

THE
ZIONIST
ILLUSION

HAIM BEN-ASHER

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This internal critique of Zionism challenges three notions: that the Jews are a nation; that exile is the main cause of their past suffering, and that Jewish history is made solely in Israel. Zionism is an illusion because it has failed to 'normalize' the Jewish condition. In particular, it has not eliminated anti-Semitism, but rather cultivates it in order to keep Jews within the fold.

Once independent, the State of Israel emptied the Middle East and North Africa of their Jewish populations and prevented large numbers of Soviet Jews from settling in North America, or anywhere else but Israel. Now the target is France, but French Jews, though massively Zionist, are reluctant to emigrate. Israel, it seems, cannot thrive and prosper without draining the Diaspora of its finances, its youth – indeed its very identity.

Israeli control of Jerusalem has not brought the Messianic age any closer. Rabbis used to worry that the Holocaust could mean that God abrogated His covenant with the Jews. Israel's victory in 1967 convinced them that the covenant still holds. The Holocaust has, however, encouraged Jewish paganism, as Jews adulate power and define themselves purely as an ethnic group: *Hitlerjuden*. The State of Israel claims to be the culmination of Jewish history, but its leaders insist that we are still in the rut of 1938.

The State of Israel is perfectly capable of defending itself and has no need of solidarity rallies in the Diaspora. Zionism allows the Jewish establishment to retain power, but reduces the Diaspora to a subordinate role. Yet Judaism was born and developed in exile. If Jews divest themselves of their siege mentality, Judaism can become a university for adults, without examinations or tuition fees, open to all.

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Troubador Publishing Ltd, 5 Weir Road, Kibworth Beauchamp, Leicester, LE8 0LQ
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