our endurance or our strength of will, but this exhausts all of the internal differences. We can talk as much as we want about our good intentions; but they understand as well as we what is not good for them. They look upon Palestine with the same instinctive love and true fervor that any Aztec looked upon his Mexico or any Sioux looked upon his prairie.

... It is of no importance whether we quote Herzl or Herbert Samuel to justify our activities. Colonization itself has its own explanation, integral and inescapable, and understood by every Arab and every Jew with his wits about him. Colonization can have only one goal. For the Palestinian Arabs this goal is inadmissible. This is in the nature of things. To change that nature is impossible.

... Zionist colonization, even the most restricted, must either be terminated or carried out in defiance of the will of the native population. This colonization can, therefore, continue and develop only under the protection of a force independent of the local population – an iron wall which the native population cannot break through. This is, in toto, our policy towards the Arabs. To formulate it any other way would only be hypocrisy. Not only must this be so, it is so whether we admit it or not. What does the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate mean for us? It is the fact that a disinterested power committed itself to create such security conditions that the local population would be deterred from interfering with our efforts.



All of us, without exception, are constantly demanding that this power strictly fulfill its obligations. In this sense, there are no meaningful differences between our "militarists" and our "vegetarians". One prefers an iron wall of Jewish bayonets, the other proposes an iron wall of British bayonets, the third proposes an agreement with Baghdad, and appears to be satisfied with Baghdad's bayonets – a strange and somewhat risky taste – but we all applaud, day and night, the iron wall. We would destroy our cause if we proclaimed the necessity of an agreement, and fill the minds of the Mandatory with the belief that we do not need an iron wall, but rather endless talks. Such a proclamation can only harm us. Therefore it is our sacred duty to expose such talk and prove that it is a snare and a delusion. (ref 13)

This is a must reading for those who really want to understand the nature of Zionist designs un-encumbered with nice words or skillful maneuvering. The "wall" refers to the wall of bayonets, British and/or Zionist, necessarily required to establish a colonial Jewish State. The author persuasively argued why Arabs would not accept a Jewish State in Palestine. His vision, as articulated in this 1923 article, is amazingly prophetic in what was to transpire in Palestine over the next 80 years.

### **Is Zionism the Other Side of the Coin of Anti-Semitism?**

Zionism in essence was a project that accommodated slightly varied modes of operations, such as using Arab labor or not, working with existing political systems to achieve its goals, or using only military means. The essence of it was and still is the creation and maintenance of a Jewish state with a clear and unambiguous Jewish majority (as long as this Jewish majority supported Zionism). In a land already occupied by another people, its tactics were viewed as a traumatic, but necessary, loss. The main device towards the realization of this dream was "anti-Semitism". This form of racism was well intertwined, and is also explained by deep psychological phenomena.

The term anti-Semite was coined by anti-Jewish bigot Wilhelm Marr in 1879. According to Yahoo encyclopedia, Marr's 1862 pamphlet titled *Der Judenspiegel* ("Jews Mirror") was followed by the influential "The Victory of Judaism over Germandom, Considered from a Non-Religious point of View". Marr apparently did not want to use Jew as it connotes a religion and wanted a term that is referring to ethnicity. He was likely never introduced to the word Ashkenazi and he assumed Ashkenazi/European Jews to be "Semitic." Marr thus introduced in 1879 the word "anti-Semite" into the political vocabulary by founding the League of anti-Semites, which organized lectures and published a short-lived monthly. The "league" failed as an organization, but it was historically important for it was the first effort of creating a popular political movement based on hatred Ashkenazim. As pointed out in chapter 2, Semites refer to all people who speak Semitic languages (Arabic Hebrew, Aramaic). Ashkenazi Jews would technically not be

Semitic since they spoke Yiddish. The fact that this term developed by a racist was adopted by many Jews and Zionists is astonishing yet fits well within the context of development of Zionist thoughts as discussed above (i.e. a solution to the "Jewish problem" being relocation to a "Jewish state").

That Zionism and Judeophobia are intimately connected is evidenced by writings of early Zionists. Here is Vladimir Jabotinsky, the ideological forefather of the Israeli Likud Party, writing in 1904 about the "Jewish problem."

