

The Essential **Guide to Zionism** **Anti-Zionism** **Antisemitism** **and Jew-Hatred**

Professor Gil Troy

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PREFACE

Last winter, sitting with a 40-something-year-old friend from Boston who reported that her peers and her teenaged children could not explain the challenges facing Israel – and Israel’s reactions – I responded: “Wouldn’t it be great, if we had short, punchy, user-friendly, guides to the big questions vexing so many about Israel today?” The idea was that people could enter Jewish Community Centers, synagogues, schools, as well as non-Jewish spaces to easily access non-partisan, fact-driven, and non-polemical books, which would also be shared online.

That conversation inspired *The Essential Guide to October 7th and Its Aftermath: Facts, Figures, History*. Since JPPI published it in July 2024, and then updated it in February 2025, the Guide has been shared on the 100,000-person network of the JCC -- Jewish Community Centers -- Association of North America, as well as many Jewish Agency and Federation networks. The Montreal Federation-CJA printed 10,000 copies, and organizations, schools, and synagogues printed and distributed hundreds of other copies. My friend and JPPI colleague Dov Maimon translated *The Guide* into French – tailored for Francophones – and distributed over 20,000 copies in France, Switzerland, and Belgium - thanks to the KKL de France and World Zionist Organization. *The Guide* was translated into Hebrew and will soon be translated into Spanish, with some interest in a Chinese translation.

Eventually, we envision publishing Guides to U.S.-Israel Relations, Israeli History, Jewish History, and on Being a Jewish Parent and a Jewish Student Today. This project, *The Essential Guide to Zionism, Anti-Zionism, Antisemitism, and Jew-Hatred*, describes two defining phenomena: Zionism, the movement of Jewish nationalism that established Israel; and, alas, the ongoing hatred against Jews, and its modern manifestations, left and right, especially anti-Zionism.

Once again, before building into Five Chapters, illuminated with fact-boxes and charts, we pose Five Basic Questions:

- What is Zionism?
- What is Anti-Zionism?
- How do Anti-Zionism and antisemitism overlap, how do they differ, and why are both surging now?
- Are all pro-Palestinian activists and critics of Israel antisemitic?
- What can Jews and Zionists do to lessen the hatred against them?

After short responses below, this Guide deepens the answers in the following chapters:

CHAPTER 1: Zionism: The People of Israel Enjoying the State of Israel in the Land of Israel

CHAPTER 2: The Evil Overlap: How Anti-Zionism Became The New Antisemitism – and Mainstreamed Jew-hatred Again

CHAPTER 3: The Global Surge in Jew-Hatred: Why Now?

CHAPTER 4: Boundaries and Balance: How Israel's Critics Can Avoid Antisemitism, How Israel's Supporters Can Avoid Confusing Critics with Bigots

CHAPTER 5: Liberal Living and Zionist Dreaming in a World Gone Mad

EPILOGUE: The 6 Ps to Respond to Antisemitic Anti-Zionism

The Guide starts and ends on positive notes. That's an ideological and historical statement, putting the hatred in proportion. The French existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre claimed in *Anti-Semite and Jew*, written as the Holocaust ended, that the Antisemite makes the Jew. Zionists say "no!" The Jew makes the Jew.

Four key phenomena define this work:

- Zionism, the Jewish movement of Jewish national liberation, recognizing the Jews as a people as well as a religion with the right to establish a Jewish-democratic state on that homeland.
- Anti-Zionism, which rejects the legitimacy of Jewish nationalism, denies Jewish ties to the Land of Israel, and opposes the defining Zionist project, the State of Israel.
- Antisemitism, many Jew-haters' obsessive, conspiratorial ideology casting "the Jews," Judaism, the Jewish people, or "the Jewish state" as a central source of evil in the world.
- Jew-hatred, the crude bigotry against Jews, individually and collectively, often expressed in disdain, discrimination, intimidation, and violence.

We live in partisan times. Even what should be a unifying fight against Jew-hatred divides us, often along party lines. Just as Hamas's crimes on October 7 and the subsequent celebrations worldwide showed how much anti-Zionism and antisemitism blur, it should have ended this silly debate: "Which is worse – right-wing antisemitism or left-wing antisemitism?" We need zero tolerance for all forms of Jew-hatred, and all forms of bigotry. Even in the United States, the most welcoming of countries, Jews have been attacked violently by a right-wing White supremacist in a Pittsburgh synagogue in 2018, by a left-wing pro-Palestinian progressive outside a Washington, DC Jewish museum in 2025, and by an Islamic fundamentalist in Boulder, Colorado, eleven days later. These represent the three most popular – and deadly – forms of antisemitism today.

Antisemitism is the most plastic hatred. It's a remarkably adaptive obsession, welding Jew-hatred onto other agendas. When religion dominated the world: Christians and Muslims hated Jews as the "great heretics." As the world industrialized, Jews were too modern for traditionalists, too traditionalist for moderns, too capitalist for Communists, too Communist for capitalists, and too cosmopolitan to be trusted – that is, until Zionism made them too nationalist for the universalists. When eugenic racism was in vogue, Nazis vowed to eliminate the Jewish race. When anti-racism and anti-colonialism predominate in political and academic discourses, bigots cast Zionists, meaning Jewish nationalists, as racists and settler-colonialists. And today, to those who hate Whites, Jews have White privilege, while White supremacists say Jews are not white enough and scream, "Jews will not replace us." Again and again, as people fear different evils, Jews nevertheless remain the devil's workmates.

Forever mutating, updating, shapeshifting, Jew-hatred feeds off the hot issue of the day, be it sympathy for "the oppressed," pro-Palestinianism, anxiety about immigrants, frustrations of Whites – or Blacks. For centuries, antisemites have cleverly connected a big worry of the moment to the historical dread of the Jews – and now the Jewish state. Just as there's a difference between anti-Zionists and non-Zionists, thoughtful people must sift: just because some fanatics link just causes to unjust assaults on Judaism or Zionism – don't reject the cause, the Jews, or the Jewish state.

Antisemitism is not some mystical force. It's a useful way of organizing a confusing world for misanthropes of various stripes. An assortment of metaphors capture the different dimensions of antisemitism. It's a "parasite" because it feeds off so many different hosts, from left to right. It's a "virus" or "plague" because it's so contagious and afflicts so many. It's an "addiction" because its self-righteous intoxication becomes so overwhelmingly habit-forming. It's a "gateway drug" to other hatreds. It's "plastic," a "shapeshifter" – metaphors already used – forever mutating. It's a "ladle" stirring the pot of political furies

and social instability. Perhaps, most illuminating for historians, it's a "reservoir" – albeit polluted – a cultural pool filled with accusations, images, and grievances people draw upon when they wish to criticize anything Jewish or need a scapegoat.

Antisemitism is a process too. In 1975, Elie Wiesel, eleven years before winning the Nobel Peace Prize, recognized the morphology of antisemitic hatred in the onslaught against Israel and Zionism. "To prepare 'solutions' to the 'Jewish problem' the first step was to divorce the Jew from mankind," he wrote. Accusing Israel, the collective Jew, of the reprehensible crime of racism started the process of ostracizing, demonizing, then dehumanizing, which in the 1940s spawned Auschwitz. Fearing that "hate of the Jew has once more become fashionable," the Romanian-born American immigrant admitted then, "I remember and I am afraid."

In 1982, when Israel's war in Lebanon triggered another anti-Zionist, antisemitic hate-swarm, the French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy confirmed Wiesel's fears, saying subtly, gradually, "through tiny slips of meaning within these drifts of language and words, the [post-Holocaust] taboo is being broken." Demonizing Israel helped paint "a portrait" of Jews as "a shameful people, a satanic people . . . this abominable people, universally loathed"— and deservedly so.

Robin Shepherd, a British political commentator who attended university in London in the late 1980s and early '90s, remembers watching attempts to ban Jewish student societies using the "justification" that "Zionism was racism." Like accusations of settler-colonialism and genocide today: "It was a charge that would put anyone with even mildly pro-Israeli leanings right on the back foot. It was a verbal jab to the chin. It was a way of telling you to conform to the anti-Israel orthodoxy or be vilified."

Of course, "It would be foolish to suggest that all criticism of Israel is motivated by antisemitism," the Northwestern University law professor Steven Lubet noted during another terrorism-triggered Jew-hating surge in 2002, "but it would be irresponsible to believe that none of it is."

At a time when more and more liberals and conservatives refuse to associate with each other, partisan loyalties blur the issues. Most American Jews, for example, more easily recognize antisemitism from the right than from the left. This reflects the Jewish community's liberal majority, exacerbated by the different haters' characters.

Neo-Nazis don't hide: they shout "Heil Hitler" while calling Israel's flag the "kike flag" before burning it. Right-wing White supremacist influencers like Nick Fuentes don't hide: denouncing "Jewish subversion" while calling the Holocaust "exaggerated" and dismissing detailed descriptions of Hamas's October 7 atrocities as "all a lie."

Islamists also don't hide: saying, as Hamas's founding charter proclaims, "Our struggle against the Jews is very great and very serious...." Judgment Day "will not come until Muslims fight the Jews and kill them." Such rhetoric inspired Mohamed Sabry Soliman to yell "Free Palestine" on June 1, 2025, while throwing Molotov cocktails and burning 15 pro-Israel demonstrators protesting peacefully for the hostages' return in Boulder, Colorado. His crime murdered one 82-year-old woman. When interviewed by authorities, Soliman said he wanted to kill all Zionist people, blurring Zionists and Jews and pro-Israeli protesters together. Earlier that spring, a Temple University student, Mo Khan, was more explicit when resisting his suspension for posting a sign in a bar saying "Fuck the Jews." Denouncing "Jewish supremacy" while raising over \$18,948 on a Go-Fund Me platform, Khan insisted: "That sign didn't kill any jews.... but their support of Israel kills 1000s of people EVERY SINGLE DAY."

Many progressive anti-Semites are more subtle. Hiding behind human rights rhetoric, many nevertheless celebrated Hamas's mass-murder of Jews on October 7. They justified it as "de-colonization" or a struggle against "oppressors," and ostracized Jewish colleagues.

Still, their rhetorical smokescreens convinced some Jews that "they're just criticizing Israel." And, a year-and-a-half into the post-October 7th Jew-hating surge, magazines like *The Atlantic* ran articles downplaying campus antisemitism as harmless. One contributor claimed the university upheavals merely fostered "a pervasive sense of non-belonging among Jewish students," while accusing the Trump Administration with "cannily appropriating for its own ends one of the progressive left's highest priorities: protecting a minority from hostile acts." Unfortunately, illiberal liberals today block the Jewish "minority" – 2.4 percent of America – at the intersection, caricaturing Jews as having "white privilege," and thus not a genuine minority.

In short, it often takes one punchline to refute Right Wing or Islamist Jew-hatred, but paragraphs to expose Left-wing bile. As a result, while condemning all bigotry equally, this *Essential Guide* necessarily devotes more space to decoding Left-Wing Jew-hatred than Right-Wing. This doesn't reflect authorial bias -- but certain bigots' duplicity.

A second warning: this book often focuses on the hatred. But most Diaspora Jews' fellow citizens, in every Western democracy, are not bigots. Note how many Americans, from neighbors to political leaders, embraced the Jewish community after one extremist killed eleven worshippers in a Pittsburgh synagogue in 2018. Three years earlier, 3.7 million protesters took to France's streets to denounce terrorism and Jew-hatred after the "Charlie Hebdo" and HyperCacher murders. The evil of one should not define a nation, especially when so many stand up for good.

Proportion is essential. The Jewish world, the pro-Israel community, and liberal democracies worldwide, face many challenges. Hamas's attack on Israel unleashed waves of hatred. But Jews are not homeless, stateless, or defenseless any more. Unlike a century ago, most Jews either live in the Jewish State of Israel, or in democracies that are free, orderly, ideologically opposed to antisemitism, welcoming to Jews personally, and pro-Israel.

Like the first *Essential Guide to October 7* – and the others forthcoming – this book is a joint publishing venture with the Jewish world. We encourage organizations, foundations, federations, synagogues and schools to send out or, even better, print out the PDF with the cover, both of which are available on the JPPI website.

Full documentation backing this guidebook can also be found on the JPPI website: <https://jppei.org.il/en/>

For more copies of this guidebook or to discuss organizational collaborations and sponsorships please email: info@jppei.org.il

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In memory of our fallen, especially Sgt.-Maj. Yosef Malachi Guedalia, 22, the heroic "Angel of Kfar Azza." With pride in our incredible soldiers and their families who have made the world a safer place, and with hopes for a genuine peace – and the kind of decency and respect in democracies so many of us took for granted not that long ago.

**Professor Gil Troy, Jerusalem,
January 2026**

Q & A 5 SHORT ANSWERS TO VERY BIG QUESTIONS

1 WHAT IS ZIONISM?

Zionism is the movement of Jewish national liberation. Rooted in the Jewish people's 3,500-year-old connection to the land of Israel, founded formally in the 1800s, until 1948, Zionism focused on establishing a democratic Jewish state in the Land of Israel, the Jews' indigenous homeland – while rebuilding Jews' pride after centuries of homelessness and oppression. Today, Zionism is the movement to defend Israel and the Jewish people when necessary, while building Israel communally and being rebuilt individually always. Zionism acknowledges:

- that the Jews are a people as well as adherents of Judaism, the Jewish religion;
- that, as the Jewish homeland, the land of Israel is central to Judaism, Jewish life, and the Jewish people, wherever they live;
- and that the Jewish people have rights to establish a state on their homeland, paralleling 192 other countries in today's United Nations.

Pivoting around this old-new homeland, Zionism is more than a political movement: it's a spiritual and ideological journey, rooted in Judaism, Jewish history, Jewish values, and the Jewish people. Especially since the Holocaust ended in 1945 and Israel emerged in 1948, Zionism is foundational to Jewish identity.

2 WHAT IS ANTI-ZIONISM?

Anti-Zionism, as an idea, rejects Zionism and Jewish nationalism. While it is theoretically possible to have a "pure" anti-Zionism, questioning all forms of nationalism, carefully

avoiding antisemitism, the “applied” anti-Zionist movement today is fueled by an obsessive hatred of Israel and Zionism. Going far beyond criticisms of what Israel does, it rejects that Israel is – then blames Jews everywhere for anything anti-Zionists hate about the Jewish state. Anti-Zionists delegitimize Israel’s right to exist, denying Jews’ historical ties to the Land of Israel. In embracing a one-sided view of the conflicting claims of Jews and Palestinians, anti-Zionism starts with three basic libels.

First, anti-Zionists tar Israel as a “settler-colonialist state.” Negating Jews’ 3,500-year-old ties to their homeland is an assault on history. That “historicide” tacitly repudiates Christianity, which honors Jesus, a Jew who crisscrossed the Land of Israel 2,000 years ago. Delegitimizing Israel justifies any attack on Israel, no matter how vicious.

Second, anti-Zionists deem Zionism “racism” and Israel an “apartheid” state. Injecting the question of biologically-based bigotry, which the world justifiably abhors, falsely racializes a nationalist conflict: in fact, both Palestinians and Jews may be dark-skinned or light-skinned. Unlike South Africa’s apartheid regime, Israel never defined people by their biological race. South Africa once enforced 148 laws characterizing humans by these categories: as “Native” – meaning Black – “Coloured,” “Asian,” or “White.”

Finally, anti-Zionists brand Jews and Israelis as “oppressors.” This accusation ignores Israel’s democracy while repeatedly minimizing the violence anti-Zionist terrorists have unleashed against Jews, Israelis, and passersby. An ideological position and a political movement, anti-Zionism fuels the pro-Palestinian movement. But not every Palestinian or supporter of a Palestinian state is an anti-Zionist.

3 HOW DO ANTI-ZIONISM AND ANTISEMITISM OVERLAP, HOW DO THEY DIFFER, AND WHY ARE BOTH SURGING NOW?

Antisemitism is a conspiracy theory and an obsessive hatred, exaggerating the centrality and supposed wickedness of Jews and anything Jewish – the Jewish people, Jewish tradition and values, Jewish institutions, and Israel, the Jewish state. The disproportionate hatred often results in demonization, delegitimization and double-standards – Natan Sharansky’s “3Ds.” Anti-Zionists aren’t necessarily antisemitic. The burden of proof in distinguishing the two, however, is on anti-Zionists, not their targets. True, some people reject all nationalisms, and a marginal minority of Jews

reject Jewish nationalism. But “anti-nationalists” who don’t truly reject nationalism because they support Palestinian nationalism while condemning Jewish nationalism – or anti-Zionist Jews who validate the demonizers’ obsessive slurring of Israel – should take responsibility for emboldening Jew-haters. As Harvard’s former President Larry Summers acknowledged, sometimes it’s not an antisemitism of “intent,” but it still has harmful effects, especially today. Most anti-Zionists tap into the foundations of traditional antisemitism. In medieval times, haters targeted “the Jew,” but today’s anti-Zionist haters target “the Jewish state.” Far-right bigots take out their hatred of “the Jews” on individual Jews. And far left anti-Zionists take out their hatred of “the Jewish state” on individual Jews, too. The historian Robert Wistrich called Jew-hatred the “longest hatred.” It is also the most plastic hatred: moldable, artificial, and often toxic, surging when liberalism and democracies languish and totalitarian thought spreads. Its obsessiveness, venom, violence, and exaggerations of Jewish power, wickedness, and dishonesty have made this kind of “applied” anti-Zionism the “new antisemitism,” the latest strain of an ancient disease, which becomes more virulent and contagious as Israel’s public image comes under increasing international fire.

