

The Stifling and Smearing of a Dissenter

In the view of Zionist leaders and propagandists, offense has always been the best defense. This article indicates the lengths to which this dictum has been carried in the U.S. by documenting the case of one author of an anti-Zionist book. The measure of the reader's incredulity will be an index to his lack of realization of Zionism's true character

By Moshe Menuhin

PREMONITIONS assailed me last year, even before my book *The Decadence of Judaism in Our Time* was published, concerning the attempts which would be made to suppress it. I knew very well of the existence of a well-oiled and powerful Zionist network of publishers, editors, religious leaders of all faiths, politicians and hosts of paid and unpaid "professional Jews." I also knew that the Zionist machine was devious, omnipresent and seemingly omnipotent. But I still was not prepared for what did happen: in a very short space of time after the publication of my book, a nation-wide assault — invisible, underground and highly organized — stopped my book in its tracks, stifled every move I made and left me isolated, crushed and my character assassinated in the American Jewish sphere. It was this milieu which I had hoped to help by exposing the descent of Judaism, its decadence in our time, through the suppression of its spiritual, ethical and prophetic ideals of justice and humanity by "Jewish" nationalists who have been — with fateful irony — unconsciously imitating the racist super-nationalism of their oppressors in Czarist Russia and Nazi Germany.

At first I was as shocked and helpless as if an army tank had rolled over

MOSHE MENUHIN, the father of the violinist Yehudi Menuhin, was born in Russia in 1893 to an illustrious Hassidic family. He studied first in Orthodox Yeshivas in Jerusalem. At 16 he entered the rabidly nationalistic Hebrew Gymnasia Herzlia in Jaffa-Tel Aviv, of which he was the first graduate. He graduated from New York University in 1917, after majoring in mathematics, political science and education. He did not return to Palestine as planned because he was disenchanted with the developments of political Zionism; he saw it as implying wars of injustice and the degeneration of Judaism. He settled in California and has made his home there ever since. The vicissitudes of his intellectual life are the most pertinent aspects of his biography, for he has spent his professional life acting as manager for his son. Since the latter was a child prodigy, his father began touring the world with him when still quite young and so was able to observe world events at first hand and talk to leading figures in many countries, which further activated his intellectual evolution. He finally did a complete about-face in the direction opposed to his former classmates who were and are leaders of "Jewish" nationalism. This reversal he expressed in the book which is the subject of this article, a book which took ten years in the writing.

me. But then I recalled, one day, the exhortation of my revered Orthodox grandfather, a sincere, genuine and honest man:

If you begin a good deed, — finish it! (Hamatchil Bemitzvah Omrim Loh, Gmor)

This became my watchword as I experienced all that a dissenting, anti-Zionist author must experience when contending with the Zionist machine, that self-styled do-gooding, pure, defense organization.

My premonitions of agonies to come had been based on solid facts. Another author before me had dared to expose an aspect of the soulless, militant Zionist apparatus. It was the late Ben Hecht, who, in his book *Perfidy*,¹ had completely reversed himself, after being an ardent supporter of the Zionists' political and military efforts to dislodge the Palestinian Arabs from their homes and their homeland, going so far as to collect money from most unsavory sources. But then he discovered and exposed, in his book, the fact that the inhuman approach of the leading Zionists towards ordinary uncommitted Jews caught in Nazi-dominated Europe was to abandon them to their fate, while saving only young men who would infiltrate into Palestine and thus help to create a Jewish majority there by any and all means. . . . When I learned about this book, I happened to be vacationing in Carmel, California with my wife. I went into a bookstore and asked for Ben Hecht's *Perfidy*.

"Sir, it is an unethical and anti-Semitic book. We do not handle such stuff even if it bears the name of that glamorous and once great and popular author, Ben Hecht."

"But, won't you order the book for me?"

"No, sir, not on your life!" I tried three bookstores in Carmel and received the same reception in every one.

At the end of our vacation, we flew to New York on our way to London for a family reunion. I tried, in a big bookstore there, to procure a copy and got the identical reaction, only with even more heat and conviction. Busy as I was in New York, it occurred to me finally that there must be some kind of Zionist "anti-defamation" machine making the rounds throughout the country, defaming, smearing and quashing books, articles, lectures, reports — anything that dared question, analyze or reproach Zionist activities, and this in the guise of protectors of Jews and Judaism and in the name of six million Jews murdered by Hitlerite Germany. I was finally able to lay hands on a copy of the book directly from the publisher; despite my difficulties I am sure that there were some booksellers who defied the ban, but they were the exceptions. I read the book as I flew across the Atlantic and again I was convinced of the decadence of Judaism in our time.

