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JEWISH CRITICISM OF ZIONISM

Edward C. Corrigan

Mr. Corrigan has a law degree from the University of Windsor and a Master's in political science from the University of Western Ontario. He advises the reader: "This article is not intended to be a comprehensive study of Jewish criticism of Zionism but only an introductory survey. The author owes a debt to many people in the Jewish community for assistance and would like to thank David Finkel and especially Harriet Karchmer for her help with the material on Orthodox Jews. The writer, of course, bears all responsibility for the material and any errors or omissions."

The Palestinian uprising or intifada and the Israeli campaign to suppress it have caused considerable anguish for many Jews around the world. A large number of Jews have even begun to reassess their support for Israel and critically analyze the ideology of Zionism which legitimates the Jewish state. One example of this phenomenon is a statement that appeared in The Nation on February 3, 1988. It was endorsed by 18 prominent American Jews.

The advertisement called upon American Jews to "dissociate from Israel." It expressed the concern that "the close identification in the public mind between Israel and Jews—an equation vigorously fostered by both the Zionist movement and the American Jewish lobby, which has come under its control—threatens to stigmatize Jews everywhere." The ad called for a two-state solution and for negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization.¹

¹"Time to Dissociate from Israel," The Nation, February 13, 1988, p. 19.

The statement also discussed past discrimination against the Jews and the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust adding:

How tragic that in our own time the very state established by Jews in the aftermath of this evil has become a place where racism, religious discrimination, militarism and injustice prevail; and that Israel itself has become a pariah state within the world community. Events taking place today are all too reminiscent of the pogroms from which our own forefathers fled two and three generations ago—but this time those in authority are Jews and the victims are Moslems and Christian Palestinians.

Those endorsing The Nation statement included Professor Yigal Arens, the son of Moshe Arens; Mark Branzosky, former Washington Associate, World Jewish Congress, who now serves as chairperson for the organization; Professor Noam Chomsky, Institute Professor MIT; Rabbi Susan Einbinder, Colgate University; Jane Hunter, publisher of Israeli Foreign Affairs; Jeremy Levin, former CNN Beirut Bureau Chief and former hostage in Lebanon; Professor Don Peretz, Department of
Political Science, SUNY; and Henry Schwarzchild, of the American Civil Liberties Union. The subsequent organization they formed, the Jewish Committee on the Middle East (JCOME), has, in the short time that it has existed, attracted well over a thousand signatures endorsing their statement. These include academics at 125 U.S. universities.²

JCOME has challenged pro-Israeli American Jewish leaders to conduct a joint poll to see what American Jews really think about Israel and the Palestinians. To back up their challenge JCOME cited evidence which suggests that there is a divergence of opinion among American Jews and the pronouncements of their "official" leadership. As one example of a difference in opinion JCOME pointed to a poll which showed that 29 percent of American Jews favor negotiations with the PLO.³ However, while this new organization is important, Jewish criticism of Israel's policies and Zionism is not new. They both have deep roots within the Jewish community.

It is clear that the ideology of Zionism has had a profound impact on Jews. Today most Western Jews support its objective of establishing and securing a Jewish state in the territory formerly known as Palestine, even though the majority do not follow its precepts and immigrate to Israel. Historically Zionism was the subject of intense debate.

Zionism has always meant different things to different people. It could be interpreted in a religious, political, national or racial light depending upon the circumstances. For some, Zionism was a solution for the age-old problem of anti-Semitism, while for others merely an excuse for getting rid of the Jews. As Hannah Arendt explained, "The Zionist Organization had developed a genius for not answering, or answering ambiguously, all questions of political consequence. Everyone was free to interpret Zionism as he pleased. . . ."⁴

Zionist leaders have put off indefinitely the attempt to resolve the resulting conflicts and even contradictions generated by different interpretations of Zionism. This explains why the "Jewish state" has no constitution and why many fundamental questions about the nature of Israel remain undefined. The avoidance of a battle over conflicting definitions of what is a Jewish state is one of the reasons why Israel has a vested interest in maintaining the state of war in the Middle East. This interest has been openly acknowledged by a former president of the World Jewish Congress, Nahum Goldmann:

On the day when peace comes, the leftist movement will undoubtedly be very strong in Israel, and it will be anti-Orthodox. A great cultural battle will then break out which, like Ben Gurion, I want to avoid at this moment: as long as war prevails, that kind of internal struggle would be terribly dangerous. But after the hostilities the first thing to do will be to separate religion and state. Today we confine ourselves to telling the leftists: "Don't make a fuss on this question, you will be obstructing our defense policy, which requires national unity" —and the leftists, being good patri-


ots, give way. But after the peace they will resume the debate.5

Prior to World War II the majority of Jews were non-Zionist, and a large number were openly hostile to Zionism. As Nahum Goldmann wrote, “When Zionism first appeared on the world scene most Jews opposed it and scoffed at it. Herzl was only supported by a small minority.” It was not until the full horror of the Holocaust was realized that the great bulk of the Jewish community came to support Zionism.

Jewish history is rich in its diversity of ideas and ethical dissent. Many of the Hebrew prophets were “solitary voices” who criticized their people for betraying the great principles of their faith. The prophet Amos, for example, advanced a new interpretation of the “Chosen People” thesis. He wrote: “From all the families of the earth I have chosen you alone; for that very reason I will punish you for all your iniquities.” Amos’ concept of “chosen” did not imply the assurance of victory or prosperity but rather that of “the burden of more severe punishment for ‘normal’ unrighteousness.”7

Amos was even more revolutionary in reinterpreting the meaning of the “Promised Land.” To quote Hans Kohn:

Through his mouth the Lord proclaimed that the children of Israel were unto Him no better than the children of the Ethiopians. True, God had brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt; but equally He brought the Philistines (then Israel’s hereditary enemies) from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir, guiding each one into its land.8

In Amos’ view all peoples were entitled to the land they occupied in a spirit of equality and sharing. No one people had special God-given rights.

One of the most critical moments in ancient Jewish history was when Jochanan ben Zakkai, the leading representative of Judaism in his day and the disciple of Hillel, “abandoned the cause of the Jewish state.” At the time, the city of Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans and heroically defended by the zealots. Zakkai escaped from the city by a ruse, and with the agreement of the Roman commander, established a Jewish academy at Jabne. Judaism survived while the Jewish state was destroyed.9

Yet what do our brethren do in Palestine? . . . They treat the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, deprive them of their rights, offend them without cause, and even boast of these deeds. . . .

