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Emperor Bibi will have to wait

Zionism is an anti-Semitic credo. It always was. The founding father himself, Viennese author Theodor Herzl, wrote several stories with a clear anti-Semitic bent.

These stories aren't taught in Israel. For Herzl, Zionism wasn't just a movement designed to transfer people from one country to another, but a means of transforming the wretched Diaspora Jews into upright toilers of their own land. Herzl traveled to Russia to persuade its anti-Semitic leaders, the pogrom organizers, to support his plan. He promised them he'd remove the Jews from Russia.

One of the basic tenets of Zionist ideology was that only in a Jewish state could Jews straighten their backs and lead a normal life. Their slogan called for inverting the social pyramid, to base it on farmers and laborers instead of bankers and middlemen.

When I was a kid in British Mandatory Palestine, everything we learned was steeped in deep contempt for Diaspora Jews who preferred to stay overseas. It was obvious that they were inferior to us in every possible way. The height of this trend was reached in the early '40s with a small group nicknamed the Canaanites. They declared that we actually were a new "Hebrew" nation that had no ties with Jews overseas. When the horrific scale of the Holo-

caust became known, these voices quieted down, though not completely.

The anti-Semites, for their part, always preferred the Zionists over other Jews. Adolf Eichmann said he preferred dealing with the Zionists since they were of a "better biological element" than other Jews. Today too, Jew-haters everywhere applaud Israel as proof that they aren't anti-Semitic. Israeli diplomats don't miss a chance to exploit this support. They love the far right.

This never interfered with Israel's exploiting the support of global Jewry. There was once a joke that God divided his grace justly between Arabs and Israelis. The Arabs got oil and the Israelis got American Jews.

When Israel was established, the state desperately needed money, literally to buy bread for the next month. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion was persuaded to fly to America in search of Jewish funds. But a problem arose: Ben-Gurion was a fervent Zionist and was determined to convince Jews to leave everything and immigrate to Israel. His advisers worked hard to persuade him not to let the word "immigration" pass his lips.

These relations persist to this day. Israelis secretly scorn American Jews for preferring fleshpots over life as upright citizens in a Jewish state, but they demand their unreserved

political support. Most U.S. Jewish organizations indeed deliver such support; they have immense clout in Washington. AIPAC is considered the second most powerful lobby, topped only by the gun lobby.

Unfortunately, the relations between Israel and American Jews create problems that can no longer be smoothed over. The latest outburst came from Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely, who in an interview maliciously attacked American Jews. She said American Jews don't send their sons to the military, so these Jews can't fathom the mindset of Israelis with their soldier sons.

This is an old accusation. I remember seeing leaflets that had been scattered by Nazi planes over American lines in France during World War II. They showed an obese Jew with a hooked nose smoking a fat cigar while fondling a blonde woman. "While you shed your blood in Europe the Jew is raping your wife at home!" said the leaflet.

The United States of course ended the draft a long time ago. The U.S. military now consists of volunteers from the lower classes. Jews don't belong to those classes, making Hotovely's accusation total nonsense. She was loudly condemned but not fired, leaving her in charge of all Israeli diplomats around the world.

This incident was but

one of many in the relations between the two communities. The basic problem is that the entire edifice of the relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jews is based on a lie – that we all belong to the same nation. Reality has long separated us. The truth is, Jews in Israel are a new nation formed by the spiritual, geographic and social reality of this new country, just as Americans differ from the British and the British from Australians. Both sides have a strong sense of mutual belonging, a mutual heritage and family ties. But they are different.

The sooner both sides formally recognize this, the better. American Jews can support Israel (just as Irish Americans support Ireland), but they owe no loyalty to Israel and they don't have to pay a tax to support us.

Israel, for its part, can assist Jews in trouble anywhere, letting them join us, welcoming them. But we don't belong to the same nation. Here in Israel we consist of a nation made up of Israel's citizens. Jews in America and other countries belong to the nations they live among, as well as to the ethnic-religious community of Jews around the world.

Benjamin Netanyahu would like to see himself as a Queen Victoria, who was also empress of India. He wants to be king and emperor – a king of Israel and emperor of the Jews. He isn't.