

# American Zionism

By Jerry Klinger

## Confused in Babylon

*"A great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself from within."*

- William Durant (Author of the History of Civilization)

Around 459 BCE, Ezra, a priestly scribe, led an estimated 5,000 Jewish Babylonian exiles back to Israel. The vast majority of the exiled Jews chose to remain in exile.

A "Jewish solution" to the *Jewish question* electrified Jewish thought in Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It rocketed across the Atlantic to America. Wherever Jews lived, in any country, on any continent, in any situation, "*Der Judenstaat*" came as a dream, a hope or a terrible threat.

After thousands of years of denial, of waiting for the Messiah, of hoping for redemption or simple toleration, an assimilated Austro/Hungarian Jew had said enough. The only solution for the Jew, he contended, is to recognize that they will never be truly accepted. The Jew will always be the outcast in exile. "Above all, I recognized the emptiness and futility of trying to 'combat' anti-Semitism," he wrote. They must become a normal people. The solution to the *Jewish problem* is Jewish self-determination, in their ancient homeland, he asserted. The ancient homeland was Israel. The man was Theodor Herzl.

Herzl knew virtually nothing of the Sephardic Jewish community. He knew nothing of Ethiopian, Indian or Jews who lived in the Oriental world. He primarily spoke of teeming masses of desperate European Jews. He recognized that liberalism failed to change the world. Herzl believed, for the Jew, there was no alternative.

Masses of Eastern European Jews were migrating to America. But to Herzl, America was another illusory temporary home. It was a social experiment that he only vaguely understood. Herzl believed that the American Jewish experience would eventually, become what it had always been – not a hoped for New World, the new Zion, but a delusion. Anti-Semitism would assert itself. He felt anti-Semitism would be the real future, for American Jewry, much as it had been and would horrifically be, for European Jewry.

The return to Israel was but a dream. Herzl's vision was summed up in a single sentence. *If you dream it, it need not be a fairytale.* His message was **believe**. Herzl's message became a secular Jewish faith and even a principle of religious faith for some. By the end of the first year of the publication of "*The Jewish State*, Zionism had grown to over 800 clubs and 100,000 members.

Herzl called for the first Zionist Congress. They met in 1897, in an opera house, in Basel, Switzerland. Originally the Congress planned to assemble in Munich. A concerted effort

by the State recognized communal German Jewish religious leaders of Munich, deeply and passionately opposed to the Zionist Congress, drove them away.

The religious leadership believed that the Zionists were anti-religious and evil. They were rising against God and Jewish tradition for not having faith to wait for the promised redemption which would come in the near future. Germany, advanced, cultured and developed was the Zion of the present. Herzl was not the Messiah. It was not up to a group of self-proclaimed representatives of the Jewish people to declare an end to the Jewish exile, an end to the *Jewish question*. The end to the *Jewish question* was up to G-D alone, they asserted.

Secondly, but perhaps the true primary unspoken truth, they were deeply troubled and fearful that the hard won emerging toleration that blessed German Jewry would be lost in accusations of false or dual loyalty. Ancient accusations might once again be brought forward; the Jew was of two faces, untrustworthy, not loyal to the State, an enemy from within.

The Zionist leadership, wishing to avoid what could have been the first and only Zionist Congress' birth into disastrous, destructive contention, thought prudence the better part of valor. They hastily relocated the Congress to the more tolerant atmosphere of Basel.

To believe in Zion is the meaning of the word Zionism. Zion is a term for Jerusalem and more specifically a pre-Jewish fortification in Jerusalem. The Austrian Jewish publisher Nathan Birnbaum coined Zionism as a descriptive noun for the Jewish national movement. He was the founder of the first nationalist Jewish students' movement *Kadimah*, through his journal *Selbstemanzipation (Self Emancipation)* in 1890.<sup>1</sup> (In one of the many great ironies of modern Zionism, Birnbaum turned against Herzl's political Zionism. Finding his spiritual self, within deeply conservative, ultra Orthodox Judaism, he became the secretary-general of the anti-Zionist ultra-orthodox movement of Agudat Israel.)

