

## **Terminology**

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**Aliyah:** A Hebrew word that literally means “to arise” or “go up.” It is used to describe the act of Jews who immigrate to Israel. A Jew who immigrates to Israel is called an “oleh” for males and “olah” for females. (plural is “olim”)

**Anti-Semitism:** A persisting latent structure of hostile beliefs towards Jews as a collective group, manifested in individuals as attitudes, and in culture as myth, ideology, folklore and imagery, and in actions – social or legal discrimination, political mobilization against the Jews, and collective or state violence – which results in and/or is designed to distance, displace, or destroy Jews as Jews. The word was probably first used in 1860 by Moritz Steinschneider to characterize Ernest Renan's ideas about racial theory.

**Ashkenazi:** A Jew from Central and Eastern Europe, distinguished from the Sephardim by their religious rituals, customs, foods, and pronunciation of Hebrew. Until the twentieth century, the primary language of the Ashkenazim was Yiddish. In Israel the term is now used in ways that have nothing to do with its original meaning. In practice, the label Ashkenazi is often applied to all Jews of European background living in Israel, including those whose ethnic background is actually Sephardic.

**Barrier, The:** A physical barrier being built by Israel around the West Bank that consists of a network of fences and high concrete walls. It was started in the late 1990s and has been a hotly contested topic since its inception. The formal reason given for its construction by Israel is security. Some of those opposed to the barrier state its goal is actually to obtain more land for Israel.

**British Mandate of Palestine:** A swath of territory in the Middle East, formerly belonging to the Ottoman Empire and comprising modern Jordan, Israel, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, which the League of Nations entrusted to the United Kingdom to administer in the aftermath of World War I as a Mandate Territory. Britain controlled the area from 1917 to 1948.

**Constitutional Monarchy:** A system of government in which the supreme law is the nation's Constitution but the formal head of state is a monarch.

**Druze:** Members of a religious sect that broke with Islam nearly a thousand years ago, and whose members live mostly in Lebanon and Syria and in the mountains around Haifa in Israel. Druze serve in the Israeli military, often as border guards. The basis of the Druze religion is the belief that at various times God has been divinely incarnated in a living person and that his last, and final, such incarnation was al-Hakim, the sixth Fatimid caliph, who announced himself in Cairo about 1016 as the earthly incarnation of God. The Druze believe in one God. The Druze do not pray in a mosque and are secretive about the tenets of their religion.

**Dunam:** A unit of land measurement. It is 1,000 square meters or about 1/5 of an acre. There are about 5 dunams in a football field.

**Eretz Israel:** The term is Hebrew for “land of Israel.” It refers to the geographic goal of the Zionist movement though it is not universally agreed upon what the ideal borders would be.

**Gaza Strip:** A narrow strip of land just northeast of the Sinai Peninsula. At the end of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War it was occupied by the Egyptians, under which it remained until it was seized by Israel during the Six-Day War. It was originally part of British-mandate Palestine. In 2005 Israel withdrew all

of its settlements from Gaza, yet has kept control of its borders with Israel.

**Golan Heights:** Previously known as the Syrian Heights, it is a plateau on the border of Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. After capturing the area during the Six-Day War, Israel declared it to be sovereign Israeli territory in 1981. Syria claims the Heights are part of the governorate of Al Qunaytirah, and the international community considers the area to be under Israeli military occupation.

**Green Line:** The term Green Line is used to refer to the 1949 Armistice lines established at the end of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Its name is derived from the green pencil used to draw the line on the map during the talks.

**Hamas:** A Palestinian Islamist political and social organization closely related to the Muslim Brotherhood. Their covenant has as its preface: *"Israel will exist and continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it"* Hamas is responsible for many suicide bombings and rocket attacks against Israel. Yet, this group also provides many resources and services for the Palestinian people, including hospitals and schools. In January 2006 Hamas candidates won a majority of the seats in the Palestine Legislative Council and therefore formed a government with Fateh which held power until June 2007 when Hamas took over control of the Gaza Strip and Palestinian President Abbas dissolved the Hamas-Fateh unity government.

