Debunking Zeteo's Article "Conflating Jews with Israel Is Dangerous"

Responding to a number of fallacious claims made in this liberal Zionist apologetics piece by Mehdi Hasan's Zeteo publication

By **Tariq Acknickulous** · Originally published August 29, 2026 on *Acknickulous Substack*
https://tariqacknickulous.substack.com/p/debunking-zeteos-article-conflating

Yesterday, British-American "leftist" media company Zeteo published a Substack article titled "*Conflating Jews with Israel Is Dangerous – Whether by Antisemites, U.S. Politicians, or the Israeli State.*" As expected from a Mehdi Hasan publication, it is a masterclass in philosemitic, liberal Zionist apologetics.

Almost three years into a genocide led by the "Jewish state," for Jews, with the support of the vast majority of Jews worldwide, Zeteo's article is yet another piece of free PR for the perpetrator group. It is a cynical attempt to police discourse by weaponizing the charge of "conflation" while systematically misrepresenting Jewish public opinion.

I started this as a simple reply note, but there is just so much wrong here that it warranted a full article-length response.

zeteo

Conflating Jews with Israel Is Dangerous – Whether by Antisemites, U.S. Politicians, or the Israeli State

Amid the outrage over Hasan Piker's remarks, a Jewish professor of Israel studies at UCLA argues that it's important to acknowledge how Israel's actions fuel a lot of the anger directed at Jews.



DOV WAXMAN
AUG 28, 2026

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A pro-Palestine march in Melbourne, Australia, Aug. 3, 2025. Photo by Michael Currie/ SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images

There are a number of bizarre and downright completely false claims made in this article. It states:

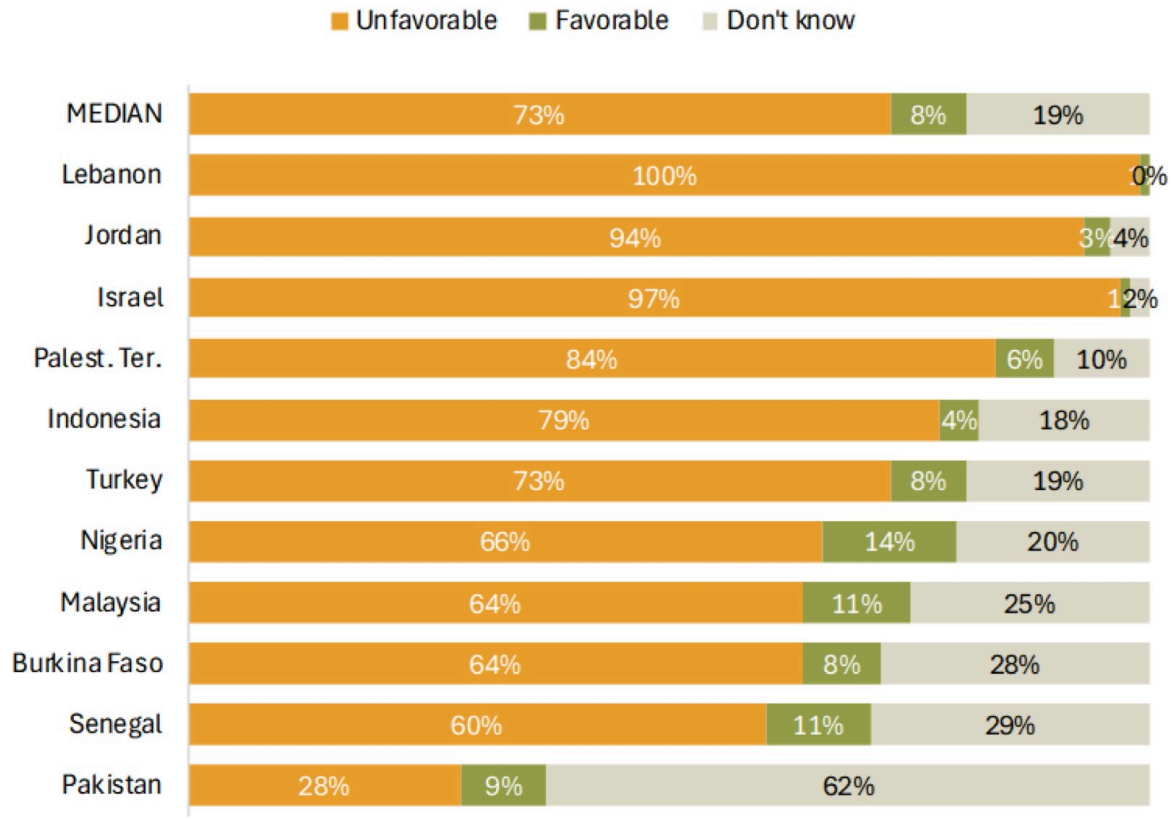
> Although Israel's flag is prominently displayed in many synagogues outside Israel, this does not make the flag itself a religious object (nor does the presence of an Israeli flag in a synagogue, typically alongside an American flag, make the synagogue an Israeli institution). To characterize the flag of Israel as a Jewish object because it has a Star of David on it conflates Judaism with Zionism and the Jewish people with the Israeli state.