WHILE I was writing my book I had another foretaste of what was in store for me when I obtained a copy of a U.S. Senate Committee's hearings concerning "activities of non-diplomatic representatives of foreign principals in the United States."²

¹ (New York, Julian Messner, 1961).

² Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings of May 23 and August 1, 1963.

From the testimony of the subpoenaed Zionist agents I, as a Jew, learned with fascinated horror and a deep sense of shame about activities that no one in America would have known about if it had not been for this investigation, and which no one would otherwise have believed. I reduced the 307 pages of testimony to 35 pages in my book. What struck home to me as the incipient author of an anti-Zionist book was this (pages 437-438 of my book):

The American Zionist Council committee on information and public relations carries on a major part of its work through highly specialized subcommittees composed of professionals in specific areas of activity. . . . They *cultivate* editors of magazines, of the daily press, television, radio, films. . . . [They] *cultivate* leading personalities in these media . . . religious leaders and groups . . . leaders in the academic community . . . monitoring and counter-action of hostile material . . . assistance to publishers in the promotion of *worthwhile books* . . . (emphasis added)

Then I realized for certain that by publishing an "unworthwhile" book, I was asking for character assassination as a Jew, as a man, even as the father of Yehudi Menuhin. I shuddered but I decided not to allow the inevitable damaging attacks to interfere with my settling my personal account with Judaism and with my Jewish people before I die.

WHEN I began submitting my manuscript to the trade book publishers the Zionist "committee" swung into action on cue. No publisher would handle it, though each praised it as a great work, well written, but too strong and unqualified. "You must understand, we cannot publish this sort of book. . . ." Compliments and good wishes were forthcoming from every one of them. I soon realized that I would have to renounce the normal way of having a book published, for every trade book publisher feared lest the cry of anti-Semitism from the Zionist machine play havoc with his firm and his own name.

I had no other choice but to publish my book at my own expense with one of the so called "vanity publishers." I chose what I thought was the best deal; the price was high if I wanted a well-presented, attractive book. But it did turn out a first-class job, and by my contract I did have the right to pass on everything done. Then came the notice of publication by the publisher, sent to the newspapers and magazines all over the country. It was strongly worded, but to the point: "Moshe Menuhin castigates the moral validity of the Zionist movement in his new book, charging that it is contrary to Judeo-Christian ethics, is a worldwide subverting force, inimical to Jews of all nations, and a distortion of Judaism and the Jewish faith. . . ." The reaction is easy to describe; with a very few exceptions, the "free press" of America ignored it.

The notices were followed by book review copies, sent to the principal editors of the country's newspapers and magazines. Months passed, but only a few newspapers reviewed the book and these, to play it safe, turned it over to good Zionists to "review." A few remarkably favorable reviews appeared, one by Rabbi Morris Lazon in *Issues*, another by Dr. Erich Bethmann in *Viewpoints* and, to my great surprise, the Zionist, but decent, London *Jewish Chronicle* dared to say,

Moshe Menuhin's qualifications for recording his "spiritual adventures" are remarkable, and, one could say, unique. . . . This book is an undisguised, full-scale frontal attack with no holds barred on political Zionism. . . . We can perhaps at least be grateful to him for having included statements which rarely appear in books by Zionists.

I wrote personal letters to the outstanding editors, and included photocopies of the favorable reviews of the book. I offered to send them new review copies in case those sent by my publisher had not reached them. There were indeed a number of cases where the review copies never reached their destination. *Life* magazine wrote to me twice that they did not receive a copy, and a few others said the same thing. But the editors of free America remained afraid to mention my book; they even forgot their customary, polite, if perfunctory acknowledgements.

I perceived in this reaction the automatic working of the Zionist influence, the effect of long years of "cultivation of editors, publishers, leading personalities. . ." I could imagine my former friends in the Zionist world, when I was a young member of a wild Jewish nationalist gang, saying to me,

You, Moshe Mnuchin [Menuhin, after I took out my American citizenship papers] dare to expose and denigrate your own old gang. We will show you that your dissenter's freedom in America comes to nothing. Our steps won't be directly visible, but deviousness is our trademark, just as our "chosen people" and "God's covenant" sheepskins cover our militant, ruthless, nationalistic hearts.