**Haredi:** A sect of Judaism, often referred to as Ultra-Orthodox Judaism, that is the most theologically conservative form of Orthodox Judaism. The term "ultra-Orthodox" is often times considered demeaning and is not used by the Jews to whom it is applied. (plural is "haredim")

**Indigenous Christian:** Sects of Christianity and Christian churches that were founded by the local population and not by foreign missionaries, as well as church bodies started by foreign missions that have become independent of foreign control. With regard to Israel and the surrounding areas, these are Christian churches that have ties to the lands on the Eastern Mediterranean shores all the way back to the beginnings of Christianity.

**Intifada:** Literally, "shaking off" in Arabic, the word has come to denote Arab uprisings against what they view as the oppressive and unjust systems of Israeli occupation. Within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there have been two Intifadas, the First Intifada in 1987 and the Second Intifada in 2000.

**Intifada, al-Aqsa:** *see* Intifada, Second

**Intifada, First:** An uprising of the Palestinian people, the first beginning around early 1987. It is disputed whether it was a spontaneous uprising or orchestrated by the PLO, though most historians adhere to the former opinion. It is also disputed whether it should be labeled a generally peaceful, non-violent uprising or a violent one. The IDF response has also been called into question for perhaps being too harsh. It subsided in 1993 with the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords.

**Intifada, Second:** The Palestinian uprising that began in 2000. Both sides heavily dispute the specific cause for this Intifada. It is sometimes called the al-Aqsa Intifada because violence broke out after Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's visit to the al-Aqsa Mosque in September 2000. It was much more violent than the First Intifada and included increased attacks on civilian or indiscriminate targets involving both sides.

**Israel, State of:** A country in the Middle East on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea. It is a

parliamentary democracy and a predominantly Jewish state formed in 1948. It claims Jerusalem as its capital, though the majority of the international community considers Tel Aviv its capital.

**Israeli:** A citizen of the State of Israel. The common misconception with this word is that it is interchangeable with Jewish. This stems from the incorrect belief that all Israelis are Jews. In actuality, there are many different ethnicities and religious orientations expressed within the Israeli population.

**Jerusalem (East):** The part of Jerusalem which was held by Jordan from the 1948 Arab-Israeli War until the Six-Day War in 1967. It contains the Old City and some of the holiest sites in the Jewish, Muslim and Christian religions, including the Western Wall, the Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary (containing the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque), and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Its population is mainly Palestinian.

**Jerusalem (West):** Refers to the part of Jerusalem that has been under Israeli control since the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. After the Six-Day War Israel controlled both halves of Jerusalem and proclaimed it united and indivisible.

**Jew (Cultural):** *see* Jew (Paternal)

**Jew (Paternal):** A person who is descended from Jewish parents. Within the Orthodox Jewish community it must be shown that the mother is Jewish, the identity of the father is not of the same level of importance. Outside of the Orthodox community the general view is that if either parent is Jewish the child is Jewish.

**Jew (Religious):** A person who practices the Jewish faith. Within the Orthodox Jewish community only if someone who was previously not Jewish converts to Orthodox Judaism will they be considered Jewish. Outside of the Orthodox community it is generally agreed that converts to any recognized denomination of Judaism will be considered Jewish.

**Kibbutz:** A Hebrew word meaning "gathering" or "together". This term refers to an Israeli collective community. These collective communities were mostly associated with the Labor party but can range from farming communities to youth communities to militaristic communities. These communities, which can trace their origins to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, played an essential role in the creation of Israel. (plural is "kibbutzim")

**League of Nations:** This was an international organization founded after the First World War at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The League's goals included disarmament, preventing war through collective security, settling disputes between countries through negotiation and diplomacy, and improving global welfare. Although Woodrow Wilson suggested its creation, the United States never joined. It was dissolved in 1946 after the United Nations was formed.

**Knesset:** The parliament of the State of Israel. Its name and the number of its members are based on the "Knesset Hagdola" of the early Second Temple period. It is composed of 120 representatives of different political parties, elected for a four-year term. All Israeli citizens – men, women, Christians, Muslims, and Jews – can vote and are represented in the Knesset.

