

# Zionism: The Real Problem in the Middle East

A Review Article by **Bill Broderick**

## Armageddon

The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has been raging for 60 years with no end in sight. Alan Hart has written a book that challenges all your assumptions about a conflict that affects not only the two peoples directly involved but also, in many ways, events on the much wider world stage:

*The False Messiah*

(Volume 1 of *Zionism: the Real Enemy of the Jews*)

by Alan Hart

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Palestine, Hart reminds us, is the ancient site of Armageddon, the place where the final great world battle will be fought, according to Christian, Jewish and Muslim mythology. Certainly, it has the potential to involve the great powers of the world, especially those with nuclear weapons, in a war that could sound the death knell for modern civilization.

In this context, Hart mentions an episode in which Golda Meir appeared on the BBC's *Panorama* show when she was Prime Minister. At one point, as host of the program, he interrupted her to say: "Prime Minister, I want to be sure I understand what you're saying... You are saying that if ever Israel was in danger of being defeated on the battlefield, it would be prepared to take the region and even the whole world down with it?"

Without a moment's hesitation, Meir replied: "Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying."

Golda Meir was certainly prepared to fight for the establishment of the Zionist state. She was instrumental during the final months before Israel's declaration of statehood in raising money for the Haganah, the Zionist fighting force. Guns, tanks, planes were needed, but there was no money to buy them. On behalf of David Ben-Gurion, the leader of the Jewish Agency which constituted the Israeli government-in-waiting, she flew to America and in six weeks raised some \$50 million from America's Jews, an amount that was more than three times the entire oil revenue of Saudi Arabia in 1947—and twice the amount she had hoped to raise.

## Anti-Jewish?

Hart comes to his task with a vast amount of first-hand knowledge of the founding of Israel and the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinian people over the years. He enjoyed friendship with leaders on both sides, particularly Golda Meir (Mother Israel) and Yasser Arafat (Father Palestine). What he has to tell his readers shatters most of the illusions that have grown up around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and helps us to understand what has really happened and is happening in the Middle East. It also provides a clue to what must be done and who must do it, in order to bring about a resolution of that conflict.

Because of his subject matter, Hart is often accused of being anti-Semitic. At public appearances, when somebody makes such a charge, he produces a framed photo of Golda Meir inscribed in her own handwriting with these words: "To a good friend, Alan Hart." He then goes on to say: "Do you really think that this old lady was so stupid that she could not

have seen through me if I was anti-Jew?"

Hart writes that his position has been a matter of public record for many years. In his book *Arafat, Terrorist or Peacemaker?*, first published in the UK in 1984 and subsequently in America as *Arafat*, he wrote that he regarded the Jews, generally speaking, as the intellectual elite of the European civilization, and the Palestinians, generally speaking, as the intellectual elite of the Arab world. He went on to say that what Jews and Palestinians could do together in peace and partnership was the stuff that real dreams are made of. He even dared to suggest that together in peace and partnership Jews and Palestinian Arabs could give new hope and inspiration to the world.

On the other hand, Hart says, the Israeli-Arab conflict has the potential to bring about a revival of anti-Semitism because of what he claims is Israel's unfair treatment of the Palestinians. Also, the West could be drawn into a nuclear war because of Israel's policies. As he makes very clear, the establishment of Israel was supported by both the British and the Americans—but with the proviso that the civil and religious rights of the Palestinians would be protected.

Hart quotes from the book *Israel's Fatal Hour* by Yehoshafat Harkabi, Israel's longest serving Director of Military Intelligence:

*Israel is the criterion according to which all Jews will tend to be judged. Israel as a Jewish state is an example of the Jewish character, which finds free and concentrated expression within it. Anti-Semitism has deep and historical roots. Nevertheless, any flaw in Israeli conduct, which initially is cited as anti-Israelism, is likely to be transformed into empirical proof of the validity of anti-Semitism. It would be a tragic irony if the Jewish state, which was intended to solve the problem of anti-Semitism, was to become a factor in the rise of anti-Semitism. Israelis must be aware that the price of their*

*misconduct is paid not only by them but also Jews throughout the world.*

In 1917, Zionists prevailed upon the British government to issue a declaration of support for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. It came to be known as the "The Balfour Declaration" because it was articulated by Foreign Minister Arthur James Balfour in a short letter to Baron Lionel Rothschild, a leader of the British Zionist community, as follows (note the assurance regarding the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish Palestinians in bold lettering):

*I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations, which has been submitted to and approved by the Cabinet. His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being **clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.***

During the First World War (1914-1918), Turkey aligned with Germany against the Allies. In order that they might fight the Germans on the battlefields of Europe, the Allies (England, France, U.S.) enlisted the Arabs to fight on the Allied side against the Turkish Ottoman Empire. At the end of the war, the Arabs celebrated their victory and looked forward to independence from all foreign powers in a new United Syria. But their euphoria was short-lived. In 1920, Britain and France finally got around to making decisions in secret about the former Turkish Empire. France claimed the Mandates for ruling Lebanon and a separate Syria (minus Palestine). Britain was to have the Mandates for ruling Iraq and Palestine. The Mandates were ratified by the League of Nations.

