

TREIF INTO KOSHER: THE STORY OF ERETZ HAKODESH

Rabbi Aharon Feldman

In the winter of 2020, when a newly-formed party called Eretz Hakodesh presented a slate of candidates in the World Zionist Organization (WZO) elections and gained twenty-five seats in that body, this development was met with astonishment by the entire spectrum of the Jewish world. For Zionists, the Israeli Reform and Conservative movements and other secular Jews, this was cause for jubilation. After all, Eretz Hakodesh was a self-declared Chareidi organization, and this was the first time since the inception of the Zionist movement that any part of Chareidi Jewry had recognized Zionism as a legitimate Jewish movement and actually joined hands with it.

In his address to the first Zionist Congress in 1897, where a handful of Orthodox rabbis were among the delegates, Theodor Herzl seized upon this fact to tell the assemblage: “Zionism has already brought about something remarkable, heretofore regarded as impossible: a close union between the ultramodern and ultraconservative elements of Jewry.” But these misguided Orthodox delegates soon left or were driven out of the WZO, and ever since, *gedoley hador* have led Chareidi Jewry in treating Zionism and the WZO as

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a despised pariah.

A century and a quarter later, in 2020, Eretz Hakodesh breached that wall of opposition to begin actualizing Herzl's dream of "a close union between the ultramodern and ultraconservative elements of Jewry." From the Zionist perspective, here at last was that which they greatly yearn for: a Chareidi legitimization of Zionism. No wonder that when Eretz Hakodesh entered the WZO as an official member party together with the Reform and Conservative movements, Reform Rabbi Gilad Kariv, head of the Reform movement in Israel, exclaimed with barely contained glee, "Wall-to-wall agreement in the WZO. It seems that when the Chareidim ... have the will to sign agreements with Reform people, they are able. Herzl is rubbing his eyes."

The reaction within Torah Jewry to the formation of Eretz Hakodesh was also one of astonishment, but of a far different sort. Since the inception of the Zionist movement at the turn of the 20th century, the leading gedoley Torah of each successive generation had rejected any identification with Zionism, regardless of any benefit which would accrue to the Torah community by recognizing it.

Time after time during these past 125 years, preeminent Torah leaders were asked the identical question: Is it permitted for Torah Jews to recognize Zionism and join with the Zionist Organization in order to achieve various spiritual and material benefits? And each time, the ruling was unequivocal: it was unthinkable, because Zionism is irredeemably *treif* — far beyond the Jewish pale in both Halacha and hashkafa, no matter what benefits would ensue by joining it.

The heads of Minsk's Jewish community told Rav Chaim Soloveichik that Herzl had approached them to ask for their support for a Jewish state in return for his promise to give its religious citizens control over Shabbos, Shemita and the official rabbinate. Rav Chaim replied that the choice was theirs: They could be with him [Rav Chaim] in Olam Haba, or be with Herzl where he was destined to be.¹

In 1929, when the yeshivos of Eastern Europe were in extreme financial crisis, with their students near starvation, the Joint Distribution Committee,

1. Letter of Rav Moshe Sternbuch, 7 Adar 5780, reporting what he was told by his great-uncle, Rav Avrohom Pines, who heard this from Rav Chaim.

which helped support all of the yeshivos, asked Agudath Israel to join the Jewish Agency, an affiliate of the WZO. When asked whether the risk of the Joint Distribution Committee's cessation of support for yeshivos justified such a move, the Chofetz Chaim told Rav Elchonon Wasserman that it was prohibited to join the Jewish Agency even if a majority of yeshivos were to close as a result.²

In 1934, a proposal arose for Agudath Israel in Eretz Yisroel to join the Vaad Leumi, the internal communal counterpart of the Jewish Agency. Rav Elchonon cited the aforementioned ruling of the Chofetz Chaim in declaring it prohibited for Agudath Israel to do so.³

During World War II, as reports of the decimation of European Jewry reached Eretz Yisroel, Rav Moshe Blau, head of Agudath Israel in Eretz Yisroel, asked the Chazon Ish whether it was permitted to join forces with the WZO, without which it seemed impossible to save Jewish lives. The Chazon Ish replied, "After 120 years, when you come before the Heavenly tribunal and are asked why you didn't save more Jewish lives during the war, if you answer that there was no way to do so without joining the WZO, I will back you."⁴

In 2010, when an Orthodox Israeli political party joined the WZO, Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv directed that a statement be published denouncing this move in the strongest possible terms, under the heading "*Nevalah Ne'esesa BeYisroel*—A revolting deed has been done in Klal Yisroel." The statement declared:

a "*nevalah she'eyn kimosa*—an incomparably revolting deed—has been perpetrated in Klal Yisroel ... a shameful act which impinges upon the very foundations of the Torah ideal of separation from the ideological Zionist establishment."⁵

2. *Koveitz Ma'amarim*, vol. 1, p. 154.

3. *Ibid.* Rav Yaakov Eliezer Schwartzman attests that he was told many times by his grandfather, Rav Aharon Kotler, that all the *gedoley hador*, led by the Chofetz Chaim, were opposed to Agudath Israel joining the Jewish Agency, despite intense pressure to do so.

4. Reported by Rav Elyakim Schlesinger, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Haramah in London, England, and son-in-law of Rav Moshe Blau, in his sefer *Hador v'Hatekufah*, p. 51.

5. Yated Ne'eman, Parashas Bo, 5770.

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It did not matter whether that political party stood to benefit monetarily or otherwise by joining the WZO.

II. HOW ERETZ HAKODESH SUCCEEDED

It is important to appreciate just how radical is the very existence of Eretz Hakodesh. Its aim is to lead Chareidi Jews *en masse* to defy and discard rulings which *gedoley Yisroel* have made for well over a century in Halacha and in fundamentals of *emunah*, and it succeeded in convincing thousands of frum Jews to do so.

The notion that a Chareidi group would ever advocate joining the Reform movement, or that if it were to do so, Torah Jews would pay it any heed, is utterly unimaginable. Rav Reuven Grozovsky wrote that Zionism is an even greater heresy than Reform – and it is this greatest of heresies that Eretz Hakodesh attempted to bring Torah Jewry to embrace.

How did Eretz Hakodesh convince over 20,000 Chareidi Jews to cast votes for this anti-Torah cause in the 2020 WZO elections? It achieved this with a three-pronged public relations onslaught, consisting of trivialization and obfuscation, falsehoods and empty promises.