*Zionism is the Jewish national movement of rebirth and renewal in the land of Israel - the historical birthplace of the Jewish people. The yearning to return to Zion, the biblical term for both the Land of Israel and Jerusalem, has been the cornerstone of Jewish religious life since the Jewish exile from the land two thousand years ago, and is embedded in Jewish prayer, ritual, literature and culture.*<sup>2</sup>

Herzl's message carried to American shores. The ideas took hold and flowered first in the immigrating teeming masses of Russian, Polish and Lithuanian Jewry, not in New York as expected, but in Chicago, Illinois. The Midwestern American landscape had already been furrowed and fertilized for Zionism, not by Jews, by a Christian fundamentalist William Blackstone. His belief was centered in his faith.

*Chicago Zionism's first champion was William Eugene Blackstone, an evangelical layman and successful real estate entrepreneur who was convinced that the*

*restoration of the Jews to Palestine was a critical forerunner to the return of the Christian Messiah. In 1888, Blackstone traveled with his daughter to Palestine. It confirmed his belief that the Jews were "a people chosen by God to manifest His power and His love to ... a world steeped in deepest idolatry."*

*In 1891, Blackstone drew up a petition calling for the creation of a national homeland in Palestine for the 2 million oppressed Jews of Russia. "According to God's distribution of nations," Blackstone's petition read, "[Palestine] is their home – an inalienable possession from which they were expelled by force. ... Let us now restore them to the land of which they were so cruelly despoiled by our Roman ancestors. More than 400 prominent individuals signed Blackstone's appeal, including the publisher of the Chicago Tribune and Melville W. Fuller, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. The petition was submitted to President Benjamin Harrison."<sup>3</sup>*

The first Jewish American Zionist organization was in Chicago, Illinois. It was organized in the mid 1890's. It was called the Chicago Zion Society.

Zionism, in America, was bitterly opposed by the American Reform Movement. It was also bitterly opposed by the American Orthodox movements. Most American Jews were relatively recent immigrants who chose to vote with their feet for Israel or America. They chose America. They were unsure and insecure of their place in America. America was a confusing conundrum to them. Compared to their European experience America was a truly *Goldene Medina*. So what if a few anti-Semites did not like them. They knew and had experienced anti-Semitism before. But in America it was different – they were free to be Jews or not be Jews if they chose to. The majority chose to be Jews clinging to their communal identity. Over time, the Americanizing experience permitted the generations that followed to overwhelmingly shed their European Jewish separateness and religiosity for a new American identity. It was an identity characterized by compromise. It was an identity, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that became the dominant Jewish religious identifier – Conservative Judaism. Conservative Judaism is in sharp decline in America today.

Zionism, for most American Jews, was the dream of only a very few before World War I. The American Zionist movement by 1910 could claim less than 10,000 members out of 2,000,000 American Jews.

An extraordinary American assimilated Jew from Kentucky changed the course of American Zionism. Because of him active Zionist Jewish membership rose to over two hundred thousand in the next two decades. One of the greatest American legal minds of his time, he was the first Jew to sit on the American Supreme Court. Ironically, he was a descendent of the heretical, ignominious, Frankists who were dedicated to the destruction of conventional Judaism. His name was Louis Brandeis.

Brandeis was introduced to Zionism by the editor of a Boston Jewish Weekly, Jacob de Haas. Haas was a follower of Theodor Herzl. Brandeis quickly recognized the importance of Zionism, taking a leadership position in the Federation of American Zionists. World

War I changed the center of the World Zionist movement from Berlin to London and then to America.

