



The following resolution herewith has been proposed by the following parties:

Natalie Pressmann (Queen’s University)
Blake Ziegler (University of Notre Dame)
Ben Barash (University of Pittsburgh)
Kyla Fonger (Northern Michigan University)
Shayna Schulman (University of Florida)
Noa Rayzman (Oregon State University)

Jewish on Campus supports the adoption of a formal definition of “Zionism”.

Resolution 5 Defining Zionism

Introduction

Jewish on Campus supports student-led efforts to combat antisemitism on university campuses. Unfortunately, current social movements, organizations, individuals, and student-led bodies (regardless of their relation to Israel or Jewish life) have wrongly defined Zionism to justify the spread of antisemitic rhetoric and violence. Examples include vandalism of Jewish property, such as [Mezuzot](#) being ripped off of Jewish students' doors at Tufts University, harassment faced by Jewish students, and exclusion of Jewish and Israeli students from social movements.

To combat the rise of antisemitism, Jewish on Campus ambassadors, from six university campuses, across North America have proposed adopting a formal definition of the term "Zionism." Although Zionism has been around for thousands of years, this proposal clarifies the term to prevent misuse of it. In addition, the proposal also highlights defining points that exemplify the nuance of Zionism.

Assumptions

This has been endorsed based off the following assumptions:

- I. Zionism and being a Zionist is nuanced: Zionism is interpreted in many forms. The belief that Zionism means one view of the state of Israel, in the history of its establishment, or its current policies is false.
- II. It is crucial to note that many institutions and individuals often refer to Jews using the term "Zionist" to sound less antisemitic when spreading antisemitic rhetoric. Some are under the impression that Zionism and Judaism are unrelated aspects of identity, which is false.
- III. As a result, it is essential to define Zionism and clarify the Jewish connection to it, to limit the use of Zionist as a scapegoat for antisemitic rhetoric.
- IV. Organizations, established and grassroots, have depicted Zionism as akin to "Nazi ideology." Some have gone as far as to call Zionists Nazis and white supremacists due to their flawed misconception of Zionist ideology.
- V. The harm in this language is that it is not only not productive but insulting to label Jews in the same category as those who attempted to eradicate them.
- VI. This language also falsely frames the Israel-Palestine conflict as a race-based one, between "white Jews and brown Palestinians." Moreover, this rhetoric uses the antisemitic trope of the powerful controlling, manipulative, and racist Jewish puppetmaster, controlling the world and the conflict to their own pleasing. Further, it does not acknowledge Israel's diverse population and respect of religious sites and worship other than Judaism.

- VII. These statements have been frequently used and further shared by social media users in order to change the narrative of the conflict. The nature of these comments is antisemitic for the following reasons. First, calling Jews Nazis, the very group and political ideology that attempted to destroy them through state-sanctioned and operated genocide, is false and harmful. The Nazis used the Nuremberg Race Laws.
- VIII. The actions of the state of Israel, such as offering aid to the Palestinian authority through cooperative policing and security initiatives and offering Covid-19 vaccines, bought by the State of Israel, are incomparable to the horrors the Nazis perpetrated against the Jewish People.
- IX. A substantial amount of young Jews, who identify as Zionists, are incredibly critical of actions carried out by the state of Israel. Some foremost activists against settlement building are born and raised Israelis. But most would never equate the state's actions to those of Nazi Germany.
- X. What makes these statements further antisemitic is putting Jewish people, including Israelis, some of whom are survivors or descendants of survivors, in the same category as their annihilators.
- XI. Moreover, this narrative is used to change the ideals of the conflict, and place Jews and Israel, as the Jewish state, as the controlling, evil, overarching figures responsible for the suffering of Palestinians and the continuous conflict. This plays into antisemitic Jewish stereotypes. It places Jews as the "puppeteers of all wrongdoing."
- XII. This definition does not serve as a political justification for a form of Zionism but rather as a benchmark that can be interpreted.
- XIII. Zionism can often be interpreted as not entailing the forced dissemination of non-Jews, nor does it advocate for genocidal actions. While more extremist Zionists exist, these are a minority. In the same way that political ideologies range, so does Zionism. Extremists break off groups of ideologies and do not represent the ideology and holders of said ideology. The same applies to Zionism.
- XIV. Most Jews want coexistence while a minority do not.
- XV. Israel is the formulation of political Zionism. The state itself has continued its tradition of allowing religious freedom.
- XVI. North American students have greater attention to indigeneity due to the continent's history of colonialism.
- XVII. Being a Zionist does not entail inscribing one clear and precise view of Israel.
- XVIII. Ideas on borders differ between Zionist Jews.
- XIX. Zionism does not mean you believe in one future environment of the State of Israel. Not all Zionists have the same beliefs.
- XX. The definition serves as a middle point/stasis point. It has nuances and different perspectives and formulations. Zionism is akin to political ideologies. There is a

