

America's Role in Creating a Massive Moral Deficit

Against Our Better Judgment

By

Alison Weir

My response to a very significant book

It is always good to read a book on a subject you believe you know something about and to discover that the author has so much more to tell you.

It is also good to discover a perspective, in this case a perspective from the USA, that you had never fully used in order to make critical sense of a series of events, of casual historical assumptions, of the power of myth and self deception and of what I see as a descent into inhumanity: so many clever people, so much intellectual effort and scholarship and so much dedication to a cause that believed it had the right to displace an indigenous people, rob them of their rights, houses, land, liberty and lives.

The book is a good example of the seriousness of journalistic scholarship. It is a driven book: driven not by the urge to sell a story but by the urge to do a good job and allow the reader to follow up, question and challenge. I loved the endnotes.

The crucial role in the creation of Israel played by the 1948 US presidential election when Truman came from behind to win is not new knowledge but Alison Weir provides so much detail of people and events, beginning well before 1948. We cannot escape concluding that whenever there was a clash between the advice of informed professional government officials who were fully aware of the negative consequences for the US if it recognised a State of Israel and the self-interests of politicians under pressure from well-organised and persistent Zionist groups it was self-interest, or perceived self-interest, that won; too often short-sighted wins over long-sighted.

The result has been a heavy self-imposed and well-fed albatross around the neck of the USA since 1948. And that is only to count the cost from the point of view of the USA. The cost to the indigenous people of Palestine; to international law; to the authority of the UN; to Arab speaking Jews; to young idealistic socialist Zionists; to bullied and belittled European Jewish émigrés (don't speak Yiddish in Israel); and to human values has been enormous. It continues to grow. We now have a massive moral deficit. Shall that debt ever be paid? Or are we moral deficit deniers?

To that list we should add the cost born by truth itself. If the fundamental belief that you wish others to accept is based upon the falsehood that the Romans expelled the Jewish people from the region then, in order to maintain your position, you are driven to deceive, even yourselves, at an increasingly frantic pace and intensity.

The book concentrates upon the USA but Britain's key role features in the book though, irritatingly to this Welshman, sometimes England is taken to be the same as Britain. There are times when labels matter and the government of Israel is good at capturing labels and applying them to serve its own purpose, 'Anti-Semitic' being one of those misused and misdirected labels of which we are all frightened. 'Welsh', incidentally, means 'foreigner' and it is what the Anglo-Saxons called the British whose land they invaded. It is now what we must call ourselves. Losing the power to self identify is no small thing as Palestinians are well aware.

Key to the role of Britain was the need to bring the USA into the First World War and the Balfour Declaration played its part in this as Alison Weir shows very clearly. Reading Jonathan Schneer's *The Balfour Declaration* (Random House, 2010), and switching perspective for a moment, I formed two starkly contrasting pictures: Arabs fighting as allies of Britain assuming something good would come of this but totally unaware that decisions were made by knowing down which corridor in Whitehall it was best to walk and upon which door it was wise to knock.

An 'aside': Lawrence of Arabia was born in Tremadog in North Wales just a shortish walk from Porthmadog High Street where Lloyd George had his solicitor's office. It is still there. The house where Lawrence was born (also still there) was an hotel for a while and my family would stay there when visiting relatives. Forgive the personal nature of this 'aside' but you can imagine the fantasy of a very young child that he might have been sleeping in the bedroom of Lawrence of Arabia.

*The thought also crosses my mind that while Lawrence was fighting in Arabia Lloyd George, in many respects a hero of mine, was facilitating the Balfour Declaration. Avi Shlaim is married to Lloyd George's great granddaughter but that does not prevent him writing frankly about his role in his book *Israel and Palestine* (Verso, 2009).*

There is an Allenby Street in Tel Aviv. Allenby was in charge of the British invasion of the region in opposition to the Ottoman Turks. There is also an Allenby Street in Beirut. Perhaps someone might wish to write a learned article upon the significance of that coincidence. I know of no Sykes or Picot Streets but the naming of streets has a lot to tell us about how the people with power wish us to think. The promenade in Tel Aviv is named after a member of a prominent Liverpool Jewish family, the first Governor General of Palestine, Herbert Samuel. I believe that Jabotinsky, who was a rather nasty Zionist for whom Netanyahu's father once worked, holds the record for the number of streets in Israel named after an individual: end of my 'aside'.

Alison Weir adds to this picture of Whitehall corridors and doors by providing much information on the role of Zionists and Zionist organisations in the USA who were well aware of where to place a political fulcrum, how long a lever needed to be and how much power to exert upon it.

In *The Idea of Israel* (Verso, 2014) Ilan Pappé explains all the different and changing forms of Zionism since the establishment of the State of Israel. Before reading Alison Weir's book I had little idea of how extensive and dedicated was the Zionist network of people and organisations in the USA working from the late nineteenth century. The power of such people and organisations remains strong today and explains why the little bully in the playground gets away with it: its best mate is bigger than all the other kids. Possibly the little bully ought to be a tiny bit careful not to be offensive to its best mate.

At a book launch in London for his *The Invention of the Land of Israel* (Verso, 2012) Shlomo Sand of Tel Aviv University which, as he points out in his book, was built upon the site of a Palestinian village, recounted his surprise at discovering that the myths about European Jews 'returning' were not even myths but totally untrue. His last three books, including *How I Stopped Being a Jew* (Verso, 2014), can be seen as a gradual personal dawning of or awakening to the false reality in which so much of his life had been lived.

Alison Weir has contributed an invaluable book: a critical sense making of a movement that once was seen by many to be a worthy ideal: an ideal that often had considerable socialist intent, albeit a racially ring fenced socialism; but that has been transformed into religio/racist thuggery in which the currency of the day is blood: other peoples' blood.

So much clever manipulation, so much contrived deceit, so much deployment of every technique that might influence and yet, consistently, so much disregard for the indigenous people; and all of it to fulfil a false and fatal fantasy; if only, to coin a phrase, Americans, and not just Americans, knew. After all, they and we do pay for it. They and we would benefit from knowing. So would many innocent and wronged people. So would humanity itself. Ignorance has, for too many people, been the position of choice: 'don't bother me with knowledge, my prejudice comforts me and ignorance is bliss'.

Unfortunately, we know who is forced to pay for the moral deficit and we know full well the currency in which payment is made.

The book is subtitled ***The hidden history of how the U.S. was used to create Israel.***

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Look at http://www.ifamericansknew.org/about_us/

Cliff Jones November 2015