Between 1914-1918, Brandeis headed the Provisional Executive Committee for Zionist Affairs in New York. He traveled, spoke and wrote extensively on Zionism. He defined his belief and the definition of American Zionism as national self-determination and freedom for Jews to develop a homeland in Palestine. To Brandeis and to millions of American supporters because of him, Zionism was seen as compatible with American values and patriotism. It was O.K. It was right. It was proper to be both an American and a Zionist. It was proper for American Jews to help others Jews. A good American helped their co-religionists anywhere in the world, or the people in the old homeland, An American Jew is as free to help another just as an Irish-American, German-American can. A good American promotes Democracy, liberty, freedom of choice and the human potential.

Brandeis delivered an address in 1915, Zionism:

*"is not a movement to remove all the Jews of the world compulsorily to Palestine.... It is essentially a movement to give to the Jew more, not less freedom... to live at their option either in the land of their fathers or in some other country; a right which members of small nations as well as of large, which Irish, Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, or Belgian, may now exercise as fully as Germans or English. Zionism seeks to establish in Palestine, for such Jews as choose to go and remain there, and for their descendants, a legally secured home, where they may live together and lead a Jewish life, where they may expect ultimately to constitute a majority of the population, and may look forward to what we should call home rule.*

*The Zionists seek to establish this home in Palestine because they are convinced that the undying longing of the Jews for Palestine is a fact of deepest significance; that it is a manifestation in the struggle for existence by an ancient people which has established its right to live, a people whose three thousand years of civilization ha produced a faith, culture and individuality which enable it to constitute largely in the future, as it has in the past, to the advance of civilization; and that it is not a right merely but a duty of the Jewish nationality to survive and develop. They believe that only in Palestine can Jewish life be fully protected from the forces of disintegration; that there alone can the Jewish spirit reach its full and natural development; and that by securing for those Jews who wish to settle there the opportunity to do so, not only those Jews, but all Jews will be benefited, and that the long perplexing Jewish Problem will, at last, find solution."<sup>4</sup>*

Brandeis argued effectively and vociferously, American Jews are free of the anti-Semitic canard of dual loyalty.

Jews by nature are a contentious, fractious argumentative people. The biblical reference is a "stiff necked people".<sup>5</sup> In the case of Zionism it frequently meant, one set of Jews

cannot agree or even get along with another set of Jews. American Zionism fractionated and has remained fractionated into different parochial definitions and objectives from the beginning.

Contemporary Zionism is a shadow of the old Zionist movement in size and support among American Jews. The formerly largest American Zionist organization, ZOA, the Zionist Organization of America still claims about 30,000 members nationwide but ...the number of offices and local chapters has diminished significantly. American Zionism is ageing and some say even dying as the World War II generation, the generation who knew and experienced the Holocaust, passes away. Sixty years after the creation of the State of Israel by the United Nations partition vote, Nov. 29, 1947, American Zionists and American Jews do not speak with one voice. American Jews, once near unanimity about the necessity of Zionism and safety for all Jewry, are no longer largely concerned with Zionism or vociferously support its efforts. American Jewry does not see itself as being a part of a Jewish people. Most American Jews see themselves as Jews by religion. They view Israeli Jews as Israelis.

What is modern American Zionism? How do the various American Zionist organizations define themselves and what they do? Simplistic perhaps, but accurate none the less, using the mainline American Zionist organization's *mission statements and definitions of about us* helps provide the definitions."<sup>6</sup>

The largest American Zionist organizations are:

1. The Zionist Organization of America (ZOA)
2. The American Zionist Movement (AZM)
3. The Jewish National Fund (JNF)
4. Mercaz (the Zionist membership organization of the Conservative Movement)
5. Religious Zionists of America (RZA)
6. The Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA)
7. Hadassah
8. Baltimore Zionist District (BZD)

ZOA – "the ZOA today works to strengthen US-Israeli relations, through educational activities, public affairs programs, working every day on Capitol Hill, and by combating anti-Israel bias in the media, textbooks, and on campuses."<sup>7</sup>