range; if you are on the left side, you are not automatically a communist. If you favor right-wing policies, you are not automatically a Nazi.

- XXI. Being a Zionist does not mean supporting all of the actions of the Israeli government; it purely believes the Jews deserve to live in their homeland and therefore have autonomy and representation in their sovereign state.
- XXII. This proposal uses the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.
 - A. The legitimacy of this definition is not the purpose of this proposal. However, it is considered by many Jewish and non-Jewish students and the most prestigious Jewish organizations as the proper definition.
 - B. Therefore, its widespread approval by Jewish students and the community warrants its use as a basis for determining antisemitic behavior.
 - C. The definition states:
 - 1. “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”
 - D. To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:
 - 1. “Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits”.
- XXIII. Establishing a modern definition of Zionism will enforce a baseline for determining the difference between anti-Zionism and mere criticism of Israel.
 - A. In order to depict the intersection of anti-Zionism and antisemitism, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism will be utilized and referenced.

Articles

Article I: Proposed Definition of Zionism

- I. The proposed definition of Zionism encompasses former definitions from past and present political philosophers, such as Theodore Herzl, the founder of modern and political Zionism.
- II. The definition states the following:

- A. Zionism is a term describing the belief in Jewish self-determination in the land of current-day Israel, the indigenous land of the Jewish people. Zionism itself does not ascribe to a clear depiction of borders, relations with neighboring countries, or specific actions of the State of Israel. Instead, at its core, it believes that the state of Israel should exist as a homeland for the Jewish people. The political ramifications surrounding Zionism are separate from its core definition.
- III. Zionist is the term used to describe individuals who identify with Zionism and may include those who have a favorable view of Israel.
 - A. As a demonstration of the cultural and anthropological ties between the land of Israel and Judaism, [Cambridge University](#) revealed that “95% of American Jews had a ‘favorable’ view of Israel”.
 - B. The current and past antisemitism, ethnic cleansing, and genocide faced by Jewish communities around the world, such as during the Holocaust in Europe and the Farhud in Iraq. Jews understand the importance of Israel because of their experiences and familiar history of the consequences of what happens when a haven for Jews does not exist.
- IV. There are many forms of Zionism. Religious Zionism is an ideology that combines Zionism and Orthodox Judaism. It is the belief that Jewish scripture justifies the Jewish return to their eternal homeland of Eretz Israel.
- V. [Political Zionism](#) is the belief in establishing a formal political state in the land of Eretz Israel, governed by Jewish values.

Article II: Reasoning Behind Usage of Proposed Definition of Zionism

- I. Firstly, as established previously, the concept of Zionism is unique to Judaism.
 - A. Religious Zionism has been founded in texts that existed before those from other religions. Moreover, in the Jewish Texts, Israel is used interchangeably between the land beyond Jerusalem and the Jewish people themselves. Zion is used to refer to Israel, but also Jews as a whole. Judaism explicitly states the importance of Jerusalem and how its holiness cannot be replicated anywhere else.
- II. Moreover, Jewish texts stipulate that Israel, beyond Jerusalem, is holy as well. Despite the origins of Religious Zionism, Political Zionism is unique to Jews.
- III. Zion also refers to Israel and the Jews as a people.
- IV. The word Zionism was created for the Jews.
 - A. Although non-Jews can identify as Zionists, Jews are mostly affected by the rhetoric surrounding them. Efforts to dismantle Zionism are, in turn, efforts to dismantle the only Jewish state and, therefore, sole self-governing region by the Jewish people.
- V. Anti- Zionism opposes the Jewish right to self-determination, which all people have per the [United Nations](#).

