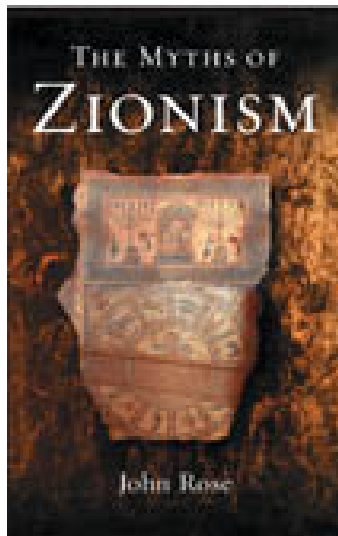


John Rose, *The Myth of Zionism*, Pluto, London 2004, 232 Pages, L 14,95.



The more one delves into the oppression of the Palestinian people by Israel the clearer the solution appears. John Rose's book presents a realistic picture about the nature of Zionism. For him "Zionism is the problem; its removal is the precondition for peace in the Middle East. It is the precondition for Arab-Jewish reconciliation in Palestine. That is the only possible conclusion to this book." This view is shared by other intellectuals, including Joel Kovel, Norman G. Finkelstein, Jacqueline Rose, Uri Davis and many others. Zionism is held together by a series of myths, "(a) package of false notions, which undermine its claims on the Jewish religion and Jewish history, its rationale as a response to Europe's Anti-Semitism, and above all its justification for its aggressive and very dangerous political posturing in the land of Palestine."

Rose states openly his goal: „My main concern has been only to demolish Zionism's mythical history.“ From a scientific point of view, this is a foregone conclusion but from a political standpoint, such an approach can be dangerous. So-called friends of Israel around the world attack and stigmatize anybody who criticizes the brutal policy of Israeli governments as an anti-Semite. Hate campaigns are pursued against almost anybody in the West who dares to criticize Israel's brutal actions against helpless people. Even U.N. Expert Judge Goldstone, a Jew who is an ardent Zionist, is accused of "anti-Semitism". Israel's President Shimon Peres and his underlings have levelled derogatory accusations against Goldstone because he just did his job in writing a report about the Israeli onslaught against the defenceless civilian population of the Gaza Strip. The Palestinians, however, understand Rose's realistic view of Zionism. For them this ideology and its practical implementation has caused the loss of their homeland, dispossession, deaths, exile and almost the total destruction of their society. The Western alliance refrains from criticizing Israel, although that State treats purported Western values with contempt.

John Rose teaches sociology at Southwark College and in the London Metropolitan University. He differentiates between facts and fiction and exposes the myths woven by the Zionists since the establishment of the State of Israel until today. For Rose, David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, was Zionists' master "myth-maker". Ben Gurion's belief system provides an "unparalleled insight into Zionist myth-making". Ben-Gurion substituted Zionism as a Messianic movement for the Messiah-as-a-Person: "Hence the redemption of mankind is to be preceded by the redemption of the Jewish people,

restored to their own Land." Martin Buber and Yesha'yahu Leibowitz, both Zionists, were appalled at the way Ben-Gurion manipulated the Jewish religion for narrow political ends, says the author. They were not the only ones appalled by Ben-Gurion's methods, but the entire Jewish Orthodoxy that at that time viewed Zionism as heresy. The Canadian historian Yacov M. Rabkin has convincingly demonstrated in his groundbreaking book "A Threat From Within. A Century of Jewish Opposition to Zionism", that Zionism is actually a negation of Judaism. He sees Judaism and Zionism as oil and water. He therefore advances all the arguments, which traditional Judaism has put forward against Zionism.

The author analyses Jewish history and the consequences for Palestine. He contends that the Jewish claim on Palestine is not well founded. The term "Eretz Israel" is also, according to him, a "religious myth". Rose shows that from its early days, not only Palestinian farmers but also by intellectuals resisted Zionist colonisation. They and the Palestinian bourgeoisie knew already then that Zionism was to their detriment. This resistance against occupation continues because the struggle of the Palestinian people is grounded on the quest for justice and for historical truth. Rose's central aim is to shed light on the real nature of Zionism. It is an impressive book that hopefully will affect the perception of European and American elites.

Ludwig Watzal