In the more recent period, Ahad Ha-am (Hebrew for “One of the People” and the pen name for Asher Ginsberg), one of the greatest Jewish thinkers of this century, was also highly critical of Zionism.10 He drew attention to the fundamental and neglected ethical dilemma of Zionism, namely the presence of the Arabs. In his 1891 report, The Truth from Palestine, he pointed out that “there was little untilled soil in Palestine, except for stony hills and sand dunes.” Ahad Ha-am also warned the Jewish settlers against arousing the wrath of the large native Arab population:

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6Ibid., p. 77.
8Ibid.
9Ibid., p. 32.
Yet what do our brethren do in Palestine? Just the very opposite! Serfs they were in the lands of the diaspora and suddenly they find themselves in freedom, and this change has awakened in them an inclination to despotism. They treat the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, deprive them of their rights, offend them without cause, and even boast of these deeds; and nobody among us opposes this despicable and dangerous inclination.11

Ahad Ha’am wrote this statement when Zionist settlers formed only a tiny portion of the population of Palestine. He also gave the following warning: “We think... that the Arabs are all savages who live like animals and do not understand what is happening around. This is, however, a great error.”12

Ahad Ha’am worked tirelessly for an intellectual and spiritual revival of the Jewish people. His belief in Zion was of a spiritual and prophetic nature. In 1913 he attacked the Zionist labor movement’s racial boycott of Arab labor:

Apart from the political danger, I can’t put up with the idea that our brethren are morally capable of behaving in such a way to men of another people; and unwittingly the thought comes to my mind: if it is so now, what will be our relation to the others if in truth we shall achieve “at the end of time” power in Eretz Israel? If this be the Messiah, I do not wish to see his coming.13

Israel Zangwill, one of Herzl’s earliest and strongest supporters, eventually turned against the idea of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. Ironically it was Zangwill who coined the phrase “a land without a people for a people without a land.” It was this phrase that became the potent rallying call for Zionist settlement in Palestine.14

It was not until 1904 that Zangwill realized that there was a fundamental problem with the Zionist program. In a speech given in New York in that year he explained:

There is... a difficulty from which the Zionist dares not avert his eyes, though he rarely likes to face it. Palestine proper has already its inhabitants. The pashalik of Jerusalem is already twice as thickly populated as the United States, having 52 souls to every square mile, and not 25 percent of them Jews; so we must be prepared either to drive out by the sword the tribes in possession as our forefathers did, or to grapple with the problem of a large alien population, mostly Mohammedan... This is an infinitely graver difficulty than the stock anti-Zionist taunt that nobody would go to Palestine if we got it.15

Zangwill and many other leading Zionists split from the movement in 1905 when the Zionist Organization turned down the British offer to settle Jews in Uganda. Incidentally, this proposal was supported by Herzl. The dissidents set up the Jewish Territorial Organization to pursue alternative settlement proposals. Zangwill was elected leader of the new body. The organization was, however, dissolved in 1925.16

Sir Edwin Montagu, the only Jewish member of Lloyd George’s cabinet when Great Britain first threw its weight behind Zionism in 1917, was also adamantly opposed to the creation of a Jewish state. He attacked the Balfour Declaration and Zion-

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11Ahad Ha’am, The Truth from Palestine (1891), quoted in ibid., p. 33.
12Ibid.
13Ibid., p. 34.
ism because he believed they were anti-Semitic. Montagu based his argument on the fact that both Zionism and anti-Semitism were based on the premise that Jews and non-Jews could not co-exist. He was also afraid that a Jewish state would undermine the security of Jews in other countries. Montagu’s opposition to Zionism was supported by the leading representative bodies of Anglo-Jewry, the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association, and in particular, by Claude Montefiore, David Alexander and Lucien Wolf.

RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION TO ZIONISM

Much of the fiercest opposition to Zionism came from the Jewish religious community which attacked its secular nationalism. Akiva Orr, who characterizes himself as a Jewish refugee from Israel, describes this conflict between religion and secularism as follows:

The State of Israel is a secular state: its law, its legislative assembly (the Knesset), and the majority of its population are non-religious. This is hardly surprising as Israel came into existence due to the efforts of a secular political movement motivated by non-religious nationalism, namely political Zionism. In its early days Zionism came into fierce conflict with religious Jewry. The Zionists rejected religious submission; the religious saw the atheist attempt to create a secular Jewish state as blasphemy.

A nonreligious Jewish identity is antithetical to a religious definition of Jewishness. This fact presents an irreconcilable contradiction between the religious and secular streams in the Jewish community. Theodore Herzl, David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir and many other leading Zionists were non-believers who actively sought to reformulate the basis for Jewish existence on race and territorial nationalism. This process would thereby “normalize” the existence of the Jewish people. The anti-religious component of political Zionism explains the vehement opposition of most devout Jews when the movement first emerged.

For religious Jews the restoration of Zion could only be brought about by divine intervention; human attempts to reestablish Israel were heretical. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, the religious leader of nineteenth century German Orthodox Jews stated that it was a sin to promote Jewish emigration to Palestine. Zionists were called by Rabbi Joseph Hayyim Sonnenfeld of Brisk “ruffians” and “evil men.” In

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20 Marion Woolfson writes “the Zionists whose claim to the land of Palestine was based on a Divine promise, made some four thousand years ago, were self-proclaimed agnostics.” Prophets in Babylon (London: Faber and Faber, 1980), p. 12; See also Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht, The Fate of the Jews (New York: Times Books, 1983); and Dan E. Seger, A Crisis in Identity: Israel and Zionism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 3; and Orr, p. 9.
23 Laqueur, p. 410.
1898 Rabbi Sonnenfeld wrote that Zionists have asserted view that the whole difference and distinction between Israel and the nations lies in nationalism, blood and race, and that the faith and the religion are superfluous. . . . Dr. Herzl comes not from the Lord, but from the side of pollution.24

Other leading Jewish religious leaders who opposed Zionism included Moritz Gudemann, Chief Rabbi of Vienna,25 Dr. Herman Adler, Chief Rabbi of Great Britain,26 the Lubavitscher Rebbe, Rabbi Shulem ben Schneersohn,27 the Holy Gerer Rebbe, the Stas Emes,28 and Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, the leader of the American Reform Movement.29 Many more Jewish religious leaders were opposed to Zionism.30

Religious Jews in Palestine and the Orthodox Jewish organization, Agudas Yisroel, founded in 1912, also opposed the political Zionist colonization program in Palestine. They protested, to the British Mandatory Administration, against the Zionist claim to represent the entire Jewish community.31 Nathan Birnbaum, an early Zionist, who is credited with coining the term Zionist, later broke with the move-

24Marmorstein, pp. 79-80.
26Ibid.
27"Statement by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shulem ben Schneersohn, on Zionism (1903)," Selzer, pp. 11-18.
28"Statement by the Holy Gerer Rebbe, the Stas Emes, on Zionism (1901)," Selzer, pp. 19-22.
31Laqueur, pp. 407 and 409.

ment and became a devoutly Orthodox anti-Zionist Jew. For a brief time he served as one of Aguda’s spokesmen.32

On June 30, 1924, Jakob Israel De Han, a member of Aguda’s executive committee, was assassinated in Palestine by underground soldiers of the Haganah. He had “violently denounced Zionism in cables to British newspapers and attacked the Balfour declaration” and British colonial officials who were “pro-Zionist” De Han became a martyr to Jerusalem’s anti-Zionist Orthodox Jews.33

In time, the Zionists managed to win much of the Orthodox Jewish community to their cause. This was done in part by granting the Orthodox political and economic concessions and by implementing a proportional representation system in central Zionist organizations and in the Israeli Knesset. This type of political mechanism gave the Orthodox Jews an important role in determining the course of Jewish affairs in Zionist institutions.

