

## Zionist Theses And Anti-Theses

**We are at a turning point of history, for better or worse. If we can unravel the fabric of lies woven over the past century, we can perhaps nudge this historical turning point just a little bit towards better outcomes.**

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A Martian political delegation to our planet arriving in 1948 remarked how lucky they were to have come at a time when Earth's political geography was undergoing a sea change.

They observed that the two major wars in the three previous decades were behind some of this ferment. Britain and France, the two great colonial powers, were being pushed aside by two new ones, United States and the Soviet Union. They observed the beginnings of another historic process. Taking advantage of the capitalist wars, the colonized peoples of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean were ratcheting their own independence movements. The age of colonial empires and settler colonies was coming to a close. Or so it seemed.

In addition to these broad-brush changes, the Martians noted some anomalous details. They wrote of events in the Levant-in Palestine to be precise-that ran contrary to the global trends away from colonial empires and settler-colonization. In particular, they reported the creation in May 1948 of Israel, a Jewish state, in Palestine; it was the culmination of a colonial-settler movement launched at Basle in 1897 by the powerful but despised Jews of Europe. This new state had expelled, both before and after its creation, some 800,000 Palestinians from their homes.

One of the Martian observers, in a dissenting note to the delegation's report, observed that the creation of Israel did not bode well for Earthlings. In a language that appeared to be taken from Theodor Herzl's *The Jewish State* written in 1895, he wrote that "the existence of this rampart of Europe against Asia, this outpost of Western civilization, could only be guaranteed by Europe." He predicted that since this new state had been created abnormally, in opposition to the new trends in global morality, it would face the greatest difficulty in securing the moral support of the publics in United States and Europe.

On this last point, our Martian observer was in error. He seemed to lack a clear understanding of the forces that had chaperoned this new state into existence. First, there was the longstanding desire of many Westerners to be rid of the Jews from their midst. [1] Second, most Westerners nursed an even stronger antipathy towards the Ishmaelites-variously known as Saracens, Hagarites, Mahometans and Arabs-the other branch of the Semitic family. Third, there was the guilt many Westerners felt over the Holocaust. Ironically, all these forces contributed to the founding of Israel. In creating Israel, the West could reduce its own Jewish population, assuage its guilt over the Holocaust, and oppose the Israelites against the Ishmaelites. The creation of Israel was one project on which the Jews and Western anti-Semites could cooperate heartily.

Our Martian observer also had little notion of the resources commanded by the Jews. Already, by the sixteenth century, the Jews had established themselves as Europe's leading bankers, since the Church banned Christians from usurious activities. In turn, the European Enlightenment brought equal rights for all citizens, allowing Jews to move out of the ghettos, and rise to distinction in various professions. Far from being an "inferior race"-as the Goyims claimed-the Jews demonstrated that they had enormous gifts. In his book, *The Jewish State* (London: H. Pordes, 1967, 16), Theodor Herzl, explains that this was the result of "Jew-baiting" which had "merely stripped off our weaklings; the strong among us were invariably true to their race when persecution broke out against them."

The moral case for Israel succeeded like a Spielberg blockbuster, a success produced by Jewish power and ingenuity, working to take advantage of Islamophobia, Holocaust guilt, and anti-Semitism. In hundreds of movies, television serials, books, magazines, and newspapers, the Zionists constructed a narrative of Jewish rights to Israel, Israel's distinctiveness, Israeli achievements, the victimization of Israel by its barbaric Arab neighbors, and an Islamic hatred of all things Western (chiefly Israel). Those who remained skeptical of this narrative were neutralized by more direct methods, including denial of tenure, defeat at the ballot, smear campaigns, and, occasionally, worse. [2] For too long, these campaigns of persuasion and coercion have represented Israel as a small, beleaguered but heroic country, defending Western values against the onslaught of Islamic vandals. Next to the creation of Israel, the launching of this narrative has been the greatest triumph of the Zionist movement.

Is it then foolhardy to oppose this political juggernaut? One might answer with Noam Chomsky (Milan Rai, *Chomsky's Politics*, 1995, 50) who was speaking about the media in United States, that "Any system that's based on lying and deceit is inherently unstable." The Zionist narrative about Israel too is unstable. It is unstable because it is founded on egregious lies that strain our credulity; it is unstable because the Palestinians have refused to make a quiet exit; it is unstable because Israeli repression escalates as it contends with Palestinian resistance; it is unstable because Israel contains the dynamics that pushes the world towards a clash of civilizations. It is all too obvious that as the Palestinian resistance rises, Israel has been seeking to draw United States directly into its war with the Arabs.