Trivialization and Obfuscation

From the outset, Eretz Hakodesh has never once acknowledged, let alone addressed, the unanimous *da'as Torah* and *psak halacha* which for well over a century has prohibited collaboration with the WZO. It has treated the aforementioned recorded statements of the Chofetz Chaim, Rav Chaim Soloveichik, Rav Elchonon Wasserman, the Chazon Ish and Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv on this matter as non-existent.

Had Eretz Hakodesh admitted that these *gedoley olam* had already spoken to the very question of joining the WZO—and in circumstances where the hoped-for benefits were far more compelling than those claimed by Eretz Hakodesh—the matter would have been settled for Torah Jewry. The only way, then, for Eretz Hakodesh to move forward with its campaign was to ignore their words entirely, which freed the group to trivialize the opposition of Torah Jewry to Zionism and the WZO as merely a matter of personal preference or tribal habit.

The founder of Eretz Hakodesh wrote that “the Torah community has

traditionally not been involved or active in the WZO ... and *gedoley Yisroel* have generally stayed away from any involvement.”⁶ Nearly every word in that sentence is incorrect. *Gedoley Yisroel* did not “generally stay away from involvement” – they at all times unanimously prohibited any connection to the WZO and similar Zionist groups in the most unequivocal terms. Nor has the Torah community been “traditionally uninvolved or inactive” in the WZO – it has unfailingly followed its leaders’ directives to shun that heretical entity.

Another prominent writer described how for many Chareidi Jews, “the word Zionist is a turnoff... They may feel disinclined to take part simply on the grounds that this isn’t something for the heimishe crowd.” He thus turned association with Zionism, which *gedoley Yisroel* have deemed a sin of the gravest sort, into something to which Chareidi Jews “feel disinclined” merely out of tribal habit or upbringing, not unlike a Sefardi Jew’s distaste for gefilte fish.

That which the Chofetz Chaim and Rav Chaim Soloveichik regarded as an existential threat to the Jewish people was reduced by this writer to something that “isn’t for the heimishe crowd,” But Eretz Hakodesh was ready to help them to overcome their unease.

In truth, Torah Jewry’s historical opposition to Zionism and the WZO is founded on the most central Torah beliefs that exist. Zionism strikes a mortal blow at the heart of the essential definition of the Jewish people as a nation which received the Torah at Mount Sinai, one enjoined by God to observe His commandments and charged with the mission to be a “kingdom of servants of God, and a holy nation.”

Zionism obliterated this definition, and substituted a common land and language as the sole basis for Jewish nationhood. It jettisoned the idea of an eternal *Am Hashem* and *Am HaTorah* and replaced it with a purely secular national identity, indistinguishable from that of France or Italy.

As Rav Reuven Grozovsky, Rosh Hayeshiva of Yeshivas Torah Vodaath and chairman of the Mo’etztes Gedoley HaTorah of America, wrote, this was an even greater distortion of Jewish belief and history than the ideologies of Reform and the Enlightenment. There cannot be, after all, any greater attack on the Judaic worldview than this one, which robs the Jewish nation

6. Mishpacha, 2/5/20.

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and every individual Jew within it of their core identities as servants of God and guardians of the Torah, the purpose of all existence.

The unanimous rejection of Zionism is not only rooted in the most central precepts of hashkafa, but is also squarely based on numerous explicit halachic proscriptions. Rav Reuven addresses these at length in his sefer, *Ba'ayos Hazeman*.⁷

As he discusses in great detail, these prohibitions include 1) *hischabrus im reshaim* – the act of joining together with those who reject Torah, such as the Zionist, Reform and Conservative parties in the WZO; 2) *hischabrus im minus* – the act of joining together with heretical ideologies such as Zionism, Reform and Conservatism; 3) *mesayey'a yedey ovrey aveyrah* – facilitating the commission of sin, by actively voting for the budgets, officers, staff and everything else that enables the WZO to disseminate heresy and engage in a variety of other transgressions of Torah through its multifaceted educational and other activities; and 4) Chilul Hashem on a monumental scale by failing to openly oppose the anti-Torah ideology and activities of the WZO and on the contrary, appearing to acquiesce in and endorse them.

These are not *chumros* (stringencies) or violations of the spirit of the law. They are *halachos pesukos* (clear-cut Halacha) appearing in Shas and Poskim, and transgressing these grave prohibitions cannot be rationalized away for all the benefits in the world.

All of this applies to the WZO as a Zionist organization. But with the inclusion of the Reform and Conservative parties in the WZO, all of these *issurim* take on added severity. In Adar 5716, eleven of America's leading *gedoley Torah* pronounced a prohibition on joining with Reform and Conservative representatives in Jewish communal organizations.

From that time onward, American Chareidi Jewry has considered any collaboration with those movements to be complete anathema – until the advent of Eretz Hakodesh. It is a supreme irony that for the ostensible purpose of fighting the heterodox movements, Eretz Hakodesh has been the first Chareidi group in sixty-five years to breach the ban on joining with them.

After the signing of the WZO coalition agreement with Eretz Hakodesh,

7. Pp. 48-71.

Yizhar Hess, the Conservative movement's representative in the WZO, gloated: "This past week has been the most intensive one in my professional life, and it ended with a compromise that is respectful for all the parties involved. But this intensive week also had its enjoyable moments: joking around with Pindrus [Degel HaTorah MK], exchanging witticisms with Schwebel [Eretz Hakodesh officer in WZO], complimenting Lituv [director-general of Bnei Brak]. When it was all over, we are all signed on a document together."

When spokesmen for Eretz Hakodesh are bluntly confronted with the truths they so desperately seek to elide – that the *gedoley hador* of several successive generations have prohibited participation in the WZO based on fundamental hashkafa and explicit Halacha – they offer vague justifications that do nothing but obfuscate the issues at hand.

It is a kind of argumentation known to lawyers as "alternative pleadings," but perhaps a truer description is that of an intellectual shell game, in which each alternative assertion is not only false but simply incoherent, and the purpose of the exercise seems to be to studiously avoid facing an uncomfortable truth. Let us address these claims one by one.

First there is the assertion that "*Zionism is passé and real Zionists no longer exist.*" Those advancing this claim don't explain what they mean, nor do they explain what "real" Zionism and Zionists would look like. Whether Zionism is real does not depend upon the sale of kova tembel hats on Israeli Independence Day, or how many fans stand at attention as Hatikva is sung before Shabbos afternoon soccer matches.