The various religious parties in Israel today represent Orthodox Jewish opinion that has accommodated itself to the Zionist view. However, the religious orientation of these parties is frequently at odds with the majority secular-national interpretation of “Jewishness” in Israel. This contradiction is the source of much political conflict.34

32Selzer, pp. xxi and 251. For an example of Nathan Birnbaum’s views see “In Bondage to Our Fellow Jews,” in Selzer, pp. 1-9.
33Laqueur, p. 410.
It can even be said that the Israeli ultra-orthodox religious parties which participate in Israeli politics are still anti-Zionist, despite that involvement. The ultra-Orthodox parties are Shas (the Sephardic religious party), Aguda (the Hasidic) and Degel Hatorah (the Flag of the Torah or the "Lithuanian party"). They are supported by between 250,000 and 300,000 Orthodox Israeli Jews and won 13 Knesset seats in the 1988 election.35

These three religious parties are opposed to the Zionist aim of creating a secular Jewish homeland, and as such are considered by some as anti-Zionist. This view is held despite the fact that they support the continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and bargain for financial support from the state. The National Religious party, which won five seats in the 1988 Israeli election, is considered Zionist and over the years has become increasingly nationalistic.36

While much of the Orthodox religious Jewish community was eventually won over to the extent of giving at least nominal support to the state of Israel, significant pockets of resistance remain. The Neturei Karta ("Guardians of the Walls") in their large enclaves in Jerusalem's Mea Sharim Quarter and in Bnai Brak near Tel Aviv, preserve Orthodox Jewry's fierce opposition to Zionism. They refuse to have anything to do with Israeli state authorities.37 The following is an excerpt from a Neturei Karta advertisement that appeared in The New York Times on June 15, 1981:

Besides the millions of Jews who are non-Zionist, there are many hundreds of thousands of Jews who are fervently anti-Zionist. They are opposed to Zionism and the very existence of the Zionist state because Zionism seeks to change the essence of Judaism and substitute chauvinism and militarism and loyalty to the Zionist state for the lofty and unchangeable principles of the Jewish faith. The Jewish nation was not founded by Zionist politicians but the character of Jewish nationhood was determined on Mount Sinai and the Jewish people as well as every individual Jew are bound to fulfill the Mitzvos (commandments) of the oral and written law of the Torah. Jews are certain that the Jewish redemption will come with the coming of the Moshiach. The establishment of the Zionist state before that time is heretic and indeed blasphemous. Our greatest rabbis have taught us that Zionism is one of the worst calamities that has ever befallen the Jewish people.38

The intensity of the ultra-Orthodox's opposition to political Zionism is fierce. Rabbi Moshe Schonfeld, for example, argues that Zionism is causing a genocide of the Jewish people by destroying the religious and spiritual basis for Jewish existence.39 Rabbi Moshe Leib-Hirsch summarized the extent of Neturei Karta's opposition to Zionism by stating, "We will not accept a Zionist State even if the Arabs do."40

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36Ibid.
39See Moshe Schonfeld, Genocide in the Holy Land (Brooklyn, New York: Bnei Yeshivos, 1980).
Joel Teitelbaum, the Satmar rebbe, until his death in 1979, at the age of 91, was also implacably anti-Zionist and "influenced Orthodox Jewry in the whole of Transylvania." After World War II, and a brief stay in Jerusalem, he emigrated to New York. Many of his followers congregated there and new members joined his flock. Rabbi Teitelbaum opposed Zionism not only on halachic grounds but also because he believed that "Zionism forestalled the Messiah... brought the Holocaust and other calamities on the Jewish people." In his view the Jewish state "condemned itself through its own lifestyle and politics." Teitelbaum's 40,000 chassidim are found largely in Williamsburg, New York, and in Jerusalem.41

In January 1986 the non-Zionist Central Rabbinical Congress of the United States and Canada, representing Orthodox and Hasidic Jews, issued a statement attacking Zionism and Israel's policies towards the Palestinians. It included the following:

It is our duty to denounce those who invoke the name of the Almighty in vain. It is our holy obligation and our moral responsibility to call on them: Stop using these falsehoods and heresies to justify yourselves and your misdeeds. The Jewish faith, as transmitted by the Almighty to our forefathers has not and will never countenance the zionist and nationalistic doctrines of the state of Israel. These false doctrines are compounded of atheism and anti-religious zionism, ideologies alien to Judaism. Let them not be misrepresented to the world as Jewish.42

"We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine... nor the restoration of the laws concerning the Jewish state."

Reform Jews in the United States were also opposed to Zionism. Their Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 stated their opposition to the establishment of a Jewish state very clearly: "We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine... nor the restoration of the laws concerning the Jewish state."43

With the emergence of the Zionist movement their position even hardened. In 1897, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) declared:

... we totally disapprove of any attempt for the establishment of a Jewish state. Such attempts show a misunderstanding of Israel's mission, which from the narrow political and national field has been expanded to the promotion among the whole human race of the broad and universalistic religion first proclaimed by the Jewish prophets... 44

It was not until 1937, and after the rise of Hitler, that the CCAR changed its position on the question of Zionism. This reversal,
however, also spawned another anti-Zionist Jewish organization.  

In 1943, a group of 92 Reform rabbis, and many other prominent American Jews, created the American Council for Judaism with the express intent of combatting Zionism. Included in the Council’s leadership were Rabbi Morris S. Lazaroff of Baltimore; Lessing J. Rosenwald, the former chairman of the Sears, Roebuck & Company, who became president of the Council; Rabbi Elmer Berger who became its executive director; Arthur Hays Sulzberger, publisher of The New York Times; and Sidney Wallach of the American Jewish Committee. Membership in the Council grew to over 15,000. Its members were highly articulate and greatly angered the Zionist leadership, who wanted the American Jewish community to present a united front on the Palestine question.

Even after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1947 the American Council for Judaism continued to oppose Zionism vocally. The magazine, Issues, was their principal vehicle of communication.  

was joined in its opposition to Zionism by The Menorah Journal edited by Dr. Henry Hurwitz and William Zukerman’s Jewish Newsletter.

After Israel’s spectacular success in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, however, a change in the policy towards Zionism occurred in the American Council for Judaism. Alfred Lilienthal suggests that “Zionist infiltration” succeeded in “neutralizing” the Council. A separate organization was subsequently established in 1969 called American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism (AJAZ). The new group, which is based in New York, continues the original anti-Zionist tradition of the American Council for Judaism. Rabbi Elmer Berger is currently the president of AJAZ and also editor of its publication the AJAZ Report.