4 ARE ALL PRO-PALESTINIAN ACTIVISTS AND CRITICS OF ISRAEL ANTISEMITIC?

Of course not. Like all countries, Israel makes right moves and wrong moves. It includes good people and bad people. And some pro-Palestinian activists criticize Israeli policy without delegitimizing Israel or libeling Jews. Moreover, many liberal Zionists believe their Zionist dreams won’t be fulfilled until a Palestinian state co-exists peacefully with the Jewish state. A dynamic democracy, Israel has many patriotic citizens who criticize their government – while supporting Palestinian nationalist aspirations. Therefore, criticizing Israel or supporting the Palestinians is not inherently antisemitic or anti-Zionist. But pro-Palestinian haters keep blurring the two. They fuse them together when they attack synagogues and Jewish schools, hit Jews wearing yarmulkes, or tell Jewish students “the only good Zionist is a dead Zionist.” Pro-Palestinianism and antisemitism reinforce one another when the pro-Palestinian movement celebrates Hamas terrorists yelling “*Itbach al Yahud*” – slaughter the Jew. The BBC implicitly acknowledged how bigoted that well-known Arabic cry is by mistranslating it in a documentary as “Kill the Israelis” – as if that’s not bad enough. Far too many Palestinians and their supporters have made it too easy to conflate any criticism of Israel, any support of the Palestinian cause, with today’s Jew-hating epidemic.

5 WHAT CAN JEWS AND ZIONISTS DO TO LESSEN THE HATRED AGAINST THEM?

Historically, some initiatives have reduced bigotry, from the Civil Rights Movement against anti-Black racism to the Women's Liberation Movement to Zionism itself – which, along with the mass shock provided by the Nazi mass murder, had sidelined most Western haters for decades following the Holocaust. Still, the question unfairly blames the victim. It implies that Jews or Zionists are responsible for today's demonization of Israel, Jews, and Zionists. Jew-haters are responsible for Jew-hatred, not Jews. Jews should not be targeted as Jews, anytime, anywhere. And the best response to today's antisemitism is Jewish and Zionist pride – twinned with a broader commitment among Jews and non-Jews to defend liberalism, democracy, and common decency. We need zero-tolerance for intolerance on all fronts – and far more tolerance of political differences among fellow citizens in every democracy. Jew-hatred, in all its manifestations, like all forms of prejudice, is a totalitarian assault on democratic norms – and symptomatic of deeper social, political, and cultural dysfunctions.

CHAPTER

1

ZIONISM: THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL ENJOYING THE STATE OF ISRAEL IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL

ZIONISM: A THRICE-BORN MOVEMENT

"To be a free people in our homeland, the land of Zion, Jerusalem...." This, Hatikvah's final line, concludes the Jewish national anthem – or is it the Israeli national anthem? The answer is "yes, both." That blurring tells the story of the Jewish people, Zionism, the Jewish national movement, and Israel. The Jewish national homeland, Israel, is also a Jewish-democratic state that guarantees the equal rights of the 20% of its citizens who are not Jewish.

Jews confuse. Had followers of Judaism, the Jewish people's religion, launched Judeanism, and established a Jewish-democratic state of Judea, enemies couldn't convincingly say: "I love Jews but I hate Judea and Judeanism." It would be like claiming: "I love Italians, but I hate Italy, Italian food, and the Italian language."

But history happens. Different words emerged. The religion of Judaism defines Israel, the Promised Land, as the Jewish people's ancestral home and forever headquarters. Over the centuries, Zion, a central mountain in Jerusalem, the Jewish people's 3,000-year-old capital, became a central symbol to the Jewish people. That's why the movement to launch the Jewish state, formed in the late 1800s, called itself Zionism. In 1948, David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of the re-established Jewish State, declared the new State of Israel.

Still, consider Zionism a thrice-born movement.

FACT BOX | WHAT IS ZIONISM

The movement of Jewish national liberation, Zionism builds on three fundamental ideas:



that Jews are a people in addition to sharing the religious faith of Judaism

Am Yisrael



that Jews have ties to a particular homeland

Eretz Yisrael



and that Jews have the right to establish a state on that homeland

Medinat Yisrael



Zionism is also a core expression of Jewish values and vision rooted in Judaism's DNA. Zionism is Abraham and Sarah wandering the land, Moses and Miriam yearning for the land, and Moshe Dayan and Golda Meir redeeming the land. Zionism is Jews evoking a "land flowing with milk and honey" by eating apples and honey every New Year, breaking the glass to honor two destroyed temples under the wedding canopy, and singing "Next Year in Jerusalem" at Passover seders.



Until 1948, the Zionist movement's main goal was to establish a Jewish state, while also creating a New Jew, strong, proud, free. Since 1948, Zionism's goal is to defend the Jewish-democratic State of Israel and the Jewish people when necessary, but continue to build, be rebuilt by it, and keep dreaming, always.

Jews confuse: Zionism could have been called Judeanism – instead of being named after that central hill in Jerusalem, Mount Zion; and Israel could have been called Judea – instead of being named after the Land of Israel. Then it would be hard to claim "I only hate Judea and Judeanism, not Jews...."



Calling Zionism "settler-colonialism" negates Jews' deep ties to the land of Israel; calling Zionism "racist" or "apartheid" falsely tries making the nationalist clash between Israelis and Palestinians a racial fight.

Non-Jews who support Israel and the Jewish people, can be Zionists, while Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel, who don't believe that the Jewish state is also a shared project of the Jewish people, can be good Israelis without being Zionists.



ZIONISM'S FIRST BIRTH: ANCIENT ROOTS BIBLICALLY, ARCHAEOLOGICALLY, EXISTENTIALLY

First, in the Bible, Abraham and Sarah intensify their religious journey into Judaism by moving to the Jewish homeland, the Land of Israel, somewhere between 2100 and 1900 BCE. That leap begins the Jewish people's journey into history. From then on, whenever they – and their ancestors – left the Jewish people's home, they defined themselves as in "exile." Four thousand years later, even after centuries with most but not all Jews scattered worldwide, whenever Jews pray, wherever they live, they turn toward Zion.

Originally, Judaism was heavily land-based. Jews usually worshipped God through agricultural sacrifices, especially at the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Even as Judaism became more abstract, even as conquerors displaced the Jews, the land remained central to Judaism theologically and the Jewish people symbolically. The Talmud teaches: "Living in Israel is equivalent to all the Torah's mitzvot, commandments."

While the Jewish people suffered when enslaved in Egypt, they thrived three centuries later with their harp-playing, Psalm-writing, charismatic King David around 1000 BCE. David gives the Jewish people the eternal gift of Jerusalem, their capital.

By building the First Temple there, David's son King Solomon harmonized Jewish political and spiritual power. In a simple, agricultural society, the Second Temple sent people's spirits soaring. Towering at 45 meters during Herod's days, it was almost as tall as today's White House. During the three pilgrimage festivals of Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot – Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles – Jews gathered from all over the world, fulfilling the Torah's vision.

Today, when Jews read the Temple Service on Yom Kippur, or wave the Lulav (palm fronds) described in *Leviticus* 23:40, or end the Passover seder singing "Next Year in Jerusalem," those rituals celebrate their tie to one homeland, Israel.

FACT BOX | ANCIENT SIGNS OF JEWISH LIFE IN ISRAEL ARCHAEOLOGISTS HAVE UNCOVERED



1130–586 BCE

Oldest Evidence of a Jewish Ritual:

Israelite villages found without pig bones. (*Tel Shiloh and Et-Tell Ai*)

1050 – 970 BCE

Oldest Hebrew Text:

with the words “king,” “judge,” and “slave,” (*Elah Fortress, near Bet Shemesh*)



c.700 BCE

Oldest Evidence of the Priestly Blessing from *Numbers*, 6:23–27.

Ketef Hinom Silver Scrolls (*Jerusalem*)



c. 1209 BCE

Oldest Evidence of a People Called Israel:

The Egyptian Merneptah Stele, “Israel is laid waste and his seed is not” (*found in Thebes in Egypt*).



870–750 BCE

Oldest Reference to the House of David:

Tal Dan Stele (*found in the Hula Valley*)



c. 100 BCE

Oldest Synagogue with mikve/ritual bath (*Modi'in*)



40–37 BCE

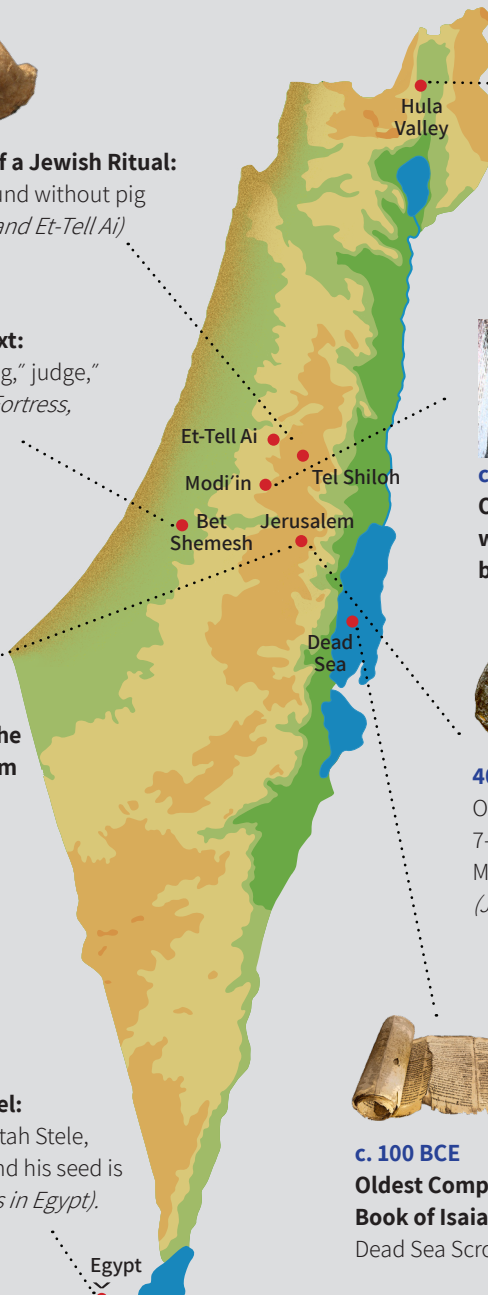
Oldest etching of 7-Branded Candlebra Menorah on Coins (*Jerusalem*)



c. 100 BCE

Oldest Complete Scroll of the Book of Isaiah:

Dead Sea Scrolls (*Dead Sea*)



Archaeological evidence confirms Jewish life in Israel. A 2,700-year-old amulet found in Jerusalem includes the priestly blessing from *Numbers*, 6:23-27: "May the Lord Bless you and keep you...." The etching of a seven-stemmed menorah candelabrum in Migdal, in the Galilee, was dated to 2,000 years ago, during Second Temple times. The Dead Sea Scrolls include 2,000-year-old Biblical parchments and tefillin – phylacteries. Certain villagers during the Iron Age IIB – 925 to 586 BCE, the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah – left no chewed pig bones behind for archaeologists, unlike their neighbors. That makes avoiding pork, keeping the kosher dietary laws, the most ancient Jewish ritual confirmed by secular archaeologists.

Most striking are the Holy Temple's remains, the 2,000-year-old Western Wall. More than ten million people a year visit the Second Temple's outer wall in Jerusalem. Nearby, in the City of David, archaeologists uncovered the "Pilgrim's Way," which worshippers walked during the festivals. Preachers like Jesus of Nazareth probably stood along that path, using its stone stands as podiums.

Archaeologists also uncovered evidence of the destruction of both Holy Temples. Charred wood dating back 1,955 years, along with daggers and coins, testify to the calamities once-free sovereign Jews endured, by the Babylonians in 586 BCE and again in 70 CE by the Romans. Jews still end wedding ceremonies by breaking a glass, symbolizing the destruction of Jerusalem that still haunts Jewish life, even at joyous moments.

The Babylonian exile lasted 40 years; the Roman takeover proved more enduring. By 132 CE, the Emperor Hadrian, insulting the Jews after too many revolts, renamed the land "Syria Palaestina." Jerusalem became "Aelia Capitolina." As the Roman Empire became the Christianized Byzantine Empire, Jerusalem became a popular takeover target. The Muslims, Christian Crusaders, Mamluks, and Ottomans came and went. Despite many Jews being exiled worldwide, some Jews remained in their homeland, particularly in Israel's four holy cities: Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and Tiberias.

While exiled, the Jewish people remained a people apart – often ghettoized, following their laws, respecting their leaders, caring for their poor. Christian and Muslim contempt isolated the Jews – while Jews communicated with one another globally through trading, kinship, and rabbinic teachings. And, wherever they were, Jews kept looking toward Zion, dreaming of redemption.

Zionism, then, is catalyzed by positive kinetic forces shaping Jewish identity and the need to be a free people back home after centuries of suffering. Yearning to return, Jews kept praying toward their homeland. Over the centuries, some reached the Promised Land. Still, the Zionist movement needed restarts, beyond its biblical spawning and Medieval stumbles.

ZIONISM'S SECOND BIRTH: DEFINING NATIONHOOD

First, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the Enlightenment and Emancipation freed some Jews from the European ghettos. But Jews were mugged by modernity. Acceptance into “enlightened” society usually involved concealing your Jewish self.

Starting in Germany in the 1810s, the movement of Reform Judaism triggered an intense debate about how to modernize. Originally, Reformed Jews distanced themselves from some of the traditional foundations of peoplehood and homeland. Three decades later, the Conservative movement committed to rooting its changes in a more evolutionary, historical process. Meanwhile Orthodox Jews declared themselves most adverse to change. Today, other denominations and ideological spin-offs have joined this ongoing 200-year-old debate.

Watching Italians form an Italian consciousness, Brits create a United Kingdom, and Americans develop liberal-democratic nationalism, some Jews updated the traditional Jewish national consciousness.

Then, modernity betrayed its own promises, unleashing waves of Jew-hatred. The Russian pogroms – anti-Jewish riots – of 1881-1882 and the rise of populist nationalist antisemites in Austria, France, and Germany inspired a few Jews to move to Palestine. Most Eastern European Jewish immigrants went to America. Other thinkers began articulating a Jewish nationalist vision.

The Jews in the East felt less betrayed because their expectations were lower -- no modernizers promised Enlightenment. Fewer Jews in Muslim and Arab lands rebelled against the rabbis, assimilated, or tried fitting in by draining their Judaism of its nationalist, peoplehood, dimensions. That's why many scholars say that the Jews of Muslim and Arab lands were “born Zionist.”

Ideologically, the small, gutsy band of European Jewish thinkers and activists pioneered a modern liberal-democratic Jewish nationalism on the biblical commitment to a land-centered identity. Pragmatically, the Zionist movement coalesced as the 19th century ended.

In 1878, before the pogroms, religious Jews established Petah Tikvah – Gates of Hope – Palestine’s first modern Jewish agricultural settlement. In 1882, members of BILU (a Hebrew acronym that translates into English as House of Jacob, let us go), intent on cultivating the Holy Land, responded to the pogrom-bred despair with hopes. Updating Judaism’s one-line affirmation of monotheism, they proclaimed: “Hear O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one, and our land Zion is our only hope.”

In 1890, the Viennese anti-religious rebel Nathan Birnbaum named this growing, old-new movement. The coalition of Russian-Jewish post-pogrom organizations called themselves “Hovevei Zion,” sometimes “Hibbat Zion,” “lovers of Zion.” Birnbaum translated the names into German as “Zionismus,” which became Zionism.

ZIONISM’S THIRD BIRTH: SEEKING STATEHOOD

In 1897, a 37-year-old journalist, ex-lawyer, and frustrated playwright boldly invited 208 delegates to a Zionist Congress in Switzerland. In Basel that August, Theodor Herzl established the formal Zionist movement in pursuit of Jewish statehood in Palestine. Zionism’s three pillars – the land of Israel, for the people of Israel, establishing a State of Israel – grounded what became an extraordinarily successful movement.