AZM – "The mission of the American Zionist Movement is to strengthen the connection of American Jews with Israel; develop their appreciation of the centrality of Israel to

Jewish life worldwide; deepen their understanding of Israeli society and the challenges it faces; encourage travel, long-term visits and Aliyah to Israel; and to facilitate dialogue, debate and collective action to further Zionism in the United States and abroad."<sup>8</sup>

JNF – "The Jewish National Fund is the caretaker of the land of Israel, on behalf of its owners - Jewish people everywhere. Turning the dream into reality."<sup>9</sup>

Mercaz – "The mission of Mercaz USA ... is the Zionist Organization of the Conservative Movement, representing Conservative Judaism within the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Israel. MERCAZ USA sees Zionism as an invaluable tool for strengthening Jewish identity and combating assimilation. It calls for linking Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora with Israel through tourism, Jewish education, Hebrew language study, "people-to-people" partnerships, short-and long-term Israel programs and Aliyah.<sup>10</sup> Religious Zionism – "The Religious Zionists of America (RZA), the American branch of World Mizrachi – Hapoel Hamizrachi movement, is an ideological and educational organization that aims to instill in the American Jewish community a commitment to Religious Zionism.

Religious Zionism is an ideology based on the synthesis of a Jewish religious and national outlook and is dedicated to the preservation of Jewish political freedom, the enhancement of Jewish religious life in the land of Israel, and the promotion of Aliyah.

In a world of shifting commitments to Zionism, the RZA is the sole organization whose singular mission is to be an engine of pro-Israel advocacy, educational programming, and the driving force behind the organized leadership of the Orthodox community in its quest for activities on behalf of the State of Israel."<sup>11</sup>

ARZA – "the Association of Reform Zionists of America - the Zionist arm and voice of the Reform Movement in the United States - endeavors to make Israel fundamental to the sacred lives and Jewish identity of Reform Jews. As a Zionist organization, ARZA champions activities that further enhance Israel as a pluralistic, just and democratic Jewish state."<sup>12</sup>

Hadassah – "Committed to the centrality of Israel based on the renaissance of the Jewish people in its historic homeland, Hadassah promotes the unity of the Jewish people. In Israel, Hadassah initiates and supports pace-setting health care, education and youth institutions, and land development to meet the country's changing needs. In the United States, Hadassah enhances the quality of American and Jewish life through its education and Zionist youth programs, promotes health awareness, and provides personal enrichment and growth for its members."<sup>13</sup>

BZD - The Baltimore Zionist District (BZD) is the largest grassroots pro-Israel organization of its kind in the United States. We welcome everyone to be part of our dynamic and spiritual connection to our Jewish homeland. We pride ourselves for creating an incredible lifelong bond between the individual and the State of Israel. BZD participates, supports and promotes all facets of Israeli life. From missions to Israel to

cultural gatherings to educational programs, the Baltimore Zionist District leads the way!  
We invite you to become part of our mishpacha!<sup>14</sup>



Mercaz and Hadassah provided definitions of Zionism. The other organizations assume that the term Zionism is inherently understood. It is not understood. A single definition of Zionism does not exist among American Zionists. Aliyah is mentioned but it is not central to all groups of American Zionism. Until just recently, the American Reform movement did not promote or encourage Aliyah. *Most significantly, the concept of the unity of the Jewish people is universally absent. The term "the Jewish National movement" is not noticeably absent; it is considered politically incorrect.*

JNF does not define Zionism. JNF is and has been the practical application of Zionism. A 1995 Israeli Supreme Court decision requires that the government of Israel must sell (or lease on a similar basis as is done for Israeli Jews) land acquired by JNF to Israeli Arabs. JNF's *custodianship of the land for its owners the Jewish people* has been brought into contradiction. Non-Jewish Israelis and non Jews, including Arabs, are permitted to acquire land in Israel. Jews and Israelis are specifically prohibited from acquiring land in Arab countries, especially in the Palestinian Authority areas.<sup>15</sup> The central mission of acquiring land purchased from money accumulated through its famous blue boxes has virtually ended. JNF does not buy land over the green line though it did actively buy lands when there was no green line or border for Israel.<sup>16</sup> JNF's focus today is on building and improving the social and infrastructure of Israel within the green line.