One of the most articulate and vocal critics in Canada today of Israel’s policies towards the Palestinians is Rabbi Reuben Slonim. He is a spiritual Zionist in the tradition of Ahad Ha-am. His criticisms of Israel’s policies eventually led to a break with his congregation in Toronto. However, he does have a small, but devoted, following among the Canadian Jewish community. In 1983 he wrote:

Today we Jews are losing [the] humanism and universalism of Judaism, all for the sake of Jewish statehood. We love Israel, and so we should, but we are so blinded by that love that we are willing to pay a prohibitive price for it. We condone acts we would...
declare unconscionable anywhere else in the world: nuclear weapons are wrong but necessary for Israel; apartheid is wrong, but for the sake of Israel's survival we will tolerate it; human rights are critical, but not for the Palestinians; we have a right to a state but Palestinians do not. Our racism towards Arabs would be regarded as anti-Semitism if others spoke of us in the same light. In all things we need to remember that the Jewish people and the Jewish state are but instruments, not ends in themselves; that what is good for the world is good for the Jews, not what is good for the Jews is good for the world; that the ultimate goal of the Jew, if he be truly Jewish, is to serve humanity.  

Whether the Jews be regarded as a "race" or as a "religion," it is contrary to the democratic principles for which the world war was waged to found a nation on either or both of these bases.  

Albert Einstein was also anti-Zionist. He made a presentation to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, which was examining the Palestine issue in January 1946 and argued against the creation of a Jewish state. Einstein also later turned down the presidency of the state of Israel. In 1950 Einstein published the following statement on the question of Zionism. 

I should much rather see reasonable agreement with the Arabs on the basis of living together in peace than the creation of a Jewish state. Apart from the practical considerations, my awareness of the essential nature of Judaism resists the idea of a Jewish state with borders, an army, and a measure of temporal power no matter how modest. I am afraid of the inner damage Judaism will sustain—especially from the development of a narrow nationalism within our own ranks, against which we have already had to fight without a Jewish state.  

Albert Einstein, Sidney Hook, Hannah Arendt and twenty-five other prominent Jews, in a letter to The New York Times (December 4, 1948), condemned Menachem Begin's and Yitzhak Shamir's Likud party as "fascist" and espousing "an ad-mixture of ultra-nationalism, religious mysticism and racial superiority." The same theme is echoed in William Zukerman's

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54. Lilienthal, pp. 768–769.
1934 article in *The Nation*, “The Menace of Jewish Fascism.” This is also the premise of Michael Selzer’s book, *The Aryanization of the Jewish State.*

For most Western Jews and many other people, the connection of Zionism to fascism and racism is odious and inappropriate. However, this theme is a recurrent motif in the debate on Zionism within the Jewish community. Even David Ben-Gurion, Israel's founding father and first prime minister, wrote an article in 1933 entitled, “Tabotinsky in the Footsteps of Hitler.” Vladimir Jabotinsky was the founder of Revisionist Zionism and the mentor of Menachem Begin.

Professor Richard Arens, the late brother of Moshe Arens, the Israeli defense minister and leading figure in the Likud party, has also equated Israeli policies towards the Palestinians with the Nazi persecution of the Jews. Hannah Arendt, when writing about the trial of Adolph Eichmann, pointed out the irony of attacking the Nazis’ Nuremberg Laws of 1935 when certain laws in Israel regarding the personal status of Jews were identical to the infamous Nazi code. Morris Raphael Cohen, the distinguished philosopher, went so far as to argue that “Zionists fundamentally accept the racial ideology of anti-Semites, but draw different conclusions. Instead of the Teuton, it is the Jew that is the pure or superior race.”


Might not perhaps the “abnormal” existence of the Jews represent a higher form of historical development than territorial nationalism? Has not the diaspora been an essential part of Jewish existence? Did it not secure Jewish survival better?

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"If all nations would suddenly claim territories in which their forefathers lived two thousand years ago, this world would be a madhouse."

Erich Fromm, the eminent scholar, also was critical of Zionism. He stated that the Arabs in Israel had a much more legitimate claim to citizenship than the Jews. Fromm also wrote:

The claim of the Jews to the Land of Israel cannot be a realistic political claim. If all nations would suddenly claim territories in which their forefathers lived two thousand years ago, this world would be a madhouse.64

Bruno Kreisky, the former chancellor of Austria, who died in July 1990, was well known for his attempts to bring about reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. In a 1974 interview with an Israeli paper he stated: “There is no Jewish race; there are only Jewish religious groups. Israel was only the ancient, religious fatherland of Jews, but not their true fatherland.”65 In another interview, conducted in 1985, Kreisky said, “In the struggle between Israel and the Palestinians I am on the side of the underdog—the Palestinians.”66

Present-day Jewish opponents of Zionism who have published books on the subject include Rabbi Elmer Berger (The Jewish Dilemma, 1945), Noam Chomsky (The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians, 1983), Marc H. Ellis (Towards a Jewish Theology of Liberation: The Uprising and the Future, 1989), Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht (The Fate of the Jews, 1983), Georges Friedmann (The End of the Jewish People, 1967), Maxim Gilan (How Israel Lost Its Soul, 1974), Alfred M. Lilienthal (What Price Israel? 1953), Norton Mezvinsky (The Character of the State of Israel, 1972), Cheryl Rubenberg (Israel and the American National Interest, 1986), and Michael Selzer (The Wineskin and the Wizard, 1970). Several collections of articles are also useful in understanding the scope of debate within the Jewish community and especially the strength of opposition in Jewish intellectual circles. These collections are Jewish Critics of Zionism by Moshe Menuhin; Zionism Reconsidered, edited by Michael Selzer; and Zionism: The Dream and the Reality—A Jewish Critique, edited by Gary V. Smith.

Lilienthal’s The Zionist Connection II: What Price Peace? is one of the classic expositions of the Jewish anti-Zionist position, and as a historical work it is virtually encyclopedic. Lilienthal, who also edited the newsletter Middle East Perspective (1968–1985), Rabbi Elmer Berger and Noam Chomsky have to be considered the three preeminent American Jewish critics of Zionism.67

64Kohn, p. 45.
Many Jews have opposed Zionism because they believe that there is a moral contradiction in trying to create an exclusionist Jewish nation-state out of a universal religious ethic. They have also opposed Zionism because of what it has done to the Palestinians and how they believe this violence would transform Judaism.


There also exists in the Soviet Union an active Jewish anti-Zionist organization. It is headed by General David Dragnuski. Despite reports to the contrary, this organization is still in existence. The West tends to dismiss such bodies, but one should remember that historically there has always been a powerful anti-Zionist Socialist and Communist tradition within the Jewish community.