Using the Congress to model his ideal vision of “altneuland,” old-new land, Herzl launched a Janus-faced movement. Zionism cherished the Jews’ rich past while launching them into the future. Decades before political scientists discovered the power of “pluralism,” he invited representatives representing a range of Jewish ideologies, from religious to secular. And 74 years before women received the right to vote in federal elections in Switzerland, the Zionist Congress in Basel empowered women delegates with equal voting rights and leadership opportunities. From the start, this Jewish-democratic movement sought a Jewish-democratic state. Zionism’s Jewish traditions gave it an identity; its democratic character ultimately mobilized the Jewish masses and created a “New Jew” to make it work.

Israel was established in 1948, joining the post-colonial wave of new countries following World War II. But most former colonies in Africa and Asia became dictatorships. Zionism freed its people to live in their land, enjoying democratic civil liberties and the right to vote.

Despite its impressive ability to change history and its remarkable focus on building a Jewish state in Palestine, the Zionist movement always included intense political rivalries and searing debates. Six different schools of Zionist thought emerged: their clashes still echo in Israeli politics today.

1. **Theodor Herzl's Political Zionism** emphasized building a Jewish-democratic state, accepted by the international community.
2. **David Ben-Gurion's Labor Zionism** added a Socialism-friendly egalitarian dimension, inspiring today's attempts to mix all kinds of different ideologies with core Zionist values.
3. **Ze'ev Jabotinsky's Revisionist Zionism** combined a commitment to liberalism and individualism with an impatience to get a state immediately, given Europe's growing Jew-hatred. Today's Start-up Nation has its roots in Jabotinsky's liberalism.
4. **The Religious Zionism of Rabbi Abraham Yitzhak Kook** reaffirmed the Jewish national movement's links to the Bible and the Jews' mystical connection to the land.
5. **Ahad Ha'am's Cultural Zionism** cultivated a linguistic, artistic, literary, and music renaissance fueling the national revival, with Jews worldwide finding inspiration and empowerment from their renewed homeland.
6. **In America, especially, the Diaspora Zionism of Henrietta Szold** developed a philanthropic, support-oriented Zionism reconciling American patriotism with Jewish nationalism.

Today, **Identity Zionism** unites Jews all over the world by responding to the modern crisis of "anomie," of loneliness, drift, and purposelessness. Zionism roots Jews in a 3,500-year-old narrative of a return to their land, their roots, their tradition, while building a forward-looking democratic community too.

ZIONISM TODAY: BEING, BELONGING, BECOMING

Zionism is a noun and a verb. As a noun, Zionism denotes the movement that established the State of Israel in 1948. Since then, it is the movement to defend Israel and the Jewish people when necessary, but build Israel, be built by it, and fulfill individual and communal dreams, always. The sentence's second half makes Zionism a verb, describing a process of not just being but of becoming: from the weak, homeless, persecuted Jew to the strong, rooted, democratic Jew returning to history; from the thinking and believing Jew in exile to the thinking and believing and acting Jew of today, wherever Jews live, expressing a range of religious and political beliefs while sharing an ironclad commitment to the Jewish people and the Jewish state.

Before 1948, Zionism had to convince others – including many Jews at first – of three Zionist assumptions. First, because the Jews were a people, not just co-religionists, Jews had national rights to statehood. Second, there was only one logical place to establish that state. And third, Jews needed a Jewish state, to end Jewish suffering while fulfilling Judaism and resurrecting the Jewish people. Three decades before becoming Israel's first president, Chaim Weizmann insisted that the Jewish people “never based the Zionist movement on Jewish suffering.” Instead, the “foundation of Zionism was, and continues to be to this day, the yearning of the Jewish people for its homeland, for a national centre, and a national life.”

When a British aristocrat sniffed, “Why do you Jews insist on Palestine when there are so many undeveloped countries you could settle in more conveniently?” Weizmann, Zionism's quipmaster general, snapped: “That is like my asking you why you drove 20 miles to visit your mother last Sunday when there are so many old ladies living on your street?”

Still, there was a robust debate in the Jewish world about Zionism. While some extremely religious and extremely secular anti-Zionists rejected Jewish nationalism, many non-Zionist Jews were simply skeptical. Some doubted the chances that a viable state would emerge. Some feared accusations of “dual loyalty” in their homes away from the homeland. And many defined Judaism as a religion, treating Zionism as marginal and idiosyncratic. Today, the overwhelming majority of Jews are Zionists.

The horrors of the Holocaust, followed by the extraordinary successes in establishing and defending the Jewish state, transformed the Jewish conversation – as well as the

Jewish map. Most dramatically, Reform Judaism Zionized, embracing peoplehood and statehood. In 1949, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg marveled in *Commentary* magazine that Zionism had also succeeded “in achieving around itself... a startling unanimity of Jewish opinion.” From 1945 to 1948, “there was about Zionism the compelling atmosphere of a moral crusade in which all of world Jewry participated.”

Today, nearly, 80 years later, supporting Israel and being Zionist has become a consensus position among most Jews. Over 80% of American Jews support Israel, while communities in France, Australia, and other countries reflect even higher percentages. Nevertheless, in the United States and Great Britain, there is a growing number of non-Zionist rabbis, professors, and communal leaders. Neither anti-Zionist nor antisemitic, they view Diaspora Jewish life as more likely to fulfill Jewish values and keep Jews alive. Most don’t support the modern State of Israel ideologically, but don’t question its right to exist. It’s ironic – few Zionists today negate the Diaspora, as many did decades ago; but some leading Diaspora thinkers and activists now justify themselves by negating Zion.

FOUR TRACKS TO MODERN ZIONIST HISTORY: LEGITIMIZING THE STATE, BUILDING IT, FILLING IT, THEN LIVING THE DREAM

In the 20th century, Zionists sought international recognition, built an infrastructure for the state, populated it with citizens, then sought to live the Zionist dream. Diplomatically, key dates start with the 1917 Balfour Declaration when Great Britain recognized the need for a “national home for the Jewish people in Palestine.” The 1920 San Remo Conference, recognizing Jews’ rights to Palestine, culminated in the League of Nations’ 1922 British Mandate for Palestine. Finally, with UN Resolution 181 in 1947, the international community validated Zionism, recognizing the Jews’ rights to a “Jewish state” on their homeland.

The Jews didn’t need international recognition of their historical rights to the land – but it helped. The UN made Zionism among the most legitimized of national movements, in contradistinction to today’s international delegitimization campaign.

FACT BOX | THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S RECOGNITION OF JEWISH RIGHTS TO THE HOMELAND



November 2, 1917 The Balfour Declaration: "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people...."

- **April 25, 1920** San Remo Declaration: International Conference makes Britain responsible "for putting into effect the declaration made" in "November 1917 by the British Government and adopted by the other Allied Powers, in favor of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people...."



- **July 24, 1922** The League of Nations mandates Great Britain to place Palestine "under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home." And Britain "shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage... close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes."
- **November 29, 1947** The General Assembly of the United Nations, in Resolution 181, sets a date for the "establishment" of "Arab and Jewish States."
- **May 14, 1948** The United States of America recognized "the provisional government as the de facto authority of the new State of Israel."
- **May 11, 1949** The General Assembly of the United Nations, in Resolution 273, "Decides that Israel is a peace-loving State" and "Decides to admit Israel to membership in the United Nations."

More important than external recognition was the internal state-building process. From resurrecting the Hebrew language to developing a powerful labor movement, Zionists created frameworks and institutions. Those achievements meant that when the state formally began in May 1948, the newly named “Israelis” didn’t have to start from scratch. They were culminating a process, not jumpstarting it. Israel emerged as a democracy, with an economy capitalist enough to allow private property and free enterprise, but socialist enough to keep the state strong and its economy centralized, especially in the first few decades.

Wave after wave of immigrants bolstered the small Jewish population that had maintained the Jewish presence in the Land of Israel since the Romans. As Palestine’s Jewish community grew and prospered, and the British modernized Palestine, Arabs started flocking there too. While there were 200 to 300 Arab villages before 1841, another 50 or 60 were established over the next century. Overall, the population jumped – by 36.8 percent from 1922 to the 1931 census. The Muslim population increased by 28.6 percent. The Jewish population nearly doubled.

Clearly, history moves. That should make territorial compromise possible. Populations shift. Borders change – six times for Palestine, later called Israel, in the 20th century alone. Only fools or fanatics talk about “the” historical borders of Israel or claim that every Palestinian Arab had been rooted in “the land” forever.

An Arab adage teaches: knife sharpens knife. Zionism’s rise triggered Arab anti-Zionism too. Arabs rioted most violently in 1920, 1921, and 1924, culminating in the Hebron massacre of August 1929, when neighbors killed at least 67 Jews, raping, maiming and beating hundreds of others. In fleeing, Jews ended a long chain of life in Hebron stretching back at least to 1540.

Arab violence pressured the British to limit immigration in 1936 and 1939, just as Hitler’s war against the Jews was building its deadly momentum. After World War II, tens of thousands of Jews were smuggled in as part of “Aliyah Bet” (the second Aliyah) bypassing British immigration restrictions until Israel emerged in 1948. The once-marginalized Zionist movement reoriented Jewish history, restoring the homeland to the center of Jewish life. By May 1948, 600,000 Jews were already living in the new State.

FACT BOX | ZIONISM: SEVEN GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS BUILDING THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL

1. **RETURN HOME:** Reestablishing Jewish sovereignty in the Jewish homeland.
2. **INGATHERING EXILES:** Integrating three million immigrants since 1948 into the initial population of 600,000.
3. **EMPOWERMENT:** Returning the Jews to history: From Victims to Actors
4. **JEWISH-DEMOCRATIC:** Building a hybrid, Western-style capitalist democracy with a strong Jewish flavor.
5. **ALTNEU/OLD-NEW REVIVAL:** Revitalizing Jewish secular and religious life while serving as a bastion of Western culture, with a high quality of life.
6. **THE HOLY TONGUE LIVES:** Resurrecting Hebrew as a living language.
7. **JEWISH PEOPLE POWER:** Creating a proud Jewish Diaspora inspired by the “old-new homeland.”

Since the state’s establishment, as Jews learned to live together and with others in their own country, Zionism evolved. The movement strengthens two distinct but overlapping entities: the Jewish people and the State of Israel. The Israeli author A. B. Yehoshua explained: “A Zionist is a person who accepts the principle that the State of Israel doesn’t belong solely to its citizens, but to the entire Jewish people.”

As Israel’s builders steadied the state, from 1948 to 1998, their second-stage Zionism revolved around the questions: “What kind of nation should Israel be?” and “What kind of people should the Jews become?”

In today’s third stage, with Israel prosperous, thriving, yet still assailed, Zionism’s torchbearers are clarifying three politically unpopular assumptions: First, the Jews’ status as what the philosopher Michael Walzer calls “an anomalous people,” with its unique religious and national overlap, does not diminish Jews’ collective rights to their homeland

or the security and legitimacy every nation-state deserves. Second, the Palestinians' ties to the land do not negate the Jewish title to Israel: Americans, Canadians, Australians, and others also live with clashing land claims. Third, Israel juggles different missions: to save Jewish bodies and redeem the Jewish soul, while allowing all its citizens to thrive.

As Israel approaches its 80th birthday, it's time to resist telling Zionism's history through Israel's wars, despite the ongoing threats from its neighbors. The most famous dates in Israeli history remain 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, and now, October 7, 2023. This war-to-war story gets punctuated by peace processes and terrorism. But this narrow reading defines Israel only through the lens of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Telling Israel's story through the decades, from the 1940s to the 1950s on to the 2010s and 2020s, American-style, adds politics, culture, demography, and economics to the mix. That approach highlights Zionism's seven great achievements – along with ongoing challenges.

- **First:** reestablishing Jewish sovereignty in the Jewish homeland. Jews today take this revolution for granted, but the “wandering Jews” returning home after nearly 2,000 years remains an extraordinary national comeback. The challenge now is keeping Israel just and safe.
- **Second:** integrating three million immigrants since 1948 into the initial population of 600,000, especially Holocaust survivors, refugees from Arab lands, Ethiopian Jews, and Soviet Jews, while preserving civil liberties and free immigration as the Middle East's only democracy. Simultaneously, a need for national solidarity keeps clashing with tribal identities, agendas, and sometimes furies.
- **Third:** returning the Jews to history, transforming the Jews from the world's victims to fellow actors on the global stage, spawned great opportunities and complex dilemmas. Learning how to wield power morally remains challenging.
- **Fourth:** building a hybrid, Western-style, capitalist democracy with a strong Jewish flavor. That mix reflects Zionism's fusion, blurring religion and nationalism. Israel is democratic enough to have Arab judges and politicians, but Jewish enough to celebrate Passover and Hanukkah publicly. Balancing traditional and particularistic impulses with liberal-democratic values is still confusing.
- That political mix sparked the **fifth miracle**, the social-cultural “altneuland” – the old-new land Theodor Herzl envisioned – revitalizing Jewish secular and religious life while serving as a bastion of Western culture, with a high quality of life. Still, it's hard to preserve the sense of us-ness in an age of me-ness.

- This Jewish cultural revival relied on the **sixth achievement**, resurrecting Hebrew as a living language. This act of linguistic resurrection was a Zionist act of national renewal. Of course, in a state with 20 percent non-Jews, the Hebrew culture must welcome other voices too.
- **Finally**, the Jews' renaissance in their homeland bubbled over, creating a proud Jewish Diaspora. The "New Jew" the Zionists imagined exorcised the broken-down, weakling within, across the Jewish world. Israeli power and pride encouraged Jews to assert themselves politically and made Jews more comfortable in their own skin. Identity Zionism builds on that pride and continues to inspire, although many are distracted by focusing on Israel advocacy rather than identity-building.

Over a century ago, in different times, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis observed: "The great quality of the Jews is that they have been able to dream through all the long and dreary centuries. . . ." Zionism gave – and still gives – Jews "the power to realize their dreams." Still, decades later, when asked if his young State had fulfilled all his Zionist dreams, David Ben-Gurion answered, "Not yet." This "not-yetism" is the catalyst for Zionist can-do idealism – and, admittedly, explains the disappointment of some Jews with Israel.

Aspirational democracies, like Israel, like America, keep balancing their most ambitious dreams, individually and communally, with the humility that comes from never quite achieving them. The key is to use high ideals to keep doing better, without being overly frustrated by the shortfalls – or too convinced of your own righteousness.

CHAPTER

2

THE EVIL OVERLAP: HOW ANTI-ZIONISM BECAME THE NEW ANTISEMITISM – AND MAINSTREAMED JEW-HATRED AGAIN

THE GREAT GASLIGHTING: DENYING HOW MUCH ZIONOPHOBIA IS ANTISEMITIC

On November 10, 1975, the United Nations General Assembly declared Zionism “a form of racism and racial discrimination.” That resolution singled out one form of nationalism in that forum of nationalisms, Jewish nationalism.

At the time, Resolution 3379 didn’t mention Jews. Nevertheless, left-wingers and right-wingers, Americans and Europeans, Jews and non-Jews alike, called the UN’s proclamation “antisemitic.” They recognized that because Judaism is so foundational to Zionism, anti-Zionism is a form of antisemitism. And 30 years after Auschwitz, most Westerners condemned Jew-hatred. Still, the *Wall Street Journal* warned that, with the UN’s imprimatur, the resolution’s “practical effect will be to restore respectability to the dormant irrational hatred of the Jewish people.” The *Journal* editors and many others remembered that until the 1940s anti-semitism was respectable in the West.

Bayard Rustin, who organized Martin Luther King’s 1963 March on Washington, feared the “incalculable damage” done to the fight against bigotry, when the word “racism” becomes a political weapon rather than a moral standard. Seeing anti-Zionism incorporate traditional antisemitism into the Arab desire to eradicate Israel, Rustin quoted King that “when people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews, you are talking antisemitism.” Nevertheless, 50 years later, even when anti-Zionists express their hatred of Israel by attacking Jews and Jewish institutions thousands of miles away, some believe their claim: “I’m not antisemitic, just critical of Israel.”

The gaslighting is so common that in spring 2024, 600 Columbia University students felt compelled to sign a letter refuting this lie. They repudiated “our Jewish peers

who tokenize themselves by claiming to represent ‘real Jewish values,’ and attempt to delegitimize our lived experiences of antisemitism.” These students proclaimed: “We proudly believe in the Jewish People’s right to self-determination in our historic homeland as a fundamental tenet of our Jewish identity. Contrary to what many have tried to sell you – no, Judaism cannot be separated from Israel. Zionism is, simply put, the manifestation of that belief.”

FACT BOX | COLUMBIA STUDENTS AFFIRM ZIONISM AS CENTRAL TO THEIR JEWISH IDENTITY

**In Our Name:
A Message from Jewish Students
at Columbia University, Spring 2024**



Over the past six months, many have spoken on our behalf... Some are our Jewish peers who tokenize themselves by claiming to represent “real Jewish values,” and attempt to delegitimize our lived experiences of antisemitism. We are here, writing to you as Jewish students at Columbia University, connected to our community and deeply involved in our culture and history. We would like to speak on our behalf....

