

Britain's Jewish Community and the Thrust of Political Zionism

Anti-Semitism. No individual can properly swear allegiance to two states - one in the West and one in the East

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It is difficult to argue with the result of a recent poll of British Jews that because of anti-Semitism there is but a questionable future for them, as a community, either within the United Kingdom or in the rest of Europe.

However, that situation is entirely self-imposed, and rectifiable. In the United States where there is today the largest Jewish population in the world, members of that cohort clearly define themselves first and foremost as American citizens with a primary duty towards the land of their birth and upbringing - with any allegiance towards the state of Israel being one of a subsidiary nature only.

American Jews are immensely proud of their country and the majority also of their religion, and are not diminished in any way either by the insignificant minority that emigrate to Israel or by the number who marry out of their faith - or by US foreign policy, or by political lobbies such as AIPAC. They recognise that which many British Jews do not - that no individual can properly swear allegiance to two states - one in the West and one in the East.

In Britain today there is a dichotomy imposed by a section of the Jewish community to show indiscriminate support for the state of Israel regardless of its continuous violation of international law and the human rights provisions of both the Geneva Conventions and the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

Members of the Jewish communities of London, Manchester and elsewhere are torn between the Political Zionist movement of a secular state which they are exhorted by their peers to unquestioningly support but which arrogantly acts against the very tenets of Judaism; against democratic principles - and against their own conscience. The majority are very aware that the subjugation and dispossession of the Muslim Arab communities in former Palestine makes a travesty of Jewish ethics and religious belief but many are too afraid of being ostracised if they speak out.

Others are ashamed and saddened to recognise the similarities to their own family history of the pogroms of Eastern Europe of just a hundred years ago when their own grandparents were persecuted and forced to leave the lands of their birth.

There is no necessity for any Jewish family to leave Britain but there is an imperative to openly condemn any state that arrogantly and continuously violates human rights, in their name. A failure to do so automatically means an identification with that state and a pressure by the rest of society for them to join it.

There is a clear and voluntary choice. That is, whether to opt to live in a European democracy or in the Middle East. There are many who believe that the latter is the most dangerous place in the world for anyone, but that depends on your understanding of justice, freedom and democracy – and, of course, your allegiances.

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