Of course, Hart points out, neither in 1917 nor at any other time did Britain have any right to give Palestine away to anyone.

### **Zionism, Israel and the Deir Yassin Massacre**

The modern state of Israel was born on May 14, 1948, but its beginnings go back to the founding of Zionism and the World Zionist Organization (WZO) in 1897. Zionism's founder was Theodore Herzl, a Hungarian-born Jew who worked as a journalist and playwright in Vienna, the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was Herzl who convened the first Congress of the WZO at Basel, Switzerland, in 1897. When it ended, the published statement of Zionism's mission was declared to be "to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law."

Hart writes that Zionism's real and unproclaimed commitment was to the creation of a Jewish state. The difference between the two concepts, home and state, was profound. By implication, a Jewish "home" was something much less than a state, or for political and propaganda purposes could easily be presented as such—i.e. a recognized Jewish presence which, because it possessed no sovereignty, would not pose a threat to the well-being and rights of the indigenous Arab population of Palestine. The truth, he says, is that Zionism's founding fathers lied in public about their real purpose—because the Zionist enterprise required some, if not all, of the indigenous Arab inhabitants of Palestine to be dispossessed of their land, their homes and their rights. In other words, to achieve its objective Zionism had to commit a crime—that of ethnic cleansing.

In fact, ethnic cleansing began more than a month before Israel's declaration of statehood. In the predawn hours of April 9, 1948, a small force of 130 Israeli terrorist fighters (Irgun and Stern Gang members) conducted a massacre in the village of Deir Yassin, not far from Jerusalem. The intention had been simply to force the inhabitants from their homes, but a truck with loudspeakers had gone into a ditch and was out of action. When guards and then villagers, mostly old people, tried to fight back, everyone who had not managed to flee was killed. Between 107 and 120 unarmed Palestinian civilians, including women and children, were killed (other estimates put the casualties as high as 150).

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Deir Yassin was in part a counter-offensive to Palestinian attacks on Jewish settlements and on Jewish traffic on the roads leading into Jerusalem. However, the village had remained neutral and was not considered to be a threat by the Haganah.

Hart writes that unlike the extermination of the Jews of Europe, the slaughter of Arabs by Jews at Deir Yassin was not premeditated, it just happened. But it was born of a Zionist intention to dispossess the Arabs of Palestine of their homes, their land and their rights. Hart quotes a paragraph from Menachim Begin's book *The Revolt* which describes how well the slaughter at Deir Yassin served the Zionist cause:

*Panic overwhelmed the Arabs of Eretz (land of) Israel. Kolonia village, which had previously repulsed every attack of the Haganah, was evacuated overnight and fell without further fighting. Beit-Iska was also evacuated. These two places overlooked the road and their fall, together with the capture of Kastel by the Haganah, made it possible to keep open the road to Jerusalem. In the rest*

*of the country, too, the Arabs began to flee in terror, even before they clashed with Jewish forces... The legend of Deir Yassin helped us in particular in the saving of Tiberias and the conquest of Haifa... All the Jewish forces proceeded to advance through Haifa like a knife through butter. The Arabs began fleeing in panic, shouting Deir Yassin.*

### **Arafat's Peace Plan**

According to Hart, the truth represented in *Arafat, Terrorist or Peacemaker?* was this: "By the end of 1979... Yasser Arafat had done in principle everything that could be done on the Palestinian side at leadership level to prepare the ground for peace with Israel. It was a truth that Begin's Israel did not want to hear or be heard, but the facts supporting it were impressive, and were recognized as such by President Carter. He understood that Arafat really was serious about wanting to make peace on terms which any rational government and people in Israel would accept with relief."