**Mandate Territory:** League of Nations mandates were territories established under Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, 28 June 1919. All the territories were previously controlled by states defeated in World War I, principally Germany and the Ottoman Empire. The mandates were

fundamentally different from protectorates in that the Mandatory power undertook obligations to the inhabitants of the territory and to the League of Nations.

**Muslim:** A follower of the religion of Islam. There are over 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide, divided among three major groups: Sunni, Shi'a and Khariji. Islam teaches that there is only one God, and that the God of Judaism and Christianity is the same as the God of Islam. The majority of the world's Muslims, including many of those living in the United States, are not Arab.

**Occupied Territories:** One of a number of terms used to describe areas captured by Israel from Egypt, Jordan, and Syria during the Six-Day War of 1967. The term is generally used to refer to the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. The term was also used to describe the Sinai Peninsula, which was returned to Egypt as part of the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty.

**Palestinian:** Palestinians are people with family origins mainly in Palestine. Their religion is primarily Islam, with some representation among Christianity, Judaism, Druze, and other minorities. Today, they are mainly Arabic-speaking.

**Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO):** Founded by the Arab League in 1964, its original goal was the destruction of the State of Israel through armed struggle, and replacing it with an "independent Palestinian state" between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. More recently, the PLO adopted a two-state solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side, as its goal. A key argument for a Palestinian state is that Palestinian Arabs are entitled to the right of self-determination and sovereignty in their own land and are also entitled to the right of return.

**"Peace Process":** In general, a process taken by governments and national representatives to move towards a cessation of violence and armed conflict. This term is used in relation to Israel-Palestine to describe the history of negotiations and talks by all parties concerned.

**Right of Return:** Generally speaking a right, held by members of an ethnic or national group, to assurance of immigration and naturalization into the nation of their homeland. It is a special consideration in the nation's immigration laws to facilitate or encourage the reunion of a diaspora or dispersed ethnic population. With regard to Israel-Palestine this term is sometimes confusing because Israel and the Palestinians use the term differently. Israel has a law called the Right of Return which grants any Jew in the world automatic citizenship to the State of Israel. The Palestinian Right of Return refers to United Nations General Assembly resolution 194 which stipulates that Palestinians who were forced to flee their homes during the 1948 war have a right to return to them.

**Sabra:** A Native-born Israeli. The word comes from the name of a cactus plant that is prickly on the outside and soft and tasty on the inside. The Israeli character is often said to resemble this fruit.

**Security Fence:** *see* Barrier, The

**Semitic:** An adjective referring to the peoples who have traditionally spoken Semitic languages or to things pertaining to them. It is derived from the Greek form of the Hebrew name Shem, son of Noah. Some Semitic languages are Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic and Ugaritic. Under this definition both Jews and Arabs are Semitic peoples, though the term anti-Semitism has been usually used with reference to anti-Jewish sentiments.

**Separation Wall:** *see* Barrier, The

**Sephardic:** A Jew whose heritage can be traced back to the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), including the descendants of those subject to expulsion from Spain by order of the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella (as codified in the Alhambra decree of 1492), or from Portugal by order of King Manuel I in 1497. In a broader sense, the term has come to include Jews of Arabic and Persian backgrounds who have no historical connection to Spain except their use of the Sephardic liturgy.

**Settlements, Jewish:** Communities built by Israelis in territory captured in the 1967 Six-Day War. Such settlements currently exist in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. Settlements formerly existed in the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip but were abandoned as part of Israeli withdrawals from these areas, in 1982 and 2005 respectively. Although the Israeli policies toward these settlements have ranged from active promotion to removal by force, their continued existence and status is since the 1970s is one of the most contentious issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

**Territorialism:** In the context of Jewish nationalism, a movement calling for a Jewish homeland but not necessarily in Palestine. The major person within this movement was Israel Zangwill who founded the Jewish Territorialist Organization and looked for possible Jewish homelands in Africa, Australia, Asia and even Galveston, TX. Theodor Herzl, the father of Political Zionism, was at first a territorialist.