Torah hashkafa and Halacha are not concerned with tembel hats and Hatikva. To reiterate: the heresy of Zionism inheres in its excision of God and Torah from the definition of Jewish nationhood, replaced by land and language as its definition.

Hence, in the view of Torah hashkafa and Halacha, the heresy that is Zionism is alive and well and growing ever stronger, taking the form of a secular state which acts as the embodiment of Jewish nationhood and is regarded as such by the vast majority of Jews and non-Jews alike. It is a state governed by secular laws, values and institutions—some of which are even more anti-Torah than those of non-Jewish countries—and is led by Jews whose lifestyle is at odds with Torah law.

With every passing day, the State's status as the ostensibly legitimate

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representative, spokesman and defender of the Jewish people becomes more deeply entrenched in the minds and hearts of both Jews and non-Jews the world over, including, tragically, many Torah Jews. And as that happens, and as the State's prestige as a military and economic power grows, the heresy of Zionism gains strength and becomes ever more successful. It is, indeed, the single most successful heretical movement of modern times and perhaps in all of Jewish history (since the Golden Calf).

Where Reform, Conservatism and the other schismatic movements of the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries have all either disappeared or are headed for oblivion, Zionism alone found the nefarious formula that gave it staying power and the ability to continue to wreak deep spiritual havoc. Rav Meir Soloveichik quoted his grandfather, Rav Chaim, as saying, "How deep is the evil of the Zionists! They put great thought into finding the precise point of vulnerability at which to strike Klal Yisroel, and were thereby successful in bringing it such great ruin."

This is why the Chofetz Chaim speaking in 1929 and Rav Elyashiv in 2010 – a mere 12 years ago, by which time one would presume "real" Zionism had already disappeared – issued the identical ruling. The radical heresy of Zionism, embodied in the State, endures and only deepens with the passage of time.

The notion of "real" Zionism and Zionists is equally irrelevant to the halachic prohibitions on joining the WZO, which are based on joining with, aiding or abetting those who violate the Torah. Hence, so long as the WZO is populated by those who are anti-Torah, whether Zionists, Reform or Conservative, Halacha prohibits joining with them and facilitating their agenda, regardless of whether they spend Independence Day spouting Zionist ideology or suntanning at the beach.

Next: "*WZO isn't a real organization; it's just a bunch of money waiting to be spent.*" Once again, the claim is simply incoherent. All one needs to do to ascertain whether the WZO does something besides wantonly disbursing money is to visit wzo.org and examine the document entitled "Summary of the National Institutions Activity," which was submitted to the 38th Zionist Congress in October 2020.

The report's 54 pages make abundantly clear that the WZO is very much a real organization – a quintessentially Zionist organization at that—with 182 full-time employees and an annual budget of \$24.5 million. It sponsors

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a very wide range of programs and activities throughout the year which draw tens of thousands of participants in countries worldwide. The WZO's Emissary Unit is responsible for sending more than 2,000 Zionist emissaries each year to communities in thirty countries. The WZO Department of Education recently produced a play called "Herzl, a Dream Come True," which was performed in 25 cities in nine countries and attended by over 8,200 children. These are just two examples from among dozens.

This report is also edifying as to the kind of activities Eretz Hakodesh makes possible through its participation in the WZO. The Department for Diaspora Affairs, for example, "introduces Zionist values to the general public as a whole and to the younger generation in particular" and is "committed to creating an accepting space for all the opinions and religious and political views in the Jewish People..." The Zionist Enterprises Department promotes the idea that "Zionism and Herzl teach us that all human beings are equal and that we should build a world based on social justice and 'tikkun olam' for everyone." It ought not to surprise that every department, and every program of every department, is shot through with Zionist ideology, because WZO is a not only a "real" Zionist organization but the world's leading one.

Next: "*Eretz Hakodesh isn't really part of the WZO, it's an affiliate.*" Only the most minimal research is needed to ascertain that Eretz Hakodesh is a full-fledged member of both the WZO and the American Zionist Movement (AZM), as required by the bylaws of the AZM and the regulations of the WZO elections. On October 22, 2020, it signed the WZO coalition agreement along with all twelve of the other parties, all of which are full members of the WZO. The signature of Eretz Hakodesh's representative appears directly above the line on which the signatures of the representatives of Reform, Conservatism and Yesh Atid appear.

The agreement states that all parties to it are interested in "a true partnership to advance the goals that unite us on behalf of Am Yisrael, its land, heritage and state," and that they see great importance in, among other things, "working for the advancement of Zionism, the centrality of the State of Israel in the life of the Jewish People as a Jewish, Zionist and democratic country [and] mutual respect for pluralism in the Jewish People..." It is this "true partnership" with Zionism, Reform and Conservatism in which Eretz Hakodesh is now a full member.

Next: "*Participation in the WZO is not unlike the participation of Chareidi representatives in the Knesset.*" Those words, which the founder of

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Eretz Hakodesh wrote during the election campaign, display a complete unawareness of what both Rav Reuven Grozovsky and Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv wrote regarding this very matter.

They explained at length that there is no comparison between the two situations. The Knesset is not an ideological organization, but a governmental body which includes non-Zionists such as the Arab parties. This body passes laws governing the country's citizens and has the power to interfere with the lives of religious Jews, and since they have no choice but to live under its rule, they are forced to send representatives there to fight for their survival. The Chazon Ish compared representation in the Knesset to someone who is attacked in the forest by robbers and negotiates with them hoping they will allow him to live.

The WZO, in contrast, is the ideological center of Zionism, and we are not compelled to join it to prevent any denial of our rights as citizens. Participating in it is thus a willful act of identification with Zionism and collaboration with those who are anti-Torah. Yet, either ignorant or disdainful of what these *gedoley Yisroel* have written, the founder of Eretz Hakodesh simply continued to claim "this is no different than our gedolim or askanim getting involved in government issues."

Finally, there is this claim: "*We can sign onto the Jerusalem Program since it is just words; we don't believe in it.*"

First, some background: According to the WZO election rules, in order to be eligible to vote, a person must be a member of a "Zionist Federation," which in the United States is the AZM. To become a member of the AZM, a Jew must "accept the Jerusalem Program ... signified by signing its text," as well as pay membership dues—"in the tradition of Herzl's 'Zionist Shekel'"—which are used to support the WZO's activities. Accordingly, over 20,000 American Chareidi Jews are now members of the American Zionist Movement and financially support its activities, thanks to Eretz Hakodesh.

