

DRAFT: XIII (Final)
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Glossary of Key Terms

Antisemitism: Upholding a belief in the inferiority or evil nature of the Jewish people, or advocating acts that harm the Jewish people as a collective. This includes stripping Jews of their homeland, i.e., Zionophobia.

Apartheid: A policy of separating communities based on qualities such as race or ethnic identity, for example, the policy formerly practiced in South Africa against non-whites.

Arab Rejectionism: The deeply entrenched ideology dominating Palestinian society, according to which a Jewish homeland in any border must be rejected and fought against as the highest priority.

Colonialism: A policy or practice by which a foreign power exerts its control over another territory to which it has no indigenous connection. The central characteristic of colonialism is allegiance to a motherland, the place of origin from which the colonizers come.

Colony: A newly established settlement, typically agricultural, on previously uncultivated land. During the period of the New Yishuv, it was the term for a newly established agricultural community.

Diaspora: The Jewish community living outside of Israel. A state of dispersion considered temporary and abnormal throughout Jewish history.

Eretz Israel: Also Eretz Yisrael. Hebrew for The Land of Israel, the historic homeland of the Jewish people. See Zion.

Indigenous: Living or occurring naturally in an area or environment. Intrinsic; innate. When applied to land ownership claims, indigenoussness is based on three factors: geographical residence, genetic lineage, and intellectual or historical attachment. Jewish indigenoussness is based on vivid collective memories of a past civilization and continuous expectation of returning to the cradle of that civilization.

Jew: A member of the widely dispersed people sharing collective memories centered around Eretz Israel, a sense of mutual responsibility, and a commitment to a common destiny. Throughout their dispersion, religion was the carrier of those memories and commitments. For some Jews, religion still plays an essential role in their Jewish identity, however, the majority of contemporary Jews are secular.

Judaism: The religious aspect of Jewishness. Judaism traces its origins to the monotheism embraced by Abraham and has its spiritual and ethical principles articulated chiefly in the Torah and the Talmud. In the Diaspora period, the practices and beliefs of Judaism were the main carriers of Jewishness.

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Moral Relativism: The view that moral judgments are true or false only relative to some particular standpoint (for instance, that of a culture or a historical period) and that no standpoint is uniquely privileged over others. It has been associated with the denial of universal moral imperatives to be upheld by every human society and the insistence that we should refrain from passing moral judgments on beliefs and practices characteristic of cultures other than our own. Taken to the extreme, moral relativism would tolerate such practices as female circumcision, honor killing, and slavery.

Nakba: Arabic term for “disaster.” Originally coined in 1956 by the Syrian intellectual and Arab nationalist Constantine Zurayk to describe the humiliating failure of the Arab states’ attack on Israel in 1948. Later adopted, and continually evoked, to describe the displacement and human suffering that resulted from this attack.

Palestine: A name given by the Ottomans to a region in the Middle East formerly coined Palestina by the Romans and formerly named Eretz Yisrael by the Hebrews.

Palestinian: Literally, a person who comes from Palestine, including members of the Yishuv during the British Mandate period. Collectively, a term characterizing the national movement of the Arab residents of Palestine that emerged in the 1920s, led by the Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini, with two goals: 1) to establish an Arab state in all of Palestine and 2) to prevent the Jews from establishing their own state in any part of the land.

Racism: The belief that race (e.g., skin color or genetic lineage) accounts for differences in human character or ability and that a particular race is superior to others. More broadly, discrimination or prejudice based on other immutable characteristics, such as sexual orientation, ethnic heritage, or deeply entrenched cultural traits and mores.

Sovereignty: The right and power of a governing body to handle the needs of a given society without outside interference. The two essential features of a sovereign government are self-defense and control of immigration.

Terrorism: The ideological license to elevate one’s grievances above the norms of civilized society through the use or threatened use of force. Typically, terrorism refers to extra-governmental organizations seeking to intimidate or coerce societies or governments to accede to their demands. Often takes the form of violence against civilian populations to advance some ideological or political cause.

Yishuv: The Jewish community in Palestine before the establishment of the State of Israel. Two distinct periods define the Yishuv. The period of the Old Yishuv refers to the community residing in Palestine before the First Aliyah (1882), largely composed of observant Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews who focused on Torah study and lived on charity from the Diaspora. The period of the New Yishuv refers to the community composed of the waves of Zionist pioneers who founded self-supporting agricultural communities and new towns and cities (e.g., Tel Aviv) with the ultimate aim of reestablishing Jewish sovereignty in Eretz Israel. While it lacked control

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over its own defense and immigration, the New Yishuv otherwise featured all the attributes of a modern democratic state, including elected leadership, town councils, and a Rabbinical Council; educational and healthcare systems; a robust independent press; arts and cultural centers; and considerable economic activity. The strong institutional structure established by the New Yishuv enabled the smooth transition from British Mandate rule to independence in 1948.

Zion: Biblical name for both Jerusalem and Eretz Israel, also used as a symbol for the Jewish people itself.

Zionism: The continuous yearning of the Jewish people for self-determination and normalcy in their historic homeland. The political manifestation of Zionism was catalyzed in 1897 by Austro-Hungarian lawyer, journalist, and author Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) and realized with the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948.

Motivated by the danger of rising antisemitism in Europe and Russia, Herzl argued a two-part purpose for Zionism: 1) to establish for the Jewish people a publicly recognized, legally secured homeland in Palestine and 2) to rekindle Jews’ connection to the fold of their peoplehood.

Zionophobia: A form of racism denying the Jewish people a home in Eretz Israel.

Related to but distinct from antisemitism, Zionophobia earns its discriminatory character by denying the Jewish people what it grants to other historically bonded collectives: the right to nationhood, self-determination, and legitimate coexistence with their neighbors. The “phobic” component in the word Zionophobia highlights the irrational obsession with which most Zionophobes pursue their genocidal goal of stripping Israeli Jews of their sovereignty.