We proudly believe in the right of a Jewish people to self-determination in our historic homeland as a fundamental tenet of our Jewish identity. Contrary to what many have tried to sell you – no, Judaism cannot be separated from Israel. Zionism is, simply put, an expression of this belief.

Our religious texts are replete with references to Israel, Zion, and Jerusalem. The Land of Israel is filled with archaeological remains of a Jewish presence spanning centuries. Yet, despite generations of living in exile and diaspora around the world, the Jewish people have never stopped dreaming of returning to their homeland – Judah, the place from which we derive our name, “Jews.” Indeed, just two days ago, we all closed our Passover seder with the declaration, “Next year in Jerusalem!”

Many of us are not observant, but Zionism remains a pillar of our Jewish identity... We connect to Israel not only as our homeland, but as the only place in the modern world where Jews can safely take ownership of their destiny....

Charging Jews – as Zionists – with the inexcusable biologically-based crime of racism, anti-Zionists became increasingly totalitarian, subordinating all other values to the anti-Israel impulse. Anti-Zionism became the glue holding a diverse left together. These fanatics’ triple-double cross was exemplified by many feminists’ silence after the widespread gender-based violence Jewish women and girls suffered on October 7. They betrayed the Jews – alas, an old story. They betrayed liberal ideas – a 50-year story. But they also betrayed themselves, their core commitments. One Jewish woman in London complained, “It’s #MeToo... Unless you’re a Jew.”

Launching this UN-validated libel 50 years ago also helped make antisemitic anti-Zionism central to the far left, Marxist-infused ideology that keeps changing its name – call it Identity Politics, Modern Progressivism, Woke, Critical Race Theory, Postmodernism, or the Academic Intifada. This ideology, which dominated elite academia by 2020, justifiably abhorred racism. But, after Israel won the 1967 war, after Palestinian and Soviet propagandists racialized the Jewish-Palestinian national conflict, hating Zionism as a racist, imperialist, colonialist endeavor became a defining progressive cause. Israel was the poster child of the 1960s left with its kibbutz, labor unions, and Jaffa oranges. Especially after South African Apartheid ended in the 1990s, Israel became the far left’s most hated nation.

Today, many leftists condemn Israeli actions as “oppressive,” while forgiving any Palestinian violence because they’re “oppressed.” By hiding that bias behind human rights, anti-racism, and anti-colonialist rhetoric, left-wing Jew-hatred often requires paragraphs to refute. Right-wing Jew-hatred is more obvious.

Left-leaning, anti-racist, neo-Nazi-hating, “Jew-haters try to avoid using the term ‘Jew’ or ‘Jewish’ and instead reach for the word ‘Zionist’ or ‘Zionism,’” the British Labour Party parliamentarian Denis MacShane explains. In 1964, the Vatican II council condemned the traditional “hatred and persecutions of Jews.” Since then, both jihadists and illiberal liberals keep merging their attacks on Israel with a traditional, conspiratorial hatred of the Jews. The obsessive, self-destructive hatred of the Islamic Republic of Iran for Jews and the Jewish state – nearly 1000 miles away from Israel – embodies the evil overlap intertwining today’s anti-Zionism with modern antisemitism.

FACT BOX | THE TELLS OF A BIGOT: WAYS ANTI-ZIONISTS SHOW THEIR ANTISEMITISM

Bigots go from criticizing Israel to spreading antisemitism when they:



- **Recycle old antisemitic stereotypes**, slurs, and images, now stereotyping “Zios” – Zionists – as rich, powerful, manipulative, shifty, greedy, serpent-like, evil, obsessing about the Jewish state and “the Jew,” as being at the root of many problems.
- **Deny that the Nazis murdered Six Million Jews** or weaponize Holocaust imagery and language against Israel, accusing Jews of committing genocide, creating concentration camps, and becoming modern-day Nazis.
- **Commit “historicide,” trying to kill the Jews’ history**, claiming the right to define Judaism as only a religion, denying Jews’ historic ties to their homeland, and negating the broad Jewish consensus building modern identity on ties to Judaism, Jewish peoplehood, Zionism, and Israel, the Jewish State.
- Scream **“Itbach Al Yahud”** slaughter the Jew, and boast of killing “Jews” – most frequently in the Middle East.
- Lash out against Israel by **targeting synagogues**, Jewish day schools, people who simply “look” Jewish to them, or wear signs of being Jewish – in so many Western cities.
- Yell “Go back to Poland,” **call Jews “inbred swine,”** and target Hillel, the Jewish students’ center, including graffiting the upside-down triangle – Hamas’s symbol threatening death – on some buildings Jews use – often on campus.

Professor Judea Pearl, whose son Daniel Pearl was kidnapped and beheaded by jihadists shortly after 9/11, sidesteps the “is anti-Zionism antisemitic” debate. He argues that “Zionophobia” – an irrational, obsessive hatred of Zionists and Israelis is bad enough, whether or not it’s rooted in historical hostility to Jews. In fact, America’s 1964 Civil Rights Act, the legal foundation for fighting bigotry on campus, doesn’t prohibit religious prejudice. It bars “discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin.” That makes discriminating against Israelis a blatant violation of the Act – although those who understand that Jews are a people too would understand that “national origin” should include Jews.

ANTISEMITISM, DEFINED

Surprisingly, despite its age and reach, many people still quibble about how to define antisemitism. Antisemitism is *an obsessive hatred exaggerating the centrality and supposed wickedness of Jews and anything Jewish – the Jewish people, Jewish tradition and values, Jewish institutions, and Israel, the Jewish state. The disproportionate hatred is often expressed in demonization, delegitimization, and double-standards that go far beyond reasonable criticism applied to others – Natan Sharansky’s “3Ds.”*

Breaking down the definition...:

“Antisemitism”: This term risks making the prejudice sound scientific. It also allows Arab apologists to say, “we’re Semites too.” The German propagandist Wilhelm Marr coined the term in 1879. His pamphlet *Der Weg zum Siege des Germanenthums über das Judenthum* (The Way to Victory of Germanism over Judaism) warned that Jews could never live with Germans or as Germans, even if they assimilated. He founded the *Antisemiten-Liga* (The League of Antisemites) in the same year. It remains the most used term. As an “ism,” it captures the ideological dimension of seeing Jews as a source of evil. Jew-hatred is the expression of bigotry, acts of bias against Jews, individually or collectively. Most antisemites express their Jew-hatred actively. But some antisemites believe the ideology while treating individual Jews kindly, just as some Jew-haters disdain Jews or beat them without a broader theory.

“Obsessive”: Some people build themselves up by knocking others down. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines “obsession” as “a persistent disturbing preoccupation with

an often-unreasonable idea or feeling.” Especially after October 7th, so many people with conflicting agendas, focusing on this one conflict and building their identity around denouncing Israel’s alleged evils, reflected the unhealthy but historical preoccupation with Jews.

“Exaggerating the centrality and supposed wickedness”: The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, involving 0.18 percent of the world’s 8 billion people, has generated massive coverage, nearly 100 times more articles in the American media than the bloody, American-led nine-month battle in Mosul. Censuring Jews, Israelis, and Zionists became a defining feature of so many students and professors, left-wingers and right-wingers. Reasonable people called the Gaza war a “genocide,” which denotes systematic, intentional, slaughter not casualties in a war of self-defense. Others called it the 21st century’s “most violent conflict.” Even if one accepts Hamas’s claim of 63,000 deaths as of August, 2025, 600,000 died in Syria, and three million died in the Democratic Republic of Congo. If medieval haters believed “the Jew” posed the major threat to them, too many today see “the Jewish state” as posing the greatest threat to the world.

“Of Jews and anything Jewish – the Jewish people, Jewish heritage, Jewish institutions, and Israel, the Jewish state”: Antisemitism and Jew-hatred don’t stop with individual Jews. They metastasize, repudiating anything Jewish – and targeting anything and anyone Jewish. That is why, when Palestinians attack Israel, Jew-haters in Montreal, Paris, and Sydney fire-bomb Jewish schools, torch synagogues, harass Jews wearing kippot, or worse.

It’s a two-way hatred. By disliking individual Jews, you despise anything associated with them. And after disliking a Jewish value, institution or state, you take it out on individual Jews, no matter where they stand politically, religiously, or geographically.

“The disproportionate hatred”: Jews aren’t perfect, nor are their values, institutions, or governments. Healthy diverse, democratic communities need a culture of criticism and self-criticism. Fighting antisemitism isn’t squelching critique. It’s distinguishing between normative disapproval, even denunciation, of individuals, ideas, actions, versus escalating criticisms into a sweeping, categorical, essentialist loathing.

“Often expressed in demonization, delegitimization and double-standards – Natan Sharansky’s ‘3Ds.’” Two decades ago, to distinguish healthy critique of Israeli actions from broad assaults on Israel itself, the former-Soviet Jewish activist Natan Sharansky identified the tonal, conceptual, and historical overlaps linking traditional

antisemitism with anti-Zionism, “the New antisemitism.” Sharansky emphasized three dimensions that root today’s hatred in centuries-old obsessions.

- **Demonization** – treating Jews as the devil, a force of evil.
- **Delegitimization** – exaggerating Jewish sins, real or imagined, to negate the validity of the Jews’ religion, peoplehood, ties to Israel, or right to live in peace.
- **Double Standards** – the selective, disproportionate assault on Israel or Jews, which holds anything Jewish to standards no others are expected to reach. This goes far beyond standard criticism or disagreement.

Sharansky’s 3Ds helped expose left-wing Jew-hatred packaged as mere “criticism of Israel.” It’s not that hard to criticize Israeli actions or policies. The antisemite feels compelled to escalate, unfairly generalizing about what Israel, Zionism, or the Jewish people are or think or feel.

Left-wing antisemitism hides behind human rights language, confusing those who respect human rights.

Today, Right-wing antisemitism also confuses, occasionally hiding behind pro-Israel rhetoric. That bigotry sits on 4Hs:

- **Hegemonic fears:** Bigots claim that powerful, secretive Jews seek world domination – hegemony – that “Jews will not replace us,” that wealthy Jews like the Rothschild family and George Soros are ruining the world. They characterize the American government as ZOG – the Zionist Occupied Government. These lies build on traditional libels of treacherous Jews, spidery Jewish networks, and Jewish conspiracies seeking world domination.
- **Holocaust-denialism or abuse:** Many Islamists and Palestinians, most famously PA President Mahmoud Abbas, minimize the Holocaust or, paradoxically, often excuse Nazi mass-murder by suggesting the Jews deserved it. Similarly, far right bigots, especially White supremacists and neo-Nazis, deny Hitler’s crimes or romanticize them.
- **Halachic hostility:** Especially in Europe, opposition to Jewish law – Halacha – has encouraged campaigns outlawing circumcision (*brit milah*) and kosher slaughter (*shechita*). Here, echoing left-wing anti-Zionists, haters mask their Jew-hatred, claiming they’re being “humane.” Yet Europe allows bullfights and hunting. And

the enthusiasm of neo-Nazis and other Jew-haters for the bans exposes most activists' hypocrisy.

- **Historical libels:** Antisemitic slurs are recycled from the Middle Ages, Voltaire and other Enlightened thinkers, the 1800s, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, the Nazis. Many criticize Jewish individuals, Judaism, the Jewish people, and the Jewish state, by updating slanderous stereotyping of Jews as greedy, corrupt, disloyal, unpatriotic, exploitative, child-murdering, blood-sucking profiteers.

FACT BOX | THE ABCS OF LEFT-RIGHT JEW-HATRED 3DS AND 4 HS

Jew-hatred comes from the left and the right. The target is the same, but the triggers and obsessions often differ.

Natan Sharansky's 3Ds Most Often Exposes Left-Wing Anti-Zionist antisemitism Hiding Behind Human Rights Rhetoric



Demonization

Treating Jews or Jewish entities as the devil, evil.



Delegitimization

Negating the validity of the Jews' religion, peoplehood or ties to Israel.



Double Standards

Holding Jews or Jewish entities to unfairly high, inconsistent standards.

Right-wing antisemitism, which occasionally hides behind pro-Israel rhetoric, sits on 4Hs:



Hegemonic fears

Claiming Jews seek hegemony, world domination.



Holocaust

Denialism or Abuse – denying the Holocaust or claiming Jews or Israelis have become Nazis.



Halachic hostility

Singling out Jewish law – Halacha – or rituals – to be banned.



Historic libels

Updating traditional slurs of Jews.

The 3Ds and 4Hs analysis helps expose many haters these days. When British protesters wave signs claiming “ISRAEL IS THE WORST TERROR STATE IN HISTORY: Child Killers, Land Grabbers, Oppressors, Zionists, Liars, and Snakes,” it’s clear that Israel – and Jews – are being demonized. When, after October 7, agitators from Within Our Lifetime–United for Palestine (WOL) endorse Palestinian resistance “in all its forms. By any means necessary. With no exceptions,” it’s clear that delegitimizing Israel justifies any violence no matter how heinous – against Israel and Jews. And when signs appear in New York with the Palestinian flag as background proclaiming “BABIES ARE OCCUPIERS TOO,” the double standard is clear. No child’s murder should be celebrated.

Similarly, from the right. The conservative commentator Tucker Carlson hits many of the boxes by himself. When his February, 2023, documentary “Hungary vs. Soros: The Fight for Civilization” claimed George Soros has spent decades waging a “political, social, and demographic war on the West,” he was spreading the fear that Soros, a spidery, well-connected Jew, sought hegemony, to rule the world. When he calls the Holocaust revisionist Darryl Cooper, who claims Nazis didn’t intend to kill Jews but were “unprepared” to deal with the large numbers they imprisoned, the “best and most honest popular historian in the United States,” he’s legitimizing Holocaust denial. And when he calls Ukraine’s Jewish president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, “sweaty and rat-like,” “shifty,” and “a persecutor of Christians,” he’s peddling historical libels.

The most widely accepted definition of antisemitism today, the IHRA definition, identifies many of these tendencies. In 2005, the EU’s European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia published the definition. In 2016, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance adopted it. Over 1,266 different entities have adopted this definition, which features eleven illustrative examples, seven of which distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate criticism of Israel. The formal definition states: “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.” The illustrations include threatening Jews, stereotyping Jews, unfairly accusing Jews, and Nazifying Jews – or the Jewish state.

The IHRA definition – pronounced Ira – is often mischaracterized. Rather than branding all criticisms of Israel and Zionism antisemitic, its authors tried to reserve substantial room for legitimate debate – and implicitly challenge critics to ask themselves why it’s

so hard for them to have calm conversations when discussing Jews or Israel, and why do they go hysterical so frequently when discussing Zionism.

ANTISEMITISM WAS AND IS FOUNDATIONAL TO MAINSTREAM PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM

In *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), Harvard's leading social psychologist, Gordon Allport, tracked anti-Black bias. His five-point scale built from "verbal violence" – talking – to snubbing, discriminating, wounding, then killing, especially lynching. Many anti-Zionists similarly escalate.

Sincere universalists reject all nationalisms, including Zionism. But pro-Palestinian anti-Zionists champion Palestinian nationalism, while negating Jewish nationalism. That reveals their real objection: to Zionism's Jewishness, not nationalism itself.

Similarly, Zionists have long debated Zionist fundamentals, and there are sincere non-Zionists who have more faith in a Jewish future in the Diaspora. All honest critics, however, are morally obligated to distance themselves from the bigots. No Jews are obligated to ease the way intellectually for their enemies – especially because so many pro-Palestinian forces unapologetically assail Jews, Jewish institutions, and the Jewish state – descending into the pit Gordon Allport mapped, from insults to murder.

Since Palestinian nationalism emerged, antisemitism has been at the core of its ideology – while Palestinian terrorists have become the most lethal Jew-haters since the Nazis, long before October 7 – murdering hundreds of Jews and targeting dozens of Jewish institutions. That's their fault, not the Jews' responsibility. Hamas's founding charter quotes Koranic verses targeting the Jews. Article 28 proclaims, "Israel, Judaism and Jews challenge Islam and the Muslim people. 'May the cowards never sleep.'" The supposedly moderate Palestinian Authority also demonizes Jews, often with religious language. On the PA's official television station, preachers proclaim, as one did on April 17, 2022: "Allah, delight us with the extermination of the evil Jews."

Similarly, Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas echoed antisemitic tropes when addressing the UN on May 15, 2023. Blaming the U.S. and Great Britain for the Palestinian Nakba – catastrophe – Abbas trumpeted that old stereotype, the hateful Jew

who must be expelled from proper society. He claimed “Western countries wanted to get rid of the Jews and to benefit from them in Palestine. They wanted to kill two birds with one stone.” In two sentences, Abbas denied Israel’s legitimacy, deemed it “settler-colonialist,” treated Jews as repulsive foreign entities, and framed Zionist history as starting with the Holocaust, not centuries before.