It is scarcely surprising then if the hegemonic Zionist narrative has begun to fray at the edges even in these United States. One visible sign of this is the movement to divest from Israel, which began some two years ago at UC Berkeley, and has already spread to more than forty campuses nationwide. In addition, there are indications that the growing anti-war movement is linking its opposition to the war on Iraq to justice for Palestinians. In Western Europe, the Zionist narrative has fared worse. A survey of recent opinion polls indicates that there has already occurred a quite significant shift in European sympathies towards the Palestinians. [3] A survey of Britain's leading writers, conducted by the *Independent* in October 2002, found that about half of the thirty-five writers see greater justice on the Palestinian side, only three on the Israeli side, and several of the uncommitted writers expressed strong sympathy for the Palestinians in their comments. [4]

All of this suggests that the time is ripe for examining again, case by case, some of the leading Zionist theses of the past century. More than ever before, American audiences are perplexed by the dominant narratives about Israel, the sources of 9-11, and the inevitable clash of civilizations. We are at a turning point of history, for better or worse. If we can unravel the fabric of lies woven over the past century, we can perhaps nudge this historical turning point just a little bit towards better outcomes.

### **Promised by God**

According to this thesis, the Jews have a legal right to Palestine because God, in the Torah, promised it to Abraham and his descendents some four thousand years ago.

There is one slight problem with this thesis. It has never been established in any system of laws that a religious document, purporting to record statements made by God, could form the basis of legally enforceable claims to property in *this* world. Imagine what would happen if courts began to accept individual or collective claims to land, buildings, rivers, and mountains that were backed by divine promises. Saddam Hussein might claim that he had a dream in his youth, which he had never revealed before, in which God had chosen the Iraqis to inherit the entire United States.

Apart from the legal questions, it would be a little hard proving that European Jews, those who demanded the right to emigrate to Palestine, were in fact descended from Abraham. Even the world's leading geneticists would feel challenged, trying to establish a connection between a present population and a putative ancestor whose existence has never been established historically. What if this connection was

tenuous, or a stronger connection was discovered between Abraham and the Arabs?

### **A Historical Connection**

More secular Zionists pressed their claims on the basis of a historical connection to Palestine. The historical connection is valid, but it will not support Zionist claims.

It is worth pointing out that the historical connection ended some two thousand years ago, when the overwhelming majority of Jews left Palestine for other destinations, mostly in the Mediterranean world. In addition, even during the few centuries when Jews had political dominion over Palestine, they were not its only inhabitants. But these are only minor problems.

The real problem with this thesis is that claims of a historical connection, quite ancient in this case, cannot be used to justify present claims to territory. If this is accepted as a valid principle for appropriating territory, we should all start by vacating United States, since the Indians have a historical connection to this land that is quite a bit weightier than any Jewish connection to Palestine. The Indians had a connection to United States that was exclusive until the 1600s, and spanned some twenty thousand years.

### **A Distinct People**

The Jews are a 'distinct' people, and, hence, they must have a state of their own. In this case, it does not matter where; it could be in Argentina, Uganda, or Palestine.

This claim is fraught with difficulties. The Jews *were* a distinct people some two thousand years ago when they inhabited a single territory, shared the same faith, spoke a common language, and shared the same traditions. But since their dispersal, the Jews have been divided into many distinct Jewish communities living amongst gentiles, blending with their hosts through marriages, and creating new Jewish communities through conversions. Over centuries, these Jewish communities grew apart from each other, racially, culturally, and even in terms of their religious life. How much was there in common between the Jews of Russia, Morocco, Iran and Ethiopia, that could define them as a 'distinct' people?

Another difficulty with this thesis lies in its unstated second premise. It assumes that all distinct peoples have a state of their own. This is patently incorrect. There are probably hundreds, if not thousands, of distinct peoples-with distinct languages, cultures, religions, and lineages-through out the world who do not have a state of their own. In addition, most of these distinct peoples have a much stronger claim to statehood than the Jews since they constitute a majority in the areas they inhabit.

One encounters the greatest difficulty in this argument when the demand for a state arises from a 'people,' as in the case of the Jews, who do not constitute a majority in any of the areas they inhabit. In the event, such a people can establish their own state only by conquering another people and/or expelling them. Indeed, that is how the Jews established the state of Israel in Palestine, by invading it under the cover of the British mandate, and, then, expelling the great majority of the Palestinians.

### **Many Arab States**

The Arabs already have several states of their own. If they were not motivated by anti-Semitism, they would not object to the creation of the only Jewish state. Instead, they would welcome and resettle the Palestinians displaced by the creation of Israel.

This is a racist argument. It assumes that the Jewish need for a state has moral precedence over the rights of Palestinians to their own homes, their history, their ancestral lands, their towns and villages. It blames the Arabs for not showing proper deference towards the desire of the Jews for their own state, a state that would be established solely at the cost of the Arab peoples.