The Jerusalem Program is the Pledge of Allegiance of the Zionist movement, setting forth the core beliefs of its ideology. It reads, in part:

Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, brought about the establishment of the State of Israel, and views a Jewish, Zionist, democratic and secure State of Israel to be the expression of the common responsibility of the Jewish people for its continuity and future. The foundations

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of Zionism are: 1) The unity of the Jewish people, its bond to its historic homeland Eretz Yisroel, and the centrality of the State of Israel and Jerusalem, its capital, in the life of the nation....

The claim that “the Jerusalem Program is just words; we don’t believe in it,” is both false and irrelevant.

It is false because Eretz Hakodesh has said so.

In its initial application to the AZM to participate in the WZO election, Eretz Hakodesh declared its full acceptance of the Jerusalem Program and that its participation in the election would advance the Zionist Movement because “more Jews will begin to get involved... and their support, concern and involvement will grow.”⁸ In the pages of the *Jerusalem Post*, the founder of Eretz Hakodesh proudly affirmed “the commitment of Eretz Hakodesh delegates to the planks of the Jerusalem Program, the ideological platform of the World Zionist Organization.”⁹

Later, in a proceeding before the Tribunal of the AZM, Eretz Hakodesh stated:

Eretz Hakodesh was entirely honest, forthright and clear regarding its endorsement of the Jerusalem Program, and explicitly stated its intent to involve those who might previously not have been involved Eretz Hakodesh highlighted both the Jerusalem Program and Zionism ... knowing full well that this would engender greater opposition from factions within the Chareidi world who objected to any identification with modern Zionism.... We did a survey of our delegates [and] ... the results demonstrate an intense involvement with both Israel and the Jerusalem Program....

In its submissions to the AZM Tribunal, Eretz Hakodesh stated further that “present circumstances encourage greater engagement between traditional Orthodox Jewry and the global Zionist community.... ” Eretz Hakodesh’s application was approved unanimously by the AZM’s Election Committee. And this is no surprise: the AZM, in its informational election video,

8. Letter to Judge Abraham Gafni, Chairman, Area Election Committee of AZM, 5/22/19.

9. *Jerusalem Post*, 10/22/20.

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highlights the idea that the WZO “builds bridges among world Jewry,” as illustrated by a cartoon representation of Theodor Herzl bringing a secular and obviously Chareidi Jew together in friendship.

This is the Eretz Hakodesh agenda succinctly stated: “greater engagement between traditional Orthodox Jewry and the global Zionist community.” And it has pursued this agenda “knowing full well that this would engender greater opposition from factions within the Chareidi world who objected to any identification with modern Zionism.”

Should this be surprising? Not at all. The founder and driving force behind Eretz Hakodesh is, after all, an unabashed fellow traveler of Zionism. He was a delegate of the religious Zionist Mizrachi party in several previous WZO elections and is also a member of the executive board of the annual Moscowitz Prize for Zionism. During the 2020 WZO elections, he wrote in *Hamodia*¹⁰ that “it would be important to vote for any Orthodox [i.e. religious Zionist] party in this upcoming election. Since many of our *machaneh* may feel uncomfortable voting for one of the existing Orthodox parties, a new party called Eretz Hakodesh was formed.”

Since the founder of Eretz Hakodesh is a supporter of Zionism and has served as a Zionist delegate to the WZO, it makes perfect sense that he would be happy for Chareidi Jews to vote for an existing, avowedly Zionist party which espouses the tenets of the Jerusalem Program. It is only because “our *machaneh*” may feel “uncomfortable” voting for a party with “Zionist” in its name that he created Eretz Hakodesh, which sounds so much holier, so that Chareidi Jews can now be brought to affirm the Jerusalem Program, the seminal creed of Zionist ideology, in maximum comfort.

Once again, with disregard for historical truth, collaboration with Zionism is trivialized into something that’s merely “uncomfortable,” a social *faux pas* for those belonging to a particular “*machaneh*.”

“Uncomfortable” is when someone’s new shoes are too tight or when the air conditioning malfunctions on a humid summer day. Joining the WZO is not “uncomfortable.” It is a grave violation of numerous halachos, a monumental Chilul Hashem, a rebellion against a century of *da’as Torah* and a grotesque perversion of what Klal Yisroel stands for.

But even if we were to assume that Eretz Hakodesh’s professions of belief in

10. Hamodia, 1/27/20.

the Jerusalem Program were indeed a bald-faced lie intended only to gain entry into the WZO, that fact would still be irrelevant.

To begin with, it is prohibited to outwardly profess allegiance to heresy even while rejecting it inwardly. Moreover, the halachic prohibitions on joining the WZO apply even in the absence of any requirement to accept the Jerusalem Program. It is the same *hischabrus* with *reshaim*, the same *hischabrus* with a group devoted to *minus* and the same *misayey'a yedey ovrey avevrah*, even if no word of loyalty to Zionism is ever uttered.

And, finally, even without any pledge of allegiance to Zionism, the entry of Eretz Hakodesh into the WZO, which is seen by the entire world as a full embrace of Zionism, constitutes a Chilul Hashem of breathtaking magnitude. The vast majority of Jews and non-Jews worldwide know nothing about the Jerusalem Program, or the difference between being an affiliate or a member of the WZO, or the supposed death of Zionism. They know only what they've seen unfold before their eyes, as this *Jerusalem Post* article describes:

Theodor Herzl could never have imagined this scene, not in his wildest dreams. Representatives of the Reform, Conservative, religious-Zionist and Chareidi (ultra-Orthodox) religious movements sat beneath a picture of Herzl last week in the Ben-Gurion board room at World Zionist Organization headquarters in Jerusalem. There they joined all Israeli right- and left-wing parties ... in signing an agreement to share the leadership and budgets of the international Zionist movement.

Yes, Chareidim in the Zionist movement in order to run for the Zionist Congress, Eretz Hakodesh had to sign the Jerusalem Conference, which among other things calls for "strengthening Israel as a Jewish, Zionist and democratic state ... marked by mutual respect for the multi-faceted Jewish people" [and] "ensuring the future and the distinctiveness of the Jewish people by furthering Jewish, Hebrew and Zionist education." Could Herzl have imagined that Chareidi and Reform Jews would sign a Zionist document together?¹¹

That is what the world knows of Eretz Hakodesh, resulting in a desecration

11. Jerusalem Post, 10/29/20.

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of Hashem's Name of incalculable proportions.