Many Jewish intellectuals were prominent leaders in the Socialist movement, and in many respects they represent a competing stream of thought in the world Jewish community. Leon Trotsky, for example,

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60See for example, “Minority Report,” *The Nation*, August 7–14, 1989, p. 159. Here he discusses Yitzhak Shamir’s past dealings with the Nazis and the LEHI (Stern Gang) proposed alliance with the Nazis. For discussion of Hitchens’ recent discovery that his father was Jewish see his article, “On Not Knowing the Half of It, My Jewish Self: Homage to Telegraphist Jacobs,” *Grand Street*, Summer 1988, pp. 121–136.


attacked Zionism as “reactionary,” a 
“blind alley” and “a bloody trap.”
Rosa 
Luxemberg also was anti-Zionist and as a 
result was attacked with the accusation of 
“self-hatred.” Ephraim Sevela, a Soviet 
Jewish emigrant to Israel, has written a 
book about his disillusionment with Zionism 
in which he concludes that Israel is not a 
Jewish homeland.77

The Jewish workers’ Bund movement 
was also anti-Zionist. The Bund was a large 
and well-organized Jewish socialist, autonomist party that existed in Lithuania, Poland 
and Russia between 1907–1948. It fa-
vored a secular East European Jewish 
nationalism and rejected a world Jewish 
national identity.78

Over time Socialist Zionists managed to 
reduce leftist Jewish opposition to the Zi-
onist program by emphasizing the utopian 
and socialist aspects of political Zionism. 
The kibbutz experiment of collective farm-
ing and the large role labor played in the 
early years of the state figured prominently 
in the campaign to win support from the left 
for the Jewish state. But with the shift of 
the political character of Zionism to the 
right and with Begin’s and Shamir’s rise to 
power in Israel, and with the increased repress-
ion of the Palestinians, the left has lost much of its enthusiasm for the Zionist 
experiment.

For many critics of Zionism the parallels 
between Israel’s treatment of the Palestin-
ians and South Africa’s handling of its 
black population are striking. Dennis Gold-
berg, a white South African and member of 
the African National Congress, was released from Pretoria prison in 1985 to im-
migrate to Israel when he agreed to for-
swear violent opposition to apartheid.79 He 
was also highly critical of Israel’s close 
military and economic ties with the white-
supremacist state. Goldberg later emigrated 
from Israel to Great Britain. Mark A. Bru-
zonsky80 and Micah L. Silfry81 have made 
similar comparisons. Israel: An Apartheid 
State, by expatriate Israeli Uri Davis, also 
equates Israel with South Africa.82

OPPOSITION IN ISRAEL

It may surprise some, but much of the 
opposition to Zionism today is centered in 
Israel. It is there that the realities of Zion-
ism’s confrontation with the Palestinians 
are most painfully apparent. Local Jewish 
opposition to Zionism also has a long his-
tory.

Several important Jewish religious lead-
ers in Palestine were opposed to Zionism 
and the creation of Israel. Rabbi Yosef Tzvi 
Dushinsky, the Chief Rabbi of the Holy 
Land, and Rabbi Zelig Reuven Bengis were 
opposed to the creation of a Jewish state. 
These two rabbis stated their opposition in 
a presentation on June 16, 1947, before the 
U.N. Commission on Palestine when it 
convened hearings in Jerusalem. They 
feared that “a Jewish state would be a 
rallying point for anti-Semitism and thus an 
actual danger to the Jewish people.”83

In July 1949 Rabbi Amram Blau and 
Rabbi Aaron Katzenellenbogen sent a

77Leon Trotsky, On the Jewish Question (New 
78Laqueur, p. 253 and p. 435.
79See Ephraim Sevela, Farewell Israel (South Bend, 
1502.
81Michah L. Silfry, “Israel and South Africa,” The 
Nation, February 13, 1988, p. 194.
82Uri Davis, Israel: An Apartheid State (London: 
83Yosef Becher, “Neturei Karta: the anti-Zionist 
Rabbi Becher is a leading spokesman for the Neturei 
Karta in the United States.
memorandum to the Secretary General of the United Nations on behalf of the Neturei Karta in Jerusalem. They called for the internationalization of Jerusalem and asked for U.N. passports and protection for their community.\textsuperscript{64}

Judah L. Magnes, who was president of Hebrew University in Jerusalem during the Palestine Mandate, was also opposed to the creation of a Jewish state.\textsuperscript{85} In 1936, Magnes, together with other leading Jewish Palestinian humanists, including Pinhas Rutenberg and Moshe Smilanski, advocated the creation of a bi-national state. The Zionist establishment rejected this proposal. These prominent Jewish intellectuals then founded the Ihud (Union) group to oppose the partition of Palestine.\textsuperscript{86}

Shortly before the creation of Israel, Judah Magnes and Martin Buber, on the behalf of the Ihud Association, made the following statement before the Anglo-American Palestine Commission Inquiry: "We do not favor Palestine as a Jewish country or Palestine as an Arab country, but a bi-national Palestine as the common country of two peoples."\textsuperscript{87} The Ihud, however, abandoned the idea in 1948 after Magnes' death, and after war had broken out in Palestine.\textsuperscript{88}

Mordechai Avi Shaul was one of these early Jewish humanists who continued to oppose the Jewish state after its creation. In 1935 he helped to establish the League of Civil and Human Rights in Palestine, "whose original purpose was to oppose British oppression of Jews and Arabs under the Mandate." He continued to work for equal rights for Arabs in the Jewish state.\textsuperscript{89}

Reb Binyomin, a prominent writer, strongly criticized actions that occurred during the creation of the Jewish state. In 1953 he wrote:

After the State of Israel was established, I began receiving news about the terrible things perpetrated both during and after the Israeli-Arab war. I did not recognize my own people for the changes which had occurred in their spirit. The acts of brutality were not the worst because those might have been explained somehow. . . . Far more terrible was the benevolent attitude towards these acts on the part of public opinion. I had never imagined that such could be the spiritual and moral countenance of Israel. . . .\textsuperscript{90}

Another old Jewish settler, Nathan Chofshi, who also witnessed the birth of the Jewish state, did not like what he saw. In 1959, in a reply to a rabbi who "parroted" the official version of the Palestinian exodus from Israel, he bore witness to the campaign to expel the Palestinian population. Chofshi also stated the following:

We came and turned the Arabs into tragic refugees. And still we dare slander and malign them, to besmear their name; instead of being deeply ashamed of what we did, and trying to undo some of the evil we committed, we justify our terrible acts and even attempt to glorify them.\textsuperscript{91}


\textsuperscript{86}Glass, p. 78.


\textsuperscript{88}Taylor, p. 107.

\textsuperscript{89}Glass, p. 78.

\textsuperscript{90}Kohn, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{91}\textit{Jewish Newsletter}, 9 February 1959, cited in Gilmour, p. 74.
Machover] described Zionism as "the equivalent of what in other places is known as white supremacy. Here [in Israel] there are exact parallels in terms of Jewish supremacy."  