American Zionism sees Israel as a central redemptive, moral and spiritual link to the meaning of being Jewish in America. Implied is the question, should there be no Israel what would be the meaning of American Jewry?

American Zionists sees themselves as a line of defense in the battle for the non-Jewish world to understand why Israel is important and should be supported. Much American Zionist effort is focused on helping Americans, American politicians, and especially American Jews understand why Israel is important.

Israel recently recognized a fundamental mistake dating back to Ben Gurion. Zionism is not inherently understood, valued or appreciated by simply living in Israel. Osmosis of what is Zionism and why it is important does not transmit automatically. It must be learned. Two years ago, an important Knesset Law was passed – the Herzl Law. The Law created the Herzl Council. The Council is a commission under the Knesset comprised of 21 leading Israeli educators, political and military leaders. It is designed to begin a process of educating young Israelis on Zionism – who was Herzl and what did he do? A shockingly large percentage of grade school level Israeli children did not know or understand their own story. Implementation of the Law in Israel has been spotty, characterized by cynicism and apathy.

American Jewish young are not any better. In America, a Herzl Law does not exist requiring all Jews to learn about Herzl. Zionism is randomly and poorly taught in Jewish schools and Sunday school programs. Zionism is relegated to a secondary status; a small section in text books linked to the truncated and sterilized teaching about the Holocaust. Too many American parents do not want their children "traumatized" by the Holocaust story. Zionism is buried under the crushing needs to simply teach why remain a Jew to the minority of American Jewish youth getting any Jewish education.

The process of re-establishing meaning to Zionism, to a new generation, in both the U.S. and Israel, is struggling.

Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on your point of view, Herzl's warnings of the permanence of anti-Semitism is proving true again in Europe. Anti-Semitism is gaining in legitimacy there. In the U.S. anti-Semitism is still considered a social and societal negative instead anti-Semitism is manifested by growing *anti-Israelism*. Former President of the United States Jimmy Carter is a primary advocate of the new perception. The Carter Institute is heavily funded by Saudi petro-dollars.

American Zionism is self focused and insular. It does not actively teach Americans that the re-growth of virulent anti-Semitism outside of America is a threat to American Jews. American Zionism does not generally promote the unity of the Jewish people. American Zionism does address the resurfacing accusations of dual loyalty. A nagging question emerges, does American Zionism fight and support Israel for Zionist reasons or for self-preservation reasons.

American Zionists refute history but quietly acknowledge a reality of concern. With the rebirth of European anti-Semitism fueled by virulent, vicious Muslim and Arab hate directed at Jews generally, American Jews say "no it can never be here" Quietly they worry, could Herzl have been right? Arab petro dollars and oil are powerful, frightening anti-Jewish tools that Israel cannot counter easily.

A recent poll conducted by the ADL confirmed reemerging attitudes towards Jews in Europe:

*"Fifty percent of Europeans in six countries believe that Jews are more loyal to Israel than to their home country; 34.5 percent agree that Jews have too much financial and business clout; and 43 percent said Jews talk too much about the Holocaust, according to a poll released yesterday by the Anti-Defamation League.... ADL National Director Abraham Foxman called the questioning of Jewish loyalty the most distressing, disturbing, and frightening issue, as it was liable to fuel anti-Semitic incidents.*

*"Millions of Europeans continue to accept a wide range of traditional anti-Semitic stereotypes and conspiracy theories, including the charge that Jews are more loyal to Israel than to their home country."<sup>17</sup>*