Those Zionist editors who did take up my book reveled in tearing me apart. Robert Gamzey, the Zionist, was assigned my book by the *Denver Post*; he is the editor of the *Intermountain Jewish News* and the author of a book, *Miracle of Israel*, published by the Herzl Press, a Zionist outlet. He wrote:

The Jews have a word for it, *Meshumed*, one who abandons his Jewish faith to proselyte against his own people. Moshe Menuhin has written a tract that enriches the anti-Jewish, anti-Israel propaganda arsenal of the Arabs, the Jew-baiters and the anti-Zionists.

It should be noted that, to this reviewer, "Jews" and "Zionists" are synonymous. In his own magazine, Gamzey repeated his review. Most of the Anglo-Jewish press struck the same note, which seemed to be the only alternative to the silent treatment of the non-Jewish press (except for the *Denver Post* and the *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*; the latter employed a Zionist to "review" my book). The cogs in the Zionist machine did as was required of them.

I had 8,000 circulars mailed to a carefully selected list of potential buyers of my book, with the same text as appeared on the dust jacket. But when some recipients went to a bookstore to buy it they got the same reception which I had encountered when I tried to buy *Perfidy*. The owner of one important bookstore in San Francisco told an irate customer, "Over my dead body will I be forced to order this book." There were exceptions; in San

Francisco again, Paul Elder's and The Emporium have been selling my book since its publication.

The opposition only spurred me on, seconded as I was by my grandfather's maxim. I resolved to do all I could for my book, into which I had put ten years of my old age, ten years of research and contemplation. I had the help of my good friend Sidney M. Ehrman of San Francisco, who had ordered 100 copies of my book from the publisher after first reading it and distributed them among public libraries, Jewish institutions and leading citizens of his city.

Mr. Ehrman helped me financially with the advertisements in some of the leading newspapers and magazines during December (1965). These included the *New York Times*, in its Sunday Book Review section, and in its international edition, the *Nation*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *San Francisco Examiner-Chronicle*, *Commentary* (in January, 1966). Locally, (I live in Los Gatos, California) I had the advertisement printed in the *San Jose Mercury*, the *San Jose News* and the *Los Gatos Times*.

THIS advertising stimulated a respectable volume of demand. But even before the December advertising campaign, an incident launched a really large-scale demand in northern California which had the character of a reaction to a violent outburst of preventive warfare against me and the book by a so-called "non-Zionist" organization. This is the climactic episode of my long travail. The body in question was the B'nai B'rith of San Jose and later of San Francisco, as well as their Anti-Defamation League. In essence what happened was that the League's defamations boomeranged and gave my book an unexpected lease on life.

The story is worth a detailed recounting, for it dragged in some local Arab students who became the target of anti-Arab hate-mongering by the "Jewish" nationalists, resulting in a sense of outrage on the part of all the Arab students in this country and with repercussions in the Arab countries as well.

On Saturday and Sunday, October 23 and 24, 1965 an annual United Nations Festival was held in San Jose, at the county fairgrounds. Domestic and foreign booths exhibited items of historical and current interest to large and interested crowds. The Organization of Arab Students at San Jose State College was asked to participate and responded with a booth displaying Arab flags, posters, handicrafts of silver and precious stones and publications. Among the books they exhibited was my book! Across from this booth was the B'nai B'rith booth, (even though Israel had a booth of its own). From the moment the festival began, B'nai B'rith men began marching back and forth in front of the Arab students' booth, shouting demands that my book be removed. (At this point I did not know about the festival or of the existence of the Arab students.)

The reply of the Arab students' president, Mohammed Adwan, was that he "would remove any book except that of Moshe Menuhin, a Jew who laments Jewish nationalism because of his belief in universal and ethical

Judaism.”³ Adwan added that he “wanted to show that the Arabs’ differences with Israel were strictly political and not religious and that Arabs had nothing against Jews as Jews.”

The B’nai B’rith men were apparently itching for a fight with the Arab students for they continued to insult them, asking Adwan how much he had been paid to exhibit Menuhin’s book, calling him a “nut” and the author of the book a “nut.” They were most vociferous at the noon hour when Adwan was practically alone at the booth. But he kept his temper and offered to read passages from it to the crowd to show that the book was written by a conscious and conscientious Jew. The answer was a shouted “Take that dirty book away. We won’t touch it. Don’t exhibit it, or close your booth!”⁴ “Adwan answered, ‘I consider the book pro-Jewish, pro-Judaism. It could be called controversial, or anti-Zionist, but it is not anti-Jewish.’ The B’nai B’rith men launched a wild harangue and so Adwan asked a sheriff’s deputy patrolling nearby to remove the kibitzers from the Arab booth, and the officer dispersed them.”

