



# Zionism 2025: Reclaiming Our History— and Our Future

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At the heart of Zionism is the affirmation of Jewish peoplehood and, beginning with Herzl's foundation stone, the insistence on writing our own story. More than seventy-five years after Israel's founding, in an era of cyber-prop and resurgent antisemitism, the challenge to Zionism is existential—whether Jews will again be cast in the scripts others write.

History supplies a long list: Stories of Christ-killers, parasites, "Semites," "globalists," and "white settler colonialists." In each, the Jew plays the archetypal "other," the convenient villain onto whom anxieties and grievances are projected.

Today, false accusations against Israel of "starvation," "genocide," and "apartheid" conceal a darker reality: Jews are being intentionally starved by the very people who attempted genocide on October 7, in territory where the only Jews in 20 years have been hostages.

When public life grows febrile, identity politics hardens into a tribal psychology that divides the world into "us" and "them," with Jews the perpetual stand-in for the "other."

But there is a deeper reason for miscasting Jews.

Jews famously bloom wherever planted. Jewish refusal to accept perpetual victimhood is associated with historically disproportionate Jewish contributions to society. A political paradigm in which a Jewish minority thrives is one that welcomes the stranger while protecting individual rights and liberal values. When an illiberal paradigm takes hold, the invention of Jew-as-villain, becomes its calling card.

Jewish peoplehood is a complex reality that resists the brittle categories of illiberal ideologies: Though many Jews share genetic markers, we are not a race. We have a religion that not all of us practice. Without proselytizing, we welcome converts. We have a language that not all of us speak. We are an ancient nation, but only half live in our

lands. And Israel is both a Middle Eastern nation-state and a Western democracy with minorities and equal rights for all.

The inability to neatly slot Jews or Israel illuminates the unworkability of illiberal paradigms, whether clothed in religious absolutism, racial determinism, or the moral tautologies of contemporary critical theory. To protect the paradigm, the Jewish people and “the Jew among the nations” must disappear. The options are grim: assimilation, subordination, or elimination—metaphorically, or in the most extreme manifestations, literally.

Antizionism is, in practice, a movement to erase the Jewish people, our history, our connection to our land, and the existence of our national home. American antizionism performs this erasure through mutually incompatible accounts, with Israel as the embodiment of power and oppression: On the right, Jews are cast as immigrants and globalists manipulating policy; on the left, as white oppressors behind a settler-colonial project.

In a third, historically lethal strand of antizionism, Zionism is a Western fabrication—an imperial scheme to solve ‘the Jewish problem’ by depositing unwanted European Jews into “Arab lands.” This Islamist antizionism denies Jewish history, defies national legitimacy, and treats sovereignty as an intolerable affront, casting annihilation as religious duty. These narratives converge in an “intersectional” antizionist movement in which Jewish particularity is expropriated or expunged.

Zionism in 2025 must be rooted in the preservation of the Jewish people *as a people*. It must also preserve the security, dignity, history, and the memory of those who came before us: those named in the Torah; those for whom we are named; those who perished before Zionism succeeded; the victims of October 7; all those who gave their lives to the promise of *never again*; and everyone who is “comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.”

None of this means that Israel is above criticism or Zionism’s boundaries are beyond debate. We argue about borders, the role of religion, the architecture of democracy, definitions of justice, the role of the judiciary... even who counts as a Jew. “Argument for the sake of Heaven” is not a quaint phrase; it is a civic method. To paraphrase Walt Whitman, *Zionism contains multitudes*.

What Zionism cannot contain, however, is the surrender of the right to exist as a sovereign people. That is a boundary with moral urgency and existential necessity. And after three-quarters of a century, denying Israel’s existence is an argument for the sake of something else.

Zionism is ultimately a modern covenant of a people entrusted with an ancient story—and the calling to write the next chapters as a free people in our own land.

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