Aside from the fact that there are only four synagogues in the U.S. who have publicly taken an anti-Zionist political stance out of over 3,800, tons of synagogues not only directly send money to Israel, but also to the IDF and help recruit soldiers abroad. Having Israeli flags might not technically make a place a *literal* "Israeli institution"—as in an arm of the Israeli government or an Israeli corporation—but it *absolutely* makes it a pro-Israel, Zionist institution and *that* is the actual problem. If an institution in the U.S. had the flag of Nazi Germany displayed, no one would play these stupid semantic games or be doubtful if that was a White supremacist institution at the very least. Only Jewish supremacists enjoy this ridiculous level of mental gymnastics and excuse-making. Over 99% of American synagogues are factually Zionist. The presence of the Israeli flag is merely a symbol of an institutional reality the article refuses to acknowledge.

The article goes on to compare ISIS to Israel, but of course as always it needs to be pointed out that ISIS never had popular support among Muslims, as opposed to Israel among Jews. Pew Research polls from 2015 showed less than 8% positive views of ISIS among Muslims in multiple countries. The primary victims of ISIS were Muslims and the primary defeaters of ISIS were Muslims. Conversely, to this day, Jewish support for Israel worldwide remains well over 80%, almost 3 years into a genocide, and no Jew has ever picked up arms against Israel and joined the Palestinian resistance.

Views of ISIS Overwhelmingly Negative

Do you have a ____ opinion of the Islamic militant group in Iraq and Syria known as ISIS?



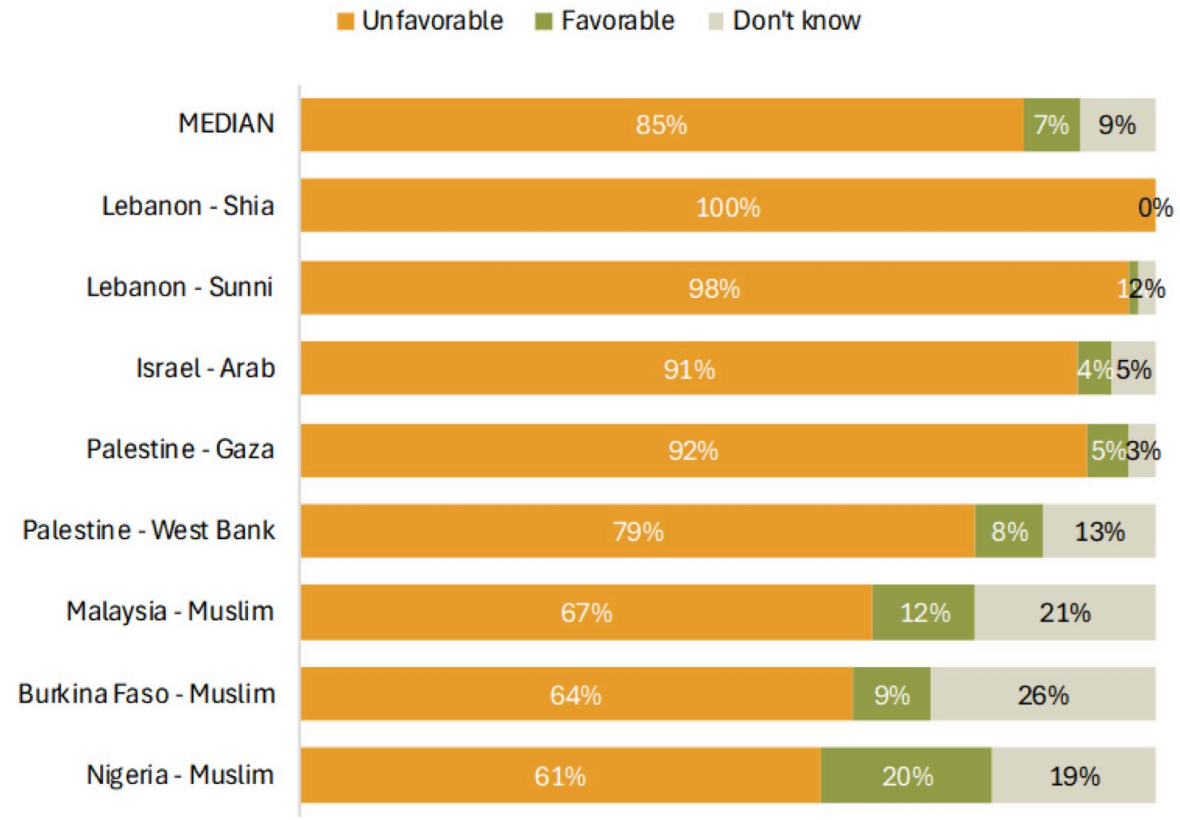
Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%.