In 1962 Moshe Machover founded the Israeli Socialist Organization (known as Matzpen after its publication) with other Israeli leftists. He described Zionism as "the equivalent of what in other places is known as white supremacy. Here [in Israel] there are exact parallels in terms of Jewish supremacy." Matzpen, however, splintered into several political factions and together with other small left-wing anti-Zionist Israeli groups the divisions greatly diminished the strength of non-Zionist Jewish forces within Israel. All of these "radical" groups came under political attack from state authorities.  

In 1975 Charles Glass estimated that 5–8 percent of Israel's Jewish population fell into the anti-Zionist category. Most of this opposition was of a "leftist" variety. However, Glass also stated that "they represent 50 percent of the only significant debate in the country."  

Ehud Adi, Dan Vered, Yehzekel Cohen, David Cooper and Rami Livneh are five Jewish Israelis who have been sent to prison for working against the Jewish state. Livneh was sentenced to ten years in prison for meeting with a Fatah member near Nazareth to discuss political issues. His case was adopted by Amnesty International.

Adi, Vered, Cohen and Cooper were members of the Revolutionary Communist Alliance-Red Front. They were critical of Matzpen and some of the other leftist anti-Zionist organizations for their lack of a political program. Their belief in activism led them to participate in an underground Palestinian-Israeli organization. This resulted in their being convicted of helping to form an "espionage and sabotage network." The "Red Front Trial" was a shock to Israeli society which was used to the image of its Jewish youth ready to defend the nation under all circumstances.  

As Charles Glass commented:

While the Red Front probably never presented a security danger to the State of Israel, its psychological threat was enormous. Here were Jews born and raised in Israel, Adi himself from a kibbutz, working with Arabs for the overthrow of the state! Young Israelis could not help but ask why.

The 1986 disclosure by the former Israeli nuclear technician, Mordechai Vanunu, of Israel's nuclear arsenal can be seen in a similar light. Israeli authorities launched a massive campaign to discredit Vanunu in the eyes of Israel's Jewish population while his trial was conducted in total secrecy. He was convicted of treason and sentenced to 18 years imprisonment. The stiff penalty

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92 Glass, pp. 63–64.
93 Ibid., pp. 61–75. For a survey of criticism of Zionism from an Israeli Socialist perspective see Arie Bober ed., The Other Israel: The Radical Case Against Zionism (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972).
94 Glass, p. 57.

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given Vanunu for revealing what has been an open secret for years is a harsh reminder that the Jewish state is tightening the noose around internal dissent.99

One of the leading Israeli anti-Zionists today is concentration-camp survivor Israel Shahak, who currently heads the Israeli League for Civil and Human Rights. Shahak takes the view that "the State of Israel is a racist state in the full meaning of the term: In this state people are discriminated against, in the most permanent and legal way and in the most important areas of life, only because of their origin."100 He also indicates:

I would say the only human response to Holocaust is to try not to be like Nazis, in word or in deed. What brought the Holocaust was the racist attitude towards Jews, the division of German society into Jews and non-Jews on grounds of race. This is exactly the same thing that is happening in Israel.101

Many view this type of comparison as inappropriate, but other Israeli Jews have drawn the same parallel. Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz, the renowned scholar of Judaism and philosophy and the editor of several volumes of the Encyclopedia Hebraica, has expressed similar concerns:

The big crisis of the Jewish people is that the overwhelming majority of the Jews genuinely desire to be Jewish—but they have no content for their Judaism other than a piece of colored rag attached to the end of a pole and a military uniform. The consciousness and the desire to be Jewish did not vanish, rather they are transformed today into a Judeo-Nazi mentality.102

Other leading Israeli critics of Zionism and of Israel's policies towards the Palestinians include Professor Danny Amit ("There is a basis for an Israeli-Palestinian strategy of joint struggle," MERIP Reports, May 1983), Uri Avnery (Israel without Zionists, 1968), Yoram Binur (My Enemy, My Self, 1989), Uri Davis ("Journey Out of Zionism," in Journal of Palestine Studies, summer 1970), Boaz Evron ("Holocaust: The Uses of Disaster," in Radical America, fall 1983), the late Simha Flapan (The Birth of Israel, 1987), Isaac Hasson ("Can Israel Be a Democratic State?" in The International Humanist, December 1987), Amnon Kapeliouk (Sabra and Shatilla, 1984), Peretz Kidron ("Truth Whereby Nations Live," in Blaming the Victims, edited by Hitchens and Said), Felicia Langer (With My Own Eyes, 1975), the late Livia Rokach (editor of Israel's Sacred Terrorism, 1980), Uri Shalansky ("Eyewitness in Gaza," in Radical America, fall, 1983), Professor Jacob Talmon ("Self-Determination for Palestinian Arabs: An Open Letter," in Jewish Liberation Journal, November-December 1969), Georges Tamarin (The Israeli Dilemma: Essays on a Warfare State, 1973), and Lea Tsemel ("The Political Prisoners," Arab Studies Quarterly, spring/summer 1985). This list is by no means complete.

99For example see Peter Fry, Israel's Nuclear Arsenal (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985).
101Glass, p. 77.
Many Israelis have also refused to serve in the army on political grounds. These include Marius Shattner, Irit Yacobi and Reuben Lassman. In 1973 Giora Neumann was sentenced to eight months imprisonment for refusing military duty. At his trial Neumann said that he had to be loyal to his values, and that the Israeli military had become a “persecuting army” of occupation which “uproots and exiles people.”

Over 2,000 Israeli reserve soldiers signed a petition requesting not to serve in the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. The opposition to war among Israeli reserve soldiers formalized itself into an organization called Yesh Gvul (“There is a limit”). Gideon Spiro, one of its founders, wrote:

It was the first time in Israel’s history that Israeli reserve soldiers said to the government: We are not going to a war which violates all democratic and humanistic norms; which violates all international charters to which Israel is a signatory, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; which contradicts the essence and spirit of the Israeli Declaration of Independence; and which involves the criminal bombing of civilian populations.

Yesh Gvul is not a pacifist organization and does not question the need for an army for Israel’s defense. However, its members argued that they were not prepared to support a war they viewed as illegal, and they were not prepared to hide behind the defense of “we acted under orders” in an attempt to justify that illegality. One hundred and fifty Israelis were charged with refusing to serve in Lebanon.

Yesh Gvul has also been active in opposing Israeli policies towards the Palestinians. Over 600 Israeli reserve soldiers have signed a petition indicating their refusal to serve in the Occupied Territories. At least 37 “refuseniks” have been sent to prison and approximately 100 reservists have been released from service after refusing to help crush Palestinian resistance to the occupation of the territories.

The board of directors of the state-operated Israeli television network has decided to prohibit reports of Yesh Gvul demonstrations. Israel has only one television network. This decision was seen by many Israelis, including those who were opposed to Yesh Gvul, as an ominous attack on freedom of expression.