Rather than engaging in empty *pilpulim* about whether Eretz Hakodesh is *really* just an “affiliate” of the WZO, which in turn is not *really* an organization but a mere pile of money there for the taking, another question begs: can it really be that there are those who harbor not even the most minimal feeling for the *tza'ar* of Hakadosh Boruch Hu upon seeing Torah Jews consorting with those who despise Him? Is there not the slightest twinge of conscience over selling the foundational principles of Yiddishkeit for a meager mess of pottage and attaching their names forever to a radical redefinition of Judaism?

Falsehood

From its inception until today, Eretz Hakodesh's campaign to enlist the support of Chareidi Jewry has been accompanied by a very disturbing phenomenon: the dissemination of numerous partial or complete untruths and factual distortions intended to shape public opinion about Eretz Hakodesh and the permissibility of voting for it.

It began with its founder claiming in the frum press that “Eretz Hakodesh has the backing of numerous rabbanim, including Rav Elya Brudny [who later retracted his support-AF], who explained the position of the Mo'etzes Gedoley HaTorah...” The invocation of the Mo'etzes Gedoley HaTorah insinuated that it supported Eretz Hakodesh, but that is false.¹²

He wrote further that “the initiative also has the backing of...Torah Umesorah...who welcomed the askanim [of Eretz Hakodesh] at their recent presidents conference.” False again: representatives of Eretz Hakodesh did attend a Torah Umesorah conference, but that organization never endorsed the group.

12. Indeed, in October 2020, Agudath Israel of America issued a statement that read, in part: “Any suggestion that the ideology of Zionism is compatible with Chareidi Jewry's fundamental beliefs has no basis and must be rejected....Also without basis is the notion that a party identifying itself as representing Chareidi Jews has the authority to sign a coalition agreement within the World Zionist Congress together with other Jewish parties including non-Orthodox religious groups, as happened last week. Chareidi Jewry has long abided by the halachic ruling of the most revered Torah leaders of a generation ago that it is forbidden to join Jewish organizations whose purpose is to bring Orthodox Jewry together with non-Orthodox under one organizational umbrella.”

Then, in the above-cited article in *Hamodia*, he wrote: “You can vote directly from the Eretz Hakodesh website. There is a requirement to pay a small fee... and check a box that you endorse the ‘Jerusalem Program,’ which speaks of the unity of the Jewish People and its bond to Eretz Yisrael, the value of Aliyah, strengthening the country, and promoting Jewish values and the Hebrew language.”

This was falsehood by omission, a knowing deletion of the pledge of allegiance to Zionism at the core of the Jerusalem Program statement. That deletion speaks volumes about what Eretz Hakodesh knew it needed to hide from Chareidi Jews in order to get them to sign up.

He later compounded the falsehood with another one, claiming in post-election proceedings before the AZM Tribunal that during its election campaign, “Eretz Hakodesh highlighted both the Jerusalem Program and Zionism.” Yet, not only did the group not highlight the Jerusalem Program and Zionism on its website and in various articles in the Orthodox press, but as we have seen, it actively hid the true nature of the Jerusalem Program from prospective voters.

Eretz Hakodesh’s dissembling finally reached its apex when it stated during those same proceedings that:

The reality is that Eretz Hakodesh supports the Jerusalem Program ... and its voters accept the Jerusalem Program both when signing a ballot and in their daily lives Chareidi Jews can indeed support the Jerusalem Program, and all of the elements of the Jerusalem Program are things that Eretz Hakodesh delegates and voters value deeply.

With unabashed duplicity, Eretz Hakodesh publicly characterized tens of thousands of Chareidi Jews as deeply valuing Zionism as “the national liberation movement of the Jewish people” and living their lives based on “the centrality of the State of Israel in the life of the nation” – even as it took pains to hide from those same Chareidi Jews what the Jerusalem Program actually says about Zionism.

Not content to portray contemporary Chareidi Jews as Zionists, Eretz Hakodesh claimed before the AZM Tribunal that the *gedoley hadoros* themselves were the precursors of modern Zionism, stating:

Was Maimonides not a Zionist? Was Rav Yosef Karo?... What about Rabbi Israel Ba’al Shem Tov, or Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer,

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the Vilna Gaon? Neither was able to move to Israel himself, but both sent groups of students to establish communities in the Holy Land that remain part of modern-day Jerusalem.

Yes, those rabbinic figures predated Theodor Herzl and the Zionist Congress – but that is precisely the point The core idea behind Zionism, that Jews should support, build and live in the Jewish homeland, is part and parcel of traditional Judaism. The definition of Zionism preferred by the Eretz Hakodesh slate is that which has remained vibrant throughout all Jewish history, and continues to this day as the foundation upon which modern Zionism was built.

The degree of distortion of truth in these words is so obvious it needs no explanation. In order to achieve its grotesque synthesis of Zionism with Torah, Eretz Hakodesh has distorted Torah belief beyond recognition—invoking the names of *gedoley Yisroel* of all the generations in support of it – and at the same time distorting what Zionism stands for, too.

The “core idea behind Zionism” is not merely “that Jews should support, build and live in the Jewish homeland.” It is the creation of a secular political state like any Gentile one. That is not “part and parcel of traditional Judaism” – it is its antithesis.

If Eretz Hakodesh’s definition of Zionism is simply that of *vesechezena eineinu beShuvcha letziyon berachamim*, of *hashra’as haShechinah* and *mitzvos hatluyos ba’aretz*, then it is false to state that it is “the foundation upon which modern Zionism was built.” If, on the other hand, its definition of Zionism is that of *kechol hagoyim beis Yisroel*, that the Jewish people become a nation like all other nations—essentially the Zionist ideology of the Jerusalem Program that Eretz Hakodesh publicly endorses – then it is a lie to claim that this ideology “has remained vibrant throughout all Jewish history” and is that of the Rambam, Rav Yosef Karo, the Vilna Gaon and the Ba’al Shem Tov.

Baseless Promises

As a practical matter, the issue of what Eretz Hakodesh promised to achieve for Torah Jewry by joining the WZO and whether it, in fact, achieved any of this, is wholly irrelevant. The *gedoley olam* who prohibited such participation ruled, based on the words of Chazal and the Rishonim, that all of the *issurim* involved apply regardless of the perceived

benefit from violating them.