Adwan asked the festival committee for a formal letter about what they would do about his booth if the book were not removed. The answer ran:

The difficulty has arisen [because] of some of the literature displayed at your booth . . . We must ask you once more to remove the book written by Menuhin . . . If you are unable to, then regretfully we must ask you to take down your booth display by noon tomorrow [Sunday].

On Sunday the violent demonstrations resumed. “The Arab students protested against racial discrimination of any kind, folded their tent and quit the county fairgrounds.”

THE attacks by the B’nai B’rith on the Arabs for exhibiting my book did not end at that point and so the battle continued in the press and on the radio for weeks. The radio stations in San Francisco picked up the story and so it spread throughout northern California. I must remark in passing that only professional, fanatical “Jewish” nationalists would not see that the Arab sense of outrage is bound to grow as a result of such discrimination and hate-mongering. Any responsible Jew who knows that there are 100 million Arabs surrounding Israel, and only one-and-one-half million Jews inside it, must realize that these irresponsible and tribalistic nationalists are playing with fire.

The story continued to spread. The headlines in the California press included “Arabs-Jews Ignite Furor at U.N. Fete”; “Arabs Versus Jews, U.N. Festival Border War”; “Arab-Jew Skirmish Erupts at U.N.” The *San Jose Mercury* asked me for my comments. I had just read the reports and I was unhappy and angry at this importation of the Arab-Israeli cold war to America. I said:

These misguided Jews do not represent America, for this is a free country. We do not burn or bury books. We let everyone have his say, and if we

³ All quotes pertaining to this episode are from the following newspapers: *San Jose Mercury*, *San Jose News*, *Palo Alto Times*, *Spartan Daily* (student daily of San Jose State College), *Los Galos Times*.

⁴ This reminds me of a wise book reviewer in the *New York Times* who wrote recently, “Books are violently denounced from time to time by persons who freely admit that they have not read them and have no wish to; all they want is to prevent others from reading them.”

do not agree with the printed word, we reply in other words, by a written answer, and not by Nazi-Fascist strong-arm methods. I Moshe Menuhin am a conscious and conscientious Jew, devoted to historic Judaism, to its spirit, and not to the nationalistic new content given Judaism. Judaism is a religion, not a nationality. The Arabs' only sin was to display a Jew's anti-Zionist book. The United Nations stands for freedom of books, freedom of speech, and not suppression of truth or opinion.

To the *Los Gatos Times* I said:

. . . The shameless hooliganism, un-American and un-Jewish, of the B'nai B'rith men . . . only confirms the truth of what is in my book. It proves conclusively that subverted Zionist Jews lose their Jewish humility and self-respect, their respect for books as the heritage of the "People of the Book"; they have degenerated Judaism, a 3,000-year-old civilization and culture into a Nazi-like super-nationalism and super-racism, full of hatred for gentiles, particularly for Arabs, in this case . . .

The *San Jose News* said editorially:

. . . The United Nations is not a harmonious body. This newspaper tends to favor Israel's position in regard to her Arab neighbors, but this does not mean that we believe the Arabs should not be able to speak their piece at the U.N., or at U.N. Festival. . . . The Festival should portray the conflicts of the U.N., which really represent the most urgent business of the international organization. Nothing is to be gained by inter-booth warfare. . . . The Festival in the future should give more prominence to debates between advocates of sharply different points of view."

Letters to the editor and radio discussions continued for weeks in San Jose and San Francisco. On KCBS a member of the San Francisco B'nai B'rith and/or the Anti-Defamation League (I did not take stenographic notes) said that I was associated with the Arab students "who are oldsters passing for students, sent to America by their governments to create trouble for the Jews . . ."

NOW I must report what I learned about the "Arab oldsters," for I decided to find out for myself why they defended a Jewish book against Jewish hooligans and what they were doing in this country. By now I could write a long report about the 29 Arab students in San Jose, all of which would reveal the B'nai B'rith spokesman's charges for gross libels and pure fabrications. There is not one of these students who was sent to study abroad by his government. They are working their way through college and have a very trying time of it. Their average age is 23-24. The only "oldster" Khalil Sabra, 31 years old, comes from the no-man's-land refugee camp on the border line between Israel and Jordan. His story is a saga in itself, but I must first report about the Arab students as a whole.