Israel’s invasion of Lebanon also prompted Jacobo Timerman, the world-renowned author and human-rights activist, to sharply criticize the actions of Israel. He asked, “Why are the Israelis incapable of recognizing the high degree of criminality in their army’s campaign against the Palestinian people?” In 1988 Timerman attacked “hypocrisy” in Israel:

Israel’s great hypocrisy consists in disguising her policy of occupation with security arguments similar to those utilized by the Argentine generals to justify their bloody dictatorship. The real objective of Israel’s policy is to expel all Palestinians and seize their lands. . . . There is a second hypocrisy shocking in its obscenity: the utilization of the Holocaust to justify alleged Israeli fears of a new extermination. It is used as an excuse for the policy of wiping

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103Glass, p. 69.
105Gideon Spiro, “The Israeli soldiers who say ‘There is a limit,’” Middle East International, 9 September 1988, pp. 18-19. Yesh Gvul’s address is P.O. Box 6953, Jerusalem, 91068, Israel.
106Ibid., p. 18.
107Ibid., p. 19.
108Ibid.
109Ibid., p. 20.
out the Palestinian identity which has been implemented in Israel for the past 20 years, as if an unproven future danger were sufficient reason to commit crimes against a defenseless nation today.\textsuperscript{111}

The 23 years of occupation that has been imposed on the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza has also left its mark on Israeli society. The occupation has been opposed by many Jews.\textsuperscript{112} Professor Leibowitz, for example, made the following comment:

It is both understandable and natural that an enslaved people will fight for its freedom against an occupying power with all the means at its disposal, and without regard for their propriety; this phenomenon is recognized to be part and parcel of the wars of liberation of all peoples. We use the term “terrorism” to describe the acts of the Palestinian people, and call their fighters “terrorists.” But our rule over a resistant people could not persist were it not for the use of means which are considered to constitute war crimes throughout the world—and even plain criminal acts. We do not view these acts as terrorism; they are considered to be policy because they are being implemented by a legal government and a state arm. “Aberrant acts” by necessity become the norm because, far from being a side effect of an occupation regime, they are its essence.\textsuperscript{113}

While Palestinians have been long subjected to restrictions, Jews have largely been free from overt state interference, although the Jewish press is censored. However, there are signs that the tactics which are used to control Palestinian opposition are being extended to Jewish dissent.

In February 1987 Michael Warschawsky, an anti-Zionist Israeli and director of the Alternative Information Center was arrested. The Center was closed down and its files seized. The organization provided information on human-rights violations in the Occupied Territories to the media. The Center was a constant irritant to Israeli authorities, who wanted to present a benevolent image of the occupation to the world and “manage” coverage of the suppression of the Palestinian uprising. Several foreign journalists who witnessed the raid claimed that “what’s happening here is similar to the police treatment of foreign correspondents in South Africa.”\textsuperscript{114}

Warschawsky was charged with security offenses for assisting proscribed “terrorist” organizations. The charges included “rendering typing services to students and women’s organizations” which were claimed to be “front organizations for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.” Other offenses included rendering typing facilities for several Palestinian newspapers that are not even banned by the authorities. The Israeli newspaper \textit{Hadshot} reported that one of the charges leveled against Warschawsky was that he had helped in “preparing and distributing instructional material related to the interrogation method of Shin Bet [Israeli General Security Services], which teaches potential detainees how to behave when they are


\textsuperscript{112}For a more extensive discussion of this question, see Michael Jansen, \textit{Dissonance in Zion} (London: Zed Books, 1987).

\textsuperscript{113}Politiika, \#20, quoted by Yosef Algazi in “Forward: The 21st Year of the Occupation, the Sixth Month of the Uprising,” \textit{Report on the Violations of Human Rights in the Territories during the Uprising, 1988}, p. 5.

arrested and thereby harms the activities of the security services. . . .

. . . the anti-Zionist Neturei Karta religious sect has asked for affiliation with the Palestine National Council.

The information was to help Palestinian detainees resist torture techniques practiced by Israeli security services. In the words of one Israeli: "It is clear why Mikado [Warschawsky] was arrested. . . . so that the Jews can say: With our hands on our hearts, we didn’t know." Warschawsky was sentenced to 20 months imprisonment. However, widespread outrage at the harshness of the sentence caused the authorities to reduce it to eight months after an appeal was heard.

On February 18, 1988, Derech Hanitzotz-Tariq A-Sharara, a joint Hebrew/Arabic newspaper operation, was shut down by Israeli authorities. The paper was left-wing and extremely critical of Israeli policies towards the Palestinians. Four editors and the publisher, all Jews and three of them women, were arrested: Yakov Ben Efrat, Roni Ben Efrat, Michal Schwartz, Hadas Lahav and Asaf Adiv. It was the first Hebrew-language newspaper to be closed under the security laws.

Hadas Ladav was released after 12 days of solitary confinement without charges being brought. She reported that the detainees were subjected to "emotional torture—humiliation and sexual harassment" from the investigators. Ladav stated after such an ordeal, "one does not leave the same person as one went in." There were also reports of more severe types of punishment being inflicted on the remaining prisoners. The dissidents were held without bail and charged with security offenses similar to those leveled at Warschawsky.

The term Palestinian is simply that of a national designation which includes not only Christians and Muslims but also Jews, and other religious and even non-religious groups. The first British governor of Jerusalem, Sir Ronald Storrs, reported that virtually all indigenous Palestinian Jews were adamantly opposed to European political Zionism. Ilan Halevi, a Jewish Palestinian, is a top-ranking member of the PLO. He is the PLO ambassador to Europe and its representative to the Socialist International.

It is also interesting to note that the anti-Zionist Neturei Karta religious sect has asked for affiliation with the Palestine National Council. Rabbi Moshe Hirsch has even offered to serve as minister for Jewish Affairs in a Palestinian government-in-exile. Rabbi Hirsch argues:

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110Ibid., p. 9.
113Lili Gali, "Hadas Lahav: The Shin Bet tried to make me ‘crazy,’” Haaretz, May 26, 1988, translated and additional material provided by The Palestine Human Rights Campaign, Chicago, 220 S. State Street, #1308, 1 Quincy Court, Chicago, Illinois, 60604. Tel. (312)987-1830.
116Press release: Tevot 20, 5748, January 10, 1988, from Seven-man Neturei Karta Supreme Council. See also Ed Kraes, “Orthodox Jews Oppose Israel,”
We are as Palestinian as Yasser Arafat. There are Jewish Palestinians, and there are Muslim Palestinians and Christian Palestinians. In regard to issues relating to the Palestinian people, we also have our interests. If a state is established we would like to have our representation in the government.  

Two little-known facts are that the PLO helped protect the Beirut Jewish community (and also the American embassy) during the Lebanese Civil War, and it was the Israelis who destroyed their synagogue during the siege of Beirut. Nor has it been widely publicized that nine Palestinian Jews were among the victims of the Sabra and Shatila massacre.  