Torah and mitzvos are not for sale, even for a *devar mitzvah* or for financial gain or influence which can be used for a *devar mitzvah*. This is how these *gedoley Yisroel* ruled even when the possible *pikuach nefesh* of countless Jews and the *limud haTorah* of tens of yeshivos were at stake.

Nevertheless, since the benefits Eretz Hakodesh promised potential voters likely helped mislead a great many of them into voting for it, it's worthwhile to consider how empty these promises were and how completely they failed to materialize. That abject failure has now made Eretz Hakodesh desperate to justify its continued, Jewishly illegitimate, existence.

During the election campaign, Eretz Hakodesh harped on two specific ways in which it claimed to be poised to achieve wondrous things for the Torah community. One of these was the enormous amount of money to which it would gain access. In *Mishpacha*,¹³ the founder of Eretz Hakodesh wrote: "What would you do with \$5 billion dollars? Which Torah projects, institutions and chessed opportunities would you choose?... That's a question currently facing the American Torah community."

He went on to explain that the WZO and its affiliated organizations, the Jewish Agency, Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet) and Keren HaYesod, have a combined annual budget of \$1 billion, or \$5 billion over five years. And, he wrote ominously, the Reform and Conservative majority in the WZO "gave money to anti-Torah causes ... [and] decreased allocations to Orthodox institutions and projects.... Can you imagine what they would do with another \$5 billion?"

Although bandying about billion-dollar figures surely impressed readers, he failed to disclose what appeared openly on the Reform movement's website: "Thanks to a robust turnout in the 2015 elections, 56 of the 145 delegates (39 percent) represent the Reform Movement and, as a result, have been able to ensure that more than \$4 million a year is being directed to the Israeli Reform Movement."

In other words, the Reform movement, the WZO's largest party occupying more than double the seats Eretz Hakodesh does now, profited all of \$4 million yearly from 2015 to 2020. Thus, if Eretz Hakodesh would be successful in receiving for all Chareidi institutions the amount Reform Jewry received,

13. *Mishpacha*, 2/5/20.

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this would amount to about \$400 per institution¹⁴— yet that’s the amount for which Eretz Hakodesh wanted Torah Jews to sell their souls by embracing heresy and joining with anti-Torah forces.

In *Hamodia*, the founder of Eretz Hakodesh argued that “seminary and yeshiva directors tell me their students used to receive \$1,000 to \$2,000 in Masa subsidies; today, if they receive a few hundred dollars, they are lucky. The liberal movements control the Masa board and they will not subsidize Torah education.” It would be nice, indeed, for seminary and yeshiva parents to get some tuition help. But it’s nearly beyond belief that Eretz Hakodesh mounted a campaign against Klal Yisroel’s historical rejection of Zionist heresy so families might get \$2,000 in Masa funding—and this, at a time when the frum community’s own resources have never been greater, counting numerous billionaires and countless millionaires among its members.

The other theme of the Eretz Hakodesh campaign was that it needed to join the WZO in order to fight an agenda of religious pluralism being pushed in Eretz Yisroel by the heterodox movements. The founder of Eretz Hakodesh admitted in his *Hamodia* article that these movements’ goals “are hard to achieve without a significant constituency in Israel, which they do not currently have.”

But, he warned, the Reform are opening kindergartens around the country and are replacing Orthodox teachers of Jewish tradition in public schools with Reform ones. He claimed that the Jewish Agency “pours well over \$50 million into such pluralism programs yearly,” although it states on its website that it annually “allocates \$2.7 million, divided 40%, 40% and 20% to the Reform, Conservative and Modern Orthodox movements respectively.”

And how did Eretz Hakodesh propose to deal with this? “One solution would be to cut off the funding source to pluralistic programs.” Such a suggestion demonstrates a complete detachment from reality. In the real world, even were Reform to lose all its WZO funding, one can be sure the shortfall would be quickly made up by a tiny fraction of the great wealth that is in Reform hands worldwide, and its activities in Eretz Yisroel would continue unabated. And again, the great irony is that as a voting member of the WZO, Eretz Hakodesh is now signing off on the organization’s grants to the Reform.

14. There are an estimated 10,000 Chareidi institutions in the world.

But, of course, given the realities of organizational politics, Eretz Hakodesh's entry into the WZO will do nothing to defund Reform. The Chareidi delegates will feel compelled to go along to get along, as a weak minority of delegates in a powerful organization whose long-standing members will do whatever is necessary to maintain their grip on power and purse-strings. Eretz Hakodesh's representatives will sit politely listening to all the *kefirah* being spouted and all the anti-Torah resolutions being passed, horse-trading their votes for others' causes in exchange for some funding for Chareidi ones. And the true victim in this all will be Klal Yisroel.

Eretz Hakodesh also claimed its entry into the WZO would somehow help to counter threats to "*kodshey Yisroel*," presumably referring to areas such as giyur, kashrus and the Kosel where the heterodox movements have sought to make inroads. Eretz Hakodesh never elaborated how joining the WZO would enable it to counter such threats, and for good reason: The entire notion is a flight of fantasy which it created out of whole cloth.

If the Chareidi parties, which hold 15% of the seats in the Knesset and have major leverage within the governing coalition, haven't been able to fend off the assault in these areas, could a few dozen American delegates entering a massive, entrenched Zionist organization without legislative power possibly be capable of doing so? And in fact, during the short time since Eretz Hakodesh joined the WZO, the status quo on *kodshey Yisroel* has only been eroded, and Eretz Hakodesh has contributed virtually nothing to their defense.

Now that over two years have elapsed since Eretz Hakodesh joined the WZO, the returns are in on its promised benefits, and they are embarrassingly paltry, virtually non-existent. To begin with, the WZO continues to be dominated by Zionist, Reform and Conservative forces. Of the thirty-four members of the WZO Executive, three, including the WZO's vice chairman, Yizhar Hess, represent the Conservative movement; four represent the Reform movement; three represent Yesh Atid-Meretz; and twenty-three others represent various secular and religious Zionist parties. One member represents Eretz Hakodesh.

