

Zionism & Anti-Zionism: What They Mean Today

Before the founding of the State of Israel, Zionism referred to the political movement to re-establish Jewish sovereignty in some part of the historic Jewish homeland – known in the Bible as Zion.

Today, Zionism is defined as the movement for the self-determination for the Jewish people in their ancestral homeland, Israel. Like people of all nationalities, faiths, and ethnicities, Jewish people have the right to feel safe. Zionism, the establishment and continuation of the State of Israel, helps ensure that.

What makes someone a Zionist?

If you believe in the Jewish people's right to self-determination, the establishment of Israel and its continuing right to exist as a Jewish state – it means you're a Zionist. Being a Zionist does not mean that you can't criticize Israel or that you necessarily support all of Israel's governmental policies.

Anti-Zionism: What it is and isn't:

Anti-Zionism is a belief that opposes the Jewish people's right to self-determination and rejects it as a crucial aspect of Jewish identity. It is not just about criticism of Israel or Israeli policy – such as believing the West Bank should be part of a future Palestinian state.

What makes Anti-Zionism Antisemitic is?

The denial of Israel's right to exist.

Anti-Zionism promotes the belief that Israel should not be allowed to exist in any form and that the Jewish people do not have a historical connection to the land of Israel. Anti-Zionism also often includes threatening to destroy the State of Israel, or otherwise eliminate its Jewish character. Again, antisemitic.

Language or actions hold Israel to a different standard than other countries.

For example, Turkey and Northern Cyprus, China and Tibet, India and Kashmir, Georgia and South Ossetia, Morocco and Western Sahara constitute territorial disputes. However, the U.N., the International Court of Justice, and other states do not collectively launch apartheid, genocide, or ethnic cleansing accusations, even when factually appropriate.

And the international community has never called for the dismantling of these countries as sovereign nations. Only Israel has been singled out for elimination. Once again, antisemitic.

What can you do about rising anti-Zionism?

Continue to educate yourself and others. Begin having the conversation on what Zionism and anti-Zionism actually mean with your community and other faith and minority communities. And, stay tuned for further recommendations and actionable steps.