**West Bank:** Territory in the Middle East constituting the area west of the Jordan River annexed by Jordan at the end of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The territory formed part of Jordan from 1948 to 1967, after which it was captured by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. It was part of the British Mandate of Palestine from 1919-1948.

**Zion:** Originally was the specific name given to a Jebusite fortress near modern-day Jerusalem that was conquered by David. The original fortress was located on the hill in southeastern Jerusalem, called Mount Zion. Mount Zion is also the modern name of a hill south of the Old City's Armenian Quarter — the result of a misnomer dating from the Middle Ages when pilgrims mistook the relatively large, flat summit for the original site of the City of David.

**Zionism, Christian:** An ideology among some Christians that the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, is in accordance with Biblical prophecy. This belief is primarily, though not exclusively, associated with Christian Dispensationalism, mainly in English-speaking countries outside Europe. Christian Zionists commonly believe that to bring about the second coming of Christ, the Jewish people must control all of Historical Israel and rebuild the temple so that they can perform sacrifices.

**Zionism, General:** Zionism can be understood as a national liberation movement, a political movement or an ideology that supports a homeland for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel (around Mount Zion), where the Jewish nation originated over 3,200 years ago and where Jewish kingdoms and self-governing states existed up to the 2nd century CE. While Zionism is based in part upon religious tradition linking the Jewish people to the Land of Israel, the modern movement was originally secular, beginning largely as a response to rampant anti-Semitism and persecution in Europe during the 19th century.

**Zionism, Labor:** This type of Zionism can be understood as more of a movement than a political party. It is seen as the traditional left wing of the Zionist ideology and was historically oriented towards the Jewish workers' movement. Unlike the "political Zionist" tendency founded by Theodor Herzl, Labor Zionists did not believe that a Jewish state would be created simply by appealing to the international

community or to a powerful nation such as Britain. Rather, they believed that a Jewish state could only be created as part of the class struggle through the efforts of the Jewish working class settling in Palestine and constructing a state through the creation of kibbutzim in the countryside and a Jewish proletariat in the cities. David Ben-Gurion became the leading figure within this movement and was elected as the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel.

**Zionism, Political:** A type of Zionism that believed the goals of Zionism would be best met through political channels and gaining *de jure* recognition.

**Zionism, Pragmatic:** A type of Zionism that believed the goals of Zionism would be best met by growing the “on the ground” population and gaining *de facto* recognition.

**Zionism, Redemptionist:** This type of Zionism is a Haredi response to the "three oaths" Haredim founded on the teachings of Rabbi Zvi Yehudah ha-Cohen Kook. Rabbi Kook believed that Zionism was not trying to force the hand of God and violating the "three oaths" but was instead being forced by the hand of God and so was free from the "three oaths." Rabbi Kook also had a very messianic orientation and saw the Jewish conquest of the land as helping bring about the coming of the Messiah. Subsequently, his followers have been against any return of lands obtained by Israel because they believe this is against the will of God.

**Zionism, Revisionist:** A Zionist political party founded by Ze'ev Jabotinsky. This party believed in a more militant Jewish population able to defend itself. Jabotinsky was also very upset at the Zionist Organization, formed at the First Zionist Congress, because he felt they were not aggressive enough in pursuing their stated goal of forming a Jewish homeland. Revisionists also wanted a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan, over the entire British Mandate. How this was to be done was a point of contention within the Revisionist camp. Jabotinsky wanted to go through the political channels of Britain while the more militaristic wings wanted to conquer the lands independent of Britain. These militaristic branches became known as the Irgun and Lehi. The Revisionist party, largely through Irgun, is the forerunner of the modern right-wing Israeli political party Likud.

**Zionism, "Three Oaths" Haredi anti-:** A religious Jewish ideology that claims Zionism is against the will of God because it is against the "three oaths." The "three oaths" are found in the Torah and state that: 1) Jews may not enter into Eretz Israel as a group using force; 2) Jews may not rebel against the nations of the world; and 3) Jews cannot rush the coming of the Messiah through their own means (even praying too much for the coming of the Messiah breaks this one). Some of these Jews still live in the State of Israel but do not recognize its authority.