It’s not coincidental that when Middle East tensions spike, anti-Zionists attack Jews. It happened in 2000 and 2001, in 2009 and 2012, in 2014 and 2021 – the last four marking clashes between Israel and Hamas. And on October 7, 2023, the two hatreds of anti-Zionism and antisemitism fed one another. In Israel, Gazan terrorists boasted to parents about slaughtering “Jews.” Some promised, “We will slaughter you and you will say that what Hitler did to you was a joke.” They revealed mainstream Palestinian anti-Jewish anti-Zionism. In protests worldwide, waving placards hoping to “Keep the World Clean” of the Jewish Star, by using events in Israel to attack Jews and Jewish spaces, Palestinian supporters broadcast their anti-Zionist antisemitism. No wonder most Israelis, left to right, religious to secular, evoked the “pogroms” and called October 7th “the worst day in Jewish history” – not Israeli history – “since the Holocaust.”

The clash between Palestinians and Israel is complicated enough. Most Palestinian activists’ anti-Jewish bigotry and calls to destroy Israel are accelerants. With Palestinians’ anti-normalization strategy boycotting Israelis and all but the most anti-Zionist Jews, every tension between Palestinians and Jews escalates into a monolithic, essentialist, do-or-die narrative.

Today, Jews find themselves “on the wrong side of a political binary that provided no room for the complexity of history or current politics,” according to Harvard’s 2025 “Presidential Task Force on Combatting Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Bias.” Many illiberal professors, leading the Academic Intifada, cast Jews and Israelis as forever-guilty “settler-colonialists,” and thus “oppressors,” making Palestinians and their supporters forever-innocent “oppressed.” Labeling Zionism “racism,” and Israel “settler-colonialist,” “genocidal,” and “apartheid,” turns the Middle East’s knotty nationalist clash into a black-and-white, good-versus-evil, racial struggle.

Back in 1975, America’s ambassador to the UN, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, outed the bigots hiding behind legitimate criticisms of Israeli policy to advance their nefarious agenda. This hurricane of libels inspired his prediction that even when attacked, Israel “would not just be blamed” for any Middle East crisis, “Israel would be regretted.” But even Moynihan couldn’t have imagined that support for Palestinians – including Hamas terrorists – would become the left’s “omnicause.” From the way Keffiyehs have become

so fashionable, to the Palestinian flags waved at Los Angeles riots against Donald Trump's immigration crackdown in June, 2025, "Free Palestine" and hating Jews have interwoven anti-Zionism and antisemitism ever more tightly.

At the same time, many anti-Zionists' kitchen sink approach to Jew-baiting betrays their extremism. From the left, Dr. Rupa Marya at UCSF medical school claims that "Zionism as an ideology of supremacy in medicine impacts health and health care access for people of color" – in San Francisco, 7,387 miles from Tel Aviv. From the right, Candace Owens blames Israel for 9/11 and claims the ADL – Anti-Defamation League – was founded to shield a Jewish pedophile. And many in the Arab world update the church's medieval blood libel by claiming Israel not only targets Palestinian babies but also harvests Palestinian organs.

Still, the far left's anti-racist antisemites insist: "We're not antisemitic, just anti-Israel." They claim they're only criticizing Israel – although with no other country do they have such trouble controlling their fury. And they "what-about," pretending the far right's equally abhorrent Jew-hatred excuses theirs. Yet they resurrect historical slurs and obsessions as zealously as their Islamist allies and right-wing opponents.

ANTI-ZIONISM KEEPS UPDATING JEW-HATRED

Beyond charging "Zionophobia," there's a simple case to make about how bigots merged antisemitism with anti-Zionism – and a complicated case. It starts with the anti-Jewish rhetoric cascading throughout the Palestinian movement, the pro-Palestinian movement, the Islamist movement, and much of the Arab world. Too many grow up hating Israel – and targeting the Jews. When Muslim teenagers rape a 12-year-old girl in the Parisian suburb Courbevoie, cursing her as a Jew while brutalizing her, just as the Gazan rapists did on October 7, it's clear that, in this inflamed atmosphere against Israel and Zionism, too many parents raise youngsters to dehumanize Jews.

Decades before Yasir Arafat and Hamas, in the 1940s, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, weaved traditional antisemitism into Palestinian nationalism. A follower of Heinrich Himmler and Adolf Hitler who called Jews "locusts" and "microbes," al-Husseini quoted the Koran to denounce "the perfidiousness of Jewry." Tom Khaled Würdemann, an expert on Palestinian antisemitism at the Heidelberg School of Jewish Studies, notes that "the demonizing logic of antisemitism," now braided into Palestinian

nationalism, rejects anything Jewish, especially the Jewish state. That exacerbates the conflict, sidelining debates about borders, teaching about the Jewish enemy: "There can be no compromise with its treachery; its suffering is celebrated."

Palestinians, at least, are unhappy neighbors whose conflict fits into a long history worldwide of border disputes and clashing nationalisms. The antisemitic anti-Zionism of the Iranian mullahs shows the hatred at its purest. Iran is 1000 miles away from Israel. Yet Iran's desire to kill Jews and destroy the Jewish state was so obsessive that it spiraled into self-destruction, as Israel in June 2025 finally hit back, hard.

Remarkably, anti-Zionism keeps updating Jew-hatred.

- Romans totalized, declaring war on everything the Jews did and were. They murdered over one million Jews, a quarter of Judea's population, while delegitimizing Jews by committing "historicide." Trying to kill Jewish history, they changed Israel's name to Palestine. Today, protesters calling "Israel the worst terror state ever," hoping to "globalize the Intifada" – which targeted Jews in Israel and abroad – saying "the only good Zionist is a dead Zionist," envision a Palestinian state "from the River to the Sea." Leaving no room for Jews – denying Jews' presence in the Land of Israel – updates Romans' *essentialist Jew-hatred*.
- Christian Jew-haters warned that Jews were punitive and vengeful, like their Old Testament God, making them Christ-killers, slaying innocents. Anti-Zionists caricature Israel as punitive and vengeful, slaying innocent Palestinians. In 2023, protesters called Israel "genocidal" even before Israel counter-attacked Gaza. When Londoners dyed their dresses red, carried baby dolls swathed in white clothes splashed with red, along with a photo of Jesus on the cross, proclaiming "DO NOT LET THEM DO THE SAME THING TODAY AGAIN," they updated Medieval Christianity's *theological anti-Judaism*, hating Jews' heresy, rejecting their beliefs.
- Muslim Jew-haters resented Jews as rivals, designating them "dhimmi" – second-class citizens. That makes a thriving Israel infuriating, defying their sense of order in the world. Protesters shout: "*Khaybar, Khaybar Ya Yahud, Jaish Mohammed Sauf Ya'ud*" "Khaybar Khaybar oh Jews, the army of Mohammed is returning." Threatening Jews – and Israelis – to redo the 628 Khaybar massacre or other atrocities updates Islamists' *adversarial Jew-hatred*, hating Jews as rivals, for staying different.
- Europeans in the 1300s blamed the Jews for the Bubonic Plague – then murdered hundreds of them. In 2020, the Tweet asking "<<#covid19 or #covid1948>> Which one do you think is worse?" was forwarded with Israeli maps. Those who helped the Tweet

go viral, treating Israel as a plague, updated *infectious antisemitism*, characterizing Judaism as a disease infecting mind, body, and soul.

- Spanish Inquisitors in 1492 deemed “the Jews” the ultimate villains, untrustworthy, dishonest, and piggish. Princeton University protesters disrupting former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett’s 2025 speech, then calling fellow students “inbred swine,” amid all the images of Israelis as vampires, bloodsuckers, and serpents, update the dehumanizing stereotypes so central to *monstrous antisemitism*, exaggerating Jews’ alleged evil as the great threat to the world.
- “Enlightened” Europeans, asserting their nationalist pride, accused the Jews of “dual loyalty.” While burning American, Canadian, British, and Australian flags, anti-Zionist protesters impudently recycled the same charge of treason, updating *paranoid antisemitism*, never trusting “them,” fearing the Jew as the ultimate other, never fully assimilating.
- As Zionism grew in the early 1900s, Eastern European bigots yelled, “go back to Palestine!” Today, when anti-Zionists yell “go back to Europe,” updating *expulsionary antisemitism*, it’s fair to wonder where the “wandering Jew” will ever be welcome – other than in the Jewish homeland.
- In 1903, the Czarist secret police published their forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. They imagined an “IZC,” an International Zionist Conspiracy. Today, this favorite book of the Nazis – and the neo-Nazis – is distributed throughout the Arab world, proving the world is round: far left and far right meet in updating *conspiratorial antisemitism*.
- From 1939 through 1945, the Nazis and their collaborators killed six million Jews to “purge the world of this menace.” When haters accuse Israeli Jews of becoming Nazis – even as other bigots deny the Holocaust happened, minimize it, or celebrate the mass murder of Jews on October 7 – and when they echo Nazi cries to murder the Jews “from the river to the sea” – they are updating *genocidal antisemitism*.
- And, at its most basic, harking back to ancient times, reaching to today’s schoolyard taunts, violent assaults on tourists and soccer fans, and terrorist murders, yelling “free Palestine” to justify attacking Jews updates *violent Jew-hatred*.

With accusations of “Zionist” money, power, media manipulation, treachery, and disloyalty reverberating in France, England, the U.S., Canada, and elsewhere, the fight against Israel has given Jew-hatred a new life, in so many mutations.

FACT BOX | ZIONOPHOBIA: THE TEST TEST

Totalizing

Essentialism, finding everything related to Israel, Jews, Zionists as evil.

Exaggerated

The more extreme the criticism, the more it smacks of bigotry.

Sweeping

Turning every wrong Israeli move into justification for outright denial, not just attacking what Israel does, but that Israel is.

Tone

The more intense the criticism, the more it smells like bigotry.



ZIONOPHOBIA - ALL BIGOTRY THREATENS DEMOCRACY AND DECENCY

In 1948, 10,000 Jews lived in Lebanon; today, barely 200 remain. Iran's Jewish community, once 100,000-strong, dwindled to under 8,000. Lebanon borders Israel, but Iran's capital, Tehran, is 968 miles from Jerusalem. Antisemitism's centrality to Iranian and Hezbollah jihadists highlights two perennial questions, which have launched hundreds of academic treatises and thousands of late-into-the-night debates: "Why the Jews?" and "How did the Jews survive so much for so long?"

Antisemitism is the longest hatred partly by its sheer longevity – whatever their secret, be it divine inspiration, defining texts, family values, a rigid-yet-adaptable culture, a sense of national mission, sheer stubbornness – Jews have survived since ancient times, to be targeted still.

The plasticity of antisemitism, far left to far right, among Marxists and capitalists, among pro-Trump White supremacists and progressive universalists, among monotheistic Islamists and atheistic Marxists, is more vexing. Although constituting only a sliver of the world's population, Jews are prominent enough to attract the attention of bigots – for standing out and fitting in. Jews have long insisted on staying distinct, while many Jews also understood how to adapt to different societies worldwide. That made them excellent targets. In 1933, Rabbi Milton Steinberg explained in *The Atlantic* why Jews had survived until then by noting: “The ideas and ideals of a people may give it significance, but its group habits give it life.” Doing Jewish has been the key to being Jewish. Alas, doing Jewish has long triggered haters who hate difference into beating Jews.

Jew-hatred spikes when societies are under stress and totalitarian thought is rising. When people start doubting one another, judging one another, thinking in all-or-nothing terms, they seek scapegoats – or embrace absolutist demagogues who vilify minorities. Over centuries, when such pressures emerge and there are Jews around, the scapegoating expresses itself in particular ways. That's why Jews keep getting accused of being threats to the status quo, of seeking power and money, of being satanic. While each expression of prejudice is despicable in its own way, antisemites often connect to lies and stereotypes already festering in an historical bank of accusations and stereotypes.

Tom Khaled Würdemann notes the utopian streak uniting most antisemites. They imagine, “if only we can eliminate the Jews, then all will be well.” That makes Jew-hatred so useful to bigots and demagogues: resting on well-established lies, it can be constantly updated.

America's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism during the Biden years, Professor Deborah Lipstadt, warned that “Anybody who buys into the conspiracy myth – which is the cornerstone of antisemitism – that Jews control the media, banks, government elections, anybody who believes that, has given up on democracy.” Equally dangerous these days is the silenced majority, more and more who don't stand up when Jewish friends, neighbors, dormmates, are threatened. That's not just a “threat to democracy,” it's a threat to decency. Alas, the massive mass media pile-on against Israel as the Gaza War persisted, “almost normalized” antisemitism, Lipstadt warned – as Israel, Zionists, and Jews were deemed automatically guilty – and regretted.

THE GLOBAL SURGE IN JEW-HATRED:
WHY NOW?

On October 7, as the Hamas massacre became clear, anti-Israel activists began celebrating the slaughter of innocents. Panelists at one Harvard University academic event, on October 23, mentioned the words “settler colonial” three times, “apartheid” four times, “genocide” thirteen times, without ever mentioning the word “hostage.” On many campuses, in many world capitals, protesters romanticized the marauding Gazans’ perverse crimes as “resistance,” with some even claiming “rape is resistance.”

Had protests begun after Israel invaded Gaza on October 27, demonstrators could claim they objected to what Israel does. But those who cheered and felt “exhilarated” by the slaughter, who boasted “this is what decolonization looks like,” who denied Hamas’ perversions yet claimed Israelis deserved it, objected to that Israel is – and that Jews are. The Palestinian war cries that day resonating from the Gaza corridor and echoed globally were *“Itbach al-Yahud”* – slaughter the Jew, not “just” Israelis.

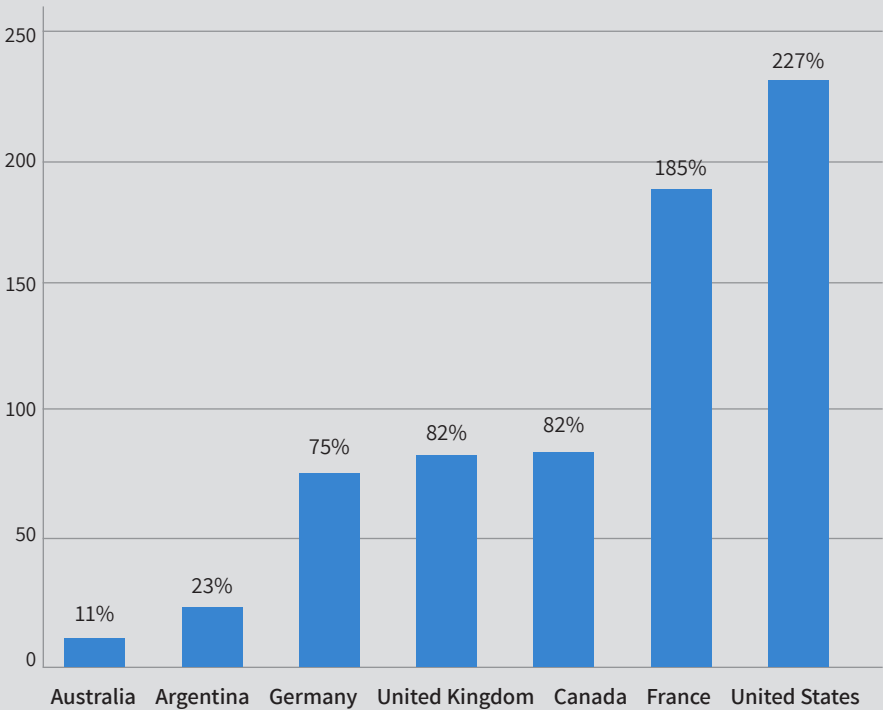
The hatred fueling Hamas terrorists and the rampaging Gazans that day transcended any solvable political issues or border clashes. It wasn’t about a two-state solution but a desire for a no-Jewish-state solution, destroying Zionism.

The subsequent global obsession exaggerated Israel’s supposed crimes, disproportionately emphasizing this conflict as the keystone to all the world’s problems. Some were shocked by the venom. Bari Weiss of the Free Press reported that many Jews had believed – what most Americans still believe – that they were living “outside of history” – and were “immune to it.” But Professor Irwin Cotler, the human rights lawyer who served as Canada’s attorney general and justice minister, insisted that this surge didn’t start on October 7. Instead: “We are witnessing the culmination of years of mainstreaming and legitimization of antisemitism across the campus, popular, media, and political cultures – with Jews now being attacked in the streets, in their neighborhoods, at their schools, in their offices, and at their synagogues, and where synagogues are firebombed, Jewish community centers are attacked, and Holocaust memorials are vandalized.”

Indeed, in July 2024, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights reported that “96% of Jews told us they had faced antisemitism in the last year and 80% feel that it has been getting worse in recent years.” Half of the Jews surveyed “worry about their safety and the safety of their family, and over 70% even hide their Jewish identity occasionally. The rapid proliferation of antisemitic content online is another worrying trend.” These surveys were completed before October 7.