It is inconceivable from a physical point of view, that a Jew born to a family of pure Jewish blood over several generations can become adapted to the spiritual outlook of a German or a Frenchman. A Jew brought up among Germans may assume German customs, German words. He may be wholly imbued with that German fluid but the nucleus of his spiritual structure will always remain Jewish, because his blood, his body, his physical-racial type are Jewish ... And a man whose body is Jewish can not possibly mold within himself the spirit of a Frenchman ... It is impossible for a man to become assimilated with people whose blood is different than his own [14](#)

Perhaps this parallel quote from Adolf Hitler's book "Mein Kampf" needs to be pondered and analyzed:

Yet I could no longer very well doubt that the objects of my study were not Germans of a special religion, but a people in themselves; for once I had begun to concern myself with this question and to take cognizance of the Jews, Vienna appeared to me in a different light than before. Wherever I went, I began to see Jews, and the more I saw, the more sharply they became distinguished in my eyes from the rest of humanity. Particularly the Inner City and the districts north of the Danube Canal swarmed with a people, which even outwardly had lost all resemblance to Germans. And whatever doubts I may still have nourished were finally dispelled by the attitude of a portion of the Jews themselves. Among them there was a great movement, quite extensive in Vienna, which came out sharply in confirmation of the national character of the Jews: this was the ZIONISTS (emphasis in original) (ref 15)

Hitler's book is the most horrific denigration of Jews and other people and the most racist book one could even imagine. For him to state that whatever "lingering doubts" about his anti-Semitism were dispelled because Zionists agreed with him about the national character of Jews is amazing and has historically almost completely been ignored. It is an important notion because Zionists not only agreed with Hitler that Jews should go away from Europe but they actually worked towards that goal. Here is what The Zionist Federation of Germany wrote in a letter to the new Nazi regime:

Zionism believes that a rebirth of national life, such as is occurring in German life through adhesion to Christian and national values, must also take place in the Jewish national group (ref 16)

Both Zionists and Nazis believed that Jews couldn't be Germans. They both believed that Jews could not function normally in other societies as equal citizens. Zionists in fact were clearly putting a primary goal of colonial Jewish presence in a majority in Palestine ahead of any other issues even when this goal contradicted the welfare of Jews. This is why they collaborated with the Nazis and thwarted some efforts to rescue Jews.

The Zionists cooperated with the Nazis in the mid-thirties to facilitate Jewish immigration to Palestine. The details of this agreement were given by Edwin Black's book (ref 17). After commencement of attacks on Jews under German control, the British, in the hope of easing the pressure for increased immigration into Palestine, proposed that thousands of Jewish children be admitted directly into Britain. Ben-Gurion, the recognized leader of labor Zionism at the time was absolutely against the plan, telling a meeting of Labour Zionist leaders on 7 Dec. 1938:

If I knew that it would be possible to save all the children in Germany by bringing them over to England, and only half of them by transporting them to Eretz Yisrael, then I would opt for the second alternative. For we must weigh not only the life of these children, but also the history of the People of Israel (ref 18)

Rabbi Shonfeld quotes the Zionist leader Yitzhak Greenbaum, as stating after the war:

When they asked me, couldn't you give money out of the United Jewish Appeal funds for the rescue of Jews in Europe, I said, 'NO!' and I say again 'NO!' . . . one should resist this wave which pushes the Zionist activities to secondary importance(ref 19)

Most Jews in the 19th and early 20th century criticized Zionist methodologies and even the whole concept of Zionism. They saw this movement as a cynical use of religion to establish state power. Perhaps the most interesting were views of highly intelligent and humanistic Jews like Einstein and Freud who while openly not opposing Zionism, simply refused to take part in it. They reflected the majority Jewish opinion before the establishment of the state of Israel.

Sigmund Freud, the father of psychotherapy, was opposed to Zionism. When approached to sign a petition to condemn the Arab riots in Palestine and to support the settlement of Jews in Israel, he wrote politely to decline:

Dear Sir,

I cannot do as you wish. I am unable to overcome my aversion to burdening the public with my name, and even the present critical time does not seem to me to warrant it. Whoever wants to influence the masses must give them something rousing and inflammatory and my sober judgment of Zionism does not permit this. I certainly sympathize with its goals, am proud of our University in Jerusalem and am delighted with our settlement's prosperity. But, on the other hand, I do not think that Palestine could ever become a Jewish state, nor that the Christian and Islamic worlds would ever be prepared to have their holy places under Jewish care. It would have seemed more sensible to me to establish a Jewish homeland on a less historically-burdened land. But I know that such a rational viewpoint would never have gained the enthusiasm of the masses and the financial support of the wealthy. I concede with sorrow that the baseless fanaticism of our people is in part to be blamed for the awakening of Arab distrust. I can raise no sympathy at all for the misdirected piety which transforms a piece of a Herodian wall into a national relic, thereby offending the feelings of the natives.