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q12n.

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Views of ISIS by religion, Ethnicity and Region

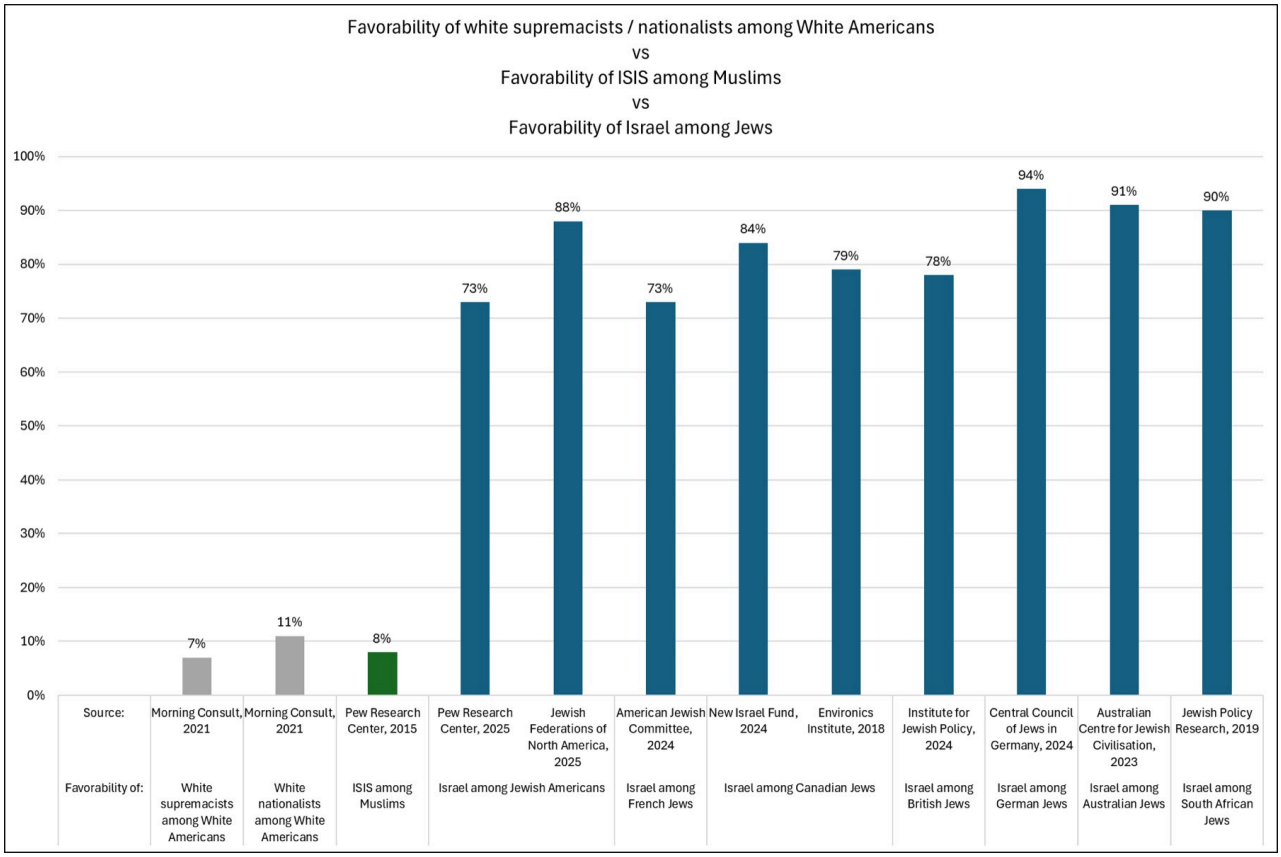
Do you have a ____ opinion of the Islamic militant group in Iraq and Syria known as ISIS?