There are also a small number of Palestinian Jews still living within Palestinian society. Esther Ramahi is one such individual. She prefers to live in the squalor of the Jelazoun refugee camp, a few kilometers from Ramallah, with her Moslem Palestinian family rather than with her Jewish daughter and all the comforts of modern Israel.  

Like the Palestinian Jews, many Arab Jews (also called Oriental and Sephardic) were initially opposed to political Zionism. European secular Zionism was a totally alien ideological concept that was in direct conflict with their Jewish religious and their Arab cultural background. Kohavi Shemesh, a former leader of the Black Panthers, an Israeli anti-Zionist Oriental Jewish organization, has stated that, contrary to popular belief, "There wasn't any large-scale anti-Semitism in the Arab countries."  

The long-simmering Arab-Israeli dispute and Israel's military actions in the name of the "Jewish people" have all but virtually destroyed what was once a thriving Jewish-Arab community. Today, only remnants remain. It was, of course, in Israel's interest to strengthen the Jewish foothold in Palestine by ingathering Jews from the Arab world.  

Naim Giladi, an Oriental Jew and one of the founders of the Black Panthers, has been working on the subject of Mossad operations in the Jewish-Arab community to "facilitate" Jewish-Arab immigration to Israel. One example of this campaign to "encourage" Zionist immigration were the bombs set off in Baghdad in 1950 to terrorize the Iraqi-Jewish community into fleeing their home of 2,500 years. This question is also the subject of Marion Woolfson's "Prophets in Babylon" where she argues, from an anti-Zionist Jewish perspective, that the Jewish Arabs were victims of Zionism.  

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122Ibid.  
123The leader of the Lebanese Jewish community is reported to have said: "The Lebanese Jews are grateful to Mr. Arafat. We have no need of any outside protection because no one has touched a hair on our heads. We reject Israeli reports that the community is in any danger. We want no outside protectors, Israeli or otherwise. We simply plan to go on living as we always have, as Lebanese." Quoted in Lilenenthal, The Zionist Connection II, p. 782. Also see Paul Martin, "Palestinians send food to Jews besieged in Beirut synagogue," The Times (London), November 4, 1975, p. A5. See also "PLO guarded our embassy U.S. admits," Toronto Star, May 16, 1985, p. A12.  
125"Nine Jews said to be among massacre victims," The Jerusalem Post, September 30, 1982.  

130Woolfson, pp. 15-17.
RECENT OPPOSITION

One of the more recent manifestations of Jewish anti-Zionism is a public advertisement that contained over 200 names, including that of Harry Cohen, a British member of Parliament. The original ad was published in The Manchester Guardian (October 31, 1987) on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. More names were added to a subsequent version published in the magazine, Jerusalem. The ad stated that “the state of Israel does not represent all Jewish people, neither legally, morally nor in any other way.” The statement also charged that “the Zionist structure of the state of Israel is at the heart of the racism and oppression against the Palestinian people, and should be dismantled.”

In other countries Jews are also expressing concern about Israel’s policies towards the Palestinians and about the direction that Zionism is heading. In Canada there are several Jewish organizations that are sharply critical of Israel’s policies. One of the most active is Jews for a Just Peace. Yossi Schwartz, an Israeli, has served as spokesman for the organization. The group is part of a small but-growing number of Canadian Jews who are voicing their opposition to Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians.

At a rally organized by Jews for a Just Peace, held in April 1988 in front of the Israeli Consulate in Toronto, Schwartz denounced Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir as a “terrorist,” a “fascist” and “an enemy not only to the Palestinians, but to the Jewish people too.” He said “the real heroes are Jews who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories and Lebanon.”

The demonstration drew a crowd of “about 300 people, including Arabs... as well as members of the New Jewish Agenda.” The demonstration was reported to have been “orderly.”

In France, 155 Jews have endorsed an advertisement calling for the French government to recognize the new Palestinian state declared at the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers on November 15, 1988. The ad stated: “Now that the right of Israel to exist has been recognized by the Palestine National Council, nothing is against negotiations starting between the representatives of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.” They also declared their support for the “peace forces which are fighting bravely in Israel against those who wish, among other things, to expel the entire Arab population.”

The “father” of the proposal to issue a declaration establishing a Palestinian state is Jerome Segal, an American Jewish peace activist who has long been active in promoting Israeli-Palestinian peace. At the present time there are also a number of prominent Jewish journalists who are extremely critical of Israel’s policies towards the Palestinians. These include Gerald Caplan of the Toronto Star (“Mindless cheerleaders for Israel?” May 13, 1990), Anthony Lewis of The New York Times (“Israel: It’s Time to Speak Out about Injustice,” October 22, 1989, one of many


133: Ancil Kashefsky, “Jews for a Just Peace urges Israeli withdrawal,” The Canadian Jewish News, April 28, 1988, p. 34. Jews for a Just Peace’s address is P.O. Box 647 Station P, Toronto, Canada, MSS 2Y4.


examples), Nat Hentoff of The Village Voice ("The Silence of American Jews," June 29, 1982; reprinted in Journal of Palestine Studies, summer/fall 1982), and Eric Rouleau of Le Monde. However, the diverse nature of Jewish opposition to Zionism, in the West at least, and conflicting approaches to politics makes this opposition relatively incoherent and very difficult to weld into a viable alternative Jewish political force. Zionism clearly dominates the activist and organized elements of the Western Jewish community.

Support for Israel has virtually become a litmus test for loyalty to the Jewish community, and the role of religion has clearly diminished. Anti-Zionist Jews are simply defined outside of the community, and if they become vocal they are attacked as self-hating Jews, and sometimes even as "Kapos" (Jews who collaborated with the Nazis in the concentration camps), for betraying the new belief system.

I. F. Stone, the award-winning American Jewish journalist, who died on June 18, 1989, wrote:

...Israel is creating a kind of moral schizophrenia in world Jewry. In the outside world the welfare of Jewry depends on the maintenance of secular, non-racial, pluralistic societies. In Israel, Jewry finds itself defending a society in which mixed marriages cannot be legalized, in which the ideal is racial and exclusionist. Jews might fight elsewhere for their very security and existence—against principles and practices they find themselves defending in Israel.

At the very least, some of the criticisms that I. F. Stone, Albert Einstein and other Jewish intellectuals and religious leaders have leveled at Zionism and at the creation of a "Jewish state" seem to have been borne out.

There is no monolithic Jewish position on Zionism. Many Jews have opposed Zionism in the past, and many still do today, whether it is from a religious, leftist, liberal or humanist perspective. It would not be inappropriate to say that Jewish critics of Zionism and of Israel’s policies towards the Palestinians are the ones who are upholding the great Jewish tradition of ethical dissent and moral leadership. It also can be argued that Zionist Jews who place power above morality are, in fact, the historical aberration.

134 For an example of his work see Eric Rouleau (with Abu Yadin), My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle, translated by Linda Butler Kosoglu (New York: Times Books, 1981).

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