Now judge for yourself whether I, with such a critical point of view, am the right person to come forward as the solace of a people deluded by unjustified hope. (ref 20)

Freud was referring to the clear methods of Zionists of the day to assert sovereignty on areas of Palestine and to regularly confront and show the natives that their interests were incompatible. Zionism was for a state of the Jews and not for a democratic state for a variety of people. As Freud pointed out it is born of a preference for a tribal affiliation that still haunts us to this day. Hillel Halkin wrote in the Jerusalem Post in 2002:

You would like me to look at it objectively. Objectively, I agree: we are only breeding more hatred and violence. You want me to imagine how I would feel if I were a Palestinian. I suppose that if I were, I might want to kill Israelis myself. But I am not objective and I am not a Palestinian. It's not that the lives of Palestinians don't matter to me. But Israeli lives matter more.

I know this doesn't sound terribly enlightened. And it certainly doesn't lead to any of the political solutions that we both know are necessary if this horror is going to end. But being objective would not make me more human. It would make me less.

I can try to be objective about Russians and Chechnyans, or about Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir, without drying up the milk of human kindness in me, just as you can try to be objective about us here, but that is only because I am not a Russian or a Chechnyan. If I were, and if I didn't put my own people first, I would simply be an emotional monster. Nothing good could come of that (ref 21)

Thus, Zionism's victims were not only the intended native displacement but it could be argued that humane Jewish values were also its victims. In his book "Ben Gurion's Scandals" Naeim Giladi, an Iraqi Jew and ex-Zionist, discusses Zionist tactics in trying to import Jews from Iraq to

Israel in the 1950s. He immigrated to the US and recently wrote an article in 'The Link', a publication of the Americans for Middle East Understanding about his book. In part he said that "about 125,000 Jews left Iraq for Israel in the late 1940s and into 1952, mostly because they had been lied to and put into a panic by what I came to learn were Zionist bombs [referring to the bombings done at Synagogues and other areas of Jewish public concentration). But my mother and father were among the 6,000 who did not go to Israel" (ref 22). Other books discuss Zionist discourse and its relationship to anti-Ashkenazim and Judeophobia. Some of these are cited in the recommended readings below.

### **A Post-Zionist Discourse**

This Zionist program tried but failed to make its ideology the ideology of "the Jewish people." Many even argued that Zionists tried to replace Judaism with Zionism or at least to make sure that Zionism is a dominant feature of mainstream Jewish thought. Hence, one understands the incessant need to label anti-Zionists or even non-Zionists as "anti-Semitic" or if they are Jewish as "self-hating Jews." In the first 80 years of Apartheid South Africa, the leaders of the White South Africans also labeled apartheid as a national movement for white safety and all opposition within blacks as anti-White racism. Jewish intellectuals and many others opposed Zionism simply because they knew it was not a workable construct for Jewish self-determination or freedom.

When Palestinians return to their lands and form a pluralistic society for all, will the descendants of those expelled Palestinians remember more the words and actions of Heztl, Ben Gurion, Barak, and Sharon or will they remember the words and actions of Martin Buber, Israel Shahak, Uri Avneri, or Norman Finkelstein? Will those memories teach us to be more tolerant of each other or will it instill in us the kind of self-righteous, know it all, "we were the perpetual victim" mentality that was so characteristic of many Zionists. Victims of the Holocaust took different lessons from it. Some, perhaps goaded or misled by simplistic and rather unrealistic notion of separation/apartheid, thought "never again" but meant never again to us Jews and thus we must separate ourselves from humanity. To make sure this does not happen, we will build a very strong state based on Jewish power. A logical place was Palestine, the ancient homeland of the Jews. Of course the only problem was that Palestine was already heavily inhabited and the native population was not simply going to consent to having sovereignty of their land transferred to an extra national entity. Other Holocaust survivors and their children like Norman Finkelstein, Israel Shahak and tens of thousands like them took the message that never again will we allow hatred or racism against anyone. Others also rejected the notion

of a new secular "Jewish state" based on theological arguments (this was true of essentially all Orthodox Jews until 1967 and still now common among the ultra-orthodox like the Naturei Karta).

I am confident that an exclusionary Palestinian movement analogous to Zionism will not gain widespread recognition nor would ever be allowed to get a foothold analogous to that of Zionism in Jewish masses. I know this because I saw it happen with natives in other parts of the world. In South Africa, the Blacks won their freedom but did not push the whites into the sea as was feared. Palestinians will not push Jews into the sea. The reverse of this actually did happen in 1948 where Palestinians were literally pushed into the sea at Jaffa and were loaded into boats to end-up in places like Gaza. It is also something that the world would never tolerate in the 21st century as witnessed in Bosnia.