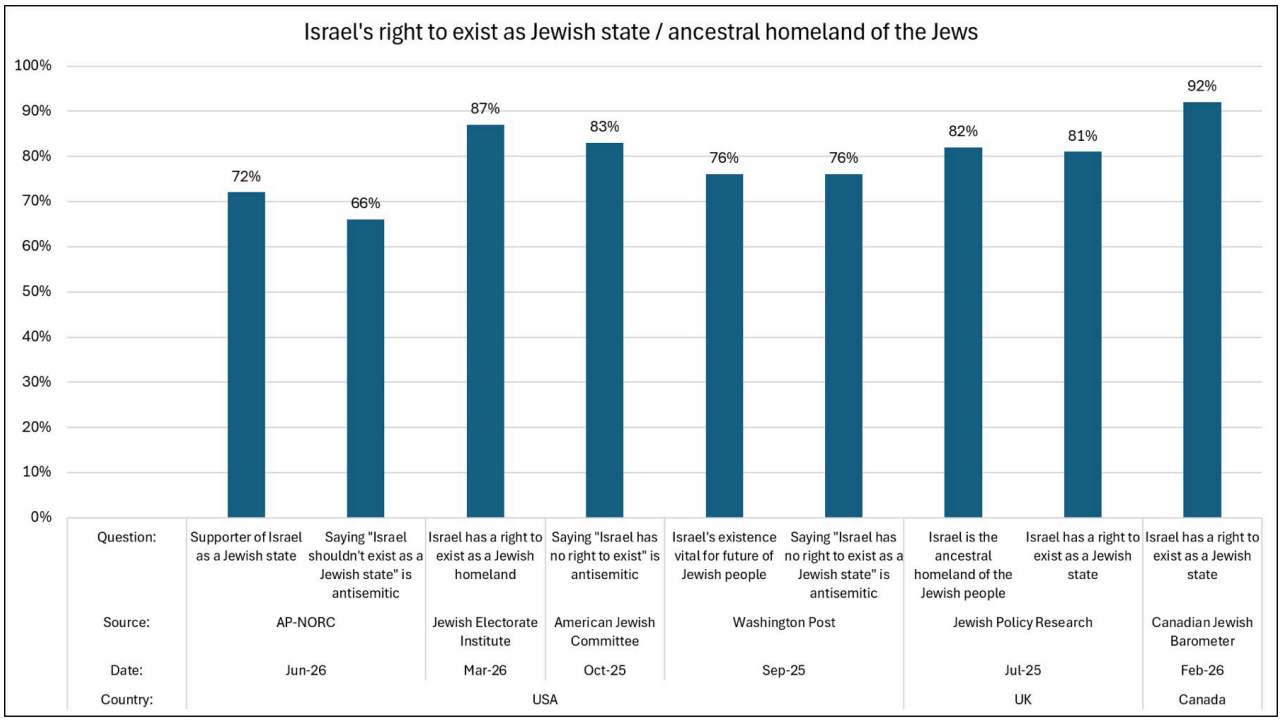


Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%.

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q12n.

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The article goes on to state:

> Another factor is that people mistakenly believe that Muslims support Jihadist groups and that Jews support Israel. Some do, but many do not. Although the Islamic State claims to act on behalf of all Muslims, surveys show that most Muslims do not support the Islamic State terrorist group. Similarly, Israel claims to act on behalf of all Jews, but surveys show that most American Jews do not support the actions and policies of the Israeli government and army, particularly towards Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (to be clear, I am not equating these actions with those of the Islamic State).