Upon his recent nomination to head the Jewish Agency, former Israeli general Doron Almog's first move was to speak before a thousand clergy and lay people at the Israeli Reform movement's biennial conference, where he spoke glowingly of the Reform movement and his family's connection to it. In an ironic twist, he was denounced for his "quick and unnecessary

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flattery of the Reform movement” by a Knesset member of the very party which twelve years ago joined Reform in the WZO, prompting Rav Elyashiv’s protest that this was a “*nevalah she’ein kimosah.*”

Having done nothing to preserve “*kodshey Yisroel*” – if anything, the assaults in the areas of giyur and kashrus have only intensified during Eretz Hakodesh’s tenure in the WZO—and having found the WZO safe containing the billions of dollars to be locked, Eretz Hakodesh has spent the last two years feverishly trying to build a record of achievement to somehow justify leading Chareidi Jewry to embrace Zionism. Some items on its list are dubious, others are simply laughable, and yet others are false. None have anything to do with why Eretz Hakodesh claimed it needed to join the WZO. And none, of course, justify trampling upon a century of *da’as Torah* and *psak halacha*.

In a full-page ad in the Pesach issues of the frum press, Eretz Hakodesh proudly co-opted the Dayeinu theme in the *Haggadah shel Pesach* to enumerate its accomplishments. Topping the list was that it “obtained entry permits for our sons and daughters to learn in Eretz Hakodesh.” This refers to the fact that an Eretz Hakodesh operative co-headed the committee of yeshivos and seminaries that procured entry permits for their students when during the height of the coronavirus Israel had clamped down on entry by all foreigners.

What has never been adequately explained, however, is how it is that in a country with an incorrigible bureaucracy in general, and an extremely strict governmental response to the coronavirus in particular, it was somehow not the Interior Minister from Shas nor the Knesset Finance Committee chair from Degel HaTorah who wielded the political clout to open the gates, but instead an American organization representing five percent of the WZO membership. The answer is that the decision was indeed made by the government. All Eretz Hakodesh did was to organize a committee representing the students—which indeed a group of seminary principals was about to do if Eretz Hakodesh had not beat them to it.

The fact that Eretz Hakodesh was a member of the WZO is therefore unrelated to the entry of the students to Israel. And consequently, touting this entry as an accomplishment of Eretz Hakodesh’s membership in the WZO is akin to the politician who runs to the front of the Veteran’s Day parade and claims to be leading it

Further down on the list were things like six million shekalim allocated for “Chareidi educational events;” bringing 12,000 girls to a protest at the Kosel; participating in a conference for 3,000 rabbanim; and sponsoring Chol Hamoed concerts for yeshiva boys. There’s a reference to 26,000 dunam of Keren Kayemet-owned land that is “keeping Shemita according to halacha.” This is false: even Eretz Hakodesh only claims an agreement to keep the *de-oraysa* laws of Shemita.¹⁵

A further item on the list speaks of twenty million shekalim in “funding for teens at risk.” This refers to a Keren Kayemet grant which is funding educational programs for youth in seven Chareidi cities – Bnei Brak, Kiryat Sefer, Elad, Telz-Stone, Beitar, Emanuel and Rechasim—under the aegis of a newly-established unit for youth-at-risk in Keren Kayemet’s educational division.

The impetus for this programming was explained by Avraham Duvdevani, chairman of Keren Kayemet, in a speech before the board of directors of the Jewish Agency in Cheshvan 5781, in which he said:

The entry of the Chareidi community into the WZO and related national institutions is of historic import. With the Chareidim joining and in the presence of all the religious streams, this is the time to reestablish the religious division in Keren Kayemet and make connections with synagogues of all streams, etc. Another area is that of chinuch. Keren Kayemet is involved in educating our youth for Zionist values”

This, then, is what Eretz Hakodesh has wrought. Not a billion dollars a year for “Torah projects, institutions and chessed opportunities,” nor even ten million – but five million for Keren Kayemet, which “educates our youth for Zionist values,” to fund programs for Chareidi children it will choose to label youth-at-risk. Not stopping the spread of religious pluralism and foiling the heterodox movements – but joining with them. And, of course, sponsoring concerts.

15. Keeping the *de-oraysa* but not the *derabanan* laws of Shemita is the equivalent of someone claiming to be a Shomer Shabbos because he does not harvest his wheat on Shabbos but keeps his store open to sell it. Indeed, nowadays there are no *de-oraysa* laws of *Shemita*.

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It would be incorrect, however, to say that the Eretz Hakodesh experiment in collaboration with heresy has been entirely unsuccessful. It has paid off handsomely for party operatives who've secured cushy positions in the WZO and related entities, replete with high salaries and perquisites. As Yizhar Hess, a representative of the Conservative movement in the WZO, remarked: "I am happy that Eretz Hakodesh ... is ready to sign on a coalition agreement together with us – the Reform and the Conservatives – to get funding and positions."

There have been other achievements, too, like one that the representative of the General Zionist party wrote about shortly after Eretz Hakodesh joined the WZO. He applauded Eretz Hakodesh for strengthening the Zionist movement by enabling new communities to become members of the WZO:

I am also happy to report that the Chareidi party has already made an impact on the future of the Zionist movement. One of the items on the agenda when the Zionist General Council met this week was accepting the Jewish communities of Ecuador and Paraguay as official Zionist federations in the WZO.... we received word that some of the parties were planning on voting against this proposal due to internal politics.

... We reached out to other parties, including Eretz Hakodesh, to secure their support....And sure enough, theirs were the deciding votes to welcome Ecuador and Paraguay into the WZO.¹⁶

III. RABBINIC OPPOSITION AND SUPPORT

The list of great talmidei chachomim, comprised of senior Poskim, Roshei Yeshiva and Rabbanim, who expressed their opposition to the Eretz Hakodesh campaign is a long and illustrious one. It includes, in part: Rav Dovid Soloveichik, Rav Moshe Shternbuch, Rav Dov Landau, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Soloveichik, Rav Aharon Schechter, Rav Shlomo Miller, Rav Yosef Harari Raful, Rav Elya Ber Wachtfogel, Rav Malkiel Kotler, Rav Dovid Schustal, Rav Yisroel Neuman, Rav Yonason David, Rav Yaakov Horowitz, Rav Sholom Schechter, Rav Meir Stern, Rav Yitzchok Soloveichik,

16. Jerusalem Post, 10/29/20.

and Rav Yaakov Eliezer Schwartzman.

The Novominsker Rebbe, Rav Yaakov Perlow, *z.t.l.*, as well, clearly stated his opposition to voting for Eretz Hakodesh, and according to a close talmid, Rav Dovid Feinstein, *z.t.l.*, too, indicated his opposition. And a group of twenty talmidim of Rav Aharon Kotler, *z.t.l.*, issued a joint statement denouncing the Eretz Hakodesh campaign as something their rebbe would have adamantly opposed.