Jewish voices against Zionism and against Israeli actions are gaining momentum but it is true that the dominant feature in at least the organized Jewish community is Zionist. However, one must realize that a majority of Jews in all surveys state that they are not Zionist and even today a majority of Jews live outside Israel. Further, the growth of the Jewish anti-Zionist and post-Zionist movements has been dramatic. What are some of the good things about these movements?

1) Jewish opponents to Zionism make it rather impossible for both Zionists and other racists to make generalizations about "the Jews." This is important in many ways but the most important is that generalizations can lead to racism and attacks on the whole community. I think it is an ironic twist that these Jews whom Zionists vilify as "self-hating" or as traitors to their religion actually do a lot of good for the religion and enhance protection for their co-religionists while Zionists who perpetuate brutalities and claim they represent all Jews increase anti-Jewish paranoia. The lesson to all, including Palestinians, is to never vilify those who stand up for justice/freedom for all.

2) Jewish opponents of Zionism take a moral stance on issues regardless of the victim or the perpetrator. They provide the highest of human ideals in rejecting tribalism and the philosophies of "us" and "them." They view each event on its own merits and are thus freed from the hypocrisy of ideological adherence. Zionists must continuously play a game of moral relativism and hypocritical support of human rights in some cases while opposing them on others (depending on whether the tribe is affected or not). This is not a healthy way to live and creates many sleepless nights among some Zionists I know. The lesson to all, including Palestinians is to never think or act tribally, think and act as a human being.

Those Jews who oppose Zionism are not doing what they do to provide us an example, nor are they doing it because they think they can change history. They do it for a very simple reason – because it is just. In fact, the more of us think like that, the less likelihood there is for wars, for tribal conflicts, for nationalism, and the more likelihood there is for peace and prosperity to all of us.

The questions asked by those skeptical of Zionist aspirations are still relevant today. Were Jews really able to survive only because of the creation of the Jewish State of Israel and the continuing dispossession of the native Palestinians? What price is a Jewish state to the natives? Does Zionism really solve the lingering feeling of being oppressed or discriminated against? Do Zionism and anti-Jewish feelings ("anti-Semitism") feed on each other to grow? In the US, Jews, Christians, Muslims and others are well adapted as members of a society that protects their rights. During the zenith of Arabic/Islamic civilization, Jews, Christians and Muslims similarly prospered together and built a great economic, architectural, intellectual, and cultural heritage. The best example of this is the pluralistic society developed in Al-Andalus (Spain). My grandfather frequently spoke of the amicable relationships he, as a Palestinian Christian, observed between all communities in Palestine well before the disasters imposed by the British-Zionist project unfolded. Jewish colleagues agree with my grandfather's statement, "It is not true what Zionism preached to us that we could not live together. It is a shame that instead of building a pluralistic country for all, some chose to build a country for one and dispossess the other."

The record shows that Zionism and anti-Jewish feelings (anti-Semitism) had a symbiotic relationship. Victims of Zionist ideology were not limited to the Palestinians (the native inhabitants) but extended to Jews and many others. Sephardic Jews who were forced to flee their homes and rather comfortable lives in Arab countries as Israel pushed to undermine their presence in those countries and as anti-Jewish feelings increased due to the repression of the Palestinians by self-declared Jewish representatives. Even today, actions of the State of Israel do increase and certainly do not decrease threats or danger to Jews around the world. So even strictly judging from its own stated goals of providing normality and safety to Jews, Zionism has been a failure. But perhaps these stated goals were not truly genuine and that Zionism, like so many other -isms, has been mainly about power and control. Declassified documents are shedding light on these things and raise very troubling questions.

These questions about relationship of Zionism to anti-Judaic feelings and Jewish reactions to it are all worth exploring. But the story with regard to the native Palestinian inhabitants is much simpler and much

less controversial. In practice to fulfill the dreams of Zionist leaders, ethnic cleansing was and continues to be practiced. After taking 78% of the land from its native people and expelling over three fourths of them, Zionism still was not satisfied and Israeli leaders are aggressively and violently insisting on partitioning the remaining 22% (apartheid) while insisting on no return of Palestinian refugees and on maintaining racist laws that discriminate against non-Jews. The idea is to keep the Jewish character of the state. These laws and beliefs are the topic of the next chapter.