FACT BOX | POST-OCTOBER 7 SPIKE IN JEW-HATRED IN 7 LARGE JEWISH COMMUNITIES

From 2021 through 2023



Source: J7 Annual Report on Antisemitism, 2025

THE STUNNED VERSUS THE WORLD WEARY: HOW CENTRAL IS JEW-HATRED TO JEWISH HISTORY?

For some Jews, October 7 was a turning point. Watching Palestinian killers delight in brutalizing “the Jews” was terrifying. Seeing their own neighbors and schoolmates celebrate the evil perpetrated thousands of miles away was a rude awakening. Some feared that the “Golden Age” of Diaspora Jewry had ended. Most American, Canadian, and Australian Jews, especially, believed their countries were different, inherently tolerant – and that the world had learned the lessons of Auschwitz. Indeed, many North Americans grew up without the constant, grating, threatening Jew-hatred their grandparents faced in Europe, the Middle East, North Africa.

Others, however, saw October 7 as another sad milestone in a long trail of Jew-hatred. To them, it is programmed into Western civilization, let alone the Islamic world. And, like Professor Cotler, they had been watching it grow. “Anti-Judaism should not be understood as some archaic or irrational closet in the vast edifices of Western thought,” David Nirenberg wrote in *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*. “It was rather one of the basic tools with which that edifice was constructed.” This need to build a worldview in contrast to the Jew confirmed Jean-Paul Sartre’s insight that “if the Jew did not exist, the antisemite would invent him.”

Nirenberg concluded sadly, in 2013, “We live in an age in which millions of people are exposed daily to some variant of the argument that the challenges of the world they live in are best explained in terms of ‘Israel,’ the Jew of the world.

In short, while equally appalled by the bigotry, these world-weary observers see the continuity in a chain of hostility reaching back to ancient times.

The Stunned and the World-Weary each grasped different truths. The history of North American antisemitism is milder than Pagan, European, or Islamist Jew-hatred. And 2025 is neither 1942 nor 1492. Antisemitism has waxed and waned, mutating, finding traction in different ways. Yet, there was something so familiar, medieval, Hitlerian, in Hamas’s barbarous Jew-hatred and the subsequent celebrations.

In the West today, Jew-hatred takes on different forms, from right to left, often among natural enemies too. Right-wing extremists cross-pollinated antisemitism with White Supremacy and ultra-nationalist populism. Left-wing extremists and Islamist fundamentalists merge support for Palestinians with hatred of THE Jews, sometimes masquerading the bigotry with

professorial theorizing and human rights talk. Upper-class anti-Semites snobbishly dismiss Jews as greedy up-starts whose unpopularity justifies the hatred, while lower-class thugs sometimes use the current hostility to Israel and Jews to declare open season on Jews just shopping or walking home from synagogue.

The scope and diversity of the attackers sharpens the real mystery: Why now, why so virulent, and why in America and Canada, Australia, and England, after decades of seeming quiet? How could it be that Jews, only 2.4% of America's population, endure 15% of all hate crimes, and 68% of religion-based hate crimes?

STEPS TO THE SURGE

In the late 1940s, as the world emerged from the Nazi maelstrom, most reasonable people assumed that never again would such evil Jew-hatred spread, and never again would the world stand by silently. Israel's founding in 1948 seemed to embody that promise. Yet, over the last 50 years, yesterday's antisemitism has been updated, weaponized, and freshly popularized. Consider just 15 steps along the way, whereby shifts on the left and the right, among Islamists and academics, in technology, politics, culture, and ideology, created this antisemitic firestorm – before October 7.

1975: While passing the Zionism is Racism resolution, the UN General Assembly establishes the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. These initiatives demonize Zionism and Israel, and popularize the false analogy comparing Zionism to South African Apartheid. The resolutions put Israel under permanent investigation, singling out the Palestinian cause for ongoing special treatment at the UN and throughout the international system.

1987: Attacking Stanford University's required Western Civilization course, activists shout: "Hey hey, ho ho, Western culture's got to go." Building on 1960s identity politics and other "postmodern" trends, progressives, especially on campus, start deprecating America, the West, "whiteness," traditional liberalism, the scholarly ideal of objectivity, and, inevitably, Zionism, treating it as the ultimate expression of each harmful phenomenon. In fairness, each progressive idea, from improving diversity to greater inclusivity and sensitivity, is based on a commendable value, but academic fanatics go all accelerator and no brakes, imposing orthodoxies rather than broadening perspectives.

1991: When the Soviet Union collapses, the left replaces Marxism with Palestinianism as its glue. Jihadists feel emboldened, claiming the Soviets' failed Afghanistan war weakened communism. The path to an Oslo Peace Process also opens – ultimately helping Yasir Arafat reengineer his image from the grandfather of modern terrorism to Palestinians' Nobel-Peace-Prize-winning peacemaker.

1994: Hezbollah's bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, kills 85 and injures hundreds. The targeting of Jews thousands of miles from Israel, by Hezbollah terrorists using Iran's diplomatic facilities, reinforced the antisemitic anti-Zionism of jihadis. They're focused on destruction – using the Jew and the Jewish state as convenient scapegoats.

1995: The Stormfront website, spewing White nationalist, antisemitic, and racist bile, becomes the first leading website spreading hate. Marginalized since the Holocaust and the Civil Rights Movement, bigots start connecting virtually, encouraging each other, and expanding the reach of their recruitment. Their growing momentum disproves the internet manifestos promising an ethical and substantive digital politics free of demagoguery and hate.

2001: The UN's World Conference against Racism in Durban ends on September 7, after becoming an anti-Zionist, antisemitic hatefest that resurrected "Zionism is Racism." Four days later, Jihadi terrorists kill 2,977 innocents on 9/11. A year into the "Second Intifada," Yasir Arafat's terrorist war against the Oslo peace process, with Jew-hatred spiking worldwide, Westerners belatedly notice that the age of global jihadi terrorism has begun.

2005: On August 15, Israel starts its Gaza Disengagement, withdrawing from every inch of the Gaza Strip, hoping for peace. Ironically, one month earlier, more than 170 Palestinian civil society organizations launched the BDS – Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions – movement, disengaging from any normal interactions with Israelis. BDS "anti-normalization" makes the conflict more essentialist, existential, and less solvable. Kassam rockets continue flying from Gaza.

2007: Hamas, the Islamist fundamentalist movement vowing to destroy Israel, seizes control of the Gaza Strip in a violent coup against the Palestinian Authority (PA). Genocidal antisemitism and anti-Zionism become mainstreamed worldwide, as Israelis start losing faith in "land for peace" exchanges.

2009: Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad appears at the UN's follow-up to the Durban anti-racism conference that April. Calling Zionists "racist perpetrators of genocide," Ahmadinejad calls attention to his own Holocaust-denying, antisemitic, anti-Zionist threats to destroy Israel, as Iranian scientists work to develop nuclear weapons.

2015: The murders in Paris of 12 at the Charlie Hebdo satirical journal and four at the Hypercacher kosher supermarket illustrate in lethal terms the reach of antisemitism and Jihadism throughout the West, especially in Europe's growing, alienated, Muslim communities.

2017: Chicago Dyke March organizers ban lesbians carrying Jewish Pride flags from their July 13 march, because their Zionism "made people feel unsafe," further blurring anti-Zionism with antisemitism. The accusation that Israel is "pinkwashing" grows, implying Israel respects LGBTQ+ rights at home to score propaganda points abroad. In progressive and academic circles, an influential "woke" ideology pursues "social justice," defined in a particular way, emphasizing being "safe" and "unsafe," "microaggressions and macroaggressions," "triggering" and "intersectionality." Yet as "microaggressions" including looking at students the wrong way derail some professors' careers, Jews and Zionists are "blocked at the intersection." Many Jews experience "macroaggressions" – attacks – because with their "white privilege," their trauma from antisemitism over millennia is discounted.

2017: One month later, proving antisemitism's plasticity from left to right, hundreds of White nationalists march in the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. They shout, "Jews will not replace us," and "the Jewish media is going down." During Donald Trump's polarizing presidency, left-wing Jews keep fighting the growing antisemitism on the right, as right-wing Jews fight the left's antisemitism on campus, especially. Making Jew-hatred another partisan flashpoint undermines the fight on all fronts.

2018: On October 27, a lone gunman riled up by right-wing online hate murders eleven Jews worshipping in Pittsburgh's Tree of Life-Or L'Simcha synagogue. Appalled, most Americans denounce this deranged assassin, without addressing the deeper forces hopping up such extremists.

2020: The murder of George Floyd in Minnesota encourages a “racial reckoning” throughout the West. But even as many American Jews support the protests, the Floyd moment popularizes assaults on America as “systemically racist,” Jews as having “white privilege,” and Zionism as racist. Black Lives Matter and Palestinian activists shout “From Minneapolis to Palestine, the struggle for liberation continues.”

2021: As Hamas bombs Israel in May, antisemitism surges worldwide. Gangs of Palestinians harass Jews from New York to Los Angeles. Thugs in London yell “Fuck the Jews, we’ll rape your daughters.” “Algorithmic antisemitism” soars as over 17,000 Tweets in one week agree: “Hitler was right.” TikTok, whose popularity surged during the COVID pandemic, becomes a massive conveyor of anti-Israel and antisemitic sentiment, as Israel becomes the most targeted country on social media. Anti-Zionism becomes even more central to “woke” university culture, as thousands of professors sign petitions vowing to boycott Israel because “the critical theory we generate in our literature and in our classrooms must be backed in deed.”

On October 7, 2023, many in the red-green alliance, uniting radical progressives and Islamists celebrated Hamas’s mass murders. Hate breeds more hate. As antisemitism from the left and Islamists surged, right-wing haters felt emboldened too by their natural enemies’ anti-Jewish enmity. Still, most Westerners denounced antisemitism and condemned its spread. In 2024, an American Jewish Congress poll found 72% of American adults recognizing antisemitism as a problem, with 59% noting the increase since 2019. Nevertheless, 77% of American Jews reported feeling less safe in America among their fellow citizens.

Spread on campuses, in Palestinian schoolrooms, in mosques, and online, these anti-Zionist lies fuel a worldwide movement. By maligning the Jewish state so obsessively, aggressively, anti-Zionists used antisemitism to justify their anti-Israel sentiment. These libels, these Jew-hating acts, this antisemitic anti-Zionism, make the Israeli-Palestinian conflict zero-sum, posing major obstacles to peace.

CHAPTER

4

BOUNDARIES AND BALANCE: HOW ISRAEL'S CRITICS CAN AVOID JEW- HATRED, HOW ISRAEL'S SUPPORTERS CAN AVOID CONFUSING CRITICS WITH BIGOTS

When anti-Zionists oversimplify, libeling Israel as an outlaw state, an oppressive, illegitimate, settler-colonialist racist enterprise, they conflate the two hatreds. If they're not bigots, it's their responsibility to distance themselves from those who demonize Israel and Jews, Zionism and Judaism altogether.

Anti-Israel hysteria is trending. Critics blame Israel for whatever evils they see in Western civilization, be it imperialism, racism, apartheid, ethnic-cleansing, settler-colonialism, supremacy, and now, genocide. Simone Rodan-Benzaquen of the American Jewish Committee notes that for the far right, Ukraine became "what Israel is to the far left – ... a proxy in a larger struggle" disconnected from either country's reality: Ukraine became "a globalist scheme" and Israel, "a colonial enterprise." Imagining some international conspiracy, anti-Ukraine White nationalists degenerated into Jew-hatred, as the far left did with Israel. Far-right influencer Candace Owens called the Ukraine war which Russia started "just another way for globalists like [the Jewish Hungarian-American George] Soros to control us." White supremacists like Sean Sweat charged the "Jewish elite" with starting the war, to profiteer while watching White men kill each other.

The onslaught against Israel and the Jews, makes many Jews defensive. Democracies need robust debates to grow, develop, and self-correct. Of course, there is no moral equivalence between the two reactions. Treating critiques as betrayal is not as bad as escalating every critique into demonization and delegitimization.

Jews do not cause Jew-hatred, Jew-haters do. Jews do not have to ask: What can we do differently so people don't hate us? Jew-hatred is the antisemitic non-Jews' failing. That's why non-Jews should lead the fight against Jew-hatred, not Jews. Over the millennia, outbreaks of antisemitism reflected social dysfunction and moral degeneration.

Tone counts. Just like it's hard to describe "love" or "sadness," it's hard to pinpoint when arguments become bigoted. Still, poisonous conversations about Israel reflect malice, while discouraging healthy debate. Israel's supporters could benefit from tough, constructive conversations about Zionism, Israeli history, and Israel's current dilemmas. Thoughtful, critical, responsible, patriotic Zionists, left and right, have to proceed with caution: they have to give Israel's government the robust critique it often needs, well-aware that many are waiting to attack Israel in ways it doesn't deserve.

Haters turn question marks into exclamation points. By turning accusatory, they weaponize valid questions and complex dilemmas.

History is messy. No country is perfect, certainly not one defending itself against Iran, the Houthis, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Palestinian terrorists. These adversaries are perfectly awful – while Israel has the best governing mechanism invented for dealing with an imperfect world... democracy.

- **"Why is Zionism a legitimate nationalist movement, isn't Judaism a religion?" versus "Zionism is a racist, settler-colonialist enterprise!"**

Many find even the milder framing offensive, because no other nationalist movement is questioned so relentlessly – what other nation is constantly asked to justify its existence? Nevertheless, some Jews consider Judaism only a religion. The West's "Judeo-Christian" embrace treats Judaism, like Christianity, as a matter of faith. But, as Chapter 1 demonstrates, Judaism fuses religious identity with Jews' national, cultural, ethnic consciousness as a people, rooted in their homeland. Exploiting this honest confusion, bigots go further. They commit "historicide" – denying a people's history – negating Jews' national consciousness, Jews' historical ties to the land, and the anti-colonial sensibility wired into Zionism's DNA: Zionists fought for independence against the Ottoman Empire, then the British Empire.

- **"What right did Jews have to establish a state on Palestinian land?" versus "Established by the West out of Holocaust guilt, Israel is an oppressive criminal regime!"**

Since the 1990s' Oslo Peace Process, most Israelis acknowledge that two peoples – Jews and Palestinians – feel connected to the same land, which happens in many regions. Rejecting Jewish ties to the land rejects Judaism, Jesus's story rooted in Israel, and Koranic teachings. Sura 17:104 says "the Children of Israel –

Dwell in the land....” Deeming the Land of Israel exclusively “Palestinian” also ignores the land purchases of many early Zionists – often from Turkish land owners – and many international declarations validating a Jewish homeland in Palestine. These include the Balfour Declaration, the League of Nations’ San Remo Declaration, and UN Resolution 181, which recognized Jewish ties to the land. Finally, Jews have centered their lives around Israel for 3500 years, while the formal Zionist movement began in 1897 at Basel, following other 19th-century initiatives, predating Hitler and the Holocaust.

- **“Didn’t Israel’s establishment create the Palestinian Refugee problem?” versus “The Jews created the Palestinian Nakba – catastrophe – by displacing 700,000 Palestinians in 1948!”**

Obviously, without Israel’s establishment, there wouldn’t be Palestinian refugees, although the British might have retained control. But the Arab rejection of the UN’s 1947 compromise partition plan followed by seven Arab armies attacking in May 1948, was the primary cause of the refugee problem. Since then, historians have vigorously debated just what happened – and the debate continues. It’s clear that Israelis exiled some Arabs, sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally. At the same time, many Palestinian Arabs fled at their leaders’ insistence, expecting to return after the Jews lost. Others fled out of fear. War is hell. World War II displaced 40 to 60 million people. India’s and Pakistan’s establishment in 1948 displaced up to 20 million more. Only Palestinians pass on refugee status, generation to generation.

- **“Why are there still Palestinian refugee camps?” versus “The Jews oppressed the Palestinians and still imprison them in refugee camps!”**

Jew-haters always blame the Jew. But Arab regimes perpetuated the problem, to justify fighting Israel while displaying little empathy for Palestinians. Most important, Palestinian leaders have repeatedly rejected compromises to share the land with the Jews – in 1947, 1967, the 1990s, and 2008. Many Arabs depicted “Jewish statehood as ‘abnormal,’ ‘unnatural,’ ‘artificial,’” the political scientist Gil Carl Alroy explained, because the “thought of the Jews as rulers suggests cosmic disorder.” During the Oslo Peace Process in the 1990s, Israel relinquished administrative control of “Area A,” to the Palestinian Authority. Today, approximately 2.8 million of the 3 million Palestinians in the territories live in Area A or Area B, jointly administered by the PA and Israel. Less than a third of Palestinians live in the remaining refugee camps. So, the real question is: why haven’t Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and the PA resettled Palestinians from the 68 refugee camps they control?