The facts were as follows: Before 1979 was out, only months after Egypt's separate (and actually disastrous) peace with Israel, Arafat had persuaded the Palestine National Council (PNC), the Palestinian parliament-in-exile and the highest decision-making authority on the Palestinian side, to be ready to make an historic compromise for peace with Israel. The compromise was unthinkable to all Palestinians, but given Israel's military superiority in the region, it was, Arafat insisted, "a compromise they had to make if they were to obtain an acceptable minimum of justice."

The historic compromise that Arafat had persuaded the PNC to accept required the Palestinians to recognize Israel inside more or less its borders as they were on the eve of the 1967 war and make peace with that Israel in exchange for the return of less than 23 percent of the land that was rightfully theirs. Israel was also to pay suitable compensation to those who had lost their lands.

Put another way, peace on that basis, providing for Palestinians self-determination in a mini-state on the 23 percent of occupied land from which Israel would withdraw (the West Bank including Arab East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip), required the Palestinians to renounce for all time their claim to the other 77 percent of their land.

That was the basic "land for peace" arithmetic of the historic compromise, Hart writes. And it was in accordance with the letter and the spirit of UN Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967, which Israel had said it accepted and would honor. However, it took Arafat six long years to convince the 300 members of the PNC, in one-on-one discussions, to agree to the compromise and also, in so doing, agree to Israel's right to exist. In the end, when the votes were finally taken, they were 296 for the agreement, only 4 against.

In order to make the agreement work, Arafat needed a serious negotiator on the Israeli side who was prepared to do what all of Israel's leaders had vowed they would never do—recognize and negotiate with the PLO for the purpose of making peace on terms that, following an end to Israeli occupation of land seized in the 1967 war, would see the coming into being of a Palestinian state with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital. His hope was that Shimon Peres would be the next Prime Minister of Israel. But it was not to be.

Begin won the next election and Israel responded to Arafat's peace plan with two initiatives: a political one to block an attempt by President Carter to recognize the PLO and bring it into the negotiating process; and a military one—the invasion of Lebanon all the way to Beirut—to liquidate Arafat and his leadership colleagues and replace them with Israeli puppets. If Begin's Israel had achieved all of its invasion objectives, the puppets would have been installed in Jordan when King Hussein had been overthrown.

## Can Peace Be Achieved in the Middle East?

As it happened, Jews in America, while not great in numbers, had both the money and the influence to affect both U.S. policy and even the outcome of resolutions at the UN. A coterie of 26 U.S. senators, with money made available by Zionists and others, made the rounds of UN delegates to offer bribes and even threats in order to get them to vote yes on Resolution 181, a plan for the partition of Palestine between Jews and Arabs. The vote took place on November 29, 1947 with the required two-thirds in favor. As well, Jews in the U.S. were quite willing and able to finance whichever political party would do their bidding. Jewish or Zionist funding was a necessary fact of life in order for any party or presidential candidate to have a hope of being elected. The message to President Harry S. Truman was a simple one: if he wanted to be reelected, he needed to support the establishment of Israel as an independent state, regardless of the Palestinians and their rights. In the end, he capitulated.

In the months leading up to the founding of Israel, the United Nations was deliberating on a plan for UN trusteeship of Palestine that was specifically requested by the United States, in order to maintain peace in the Middle East under the partition plan as decided by UN Resolution 181. U.S. President Truman came under intense political and personal pressure to recognize the State of Israel as soon as independent statehood was proclaimed on May 14, 1948. The British mandate ended at 6 p.m. Washington time and the president's announcement was made at 6:11 p.m., even with the UN still in session. Thus,

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to the consternation of America's own delegate as well as to all others, the matter of trusteeship was taken out of the hands of the UN. Truman had secured reelection for himself and for his party—and the world has been saddled with Middle East unrest ever since.

Today Israel is a fact that cannot be undone. But the Palestinian people still cry out for justice. Nobody, neither Jew nor Arab, should be the victim of unfair and discriminatory treatment. The world was rightly outraged by the Nazi's treatment of the Jews during the Holocaust. The world should also be outraged by the Zionist's treatment of the Palestinians.

Britain and America between them created the mess that is Palestine and Israel. In so doing, they incurred the enmity of almost the whole Arab world. But world Jewry and Zionists had a big hand in it, too. The key to peace in the Middle East is for all concerned to recognize their responsibility for creating the mess and bringing pressure on Israel to accept the terms proposed by Yasser Arafat that will bring a measure of fairness, justice and peace, not only to the Jews of Israel but to the Palestinian people. But, as Hart says, it can only happen if the Jews of the world bring pressure on their own leaders and decision-makers to make it happen, with assistance perhaps from Britain and America.

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