### ***Notes to Chapter 6***

- 1.** Mohameden Ould-Mey, The non-Jewish Origin of Zionism, The Arab World Geographer, 5:34-52, 2002.
- 2.** Barbara W. Tuchman, Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour (New York: Ballantine Books, 1984).
- 3.** The Times, 17 August 1840, Restoration of the Jews, p. 5, col 6(f).
- 4.** Lord Lindsay, Letters on Egypt, Edom, and the Holy Land, , (London: Henry Colburn, 1838), pp. 188-190.
- 5.** L. J Epstein, Zion's Call: Christian Contributions to the Origins and Development of Israel. (New York: University Press of America, 1984).
- 6.** George Gawler 1845, "Tranquilization of Syria and the East: Observations and Practical Suggestions, in Furtherance of the Establishment of Jewish Colonies in Palestine, the Most Sober and Sensible Remedy for the Miseries of Asiatic Turkey" as quoted in Mohameden Ould-Mey, The non-Jewish Origin of Zionism', The Arab World Geographer, Vol. 5, pp. 34--52,( 2002).
- 7.** Epstein, Zion's Call.
- 8.** 'Zionism versus Bolshevism: A struggle for the Soul of the Jewish people' Illustrated Sunday Herald 8 February 1920, reprinted in Lenni Brenner, 51 Documents: Zionist Collaboration with the Nazis (New Jersey: Barricade, 2002), p. 27
- 9.** Translated from German by Dr. D. S. Blondheim, Federation of American Zionists, 1916, Essential Texts of Zionism; Jewish Virtual Library <http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/Zionism/pinsker.html>
- 10.** Benny Morris, Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001 (New York: Knopf, 2001), p. 21.
- 11.** Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website <http://www.israel.org/mfa/go.asp?MFAHoongo>
- 12.** Amnon Rubinstein, Haaretz, 13 March 2002.
- 13.** Vladimir Jabotinsky, "The Iron Wall: We and the Arabs" First published in Russian under the title "O Zheleznoi Stene" in Rasswyet," November 4, 1923. Translated by Lenni Brenner. It can be downloaded at <http://www.marxists.de/middleeast/ironwall/ironwall.htm>



14. Vladimir Jabotinsky, 'A Letter on Autonomy, 1904', reprinted in Brenner, 51 Documents, p. 10.
15. Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, Reissue edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), p. 56.
16. June 21, 1933 memo from The Zionist Federation of Germany, reprinted in Brenner, 51 Documents, p. 43.
17. Edwin Black, The Transfer Agreement: the Untold Story of the Secret Pact Between the Third Reich & Jewish Palestine (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1984).
18. Lenni Brenner, The Iron Wall: Zionist Revisionism from Jabotinsky to Shamir (Zed Books, 1984). cites as reference no. 23: Yoav Gelber, 'Zionist Policy and the Fate of European Jewry (1939-42)' Yad Vashem Studies, vol. XII, p. 199.
19. Rabbi Moshe Shonfeld, The Holocaust Victims Accuse, Neturei Karta, USA, New York, 1977.
20. Freud's Letter to Dr. Chaim Koffler Keren HaYassod, Vienna: 26 February 1930; posted at the Freud Institute in UK website: <http://www.freud.org.uk/arab-israeli.html>.
21. Hillel Halkin, 'Objectivity is morally overrated', Jerusalem Post, 14 November 2002. Also on the web at <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/A/JParticle/ShowFull&cid=1037248935749>
22. Naeim Giladi, Ben Gurion's Scandals (Flushing: Glilit Pub. Co., 1995).

### ***Recommended Readings***

Edwin Black, The Transfer Agreement: The Dramatic Story of the Pact Between the Third Reich and Jewish Palestine (New York : Carroll & Graf, 2001).

Marc H. Ellis, Israel and Palestine: Out of the Ashes, (London: Pluto Press, 2003).

Naeim Giladi, Ben Gurion's Scandals (Flushing: Glilit Pub. Co., 1995).

Lenni Brenner, The Iron Wall: Zionist Revisionism from Jabotinsky to Shamir (London: Zed Books, 1984).

Tom Segev with Haim Watzman (Translator) The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust, (New York: Owl Books, 2000).

---

***Mazin Qumsiyeh*** is author of "*Sharing the Land of Canaan: Human Rights and the Israeli/Palestinian Struggle*". He served on the faculties of Duke and Yale Universities.

### ***Web Link***

<http://qumsiyeh.org/chapter6>