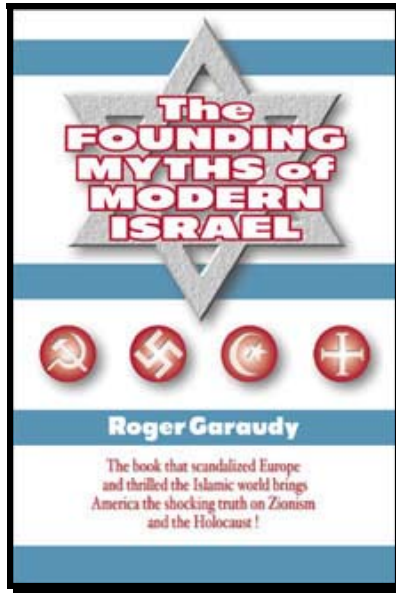


TEI BOOK ANALYSIS: THE FOUNDING MYTHS OF MODERN ISRAEL



The Founding Myths of Modern Israel

Roger Garaudy

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Perfect Bound

By Caleb Amilicar

In this modern time, there are few who have not been impacted in some way shape or form by Israel and there are a variety of reasons for that.

The three major revealed religions which are Islam, Christianity and Judaism all consider that part of the world highly significant and have holy sites located there.

Surprisingly, (or not surprisingly, depending on one's viewpoint) many Americans are unaware of the underlying reasons for the conflict that exists there between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Unfortunately, adding to the confusion is the reality that those who have received information regarding Israel's formation, and existence are badly misinformed as a result of the decidedly pro-Israeli filters with which most news sources use to broadcast.

The formation of modern Israel represents the ultimate redemption, salvation and justice to some, a continued dishonor, disgrace and the ultimate injustice to others. Until this very day, blood is being shed because of it and in this conflict, there are either fervently pro-Israeli views, or are vehemently anti-Israeli. There is no in between or middle path.

When Roger Garaudy's book titled *Les mythes fondateurs de la politique israelienne* (referred to in this review as *The Founding Myths of Modern Israel*) was released in France circa 1995 it

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generated a powerful uproar resulting in international notoriety for the author while creating considerable angst for those who desired to keep alternative views regarding Israel's formation hidden.

It set off a flurry of events resulting in endless censorship debates eventually resulting in legal wrangling involving Mr. Garaudy along with the usual denunciations reserved for those with courage to ask questions that others are often afraid to ask. A Paris court found him guilty and fined him \$40,000 however, international support for him continued to grow.

Nevertheless, in the face of menacing condemnation, Garaudy and his book was enthusiastically embraced by researchers and found its way to the internet where portions have been republished many different languages.

Garaudy is a decorated veteran of the French Army in WWII, an educator in philosophy, was a communist, and is a Catholic turned Muslim. While we are sure that his varied background resulted in the formation of his views, in judging the significance of his work, it can be measured in terms of what his book inspired in others.

For very legitimate reasons, anti-Zionist sentiment is plentiful in the Islamic world, and while attacks on the accepted version of the Holocaust of the Jewish people had appeared among some Muslims and Arab scholars for years, his writings introduced Holocaust revisionism on a wide scale, to common individuals who may not have been exposed to revisionist theory otherwise.

The section titled *"Theological Myths"* deals with the "promised land and chosen people" scriptural-based argument used by many pro-Israel advocates. In essence, the Biblical prophecy of the chosen land and chosen people was fulfilled in the formation of Israel. Whether adherents of Judaism, or Christianity, their viewpoints are the same. Those who are more versed in scripture would find useful information clearly outlined to assist in discussion.

The section titled *"Myths of the Twentieth Century"* is clearly the bane of those who would desire to condemn *Founding Myths*, for it specifically deflates the arguments of those who argue that what happened to the Jewish people in Germany was unparalleled as a human tragedy.

On page 97, he writes:

"The Nazi domination was thus something other than a vast "pogrom" of which the Jews were the main, if not the sole, victims, as a familiar propaganda tendency would have us believe. It was a human catastrophe which, unfortunately, is not without precedent, for Hitler applied to whites what the European colonialists had inflicted for over five centuries on "people of color," from the American Indians, of whom sixty to eighty million were wiped out (more through slave labor and epidemics than by weapons), to the Africans, of whom ten to twenty million were brought to the Americas, and since the slave traders obtained only one slave for every ten killed in the fight for their capture, the "trade" cost Africa between a hundred or two hundred million dead."

It is insightfully pointed out by the author that the furthering of the "greatest genocide in history" claim suits the expiatory purposes of the Western colonial powers who then would have their intrusions and slaughters directed at the Native Americans and Africans erased from the already unreliable memories of the greater population.

Even with the benefit of historical data and knowledge detailing mass destructions campaigns directed at other ethnic groups throughout history, the exclusivity of the suffering of the Jews ubiquitous in history books, political discourse, and in academic discourse.

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The author documents that seventeen million Russians and nine million Germans died in World War II, along with the lost lives of millions of soldiers from Africa and Asia who mobilized for the WWII which was in fact, a war born of Western rivalries. However, none of these lost lives are mentioned other than parenthetically, to the laudatory remembrances of the mythical and almost supernatural six million Jews who live beyond the grave.

For those who have wondered why it appears as if the American foreign policy in the Middle East appears to be overwhelmingly balanced in favor Israel, Garaudy demystifies this phenomenon in the section titled "*The Political Use of the Myth.*"

There are some who quite simply state that nothing happened to the Jews in German any at all, which is absurd and ridiculous, since it is verified that atrocities did occur and was specifically directed at Jews by Hitler's military command.

There are others who maintain that as it relates to the "orthodox" holocaust story, some of it took place, some of it did not. This is by far the more rational and logical approach and the one gaining strength among academics and students.

The IHR and Theodore O' Keefe appear to take umbrage of the fact that while Garaudy's writings, courageous stance and perseverance in the midst of adversity are notable, the contributions of professor Robert Faurisson, who is considered France's leading Holocaust revisionists was all but ignored in Garaudy. (Faurisson's writings questioning the accepted Holocaust version appeared in *Le Monde* in the late 1970's predating Garaudy's work by more than a decade.) Mr. O'Keefe clearly rights this wrong in an extensive foreword that lays the base. Subsequent IHR publications include a future compilation of Faurisson's writing on the holocaust continuing with their stated mission of "bringing history into accord with the facts."

The IHR unabridged translation of the original, with modifications and corrections results in a pleasurable reading experience. Usually books written on this topic are so thick and boring in their presentation that only professors will pick them up. In their emphasis on statistical minutiae authors often lose the reader who may be interested in the topic and interested in extracting the various viewpoints and information without having to spend hours and hours reading.

The book has a very appealing and attractive cover. At 224 pages, it is long enough to adequately provide an alternative view of the accepted version of Israel's formation and existence, but not so short that it would lack credibility among those of scholarly and academic interests.

Having an English language translation of this quality will accomplish much in the continuing effort to make more aware of this relevant area of history and present reality.

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Founder and Executive Director*

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