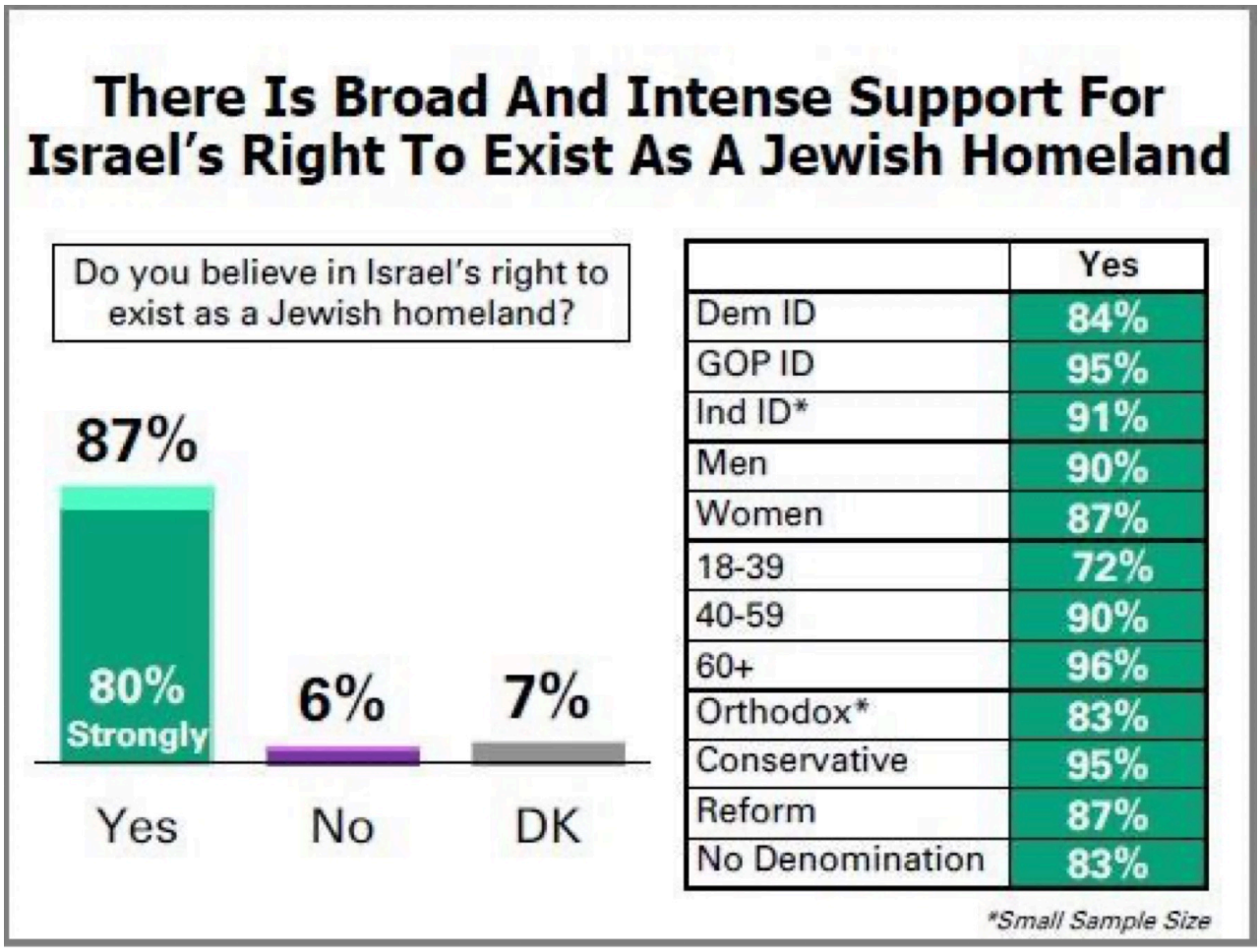
Notice the extremely sneaky sleight of hand here. For Muslims, they *"do not support the Islamic State terrorist group,"* but for Jews, they *"do not support the actions and policies of the Israeli government and army, particularly towards Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip."* For Muslims, it's complete denunciation of ISIS as a whole, but for Jews, it's just some select actions of the Israeli government, not Israel as a whole. That's because every single poll ever of any group of Jews shows they fundamentally support Israel as a Jewish state, no matter how much they claim to hate the actions of the government.

There are polling numbers quoted and justifications given for them in this article, and this is where it becomes complete bullshit. As mentioned in the previous quote and onward:

> Similarly, Israel claims to act on behalf of all Jews, but surveys show that most American Jews do not support the actions and policies of the Israeli government and army, particularly towards Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip [...] For example, in a 2025 *Washington Post* survey, 61% of American Jews said that Israel committed war crimes against Palestinians in Gaza, and 40% thought that Israel had committed genocide.

The first poll that claims that most American Jews do not support the actions of the Israeli government is by the Jewish Electorate Institute from March 2026. Those same rounds of polls also show that:

- 86% of American Jews describe themselves as pro-Israel
- 87% believe in Israel's right to exist as a Jewish homeland; 80% strongly agree
- 71% have a favorable view of Israel



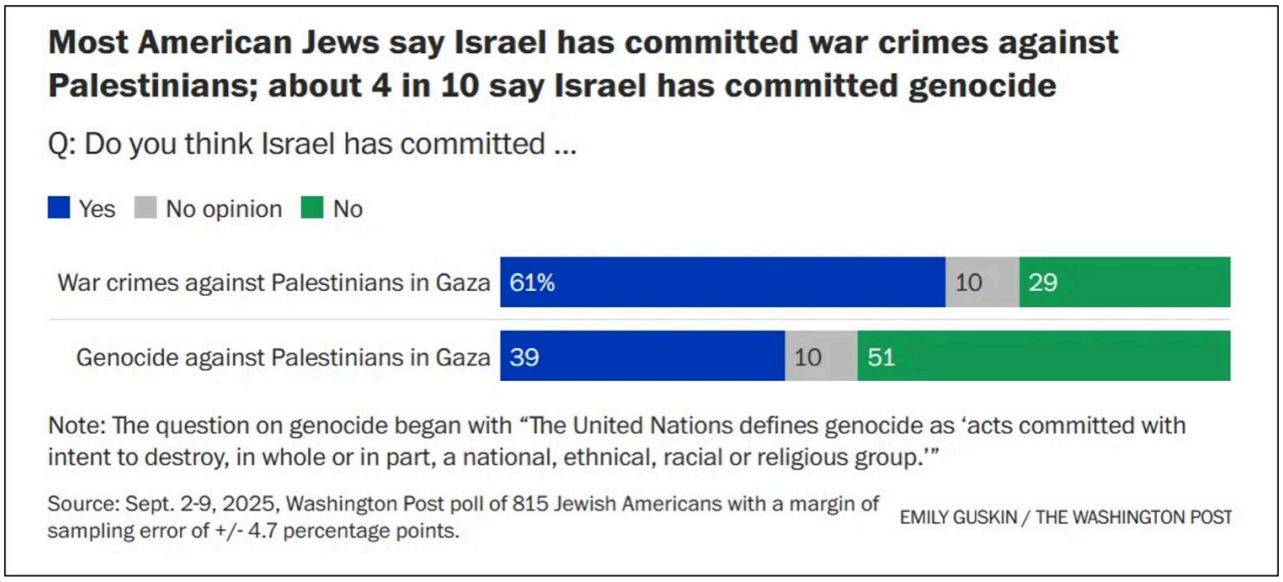
The idea that someone being critical of the actions of a country's government makes them against the entire concept and ideology of that country is obviously ridiculous. Israelis themselves are just as critical of their government as other people. That doesn't make them any less Zionist. The U.S. government consistently has extremely low ratings among Americans. That alone doesn't mean anything.