The Europeans too have many states-in fact many more than the Arabs-but would they agree to give up one

of their states to create a state for some truly distinct people living in the Middle East-say, the Kurds-who are without a state of their own?

### **Israel Attacked in 1948**

In order to paint Israel as the victim, the Zionist narrative claims that Arab armies from Egypt, Syria and Jordan attacked Israel the day after it was created on May 14, 1948.

Were the Arabs attacking an established state with a moral, legal and historical right to Palestine, or were they merely defending themselves-their lands, their homes, their historical rights-against a foreign occupation supported successively by two imperialist powers, Britain and United States?

The Zionist aggression against the Arabs had been set in motion well before 1948. At the First Zionist Congress, convened at Basle in 1897, the Zionists openly declared that their aim "is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law." By "public law" they meant the consent and support of Britain, the leading imperialist power at the time. In his diary, the same year, Theodor Herzl (*The Jewish State*, 4-5) wrote: "At Basle I founded the Jewish State." In 1917, exactly twenty years later, the British gave the Zionists the imperialist support they needed. Later, the same year, once the British forces had occupied Palestine, the Zionist agencies began setting up the civilian, security, and military infrastructure for the emergence of a Jewish state in Palestine. And most ominously, Palestine was opened up to Jewish immigration. The Zionist invasion of the Arab heartland had begun.

When the British wavered in their commitment to the Zionist enterprise, especially during the Second World War, they were replaced by United States, the new hegemonic power. United States threw its weight behind the Zionist project, and pushed the UN General Assembly to pass a resolution calling for the partition of Palestine and the creation of a Jewish state. Although the Jews in 1948 were still only a third of the population and owned only 6 percent of the land, the UN partition plan gave the new state 55 percent of the land, which included the best agricultural lands, most of the coastline, and access to the Gulf of Aqaba. Thanks to United States, the Jewish invasion of Palestine now carried the imprimatur of international law.

Should the Arabs, including the Palestinians, have acquiesced to an invasion of their lands merely because it had been sanctified by United States? One might well ask, what would the Americans have done if the UN-in a world in which Japan had won the Second World War-had first allowed unlimited immigration of Jews into Massachusetts, and then authorized its partition to create a Jewish state of Israel in 55 percent of Massachusetts? In 1948, the Arabs had done what I have no doubt the Americans would have done: they defended themselves against an alien invasion.

### **Only Democracy**

The Zionists repeat *ad nauseum* that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. This happens every time the discussion turns to some egregious Israeli violation of human rights.

This mantra serves several useful purposes. Its objective is to remind Western audiences of their affinity to Israel. 'Democracy' is a code word for Western. In claiming that Israel is a democracy-and not any of the Arab countries-the Zionists are affirming that Israel is a Western country, it is one of us, it belongs to the Western family of nations. Therefore, go easy on us, because we are fighting your battles against those Arab barbarians. There is also the sense that if Israel is a democracy then it can do no wrong. As a democracy, Israel represents a higher civilization, which cannot engage in gratuitous violence against Palestinians. Finally, this seeks to convey the impression of Israel as a solitary democracy, beleaguered by, and heroically doing battle against those brutal Arab dictatorships.

But is Israel really a democracy? This depends on what are the boundaries of Israel. Israel is the only country in the world that has never declared or demarcated its borders. And for thirty-five years now, since the 1967 war, its undeclared borders have included the West Bank and Gaza together with their three million Palestinian inhabitants. Israel has been building illegal settlements in these territories since 1967, which did

not stop even after the 1993 Oslo Accord. The expanding, armed Jewish settlements are proof positive that Israel never planned to give up these territories. In other words, the true borders of Israel encompass three million Palestinians who have no political and very few civil rights within these *de facto* borders. Is Israel then a democracy? Reverend Desmond Tutu, a leading opponent of South African apartheid, prefers to describe it as an apartheid society similar to the one that existed in his own country for more than forty years.

### **A Beleaguered State**

The Zionists deflect criticism from Israel by portraying it as a small country—a lamb amongst lions—whose very existence is threatened by hostile Arab armies. This image is hardly supportable.

Israel is a small country that packs a lot of military strength. Just consider the wars this country has waged against its neighbors. In the 1948-49 war, Israel fielded an army that was stronger and better equipped than all the Arab armies on the war front. As a result, Israel expanded its territory to 78 percent of historical Palestine, well beyond the 55 percent awarded by the UN Partition Plan. On October 29 1956, Israel invaded Egypt, in concert with Britain and France, and occupied all of Sinai and the Gaza Strip. Intense American pressure forced their withdrawal in March 1957. In June 1967, Israel launched a 'pre-emptive' war against Egypt, Syria and Jordan, and in less than six days occupied Sinai, Golan Heights, Gaza Strip, and West Bank. Only Sinai has been vacated so far. In March 1978, Israel invaded Lebanon, penetrating as far as ten miles into Lebanese territory, but withdrew in June of the same year. In June 1981, Israel launched an attack against Iraq to destroy a nuclear reactor under construction near Baghdad. Israel invaded Lebanon again in June 1982, advancing up to Beirut, and remained in occupation of parts of Southern Lebanon till May 2000. Is this the record of a small country, beleaguered, threatened by its neighbors?