American Zionist alliances with the strongest voices supporting Israel, Christian Fundamentalists, are viewed with distance, even disdain and fear of proselytization. American Zionists and Jews feel threatened by the deep religious conviction and support of Israel by Christian Fundamentalism. Only those American Zionists with the strongest sense of who they are as Jews are not threatened by Christian Fundamentalist support for Israel, the Religious Zionists. Former Knesset member Rabbi Benny Alon or Ron Nachman, the mayor of Ariel, for example, are two who reach out to Christian Fundamentalists when American Zionists do not. They receive support both politically in America and financially in Israel for their respective communities.

Golda Meir was asked, by a moral relativist reporter, why does Israel buy weapons from apartheid South Africa? Her response was simple. "I will buy arms from the Devil if it will help Israel." American Zionists are generally not willing to make such a pact on behalf of Israel.

American Zionists have been sending their young to Israel for free trips through the Birth Right programs. The BZD has been very active in this effort. For most young American Jews the trips to Israel are a welcome diversion that actually helps create a bond with Israel and reinforces their identities as Jews as defined by that experience. For other young Jews, it is a pure junket. The long term benefits of the program are encouraging but still debatable.

American Zionism and Israeli Zionism have long had different perspectives. The differences are best illustrated by the conflict between Louis Brandeis and Chaim Weizmann the first President of Israel. Weizmann commented about Brandeis.

*"Justice Brandeis, as I have remarked, I first met at the Actions Committee Conference in London, in June 1919. He was on his way to Palestine – his first visit – and could stay in London only a couple of days. He was accompanied by Mr. Jacob de Haas, to whom he referred as his "teacher in Zionism."*

*...Brandeis, too, was a Puritan: upright, austere, of a scrupulous honest and implacable logic. These qualities sometimes made him hard to work with; like Wilson he was apt to evolve theories, based on the highest principles, from his inner consciousness, and then expect the facts to fit in with them. If the facts failed to oblige, so much the worse for the facts. Indeed, the conflicts which developed between Brandeis and ourselves were not unlike those which disturbed Wilson's relations with his European colleagues when he first had to work closely with them.*

*...Justice Brandeis, he was of the opinion that "political Zionism" had very little more – if anything – to do. The political chapter of the movement might therefore be considered as closed....*

*De Haas produced elaborate plans for the up building of Palestine which seemed to us both vague and fantastic. But we know that much would depend on our American friends, and were anxious not to hurt their susceptibilities.*

*I tried to give Brandeis as accurate a picture of Palestine as I could; above all, I warned him that he would find a poor, under populated, underdeveloped,*

*neglected country, with a very small Jewish population, ravaged by four years of war, and almost completely cut off from the outside world... Brandeis's stay in Palestine did not exceed a fortnight, and could not possibly permit a thorough survey of conditions. When he returned, he was obliged to generalize on the basis of the scanty facts he had been able to collect; his views, however correct theoretically, squared badly with realities. He was for instance definitely of the opinion that unless a large-scale "sanitation" of the country were first undertaken it would be wrong to encourage immigration. He supposed that the Government's first act would be to drain the marshes, clear the swamps, build new roads, not realizing that no one in authority had the slightest intention of starting these operations. He repeatedly stated – this was thirty years ago – that Zionist political work had come to a close, that nothing remained but the economic task. These views pointed to a coming conflict between Brandeis and myself, as also between the majority of European Zionists and a powerful group of our American friends. In America itself they were to lead to a breach with the Zionist Organization which was not to be healed for many years.... It is my conviction then, as it is today after the passing of nearly three decades, that constructive work in Palestine cannot be directed from a distance, even by the ablest of men, on the basis of an occasional short visit and of reports....*<sup>18</sup>

Since 1919 the conflicts have not been resolved. American Zionists complain that since we give you our money you should do as we tell you. Israeli Zionists reply that we thank you for the money but we are the facts on the ground. We see what is real and not real in front of us. We give our bodies, our blood, our children, not just money, to make Zionism real. The arguments lead, invariably, to misunderstanding, tension and mutual frustration.