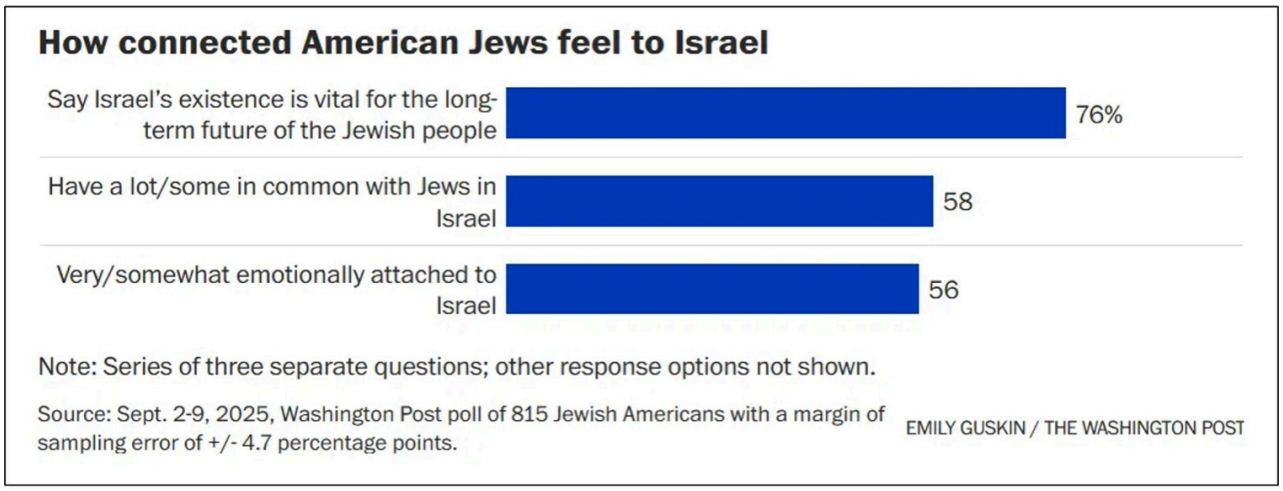
The second poll quoted is from the Washington Post done in September 2025. That same survey shows:

- 76% of American Jews believe Israel's existence is vital for a long-term future of the Jewish people
- 76% believe saying 'Israel doesn't have a right to exist as a Jewish state' is antisemitic
- More American Jews say Israel has not committed genocide (51%) than it has (39%)
- 59% support U.S. sending more military aid to Israel (compared to 32% of all U.S. adults)

- 68% believe Hamas is to blame more for deaths of civilians in Gaza by “starting the war and operating in civilian areas” compared to only 32% who believe Israel’s military is to blame for “bombing buildings where civilians live and work”
- 80% are concerned for the safety of Israeli soldiers in Gaza
- Only 32% believe the U.S. is too supportive of Israel

The idea ‘only 40% of American Jews admit the Gaza genocide is a genocide’ is something worth bragging about to defend Jews rather than an alarmingly disturbing fact is baffling.







