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[The Hidden History of Zionism ~ The Four Myths](#)

By Ralph Schoenman | April 1988

It is not accidental that when anyone attempts to examine the nature of Zionism – its origins, history and dynamics – they meet with people who terrorize or threaten them. Quite recently, after mentioning a meeting on the plight of the Palestinian people during an interview on KPFK, a Los Angeles radio station, the organizers of the public meeting were deluged with bomb threats from anonymous callers.

Nor is it easy in the United States or Western Europe to disseminate information about the nature of Zionism or to analyze the specific events which denote Zionism as a political movement. Even the announcement on university campuses of authorized forums or meetings on the subject invariably engenders a campaign designed to close off discussion. Posters are torn down as fast as they are put up. Meetings are packed by flying squads of Zionist youth who seek to break them up. Literature tables are vandalized and leaflets and articles appear accusing the speaker of anti-Semitism or, in the case of those of Jewish origin, of self-hatred.

Vindictiveness and slander are so universally meted out to anti-Zionists because the disparity between the official fiction about Zionism and the Israeli state, on the one hand, and the barbarous practice of this colonial ideology and coercive apparatus, on the other, is so vast. People are in shock when they have an opportunity to hear or read about the century of persecution suffered by the Palestinians, and, thus, the apologists for Zionism are relentless in seeking to prevent coherent, dispassionate examination of the virulent and chauvinist record of the Zionist movement and of the state which embodies its values.

The irony of this is that when we study what the Zionists have written and said – particularly when addressing themselves – no doubt remains about what they have done or of their place in the political spectrum, dating from the last quarter of the 19th century to the present day.

Four overriding myths have shaped the consciousness of most people in our society about Zionism.

The first is that of “A land without a people for a people without a land.” This myth was sedulously cultivated by early Zionists to promote the fiction that Palestine was a remote, desolate place ready for the taking. This claim was quickly followed by denial of Palestinian identity, nationhood or legitimate entitlement to the land in which the Palestinian people have lived throughout their recorded history.

The second is the myth of Israeli democracy. Innumerable newspaper stories or television references to the Israeli state are followed by the assertion that it is the only “real” democracy in the Middle East. In fact, Israel is as democratic as the apartheid state of South Africa. Civil liberty, due process and the most basic human rights are by law denied those who do not meet racial, religious criteria.

The third myth is that of “security” as the motor force of Israeli foreign policy. Zionists maintain that their state must be the fourth largest military power in the world because Israel has been forced to defend itself against imminent menace from primitive, hate-consumed Arab masses only recently dropped from the trees.

The fourth myth is that of Zionism as the moral legatee of the victims of the Holocaust. This is at once the most pervasive and insidious of the myths about Zionism. Ideologues for the Zionist movement have wrapped themselves in the collective

shroud of the six million Jews who fell victim to Nazi mass murder. The bitter and cruel irony of this false claim is that the Zionist movement itself actively colluded with Nazism from its inception.

To most people it appears anomalous that the Zionist movement, which forever invokes the horror of the Holocaust, should have collaborated actively with the most vicious enemy ever faced by the Jews. The record, however, reveals not merely common interests but a deep ideological affinity rooted in the extreme chauvinism which they share.

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