

“Yes, Anti-Zionism Is Anti-Semitism”

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbigandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of Dec. 16, 2023. (A version of the article was posted at townhall.com on Dec. 12.)

By Dennis Prager

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—Imagine a group of people who work to destroy Italy because, they claim, Italy’s origins are illegitimate. Imagine further that these people maintain that, of all the countries in the world, only Italy doesn’t deserve to exist. Then imagine that these people vigorously deny that they are anti-Italian. Would you believe them?

Now substitute “Israel” for “Italy,” and you’ll understand the dishonesty and absurdity of the argument that one can be anti-Zionist—that is, against the existence of a Jewish state—but not be anti-Jew.

Yet, that is precisely what anti-Zionists say. They say that Israel’s existence is illegitimate. They don’t say this about any other country in the world, no matter how bloody its origins. And then they get offended when they’re accused of being anti-Jew.

How can they make this argument?

■ First, they change the topic.

They say it’s unfair to charge those who merely “criticize” Israel with being antisemitic. No one says criticism of Israel is antisemitic. But anti-Zionism isn’t criticism of Israel. Anti-Zionism is opposition to Israel’s existence.

Zionism is the name of the movement for the return of the Jews to their historic homeland. Over the past 3,000 years, there were only two independent states located in what is called Israel. Both were Jewish states, and invaders destroyed both. No Arab or Muslim or any other sovereign country ever existed in that land, which was given the name “Palestine” by the Romans so as to remove all memory of the Jewish state they destroyed in the year 70.

■ Second, anti-Zionists claim they can’t be anti-Jew because Zionism has nothing to do with Judaism.

That is the same as saying Italy has nothing to do with being Italian. Judaism has always consisted of three components: God, Torah and Israel (the peo-

ple Israel and the land of Israel). Israel is as much a part of Judaism as are God and the Bible. Moreover, the most pro-Israel, i.e. the most Zionist, Jews are the Orthodox, the most religious Jews. That there exists one tiny group of ultra-Orthodox Jews (Neturei Karta) that is anti-Zionist means nothing. They are as representative of Judaism as the Ku Klux Klan is of Christianity.

■ Third, anti-Zionists claim that Judaism is only a religion; therefore, Jews are only members of a religion, not a nation.

But the Jews are called a “nation” more than 100 times in the Bible. That is why there can be irreligious, secular and even atheist Jews—because Jews are not only a religion, but a people—a nation. No one thinks non-religious Jews are not Jews. There can be no atheist Christians because Christianity is a religion, not a nation.

■ Fourth, people point to anti-Zionist Jews to prove that anti-Zionism isn’t anti-Jewish.

That would be like pointing to Americans who gave Stalin the secrets to the atom bomb to argue that siding with the Soviet Union in the Cold War was not anti-American. Or, to provide another Jewish example, it would be like pointing Jews who eat pork on Yom Kippur to argue that eating pork on Yom Kippur is Jewish. What Jews do or believe is not always the same as Judaism.

■ Fifth, anti-Zionists claim that Israel is illegitimate because Zionism—and, therefore, Israel—is “racist.”

This is a libel. Half of Israel’s Jews are not even white, and anyone, of any race or ethnicity, can become a Jew. Furthermore, one in five Israelis isn’t a Jew. And these Israeli non-Jews, mostly Arab Muslims, have the same rights as Jewish Israelis. As for Israel’s presence in the West Bank and Gaza (Israel completely abandoned Gaza in 2005), that has nothing to do with race and everything to do with security. It is because the Palestinians and other Arabs tried to destroy Israel in 1967 and lost the war.

If the Palestinians would stop killing Israelis, Israel would have no problem with a “two-state solution.” But Palestinians have rejected offers to have their own state on four separate occasions since 1947. That is the only reason they don’t have their own state.

And why have they always rejected having a Palestinian state? Because the only state they would accept is one that eradicates Israel. They have therefore been solely dedicated to destroying the Jewish state, not in having their own state alongside Israel.

■ Sixth, and finally, anti-Zionists claim that Israel’s origins are illegitimate.

Of all the world’s 200-plus countries, the only country anti-Zionists declare illegitimate is also the only Jewish one. That’s pretty much all you need to know about their motives.

Why don't they make this claim about Pakistan? In 1947, nine months before the establishment of Israel, India was partitioned into a Muslim state (Pakistan) and a Hindu state (India), just as Palestine was partitioned into a Jewish state (Israel) and an Arab one (Palestine).

But, unlike Israel, no Pakistan had ever existed. And, unlike Israel's founding, which created about 700,000 Jewish refugees from Arab lands and about 700,000 Arab refugees from what became Israel, the founding of Pakistan created about seven *million* Muslim refugees from India and about seven *million* Hindu refugees from Pakistan. And, while the highest estimate of Arab deaths in the fighting that took place when Israel was established is 10,000, the number of deaths as a result of Pakistan's creation is around one million.

So why is Israel's legitimacy challenged while Pakistan's isn't? The only possible answer is because Israel is Jewish.

Of course, not all anti-Zionists hate all Jews. But, if you seek to destroy Italy, you don't have to hate every Italian to be anti-Italian. Not every anti-American hates all Americans, but they are still called anti-American. If you seek to destroy the one Jewish state, you don't have to hate every Jew to be called anti-Jew. And the name for that is antisemite.