Following that, the article states:

> This effectively encourages non-Jews to believe that all, or at least the overwhelming majority of, Jews support what Israel does and identify as Zionists. However, surveys indicate that this is not the case. For example, in a June 2026 national survey of Jewish

> Americans, only 36% said that "supporting Israel" is important to their Jewish identity (whereas 73% said that "remembering the Holocaust" was, and 43% said "celebrating Jewish holidays"). In another survey of American Jews conducted in March 2026, 87% believed in "Israel's right to exist as a Jewish homeland," but only a third (34%) actually considered themselves Zionists, while nearly half (48%) said they were not Zionists and another 17% were unsure

The first survey mentioned in this paragraph is the June 2026 AP-NORC poll. The same poll shows that:

- 72% of American Jews say 'supporter of Israel as a Jewish state' describes them well; 50% say 'extremely/very well'
- 63% say supporting Israel is important to their Jewish identity
- 73% say Israel's immediate military response to Hamas' attack is justified; 79% say Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 was not justified
- More American Jews say Israel has not committed genocide (49%) than it has (30%)
- 66% think saying "Israel shouldn't exist as a Jewish state"‟ is antisemitic

Notice how the Zeteo article lies about the figure of *"only 36% said that "supporting Israel" is important to their Jewish identity;"* they only include *extremely important* (19%) and *very important* (18%) but omit *somewhat important* (26%), which comes to a total of 63% not 36%.

If Jewish:
JEWISH3. How important are each of the following to your Jewish identity?

[GRID ITEMS RANDOMIZED; HALF SAMPLE ASKED RESPONSE OPTIONS IN REVERSE ORDER]

AP-NORC 06/11-17/2026	**Extremely/very important NET**	Extremely important	Very important	**Somewhat important**	**Not very/not important at all NET**	Not very important	Not important at all	DK	SKP/REF
Supporting Israel	**36**	19	18	**26**	**37**	15	22	-	2
Observing Jewish law	**19**	8	11	**23**	**57**	22	35	-	1
Celebrating Jewish holidays	**43**	20	24	**24**	**31**	15	15	-	2
Remembering the Holocaust	**73**	47	26	**17**	**8**	5	3	-	2
Volunteering or donating to charity	**33**	15	18	**30**	**35**	16	19	-	2
Avoiding certain foods like pork or shellfish	**17**	10	7	**12**	**69**	15	54	-	1
Celebrating or marking Shabbat	**23**	12	11	**23**	**53**	19	34	-	1
Wearing clothing or accessories that are distinctively Jewish, such as a kippah or a star of David	**16**	9	7	**17**	**66**	22	45	-	1

N=1,022

The second survey mentioned again is the March 2026 Jewish Electorate Institute poll which the article here is honest enough to admit that 87% of American Jews believe in "Israel's right to exist as a Jewish homeland," despite only 34% of them considering themselves Zionists. This just shows that the label "Zionist" has become toxic, yet as the number show right there—87% of them *are* Zionists because the definition of Zionism is the believe in Israel as a Jewish state. Again, this is just a baffling admission.

The article ends with the following paragraph:

> I am not advocating, as Hasan Piker recently did, that Jews living outside Israel should disassociate themselves from Israel in order to be safe. Jews are entitled to have an attachment to Israel. What I am advocating is the need to draw distinctions between Jews and Israel and between Judaism and Zionism. Blurring these distinctions, as Judge

> McFadden did in his recent ruling and as Jewish establishment organizations and the Israeli state do, does not protect Jews; it endangers them.

This is nothing but blatant acceptance, legitimization of Zionism and a contradiction. The author states that Jews worldwide are entitled to have an attachment to Israel and should not dissociate themselves from Israel, yet we must avoid associating Jews with Israel. This is ridiculous nonsense. As even the polls cited in this article state that almost 90% of Jews in America believe in Israel as a Jewish state, which factually makes them Zionists—this is the vast majority. If 90% or even less of any other group of people openly supported an ethnostate, absolutely no one would be wasting their time playing defense for that group. During WWII, no one complained about "conflating Germans with Nazis," or "conflating white people with apartheid" in South Africa. In every other case, no one is afraid to name the perpetrator group, only for Jews.

It cannot be stressed enough, the people who are "conflating Jews with Israel" are not just "Antisemites, U.S. Politicians, or the Israeli State" as the article title claims—it's also the vast majority of Jews worldwide as shown in poll after poll after poll after poll after poll. So why speak over Jews when they have already spoken so loudly and clearly? Why does the "pro-Palestine" movement spend so much time and energy doing free PR for a factually largely Zionist demographic?

About the author: Dov Waxman

I'm putting this at the end because I don't want the above arguments and facts to seem like they're clouded by my thoughts on the author, Dov Waxman. I had initially just assumed Mehdi Hasan had wrote the article.

I've never heard of this guy before today. He's a British-American Jewish professor of "Israel Studies" at UCLA who focuses on Israel-Palestine and "antisemitism." In this Substack article and his website, Waxman describes himself as the "Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation Chair of Israel Studies." This foundation is a proudly Zionist organization that donates millions of dollars a year to Israel-related projects and organizations. Their website states:

> In Israel, the Foundation is focused on education/college access as well as economic/workforce development to help disadvantaged communities improve their lives both economically and socially. To strengthen all of Israel, the Foundation recognizes the need to support all populations, including secular and Orthodox Jews, Ethiopian-Israelis, Christians, Arabs and Bedouins.