Post Zionism, and the reshaping of Israeli society along American lines, is bitterly debated in Israel today. Israelis react as if it were a sudden discovery of the past decade. Post Zionism terminology is used in the States by groups such as the New Israel fund. "Zionism" does not appear anywhere in their "about" themselves definition.<sup>19</sup> Is Zionism over? The arguments are not new to American thought. Is Zionism over, is and has and will be actively debated. The struggle, illustrated by Brandeis and Weizmann, is ongoing; Brandeis in 1919, Zionism is over, Weizmann, Zionism is not over. May 20, 1948, just six days after the declaration of Israeli independence, the op-ed page of the New York Times carried an astounding story. The article was titled "End of Zionism Seen with Israel Secure", Jan. 27, 1961, Time Magazine "After Zionism What?" In Israel, the Shalem Center's Azure Magazine (Ideas for the Jewish Nation), summer 1996, asked – "The End of Zionism?"

American Jews, after 1948, especially the "baby boomers" increasingly moved away from Israel. They defined themselves and their own security as American Jews by social activism. If they could improve American society and the world, they would be more physically secure as Jews in America. Anti-Semitism would not be a future issue. Israel existed and needed them less; she could and should take care of herself. As long as Israel did not do anything to make American Jews feel insecure or threatened, because of the Jewish link to Israel, Israel is O.K.

God and traditional faith was and is decreasingly a factor in American Jewish identity. American Jews were heavily involved in the rise of the American Civil Rights movement, the anti-Vietnam war movements and the self-indulgent hedonism of the 1960's. Israel dropped further down the list of importance. For a brief astonishing period, as Israel and all Jews faced a new Holocaust, the Six Day War brought Jews back together, Israeli and American as one.

The cause of the Russian Jews drew American Jews together until the tidal wave of Russian Jews immigrating to America became threateningly massive. American Jews wanted only a symbolic handful of Russian Jews, the rest were directed to Israel; the same was true of the Ethiopian Jews. American Jewry did not want them, Israel did. American Jewish social activism was all right only so long as it did not threaten to change the white assimilated character of American Jewish life. The threat to American Jews is answered simply. Israel and Zion, not America, is the home of the modern Jew searching for a safe haven. American anti-Israel Jews or simply non-pro-Israel Jews do not call for the solution to the Jewish problem of Jews in "Palestine". They do not demand America open its borders to all Jews to leave Israel and come to America. Ironically, many of the same liberal American Jews call for the absorption of the striving masses of Hispanic illegals flooding into America with no intention of becoming Americans. American Jewish intermarriage rates are approaching 50%.

Louis Brandeis wrote in 1915, "*Whilst every other people is striving for development by asserting its nationality, ... shall we voluntarily yield to anti-Semitism, and instead of solving our "problem" end it by noble suicide? Surely this no time for Jews to despair. Let us make clear to the world that we too are a nationality striving for equal rights to life and to self-expression.*"<sup>20</sup> Would American Jews say the same today?

What is American Zionism? American Zionists are not sure and cannot agree. The traditional Zionist organizations are in severe decline as they fail to attract American Jewish youth. The only thing they seem to agree on is they need Israel to exist.

The best definition of American Zionism is from the non-Zionist, American Anti-Defamation League.

*Zionism is the Jewish national movement of rebirth and renewal in the land of Israel - the historical birthplace of the Jewish people. The yearning to return to Zion, the biblical term for both the Land of Israel and Jerusalem, has been the cornerstone of Jewish religious life since the Jewish exile from the land two thousand years ago, and is embedded in Jewish prayer, ritual, literature and culture.*<sup>21</sup>

The definition does not include the legal right of the Jewish people to a secure, national home in Israel.