



On the Fate of the Jewish State

Samuel J. Hyde

Zionism did not emerge from the Beit Midrash, nor from the pages of the Gamarra. It was neither the product of a halachic ruling nor a rabbinical consensus. Zionism was born in rebellion—against centuries of Jewish passivity and persecution. The creation of the Jewish state is therefore not only the triumph of a movement but the expression of a civilizational shift: from supplication to sovereignty.

Today, Zionism finds itself stranded. What began as liberation is now spoken of as a crime against the modern conscience. It was not always so. Zionism was once part of a grander story, within the 19th- and 20th-century national awakening—a sibling to the Greek revival and other movements of self-determination. But Europe suffered a rupture. Nationalism turned malignant. Two world wars and the recoil of empire rendered the nation suspect, morally radioactive to the liberal imagination.

For a time, the Right embraced it: Israel was imagined as a fortress of strength, a front line against terror, an ally in the Cold War. But that embrace was provisional, and among some, it has since crumbled. On the isolationist right, Zionism is now recast as conspiracy, a foreign plot siphoning away blood and treasure. On the socialist left—once enchanted by the experiment of the kibbutzim—Zionism has been doctrinally inverted. The Jews, once icons of emancipation, are condemned as metaphysical colonizers.

And so Zionism is stripped of its external alliances. What remains is its elemental claim: the Jews as a people. If we are to preserve this—not as myth, but as a viable framework for Jewish sovereignty—we must confront realities without illusion.

The first is demographic. The allure of Greater Israel may be powerful, but reality is uncompromising. Between “the River and the Sea” live millions of non-Jews. Those who pursue territorial maximalism in defiance of this fact risk undermining the most profound achievement of the Jewish people in two thousand years: the reconstitution of the Jews as a majority in their own land. To turn the Jews back into a minority—surrounded and embattled in their own state through ever-expanding borders—is not a tactic. It is betrayal.

Israel must therefore draw its eastern line. This act will preserve the Jewish majority, safeguard the democratic character of the state, and open doors to regional normalization. Peace with Saudi Arabia, and perhaps with others, would not be fantasy but probability. After two years of war, such an outcome would mark a regional victory over the jihadists. And in the face of a weakened Hezbollah, a faltering Hamas, and an Iran stretched thin, it would be a victory beyond measure.

The second issue is the Haredi draft. Despite October 7th and the war, tens of thousands of able-bodied Haredi men remain exempt from sharing the burden of the nation. They do not serve in the army. They do not contribute meaningfully to the tax base. They do not build, produce, or protect the state that protects them. This is not sustainable—not ethically, not economically, and not strategically.

For decades, Israeli governments have kicked the can down the road, trading short-term coalition stability for long-term national erosion. Sovereignty requires responsibility: one cannot inherit the blessings of statehood without accepting its burdens.

The numbers speak for themselves. The Haredi population is growing rapidly and is projected to make up nearly one-third of Israeli society within a few decades. A demographic shift of this magnitude would pose a challenge to any country—but in Israel's case, the implications are existential. A state cannot remain functional—let alone prosperous—if a third of its citizens are outside the workforce, outside the army, and outside the shared national ethos.

There is a path forward. It requires political courage, moral clarity, and a final severing from the exile mentality—an unsustainable arrangement that has long shielded the Haredi sector from civic integration. The state must enforce mandatory national service for all—military or otherwise—with only minimal exemptions. It must integrate Haredi society into the national education system and assist in job integration networks.

Today, amid the rising tide of a hostile world, sovereignty is what remains of Zionism. And sovereignty must be the principle through which we make decisions for the future. Zionism was never a reactionary force, it was a revolution with a vision, we cannot afford to lose that.

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