How does one explain this paradox—a small country with such awesome offensive capability? Israel was conceived by its founding father, Theodor Herzl (*The Jewish State*, 30), as a "rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism." It was clear from the outset that Israel would be a praetorian state, an armed encampment, with weapons supplied by Europe and United States. According to a conservative estimate, Israel has received to date some 95 billion dollars of American economic assistance. [5] It has used this largesse mostly to buy military hardware, the latest in the American arsenal, occasionally even before it is available to the American military. Israel has drawn, and continues to draw, upon the world's most sophisticated pool of manpower—the Jewry of United States, Europe, and Russia. As if all this were not enough, this lamb amongst lions has the power to bring doom upon its Arab neighbors. It is the only country in the region with an arsenal of nuclear weapons.

How could the Arabs, backward, still reeling under the impact of colonialism, divided, their strength sapped, their development blocked by archaic monarchies, match the power of a messianic but modern state, wielding the power of the most advanced segment of core capital?

### **Coda**

A Martian political delegation returning to Earth in 2002 would observe how an anomalous detail from 1948 had now grown to threaten world peace. They might well credit a prescient ancestor who had foreseen all this at the very beginning.

That anomalous detail was the creation of Israel, an alien state implanted, with help from two successive imperialist powers, in the Islamic heartland. This was not a normal state. It was an imperialist creation, a colonial-settler enterprise launched in the twentieth century. Like all such enterprises before, it could only be implemented through ethnic cleansing, or it would have to construct an apartheid state—with the indigenous Palestinians tolerated as a class of disenfranchised workers. The ethnic cleansing was enforced during Israel's creation, and later, in 1967, when Israel expanded to include another three million Palestinians, it turned into an apartheid, more brutal than the one dismantled in South Africa.

After the Oslo Accord of 1993, it appeared that the Israeli apartheid was going to work. The PLO recognized

the state of Israel within 1967 borders, thereby conceding the right of Israel to 78 percent of historic Palestine. In a delusional state of mind, Yaser Arafat, the PLO chairman, had convinced himself that he could have the remaining 22 percent, and run it, not as a Bantustan, but as a state. The Israelis had different plans. This was clear to all but the purblind from Israel's ongoing-and accelerated-settlement building activity, in violation of the Oslo Accord itself. But this did not disturb Arafat's delusion; he was getting quite comfortable with the policing authority over his Bantustans. This delusion would not last. If Arafat was to retain leadership of the Palestinian movement, he would have to show more grit, which he did at Camp David by rejecting the Israeli offer of Bantustans. And that led to the second, bloodier Intifada.

Many Israelis-perhaps a majority-are now looking at their second preferred option. They are openly talking about a third, more massive round of ethnic cleansing that will get rid of all Palestinians, even those within Israel's 1967 borders. This will be the final solution of Israel's demographic problem. In the global conditions created by 9-11, when the Bush cabal openly embrace Israel's extremist agenda, this solution is gaining credibility. This cleansing will be launched in the fog of the war against Iraq. Two destinations for the cleansed Palestinians-at least, those who survive the cleansing-are being proposed. One is Jordan, whose King would be 'transferred' to another kingdom carved out of Saudi Arabia. The second favored site is the deserts of Iraq. The C-130 Transports are ready.

I am sure that even as these plans for ethnic cleansing are being developed, and their logistics worked out, there are others-in the scholarly branch of the Zionist enterprise-who are developing new theses to explain, justify, and morally validate this new demographic adjustment in the Middle East as another victory for Western civilization and, of course, world peace. I can imagine a conclave, consisting of Bernard Lewis, Thomas Friedman and Daniel Pipes-assisted by many lesser lights-vigorously debating the merits of the new Zionist theses that will sustain Israel through another millennium of hegemony over the Arab world.

#### **Footnotes:**

[1] Ironically, Sir James Balfour, one of the leading architects of the new state, in an earlier incarnation--as British prime minister-had introduced a bill to limit Jewish immigration into Britain. Ian J. Bickerton and Carla L. Klausner, *Arab-Israeli Conflict* (NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1998): 40.

[2] Paul Findley, *They Dare to Speak Out* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill and Company, 1985).

[3] Richard Curtiss, "[Support for Palestinians Growing](#)," *The Palestine Chronicle*, July 26, 2002:

[4] *The Independent*, October 9, 2002

[5] <http://www.wrmea.com/html/usaidtoisrael0001.htm>

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