I met them all many times and spoke to each one. What struck me as extraordinary was that, though they are all genuinely sincere and idealistic, they all differ from one another in their beliefs, even in the matter of Arab nationalism. Some hate Nasser, others adore him. The same applies to King Hussein of Jordan. They have observed America and American Jews closely, and they understand Zionism's tragic role in causing Judaism to degenerate into "Jewish" nationalism. They are hungry for the truth, for facts as against propaganda. When I discussed my own philosophy of life, I stressed citizenship and individualism as against tribal nationalism, for everybody, everywhere. I knew this sometimes offended the nationalistic feelings of some of them, but I noticed a respectful effort to understand this new language. I even felt a certain affection for me, for they discovered in me a Jew without hatred or prejudice, who respects and sympathizes with the youth of our day who must resolve the wars which the older generation prepared for them.

The life story of Khalil Sabra is, in microcosm, the history of the Palestine area in the last thirty years. He was born in 1935, in a wealthy home surrounded by 65 acres of orange groves in old Jaffa, Palestine. His older brothers were sent abroad for their education, but Khalil was 13 when Arab Jaffa was attacked by the terrorist Irgun underground army and then by the Haganah, the regular Zionist army — both examples of "the new species of fighting Jew." For two weeks these forces attacked the Arabs of Jaffa until they were forced to surrender their homes, lands, factories, schools and shops. This was two days before Israel was declared a state, and *before* the neighboring Arab governments entered Palestine to help their brethren against the Zionist armies which were invading territory not granted to them by the U.N. Partition. The surviving members of Khalil's family ended up in refugee camps and his own schooling ended abruptly. When the UNRWA set up schools for the refugee children, he resumed his studies and eventually "graduated." He then went to Kuwait, to teach and save enough to go to America for a higher education. After many years he made it. But when he graduates, where will he return to?

The late Zionist leader, Moshe Sharett, once said, "Unlike those countries with a long independent history, we did not obtain our national state through dispossession . . . We had to purchase every acre." Did someone purchase the orange groves of Khalil's father? Who gets the money for the oranges sold in the London fruit markets? Khalil, in spite of his troublous life, is one of the nicest Arab students I met. He tried to reply to the false statements about the Arab students on the San Francisco radio station, but his efforts stopped there, and the public still believes the false version. What I deplore as much is the blindness of the Arab governments which do not realize that their greatest assets are talented, idealistic youth like this group, who must plan their future alone, with no government help.

The B'nai B'rith magazine, the *National Jewish Monthly*, did finally print a review of my book, the core of which was: "Menuhin takes 500 pages to state the anti-Zionist case, in the course of which he libelously accuses Israel of having secret expansion plots."

That there is a great deal more subject matter in the book than could

be gathered from this "review" is indicated by the review of Rabbi Morris Lazaron in *Issues* (Summer, 1965) which he concludes thus:

If the leaders of American Jewry would read Menuhin's book, it would not only increase their knowledge of the facts, but it might also give them the courage to throw off the shackles of a philosophy and program which ghettoizes us intellectually and emotionally now, but which may destroy the hard won victory of emancipation, and force us to return to the ghetto in actuality.

MY RESOLUTION to finish my "good deed" is still strong. Instead of recouping the enormous sums of money I have spent, I shall plow the royalties back into promoting and advertising my book, through general advertisements and by sending copies to influential opinion molders throughout the world. That this is no forlorn effort is demonstrated by this one reply I received from an American government official:

I recently completed reading your book. It changed my thinking or lack of it, very drastically. Heretofore, I had been, in thought, 100% on the side of Ben-Gurion. Before reading this book, if I had been a Jew, and wealthy, I would have been ideal prey for the Zionist collectors of "charitable donations." After all, the people of Israel had known nothing but persecution at the hands of their fellow-men, and now that they are trying to wrench a meager living from the uninhabited desert — their ancient homeland — the savage Arabs, aided by Nazi war criminals, are remorselessly bent on their destruction. These had been my fuddy-duddy thoughts on the subject. I am afraid that Zionist propaganda has worked only too well on me . . . You see how the average non-Jew lives in a fog of either disinterest or delusion.