- **“Didn’t Israel occupy the Golan, the West Bank, and Gaza after the Six-Day War?” versus “In 1967, expansionist Israel greedily occupied even more territory!”**

True, Israel expanded geographically in 1967. But Israel won the land in a legitimate war of self-defense it had tried to avoid. There were months of Arab threats to “throw the Jews into the sea” – again, note “the Jews” – and years of Arab cross-border attacks. Then, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria violated international law by blocking the Straits of Tiran. Calling the West Bank “occupied” freezes a complicated history over thousands of years, involving shifting borders and populations into one moment – the improvised border drawn with a green pencil in 1949 that became The Green Line, Israel’s armistice line. The UN never recognized Jordan’s control of those lands or Egypt’s control of Gaza. In 1967, therefore, Israel seized territory that was in legal suspended animation. Those who call the land West of the Jordan River by their biblical names, “Judea” and “Samaria,” reflect the longstanding roots of Jews there. Acknowledging the confusion undermines each side’s all-or-nothing narratives.

- **“Why do many find the settlements illegal?” versus “The illegal settlements reveal Zionism’s settler-colonialist and imperialist mentality!”**

An incendiary term, “occupation” evokes the Nazis’ murderous “occupation” of Europe. Also, under international law, let alone the laws of history and military precedent, the Jewish people have rights to settle Gaza, Judea and Samaria/the West Bank, based on the 1917 Balfour Declaration, and the League of Nations’ Mandate. On July 24, 1922, what became known as the British Mandate legitimized the “close settlement by Jews on the land” of Palestine, which covered the area from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. We can debate the wisdom of Jewish settlements in particular places, even the ethical rights and wrongs. But the constant attempt to criminalize Jewish settlement defies many international resolutions and escalates tensions.

- **“What happened to the Peace Process and the two-state solution?” versus “Oslo failed because the Zionist occupiers will never accept a Palestinian state!”**

The Oslo Peace Process was an attempt in the 1990s to build peace through trust-building stages between Israelis and Palestinians, while reducing Israeli control over Palestinian lives. That’s why Israel withdrew quickly from the six largest Palestinian cities, dominating “Area A.” Israelis were deeply divided. Many opposed returning Yasir Arafat from exile and arming his dictatorial security forces.

Oslo failed because Arafat encouraged his people in September 2000 – and earlier – to murder Israelis in cafes, on buses, while driving. In his memoirs, Bill Clinton recalls yelling at Arafat, “You made me a failure,” referring to Arafat’s negotiating stubbornness and his addiction to terrorism. Since Palestinian terrorists murdered over one thousand Israelis in what is known as “the Second Intifada” from 2000 to 2004, many Israelis began to doubt the feasibility of a two-state solution. Instead of demanding “two states for two peoples,” which usually asks, “how much territory will Israel relinquish,” calling for “two democracies for two peoples” asks: “what are the Palestinians doing to cultivate a civil society that engenders compromise and coexistence?”

- **“Why didn’t the Gaza disengagement bring peace?” versus “Gaza was always occupied: Israel’s blocked the borders and created the world’s largest open-air concentration camp!”**

Antisemites have appropriated Holocaust terminology and deployed it against the Jewish state. Even more revealing is what happened when Israel withdrew from every inch of the Gaza Strip in 2005 to avoid accusations of “occupation.” The accusations continued – and escalated. By 2007, Hamas seized power from the PA in a violent coup. The rockets continued flying. The violence culminated with the Hamas bloodbath. Most puzzling, perhaps, is how, even on October 7, 2023, as Hamas terrorists were still brutalizing Israeli civilians, many Palestinian supporters blamed Israel for being victimized.

- **“Why won’t Israel control violence against Palestinian farmers in the territories?” versus “‘Settler Violence’ reveals the Jewish intention to ethnically cleanse the West Bank!”**

State violence, meaning war and the use of police powers, is hard enough to wield justly. Individuals acting violently, even for political reasons, are breaking the law. Citizens can defend themselves only when threatened personally. Most Zionists object to any Jew harassing Palestinian farmers and they consider them criminals. Alas, no country is perfect or filled with angels. It’s legitimate to denounce criminals and mobilize politically to pressure the government to govern properly. That’s not the same as condemning an entire state, the Jewish people, or individual Jews, for the sins of relatively few individual Israelis – or even Israeli government inaction.

FACT BOX | ISRAELI ATTEMPTS AT COMPROMISE AND PALESTINIAN REJECTIONISM

- **1947** The Zionists, reluctantly, accept the Partition of Palestine under UN General Assembly Resolution 181 for the sake of peace – Arab leaders reject it.
- **1967** Following the June 1967 Six-Day War, the Arab League endorses the THREE NOs of Khartoum: No peace with Israel, No negotiations with Israel, No recognition of Israel.



- **1993** Israel accepts the core compromises of the Oslo Peace Process, by 2001, Bill Clinton yells at Yasir Arafat: "I'm a failure. And on this you made me a failure" (by resisting compromise).

- **2000** Arafat leads his people away from negotiation back to terror, leading to over 1,000 Israeli deaths and 3,000 Palestinian deaths in the "Second Intifada."
- **2005** Israel withdraws from every inch of the Gaza Strip as part of the "Gaza Disengagement" – by 2007, Hamas has seized power, driven by its genocidal, Jew-hating charter, proclaiming: "Leaving the circle of struggle with Zionism is high treason, and cursed be he who does that...."
- **2008** Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert presents PA President Mahmoud Abbas a Peace Plan, offering 93% of Judea and Samaria/The West Bank, all of Gaza, and 5.8% of pre-1967 Israel to balance out the territorial exchange. In 2015, when asked "What did you propose in return," Abbas admits: "I did not agree. I rejected it out of hand."



- **“Didn’t October 7 reflect deep Palestinian frustrations?” versus “October 7 was exhilarating; this is what decolonization looks like!”**

On October 6, 2023, many Palestinians felt frustrated by the stalemated peace process. Yet nothing justifies mass rape, maiming young and old, slaughtering civilians, and kidnapping people. The butchery reflected the Hamas charter’s exterminationist desire to destroy the Jewish state. That was the plan – and that was the rhetoric in the cries of “Slaughter the Jew,” in Arabic-to-Hebrew translation guides with phrases like “take off your clothes” or “spread your legs,” and the boasting about taking hostages and killing “Jews.” Moreover, crying “Globalize the Intifada,” celebrating these abominations, threatens not just Jews, but Westerners worldwide.

- **“Why did Israel kill so many civilians in Gaza?” versus “Once again, in the Gaza war, Israel responded with disproportionate force!”**

The loss of even one civilian in war is a tragedy, not “collateral damage,” the Pentagon’s sterile euphemism. But civilian deaths are inevitable in urban warfare, especially when fighting Hamas in Gaza, which embeds in hospitals, schools, and mosques. A fair debate would ask five questions: Was Israel justified in fighting back? Are its targets justified militarily? Did Israel try to minimize or reduce civilian casualties? How do its efforts compare to other modern armies, including when America fought in Iraq and Afghanistan? And what else could Israel have done?

- **“Why do many reasonable people, and international jurists, believe Israel is guilty of genocide in Gaza?” versus “Israel is committing genocide in Gaza!”**

“Genocide” has a specific meaning, like “occupation” and “concentration camps.” Israel responded to Hamas’s October 7 invasion with a justified war of self-defense. Twenty-two months later, Hamas claimed 63,000 Gazans died. At least 23,000 were Hamas terrorists. By April 2025, Hamas spokespeople stopped claiming that 70 percent of the casualties were women and children, estimating that 72 percent of those killed between aged 13 and 55 were male, the age when Hamas deploys them to fight. Moreover, statisticians estimate that at least 8,000 Gazans died natural deaths, further reducing the number of civilian casualties. “Genocide” means the purposeful, intentional, systematic, mass destruction of a nation. Moreover, Israel has made many attempts to minimize the damage to Palestinian civilians, including repeatedly sacrificing the element of surprise or aborting justified missions to save lives.

FACT BOX | TERMS USED TO JUDGE WARS — AND WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN



A Just War A morally justified military conflict – and when an enemy launches a supreme assault and a democracy mobilizes supreme measures in self-defense, the moral blame is on the enemy who started the violence.

Asymmetrical Warfare A conflict pitting a country's conventional army against a terrorist force. The "asymmetry" – mismatch – describes both the differing amounts of firepower the two sides hold, and the way terrorists, who respect no rules, often make democracies' larger armies look heavy-handed and unethical.

Genocide Article II of The UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines genocide as mass murder committed "with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group." This term, used historically to describe the heinous crimes against six million Jews, one million Armenians, 800,000 Rwandans, should not be confused with civilian casualties that occur in a justified conflict, or even in what some might consider military overreach.

Proportionality A legal term judging whether the target is justified militarily – it does not mean asking if each side suffers the same number of casualties or some proper "proportion" between one and the other.

Urban Warfare The particularly difficult battle conditions when enemy combatants, often terrorists, are embedded in a city, using civilians as "human shields." The UN suggests that if an army kills only ten civilians for every combatant, those disproportionate numbers are still reasonable. The U.S. has recently killed about four civilians for every fighter, which means that if Israel's ratio is even two civilians for every Hamas terrorist, that suggests the IDF halved the damage other democratic armies caused in similar conditions.

Hamas does the opposite, often risking Palestinian lives to slow down Israeli forces and make them look guilty to the world. So Israel, in an impossible situation, is not only not guilty of “genocide” but has pioneered impressive techniques teaching other democratic armies how to protect an enemy’s civilian population. Many words could be used to criticize Israel’s counterattack. Why use that one?

- **“Doesn’t squelching pro-Palestinian protests on campus threaten free speech?” versus “Jews exaggerate campus antisemitism by attacking mostly peaceful protesters exercising their freedom of speech!”**

Many Israel supporters support free speech absolutely. But many pro-Palestinian protests and encampments escalated from expressing themselves with protected political speech, to bullying, intimidation, harassment, and violence. For years, campus culture sacrificed free speech to squelch even “microaggressions,” perceived slights against certain minorities. Suddenly, many rediscovered “freedom of speech” when the speech was anti-Jewish, and often involved criminal acts, among other “macroaggressions.” After years of frequently exaggerating, even deeming minor failures to make eye contact racist or sexist, too many campus leaders minimized the overt bigotry Jews encountered. Such hypocrisy reflects the bigot’s double-standards.

- **“Is Donald Trump’s initiative against campus antisemitism effective?” versus “Jews who support Trump’s initiative are dupes just trying to silence any left-wing, anti-Trump academics!”**

Today’s all-or-nothingness is disturbing. Anyone concerned with minimizing antisemitism and improving academia should sift, figuring out which of President Trump’s initiatives will indeed protect Jewish students and which threaten free speech and other democratic values. It’s possible to support some of the programs while resisting government intrusion on campus governance, let alone Trump’s assault on scientific and medical research.

Not every criticism of Israel is unjustified or antisemitic. Nevertheless, antisemites justify their antisemitism with any attack against Israel they make up. It’s not that hard to avoid indulging in Jew-hatred while criticizing Israel – by sticking to the issues and acknowledging dilemmas rather than smearing wildly.

CHAPTER

5

LIBERAL LIVING AND ZIONIST DREAMING IN A WORLD GONE MAD

The assault on Jews, Judaism, Israel, and Zionism can feel relentless. Jews are blamed for spreading COVID-19 and profiteering off its vaccine, for encouraging Putin's invasion of Ukraine and financing Ukraine's resistance, for having White privilege by those who disdain "Whiteness" and for not being White by White nationalists, for intermarrying too much and too little, for lobbying too aggressively and too secretly.

It often feels like the once-tamed dogs of Jew-hatred have been unleashed. In the summer of 2025 alone, vandals tried burning down the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation in Melbourne, Australia, defaced a Roman synagogue with "Juden Raus" and other Nazi slogans, and painted "Free Palestine" in orange on cars belonging to Orthodox Jewish tourists at the Châtel resort in the French Alps. Even worse, hooligans attacked Jewish fathers walking with their children in Milan, Italy and Montreal, Canada, as Israeli tourists were denied service throughout Europe and beaten at a Rhodes nightclub, and a Dutch holiday park, among other assaults.

It's easy to despair. Eighty-three percent of U.S. college students have experienced Jew-hatred since October 7. Some analysts chart a 400% surge in European antisemitic incidents. Still, Jews today remain far safer from Jew-hatred than their parents or grandparents were. Most Jews now live freely in liberal democracies rather than suffering in the ghettos of Eastern Europe or under Arab or Muslim dictators.

Two sister ideologies – liberalism and Zionism – marginalized much Jew-hatred – and counter whatever lingers. In liberal democracies outside Israel, presidents and prime ministers, clerics and civic leaders, celebrities and citizens, often defend Jews rather than stoking the hatred. And, thanks to Zionism, Israel offers a refuge to Jews feeling

oppressed while resisting Jew-hatred and Jewish victimhood. Antisemitism is less welcome in liberal democracies – although not unwelcome enough!

Traditionally, politicians competed to show who excelled more at Jew-bashing, while riling the masses with antisemitic demagoguery. In America, leaders of both major parties compete to show who is more opposed to antisemitism and more pro-Israel. Similarly, France's populist firebrand, Marine Le Pen, distanced her party from its Jew-baiting founders, including her father, and marched against Jew-hatred after October 7.

Even when strained, liberalism works. Liberalism teaches that everyone is born equal with inherent rights and freedoms protected by a constitutional order guaranteeing the consent of the governed, especially through voting. Liberal democracies seek enough power to protect citizens but not too much power to oppress them.

FACT BOX | THREE PILLARS OF LIBERALISM



EQUALITY

Treating all individuals as equals and...



LIBERTY

Due to that inherent equality guaranteeing that every citizen is free to speak, pray, assemble, protest....



DEMOCRACY

While feeling protected and empowered to vote in free, fair, secure, and periodic elections in a society governed by the rule of law.

Theoretically, liberal democracies should be free of bigots. In reality, while prejudices persist, every democracy fights group hatred, including Jew-hatred, with legal protections, political incentives, and cultural taboos. As France's President Emmanuel Macron declared in July 2017: "We will cede no ground to messages of hate and we will cede no ground to anti-Zionism, for it is a mere reinvention of antisemitism. And we will cede no ground to all those who, on all continents, seek to make us give up freedom...."

Similarly, America, home to 40% of world Jewry, has many mechanisms resisting Jew-hatred. Historically, American antisemitism was never as bad as many think, although not as good as the liberal-democratic vision promised. American Jew-hatred remains relatively mild and marginal – yet more prevalent than it should be.

Usually, people tell the history of antisemitism in each democracy by cataloguing incidents of discrimination. The Wikipedia entry charting American antisemitism offers an inexorable, depressing story – with 309 footnotes. The lengthy entry ranges from Peter Stuyvesant’s mid-17th-century tirades in New Amsterdam against those “deceitful ... repugnant ... hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ,” to today’s harassment of Jews, especially on campus. The most infamous assaults include General Ulysses S. Grant’s General Order No. 11 expelling Jews “as a class” from western Tennessee in 1862; the 1915 lynching of Leo Frank in Georgia; the automaker Henry Ford’s rantings in the 1920s; the Holocaust-era spike in American antisemitism; and the shootings in a Pittsburgh synagogue in October 2018, the Poway Chabad in April 2019, the Jersey City kosher grocery store in December 2019. They culminated with the torching of Governor Josh Shapiro’s residence, the Washington DC murders of a young couple leaving a Jewish museum, and the burning of 15 pro-Israel protestors in Boulder, one fatally, all in spring 2025.

This litany is misleading. American Jew-hatred is not like the “pure and simple Jew-hatred” of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. American Jew-baiting has rarely been lethal or respectable.

ALMOST EVERY MAJOR AMERICAN ACT OF JEW-HATRED ... HAD A HAPPY ENDING

Cataloguing the damage done by the small minority of American Jew-haters buries the lede: almost every major American antisemitic incident had a happy ending – with most politicians and many people condemning the bigots. Moreover, as in every liberal democracy, Jews benefited as all their fellow citizens’ rights and freedoms kept expanding.

The American Revolution established a Jeffersonian liberal-democratic regime that aspired to be welcoming. Frankly, Blacks and Catholics absorbed much of the prejudice in America that Jews often absorbed in Europe.

George Washington's 1790 Letter to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport defined the "Government of the United States" as one that "gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance." In 1791, the Constitution's First Amendment proclaimed: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Welcomed grandly, protected legally, Jews flourished.

That spirit inspired Abraham Lincoln to cancel Grant's expulsion order. Lincoln explained that "to condemn a class is, to say the least, to wrong the good with the bad." And it's why Georgia's Governor John Slaton commuted Leo Frank's sentence and Aaron Sapiro sued Henry Ford for spreading antisemitic libels. Embarrassed, eventually forced to apologize, Ford shuttered his hate-spewing *Dearborn Independent* in 1927. Also overlooked is how Ford's grandson "Hank the Deuce," donated generously to Israel, and established a Ford assembly plant there.