- A. Anti-Zionist rhetoric and the reframing of Zionism are used to harm Jews.
- B. Therefore, those affected by false definitions of Zionism are Jews, and they shall be the ones to determine its true meaning.
- C. The definition of Zionism is broad to encompass the different interpretations held by Jews on its execution.

Article III: Implementation of this Definition of Zionism

- I. Determine if efforts to support a proposal by the ambassador should be anonymous.
 - A. Suppose there is an extreme risk of harm, harassment, or discrimination, whether academic, social, or physical; consider organizing anonymously.
 - 1. This includes the establishment of anonymous Jewish students, and allies, in support of the proposal.
 - B. It should be up to the discretion of ambassadors if their names will be published alongside.
- II. Establish support by Jewish and non-Jewish figures alike.
- III. Have a dialogue with local Jewish organizations regarding the adoption of said proposal.
 - A. Examples include Local Hillel, Chabad, nearby Synagogue, members of Jewish studies faculty, or outspoken Jewish professors.
- IV. Attempt to have solidarity with non-Jewish campus leaders to promote coexistence, partnerships, and ease attempts of adoption by student body governments.
- V. Partake in meetings (casual and one-on-one) with leaders in campus Jewish life.
 - A. Discuss the importance of said proposal in both Jewish life and your own. Be patient, listen and try to dispel myths about Zionism in an understanding manner. Most individuals are simply ignorant and uninformed.
 - B. Try to form relationships with student leaders so it is easier to understand your perspective as a Jewish student. Try to be patient and kind. It may be constructive to reach out to students in political organizations.
 - C. Make efforts to inform Jewish students of said proposal to gather support.
- VI. Speak to Jewish leaders on campus, particularly those involved in Student Government.
 - A. Attempt to have the proposal adopted by the student body government.
- VII. Contact faculty that may support the proposal.
 - A. It is best to check if said faculty member has publicly shown support for anti-Zionist or anti-Israel efforts, such as BDS or academic boycotts of the state of Israel.
- VIII. Share proposal with other university-sanctioned bodies, including, but not limited to:

- A. Inter-faculty governing bodies, alumni boards, donor and foundation chairs, as well as any open floor body that regulates and impacts student and alumni life.

Article IV: Benefits of Adopting this Definition of Zionism

- I. Creates a more straightforward depiction and characterization of Zionism, which is often falsely depicted to permit antisemitic actions.
- II. Clarifying Zionism provides a better opportunity for a legitimate critique of the actions of the state of Israel rather than the fundamental existence of the state itself.
- III. Currently, “Zionist” is often used as a negative term. In particular, it is used against Jewish students. Current misconceptions of Zionism have led to the rise of false narratives surrounding its meaning. As a result, the term “Zionist,” which is an individual in favour of Zionism, is used as an insult.
 - A. Creating and adopting a clear definition of Zionism will de-stigmatize the word “Zionist” and halt its use as an insult.
- IV. Students can understand and potentially destigmatize the term “Zionist”.
- V. Potentially, discriminatory actions against “Zionists” may become limited because of an understanding of the term.
- VI. Understanding the term “Zionism” leads to more productive conversations about the topic.

