



Zionism as a Pro-Civilization Movement

Finding the Golden Path with the “Other” as the 21st Century’s Prime Challenge

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The current *zeitgeist* is different, if not opposed, to the one in which Zionism emerged as a national movement (one of the most successful of its kind). The current trend is dismantling nation-states and abolishing even individual identities. Lennon promised us that a world without religious or national identities would be an imaginary utopia. Yet, we got a loneliness crisis that has not led to greater polarization. It is not religious or national identities that set us one against another, but rather human nature itself. By our very nature, we seek a sense of belonging. However, when most people no longer have intimate communities, they live in an existential sense of insecurity that drives them to adopt superficial versions of national or ideological movements, to feel they belong to something. These groups are too large to define collectively who **is** part of the group; consequently, they resort to negative definitions by strictly defining who is **not** part of the group, which fuels polarization. On the nationalist side, this leads to populism, and on the progressive/woke side, it leads to cancel culture. Seeing nationalists and wokesters as diametrically opposed camps is a mere optical illusion; most of them are lonely people seeking a place to belong.

The convergence of the loneliness and identity crises boils down to the question of relation to the “Other”. Responses to this lie between two extremes: violating the Other’s identity or violating One’s own identity. The far right/conservative end tries to remove the Other from society. Supposedly, it represents a strong national or religious identity, but paradoxically, it is based on weakness and is on the defensive.

The progressive/cosmopolitan side tries to erase its own identity to accommodate the Other. While this approach may seem more “advanced”, it reflects the same weak identity and lack of social cohesion. The problem with both “solutions” is simply that they violate human nature itself and, hence, are unsustainable. Can Zionism offer a different path?

From a National Home to International Engagement

The Zionist revolution calls for something more profound than a national home for the Jewish people. It calls for the realignment of the Jewish people within the broader story of humanity. Arguably, the Hebrew story has been the most impactful in history. Inasmuch as this shared story has been a catalyst for antisemitism (for example, because of the Catholic “replacement theory” that also trickled down into Islam), it can also be a catalyst for fraternity. But this will require Jewish and Israeli initiative. The challenge is that after 2,000 years with virtually no friends, we need to relearn how to cultivate non-Jewish allies instead of viewing humanity as a threat.

This situation puts Zionism in a very interesting position. The Middle East is a hotbed of identity-based conflicts (the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is only one of them). Given the region’s high profile, if Israel succeeds in presenting a sustainable model to this crisis, it may project well beyond its borders.

I argue we can offer a different path by reintroducing the Abrahamic story and making it a cornerstone of the next Zionist phase. It is a story of community and nation building, but also of immigration and “Otherness”. Abraham founded a community that evolved into a nation. Still, he was also the ultimate Other of his era, the first monotheist who was promised that his descendants would be in exile as strangers (where they would transform from a family into a nation) before they could build their own nation and welcome the stranger into it.

One practical implication of this can be in relation to the Accords carrying his name. In 2025 we celebrated the fifth anniversary of the Abraham Accords. Despite the War, conference rooms buzzed with diplomats, economists, business leaders, and security experts. But one thing was strikingly absent: the voices of educators and faith leaders. The absence is astonishing. Nearly two years after October 7th, an attack rooted in extremist religious ideology— how can anyone believe that defense pacts and trade deals alone will reconcile conflicting identities?

As they stand now, the Accords lack the very Abrahamic spirit they were named for. Abraham was not a man of policy or protocol—he was a man of covenant, compassion, and connection. A unifying ancestor for Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike, he embodied the idea that relationships, not transactions, are what bind people together. To achieve this, the Accords must expand into educational, cultural, and religious collaborations as well.

When people encounter one another in the context of a shared story, they can begin to imagine a future together, without expecting any side to forfeit its identity and without deteriorating to naive Lennonist Imagine-Style generic statements of peace and love. Finding the fine line between Me and the Other can foster cooperation between different identity groups. In an age of post-national loneliness, isolation, and decadence, this could and should be a new tenet of the Zionist movement, as a pro-civilization movement.

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