Jew-hatred peaked in America in the 1930s, while turning genocidal in Europe. A decade-and-a-half later, the Holocaust delegitimized Western antisemitism. Most could see how Jew-hatred wormed its way into the center of Nazi ideology. The shock marginalized antisemitism as authoritarian, illiberal, anti-democratic, and right-wing.

In 1950, the German-born social psychologist Theodor Adorno insisted in *The Authoritarian Personality* that "neither ethnocentrism nor antisemitism ever showed a tendency to go with leftist liberal views." The research validated most American Jews' fear of the right and the typical liberal American confidence that "it" – the Holocaust – could never happen "here."

THE NOXIOUS NEXUS: FAR LEFT, FAR RIGHT, AND ISLAMIST ANTISEMITISM OVERLAP

Such liberal self-satisfaction overlooked left-wing authoritarianism. Even then, Soviet Communism was obsessed with crushing Judaism and Zionism. As Israel allied with America, the Soviets built a left-wing anti-Zionism on the deep anti-Judaism programmed into Western culture, Marxism's disdain for "the Jews," and the anti-Israel animus central to the Palestinian nationalist movement.

As we've seen, the rise of identity politics, power dynamics, and, by the 1970s, the romanticization of the Palestinians as the ultimate victims, broadened this old-new, left-

wing antisemitism. Then, social media brought many Jew-haters out of the woodwork, giving once-disdained neo-Nazis, White supremacists and Islamist fundamentalists public platforms and networks.

The result is that today, cynics might credit Jews for performing a remarkable political service. Far-right anti-immigrant White nationalist racists, far-left anti-racists, and immigrant Islamists unite in shared Jew-hatred.

The bigots, each with a corps of aggressive, obsessive activists, exploited the Western media's harsh coverage of Israel's Gaza war that Hamas started in October 2023. The many dilemmas facing Israel in fighting the war helped many claim: "We're not antisemitic, just anti-Zionist." Steamrolling past a silenced majority and too many weak leaders, bigots on all fronts diminished most Jews' sense of safety, even as most Jews remained safe.

Still, in the summer of 2024, a badly divided America showed one rare point of agreement. At the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, families representing the Israeli hostages held by Hamas received sustained, tear-stained, standing ovations. Those moving moments, amid all the disjuncture in America and Europe, demonstrated liberal democracy's ongoing potential to defeat bigotry.

Then, Donald Trump launched his second term by targeting campus antisemitism. Conservatives cheered. Liberals – including many Jews – doubted his motives and methods. The most aggressive presidential initiative against Jew-hatred in American history became yet another flashpoint dividing Republicans and Democrats. The divides, however, are about politics and tactics. Ideologically, morally, the strong liberal-democratic consensus denouncing Jew-hatred and all bigotry has held, in America and throughout most of Europe and Australia too.

ZIONISM TRANSCENDS ANTISEMITISM

Modern Jews know that, if they feel threatened, Israel will welcome them. Zionism offers an ideology and methodology for resistance, along with a home. Zionism's greatest success, beyond the State of Israel, was the transformed Jew. These proud New Jews no longer allowed history's haters to define them. Modern Jews wrote new chapters in Jewish history – and the annals of human achievement – independent of Jew-hatred.

Like many liberal-democratic movements, Zionism was born in disappointment but succeeded by producing hope instead. The Enlightenment and Emancipation of the 1700s and 1800s weaponized Jew-hatred, even giving it the pseudo-scientific name “anti-Semitism.” Antisemites hated Jews as modernizers and traditionalists, rich and poor, capitalists and communists, for fitting in and for sticking out.

True, Theodor Herzl hoped that when the Zionist movement he founded in 1897 gave Jews their own state, Jew-hatred would disappear. That’s because it would become irrelevant – with Jews returning home – or assimilating away. Herzl recognized “the emptiness and futility of efforts to ‘combat antisemitism.’” Declamations made in writing or in closed circles do no good whatever....” He planned instead to turn the word “Jew,” from “a term of opprobrium... into something honorable.”

Herzl’s political Zionism was pragmatic – and romantic. He concluded his 1896 manifesto, *The Jewish State* by dreaming that, when Jews “live at last as free people on our own soil,” the “world will be liberated by our freedom, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness.” Similarly, Herzl’s friend Max Nordau noted that while antisemitism “taught many educated Jews the way back to their people,” throughout Europe, the “principle of nationality has awakened a sense of their own identity in all the peoples.”

THE ZIONIST JEW-JITSU: A NEW JEW IN AN OLD-NEW LAND

Zionism, then, always envisioned a Jew-Jitsu, turning Jewish negatives into Zionist, now Israeli, positives. The New Jews in Herzl’s Old-New Land would both defend themselves and fulfill themselves. *The chalutzim*, Zionism’s broad-shouldered, bronzed pioneers, resurrected their authentic selves through communal farming: the kibbutz.

These heroic homegrown Sabras negating the *Galut*, the exile, proudly taking history in their own hands, generated a new Jewish stereotype. This new generation tapped what the author Haim Hazzaz in 1942 called “Zionism’s inner essence, its hidden power.” Zionism was radical, pro-active, cleansing. This vision made Zionism a movement of national cultural and spiritual revival as well as political redemption.

American Zionists celebrated the transformation. Their Zionism united Jews as partners in building the Jewish state while restoring the Jewish soul. Henrietta

Szold, who founded Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America in 1912, recognized "the need" of "a sanctuary for miserable Jews," and "of a center from which Jewish culture and inspiration will flow" for all, even as American Jews remained in their "happy, prosperous country."

Similarly, Israel's founding prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, agreed that "Israel cannot just be a refuge." "If it is to survive as a valid nation it has to be much, much more," a light unto the nations, not just a lighthouse with a beacon.

In 1967, Israelis' decisive defeat of Soviet-backed Arab forces vindicated Zionism. Three young Israeli soldiers, transmitting innocence, idealism, and a straight-backed, unapologetic power, stood against the newly-liberated Western Wall. Their photograph epitomized the promise that Israel's super-heroes could do anything, even achieve peace and end Jew-hatred.

With its sweeping six-day victory, Israel shed its "David" status, winning big, just as the world fell in love with losers. Progressives cast Israel as "Goliath" – and an "occupier" blamed for everything bad that happened to the Palestinians. Israel's new power encouraged the new antisemitism, an anti-Zionism masking traditional Jew-hatred behind human rights talk, uniting the left with its ideological opposite – Islamism – against the oldest enemy – the Jew.

Still, Israel's Prime Minister Golda Meir trusted the Israeli miracle. "Above all, this country is our own," she explained. "Nobody has to get up in the morning and worry what his neighbors think of him." The "Jewish question" was finally answered: "Being a Jew is no problem here."

Zionists wanted Jews to stop being so other-directed. It "doesn't matter what the goyim say," Ben-Gurion taught. "It matters what the Jews do." Today, it matters less what the anti-Zionists say and more that Zionism continues.

While inflaming Jew-hatred, Zionism made most Jews less vulnerable by bringing them home. Ben-Gurion's protégé, Shimon Peres, would convey that sensibility into the 21st century, calling antisemitism, "no longer a problem for the Jews. It is a problem for the goyim."

Well-aware of what never-ending hostility does to people's souls and their politics, Rabbi David Hartman in 1982 warned against the "moral narcissism" of victims confusing their suffering with moral virtue. Years before competitive victimhood

became an intramural sport on campus, rejecting a defensive, Holocaust-scarred worldview, Hartman proclaimed: “We will mourn forever because of the memory of Auschwitz. We will build a healthy new society because of the memory of Sinai.”

IDENTITY ZIONISM AS THE WAY FORWARD TODAY

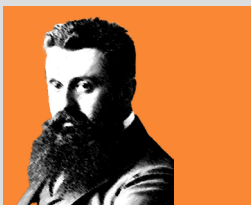
The rise of Israel’s Right amid the twin misfires of the Oslo Peace Process in the 1990s and the Gaza Disengagement in 2005, left Israelis feeling bombarded and betrayed. By 2003, the former prisoner-of-Zion Natan Sharansky, noting the “murderous anti-Jewish hatred” festering in “ostensible bastions of enlightenment and tolerance” throughout Europe, and on campus, realized that antisemitism would not wither away along with Soviet totalitarianism. This was his “shattered illusion” as Jew-hatred proved its plasticity, morphing from antisemitism to anti-Zionism and back again. Now, Jews’ homelessness did not cause Jew-hatred; Jews coming home fed it.

This inversion challenged Zionism ideologically. If rather than eliminating antisemitism, Zionism inflamed it, some wondered if eliminating Zionism might eliminate antisemitism. Such “logic” blamed the victim, missing the antisemite’s ever-adapting obsessiveness. The bigotry tells more about the bigot’s agenda than the bigot’s target. Haters will always find a reason to hate. This approach also misread Zionism as “garrison Zionism,” only defensive, rather than the redemptive rebuilding project for the Jewish people Zionism has been.

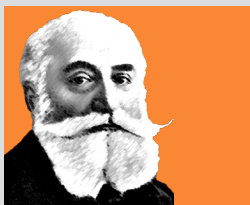
Sharansky refused to despair, devoting nine years in the Jewish Agency to moving Zionism from reactive to proactive and from “an Aliyah of necessity” to an “Aliyah of choice.” His 2020 manifesto and memoir (which he and I co-authored) was not called “Never Again” but *Never Alone* – going from fleeing trauma to seeking redemption. Those belonging to this extraordinary network called the Jewish people are rooted, interconnected, bonded – never abandoned.

These constructive threads weave together the patchwork quilt of Identity Zionism. While established, the state is not yet perfected. Challenges of delegitimization, terrorism, internal divisions, and the quest for peace loom. But Identity Zionism embraces Israel and Jewish peoplehood as collective, rooted, identity-building platforms in an increasingly alienated, individuated world.

FACT BOX | THE “EYES” HAVE IT: ZIONISM’S SIX “I”S RESPONDING TO JEW-HATRED



Idealism Theodor Herzl (1860-1904): when Jews “live at last as free people on our own soil,” the “world will be liberated by our freedom, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness.”



Identity Max Nordau (1849-1923): Although antisemitism “taught many educated Jews the way back to their people,” throughout Europe, the “principle of nationality has awakened a sense of their own identity in all the peoples.”



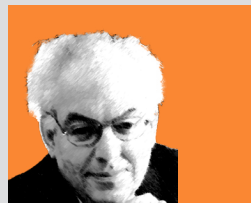
Industriousness David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973): It “doesn’t matter what the non-Jews say. It matters what the Jews do.”



Independence Golda Meir (1898-1978): “Above all, this country is our own. Nobody has to get up in the morning and worry what his neighbors think of him. Being a Jew is no problem here.”



Indifference Shimon Peres (1923-2016): antisemitism, “is no longer a problem for the Jews. It is a problem for the goyim.”



Incorruptible Rabbi David Hartman (1931-2013): Beware the “moral narcissism” of perpetual victimhood. “We will mourn forever because of the memory of Auschwitz. We will build a healthy new society because of the memory of Sinai.”

Today, amid the post-October 7th surge, there's a lot of talk about "October 8th Zionists" or "Jews." Better to be a "1948 Zionist," or a 3,500-year-old Jew tapping into the identity and ideological possibilities rather than fleeing the ugliest realities.

Israel incorporates contradictions. History imposed some; Zionism fostered others. As this small, cranky, expensive, unpopular, stressed-out country surrounded by enemies stays in the top ten of the World Happiness Index, articles proliferate wondering: "Why are the Israelis so Damned Happy?" A 2016 JPPI study suggested why: more than two-thirds of Israel's Jewish citizens build their identities around Jewish nationality, culture, tradition – with those values shared by networks of close friends and strong families. In short, amid terrorism and fear, economic strains, and regional instability, Zionism delivered a home, a sense of mission, and frameworks for finding meaning in life.

Zionism did not solve the problem of antisemitism. And it did not cure the lingering ailments of a people suffering from collective PTSD. But it transformed the historical equation with its 6 Eyes: Idealism, Identity, Industriousness, Independence, Indifference, and being Incorruptible. Today, Zionism empowers the Jews not the antisemites to make the Jew, the Jewish people, and Judaism.

The writer Hillel Halkin summed up Israel's post-1948 response to the world's hatred. This American immigrant to Israel, celebrates his life there, and his people's "great adventure," from exile to home, from powerlessness to power, from misery to joy, proclaiming "I wouldn't have missed it for the world."

Sadly, Jew-hatred is not disappearing, as Zionophobia resurrects and frequently relegitimizes Judeophobia. But while hating the haters, Jews also hate what the hatred does to the hated. So beyond defending against antisemitism, Zionism taught Jews to defend against defensiveness while pursuing the hope-filled goal "to live as a free nation in our land, our land of Zion" – building a Jerusalem that fulfills Jewish dreams while still trying to inspire the world.

FACT BOX | A ZIONIST APPRECIATION: HILLEL HALKIN



The writer Hillel Halkin summed up Israel's post-'48 response to the world's hatred. This American immigrant to Israel, celebrates his life in Israel, and his people's "great adventure," writing: "I wouldn't have missed it for the world. There's been nothing like it in human history. A small and ancient people loses its land and forgets how to speak its language; wanders defenselessly for hundreds, thousands, of years throughout the world with its God and sacred books; meets with contumely, persecution, violence, dispossession, banishment, mass murder; refuses to give up; refuses to surrender its faith; continues to believe that it will one day be restored to the land it lost; manages in the end, by dint of its own efforts, against all odds, to gather itself from the four corners of the earth and return there; learns again to speak the language of its old books; learns again to bear arms and defend itself; wrests its new-old home from the people that had replaced it; entrenches itself there; builds; fructifies; fortifies; repulses the enemies surrounding it; grows and prospers in the face of all threats. Had it not happened, could it have been imagined? Would anyone have believed it possible?"



EPILOGUE

THE 6 PS TO RESPOND TO ANTISEMITIC ANTI-ZIONISM

Although we should never stop dreaming about eliminating all forms of bigotry, realists should develop more short-term strategies too. Consider 6 Ps that can help.

- **Proportion:** Our enemies are hysterical; it's better to be disciplined. Be precise. Don't exaggerate. Be wary of treating honest, even heated, criticism of Israel, Jews, Zionism, as bigotry. There are enough egregious assaults. And while it's fair to complain, as the Stanford Antisemitism Task Force did, that "it's in the air," it's easier to win by fighting clear acts of hatred rather than ambiguous slights. In baseball, the tie goes to the runner. In confronting bigots, concentrate on egregious examples of Jew-hatred, when people cross the line into bigotry or degenerate from heated speech to harassment and violence.
- **Power:** Don't act powerless, because you aren't. As citizens of democracies, we have influence in our communities, as well as legal systems, offering tools from lawsuits to criminal complaints. As Jews, we have a peoplehood network of organizations and influential individuals. As Zionists, we have a Jewish army and a Jewish state. Resources can be leveraged, and unapologetic strength often intimidates bullies.
- **Partnership:** Hunkering down, Diaspora Jews increasingly speak about "hardening the target," hiring security guards, mounting security cameras, reinforcing entrances. Many synagogues, Jewish schools, and community centers are fortified, even greeting visitors with airport-type security machines. Let's consider "broadening the target," mobilizing friends, framing the fight as one for liberalism, democracy, human rights, and decency. Ninety percent of American adults in a 2024 American Jewish Congress poll agreed that antisemitism "affects society as a whole and everyone is responsible for combating it." Appeal to this Silenced Majority.

- Preparation: Still, it never hurts to be prepared. The French phrase “eloquence de l’escalier,” eloquence of the staircase, emphasizes the clever phrases and tactics that flood our minds after confrontations. Think instead of eloquence of the entryway, gaming out scenarios if you are in a hostile environment, taking a controversial stand, or, alas, these days, walking around with a kippah on your head, a hostage pin on your lapel, or a t-shirt that says, “Dina’s Bat Mitzvah was awesome.” With a game plan, a response, an approach in your head, if you do encounter Jew-hatred, you will absorb the blow more effectively and with less frustration.
- Perspective: While showing zero tolerance for intolerance, if you experience antisemitism, frame this insult or assault within the flow of history. Understand that even if you absorb a blow of bias, you don’t just live in this moment. Jews are part of a broader Jewish story reaching back 3500 years and a 77-year-old Israeli story that will transcend and overcome this moment too. Americans are part of a 250-year-old story of trying to overcome bigotry for a more perfect union. Historical perspective, communal support, philosophical calm, can often help soothe the soul, even if the body is bruised.
- Pride: This is the most important point. Be positive. As Zionists, as liberal democrats, we should delight in the rich heritages we have inherited. Resisting the bullies, let’s intensify attempts to eliminate bigotry and cultivate a more liberal, more democratic, more just society.

