Review: Zionist Betrayal of Jews, From Herzl to Netanyahu

written by Donna Joss | February 18, 2020

Stanley Heller's new book may reveal no surprises to a few well-read scholars of the history of the Middle East. Many readers, however, who believe they know modern history will be surprised and disconcerted. To put it simply, Heller contends that Zionism has not been a good thing for the Jews and has, in fact, exacerbated Jewish suffering and especially antisemitism. And he backs up his claim with historical facts—many, many facts.

In his introduction Heller states that "…the assumption has been that while the Jewish state was bad for the Palestinians and for the Middle East, it has benefited the world's Jews." In fact, Heller asserts, "the Zionist political movement has been a disaster *for Jews themselves*" (p. 3).

Zionist organizations and individual Zionists, some of whose impacts have been all but forgotten by historians of the twenty-first century, are sought out and thoroughly investigated for their individual and collective impact on the status of Jews in the world of their times and of today. Heller does not neglect non-Jews either, such as Henry Ford and FDR, Anthony Eden and Harry Truman, all of whom played significant roles in the struggle for survival of Jews during and after WWII. Relevant historical figures, European, Israeli and American, are all explored objectively and without compromise. Heller surprises the reader with every chapter. Who would have thought that Theodore Herzl, the father of Zionism, once believed he might lead a movement to convert Austrian Jews to Christianity? Or that Herzl, a journalist, did nothing to support Alfred Dreyfus during his trial or later, even though Herzl's insistence on the necessity of a Jewish state was solidified by the Dreyfus experience?

Heller has a fascinating chapter in which he describes in detail the Zionist success in sabotaging and destroying the anti-Nazi boycott of the 1930s. According to Heller, "the Zionists saw the Nazi rise (to power) as "*an opportunity*" (46). They regarded the expanding repressions against German Jews as something they could exploit to help their "Palestine project" (p. 19). As detailed by Heller, the Transfer Agreement of 1933 was the final blow which finished off the boycott against Nazi Germany and ultimately provided the Zionist cause with both Jewish immigrants to Palestine and German goods purchased with money belonging to German Jews, goods that were ultimately re-sold to enrich the Israeli state. As Heller so succinctly states, "The Zionists scabbed on the boycott and broke it" (p. 21).

Lenni Brenner and Edwin Black have both written about the Transfer Agreement from anti-Zionist (Brenner) and Zionist (Black) perspectives. Heller introduces the writers and their books, providing a thorough analysis of each.

Well known authors the likes of Tom Segev and Eli Wiesel go head-to-head in Heller's book. He details the experience of Ken Livingstone, mayor of London from 2000 to 2008, in battling and eventually falling victim to clearly false accusations of antisemitism which lost him his place in Britain's Labour Party. Avraham Stern (of the notorious Stern Gang) and his collaboration with the Nazis is followed by Yitzhak Shamir and Uri Avnery, both of the Irgun Zionist military group, form another eye-opening chapter. The names are very familiar, their back-stories, for the most part, are not.

Into the 21st century, with Heller, we read of the firm admiration of Benjamin Netanyahu for Viktor Orbán and his close relationship with Donald Trump, irrespective of Trump's xenophobic rants and anti-Semitic dog whistles. Then Heller introduces us to Naftali Bennett, who was once sent by Netanyahu to defend Trump, and John Hagee, a "Christian Zionist" who believed that Hitler was a hunter sent by God to drive all the Jews home to Israel.

The final chapter in this book already filled with revelations should come as no surprise to the reader. Heller calls flat-out for Jews to reject Zionism as a solution to antisemitism and instead embrace a universal and common effort to reject all racisms.

Heller's book is definitely not a foray into rumor-mongering or conspiracy theory. Quite the opposite: every assertion Heller makes is backed up by impeccable footnote documentation. Most of the 300-plus references are available on the internet. In fact, his references comprise nearly one half of the total pages of the book. In spite of the foot-noting, it is refreshing to find that Heller's writing style is accessible, engaging, provocative and definitely not academic.

The book is brief, fewer than one hundred fifty pages plus references. Readers, however, will not be inclined to rush through it and put it aside. Time and a thorough reading (and sometimes re-reading) will be helpful to assimilate and integrate the information within. This is primarily because this book contradicts, deconstructs and destroys the myths and propaganda about the Zionist political movement and the creation of Israel that most readers will have been inundated with throughout their lifetimes and are still being hammered with. The book should become a standard reference resource for those readers interested in having a solid knowledge of historical facts as well as recent events to help them explain to themselves and others the genesis of past and present world events and attitudes.

Heller's book may be ordered from here.