Their opposition to entry into the WZO follows the position of the greatest gedolim of the last several generations. What is confounding, however, is that a small number of other talmidei chachomim who expressed support for entering the WZO did not, despite their great scholarship, even mention, let alone address, the historical opposition of *gedoley Yisroel* – as recently as the ruling of Rav Elyashiv, the *posek hador*, just one decade ago. Nor did they attempt to address the numerous serious halachic issues set forth at great length in Rav Reuven Grozovsky's *Ba'ayos Hazeman*.

Faced with the unyielding opposition of a long list of *gedoley hador* of past and present, Eretz Hakodesh has frantically sought to embellish its small roster of supportive rabbinic figures, using any means at its disposal. Most disturbingly, that has meant invoking the supposed support of Torah figures who wish to have nothing to do with Eretz Hakodesh's partnership with Zionism.

In 2020, for example, an official of Eretz Hakodesh approached Rav Yonason David, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Pachad Yitzchok in Yerushalayim, to support the group. Rav David rejected this in the strongest terms, referring to its involvement in the WZO as "*kefirah*." Despite Rav David's adamant rejection, the founder of Eretz Hakodesh has continued to openly claim that Rav David supports his group.

During the WZO election campaign in 2020, the founder of Eretz Hakodesh twice approached Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky, the senior Rosh Hayeshiva in North America, to give his support to the group, which the Rosh Yeshiva declined to do. Rav Shmuel confirmed his opposition to Eretz Hakodesh in a meeting at his home in 2020, which the Lakewood Rosh Hayeshiva, Rav Malkiel Kotler, and the author of this article attended.

Despite this, Eretz Hakodesh recently succeeded in having a senior Rosh Yeshiva in England issue a letter of support on its behalf, by claiming that Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky had ruled in favor of supporting it. But once again,

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this claim is simply incorrect, as Rav Kamenetsky made clear in a second meeting with Rav Malkiel Kotler and the author of this article in September 2022.

At one point in 2020, the founder of Eretz Hakodesh made yet a third pitch for Rav Kamenetsky's support, claiming that Rav Chaim Kanievsky, *z.t.l.*, had expressed verbal support for joining the WZO. Rav Kamenetsky had serious questions about this uncorroborated report. Although it purported to convey the view of a gadol whose towering stature is well-known to everyone in our generation, it also stood in direct contravention of the *pesak* of generations of *gedoley Yisroel* on the very same issue.

Moreover, he was aware from personal experience that Rav Chaim, like his father-in-law, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, generally refrained from taking positions on matters relating to the American frum community, deferring instead to American gedolim. He was perhaps also mindful that Rav Chaim's son-in-law, Rav Shraga Steinman, has warned against giving any credibility to supposed verbal replies by his father-in-law.

In light of these concerns, Rav Kamenetsky twice requested written confirmation of Rav Chaim's position, but was rebuffed both times. He then wrote a letter to be given to Rav Chaim asking for written clarification of his position, a request which was denied.

Only when he continued to adamantly insist upon receiving it was a facsimile of the purported response sent to him. To his deep dismay, however, what he received was a paper with some entirely illegible scrawls on it.

For all intents and purposes, there was no written response forthcoming from Rav Chaim at all. Once this became apparent, Rav Kamenetsky discounted the veracity of the claim of Rav Chaim's support.

Rather than allow ourselves to be caught up in the web of innuendo and untruths being spun by Eretz Hakodesh around Rav Chaim's position on the WZO, we ought to speak openly and honestly about that which we all know—who Rav Chaim was and what he believed and stood for his entire life. And in that spirit, we must ask:

Is it logical to believe that Rav Chaim was prepared to permit that which *gedoley olam*, including his uncle, the Chazon Ish and father-in-law, Rav Elyashiv, prohibited even when "*kodshey Yisroel*" of the highest priority – no less than the continued existence of Europe's yeshivos and the rescue of Jews from the Nazi inferno—were in peril?

Rav Chaim's father, the Steipeler Gaon, stated, "We are here in Eretz Yisroel in galus under [the spiritual heirs of] Amalek," and spoke of "the false idol of Zionism." Is it reasonable, then, to conclude that the Steipeler's beloved son would stand virtually alone among the *gedoley Torah* of this and previous generations to allow voluntary collaboration with the Zionists?

And finally, there is the most critical question of all: Is Klal Yisroel prepared to overturn a clear, documented *pesak* regarding the fundamentals of Judaism issued by the *gedoley hador* of several successive generations, based on the flimsiest evidence and the claims of parties long on bias and short on credibility? The question speaks for itself.

IV. GOING FORWARD

Nothing at all remains of the founder of Zionism. Of Herzl's three children, his older daughter, a drug addict, died of an overdose in her thirties; his son, whom he did not circumcise, converted to Christianity and committed suicide at age forty; and his younger daughter died in a concentration camp. His only grandchild committed suicide in 1946.

But the ideology of Zionism that he birthed is very much alive. It has come to full expression in a State where the concept of the Jew and the Jewish nation have been radically redefined and emptied of all religious content. In the minds of the vast majority of Jews and non-Jews in the world today, the State of Israel represents Jews worldwide and is the highest expression of Jewish peoplehood. Its political leaders are seen as speaking on behalf of the Jews, and its army is venerated as the source of protection upon which the Jewish people rely.

The entry of Eretz Hakodesh into the WZO gives legitimacy to this redefinition of the Jewish people. It makes it possible for someone to reject Torah and mitzvos and yet to claim he is a proper Jew—one of the major underlying reasons behind the stance of the *gedoley hador* who resolutely rejected Zionism.

Nevertheless, Eretz Hakodesh will continue to work to persuade the Chareidi public to vote for it. It will claim that the reason for its inability to protect *kodshey Yisroel* or to gain funds for Yeshivos is because they had too few delegates. Vote for us in the next elections, they will say, and we will then be successful.

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All of this, like so many other claims of Eretz Hakodesh, is meaningless hype without any basis in truth, as we have explained above. In any event, the principles of Yiddishkeit are not on the auction block for sale to the highest bidder.

The Chareidi public must do its utmost to follow the rulings of the *gedoley hador* and to uproot this immense Chilul Hashem from its midst. It must refrain *en masse* from voting in the next WZO elections and instead relegate Eretz Hakodesh, like many other such misbegotten movements, to the dustbin of history, where it rightfully belongs.