

"Anti-Zionism = Anti-Semitism"

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

". . . You declare, my friend, that you do not hate the Jews, you are merely 'anti-Zionist.' And I say, let the truth ring forth from the high mountain tops, let it echo through the valleys of God's green earth: When people criticize Zionism, they mean Jews--this is God's own truth.

"Antisemitism, the hatred of the Jewish people, has been and remains a blot on the soul of mankind. In this we are in full agreement. So know also this: anti-Zionist is inherently antisemitic, and ever will be so.

"Why is this? You know that Zionism is nothing less than the dream and ideal of the Jewish people returning to live in their own land. The Jewish people, the Scriptures tell us, once enjoyed a flourishing Commonwealth in the Holy Land. From this they were expelled by the Roman tyrant, the same Romans who cruelly murdered Our Lord. Driven from their homeland, their nation in ashes, forced to wander the globe, the Jewish people time and again suffered the lash of whichever tyrant happened to rule over them.

"The Negro people, my friend, know what it is to suffer the torment of tyranny under rulers not of our choosing. Our brothers in Africa have begged, pleaded, requested--DEMANDED the recognition and realization of our inborn right to live in peace under our own sovereignty in our own country.

"How easy it should be, for anyone who holds dear this inalienable right of all mankind, to understand and support the right of the Jewish People to live in their ancient Land of Israel. All men of good will exult in the fulfilment of God's promise, that his People should return in joy to rebuild their plundered land.

This is Zionism, nothing more, nothing less.

"And what is anti-Zionist? It is the denial to the Jewish people of a fundamental right that we justly claim for the people of Africa and freely accord all other nations of the Globe. It is discrimination against Jews, my friend, because they are Jews. In short, it is antisemitism.

"The antisemite rejoices at any opportunity to vent his malice. The times have made it unpopular, in the West, to proclaim openly a hatred of the Jews. This being the case, the antisemite must constantly seek new forms and forums for his poison. How he must revel in the new masquerade! He does not hate the Jews, he is just 'anti-Zionist'!

"My friend, I do not accuse you of deliberate antisemitism. I know you feel, as I do, a deep love of truth and justice and a revulsion for racism, prejudice, and discrimination. But I know you have been misled--as others have been--into thinking you can be 'anti-Zionist' and yet remain true to these heartfelt principles that you and I share.

Let my words echo in the depths of your soul: When people criticize Zionism, they mean Jews--make no mistake about it."

***From M.L. King Jr., "Letter to an Anti-Zionist Friend," Saturday Review_XLVII (Aug. 1967), p. 76.
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