Article V: Potential Obstacles

- I. Engaging Jewish organizations may be complex.
 - A. Some campuses’ Hillels are less politically engaged and try to remain as neutral as possible.
 - B. Some campuses do not even have a Hillel.
- II. Finding Jewish students may also be challenging.
 - A. Some campuses may have a considerable Jewish population but are not engaged with Israel and fighting antisemitism.
 - B. Others may have a considerably small population.
- III. Finding outspoken Jewish faculty members may be difficult.
- IV. Student groups, such as the student government, may attempt to block measures to pass the resolution.
- V. There is increasing controversy regarding Israel. People may disagree with its politics, existence, or expansion.
- VI. People have different definitions of Zionism, even within the Jewish community.
 - A. As a result, some people may not accept our definition.
- VII. Fringe voices within the Jewish population and groups such as Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) showcase a vocal anti-Zionist minority.

- A. These groups may cause a misinterpretation of the Jewish community's definition of Zionism to the general public.

Article VI: Solutions to Potential Obstacles

- I. It may be beneficial to appeal to a local Jewish organization in this scenario.
 - A. For example, a Chabad, a nearby synagogue, or a UJA organization.
- II. Find Jewish professors or non-Jewish professors who have not signed pro-BDS statements or anti-IHRA petitions.
 - A. If finding faculty is not feasible, utilize student publications (such as the school's newspaper) to formalize your position, and explain the benefits of the resolution.
 - B. It may also be crucial to contact Jewish On Campus' journalism team to pitch an article.
- III. When facing discrimination to appeal to faculty, use documents that outline students' behavior, such as a constitution for student government or official rules outlining discrimination from the university.
- IV. Effectively show which rights were infringed upon and how the discrimination faced is not in line with the values enshrined in the campus's rules.
- V. Attempt to explain why exactly Zionism is important. This may be beneficial in humanizing the conflict.

Conclusion

It is necessary to define Zionism to protect Jewish students. Zionism is the belief in the right of Jews to self-determination in their ancestral homeland and has been a core Jewish value for thousands of years. Therefore, it is a term that should be defined by Jews and Jews only. Antisemitic groups and individuals have falsely depicted Zionism to permit antisemitic beliefs. Furthermore, people have often chosen not to represent the nuance of Zionism even though Zionism itself is a nuanced ideology. Understanding the nuances of Zionism can reduce its misinterpretation. It is also important to note that many ideas, premised on anti-Zionism, are based on false depictions of the term. Creating a clear concept allows for understanding it and the prevention of antisemitic and anti-Zionist beliefs.

Voting

23 Ambassadors voted "yea." 0 voted "nay." 1 abstained. 5 were not present. Voting occurred on 02/06/2022.

Representative of American Musical and
Dramatic Academy, **Yea**

Representative of Barnard College/List
College, **Yea**

Representative of Binghamton
University, **Absent**

Representative of Boston University,
Yea

Representative of Brandeis University,
Yea

Representative of California State
University (Long Beach), **Yea**

Representative of Duke University, **Yea**

Representative of Georgia Institute of
Technology, **Yea**

Representative of Middlebury College,
Absent

Representative of Northwestern
University, **Yea**

Representative of Oregon State
University, **Yea**

Representative of Queen's University,
Yea

Representative of Ryerson University,
Absent

Representative of Stanford University,
Absent

Representative of Tufts University, **Yea**

Representative of University at Buffalo,
Yea

Representative of University of
California (San Diego), **Yea**

Representative of University of Chicago,
Yea

Representative of University of Florida,
Yea

Representative of University of
Michigan, **Yea**

Representative of University of Notre
Dame, **Yea**

Representative of University of
Pittsburgh, **Yea**

Representative of University of
Vermont, **Yea**

Representative of Vanderbilt University,
Yea

Representative of Vassar College, **Yea**

Representative of Wake Forest
University, **Absent**

Representative of Washington
University in St. Louis, **Yea**

Representative of West Virginia
University, **Yea**

Representative of Western Washington
University, **Abstain**

Approval

Approved by Rosemarie Goldstein and Hannah Siegel (Co-Presidents) 02.06.2022

Approved by Ruthy Attias, Ambassador Coordinator 02.06.2022

Approved by Jewish on Campus 02.06.2022