***Dov Waxman** is the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation Professor of Israel Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He is also an honorary research fellow at the Birkbeck Institute for the Study of Antisemitism.*

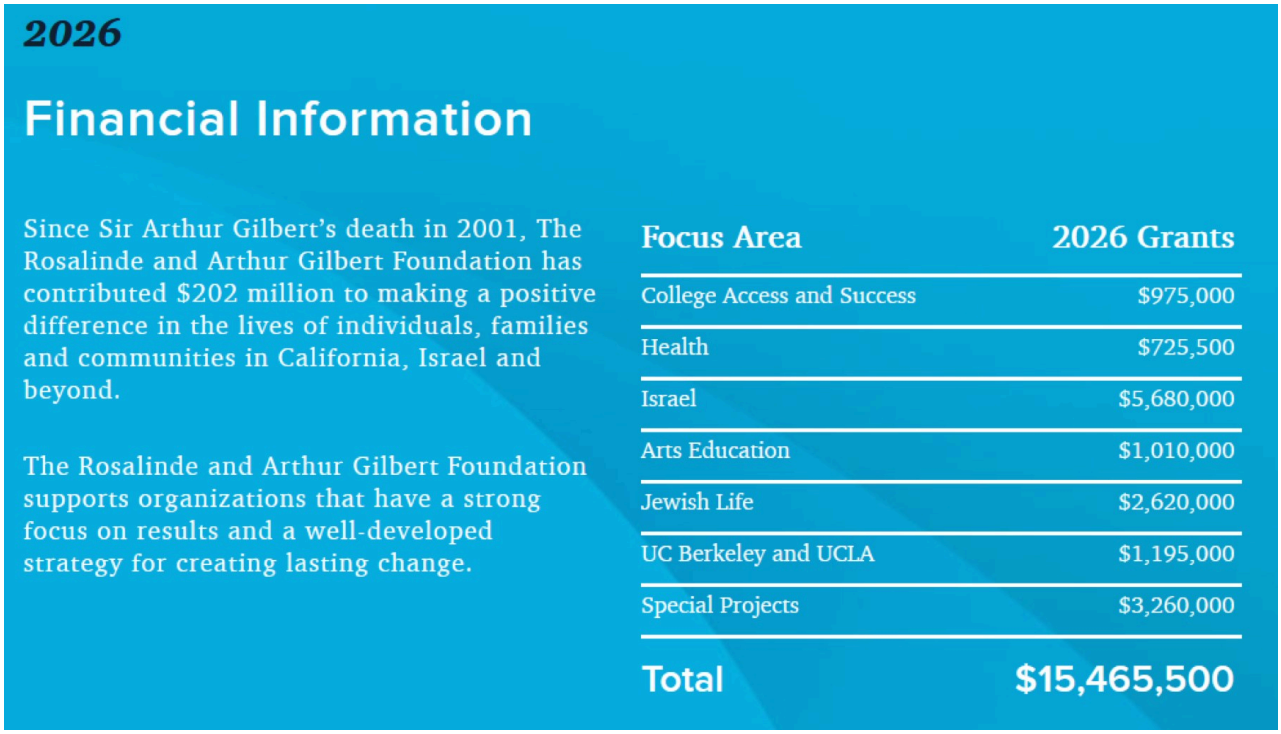


Dov Waxman is the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation Chair of Israel Studies at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). His research focuses on the conflict over Israel-Palestine, Israeli politics and foreign policy, U.S.-Israel relations, American Jewry's relationship with Israel, Jewish politics, and contemporary antisemitism. He frequently gives media interviews and public talks on these topics.

The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation has raised $5.7 million in grants in 2026 so far alone to Israel-related work. Some of the recipients of the grant money include (to name a few):

- AIPAC
- Jewish National Fund
- Magen David Adom (an auxiliary arm of the IDF)
- United Hatzalah (also works alongside the IDF)

- American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
- Israel Democracy Institute
- Israel Policy Forum
- RAND Corporation
- Yad Vashem



Waxman is also a former director of the UCLA Y&S Nazarian Center for Israel Studies, a Zionist organization funded by the Younes & Soraya Nazarian Family Foundation which also gives money to Israel-related work. As stated on their website:

> The Younes & Soraya Nazarian Center for Israel Studies promotes the study of the history, culture and society of Israel as a modern Jewish and democratic state.

The first search result for Waxman leads to a Medium article he wrote on August 2025 titled *"Why I changed my mind on the genocide charge against Israel"*.

Why I changed my mind on the genocide charge against Israel

4 min read · Aug 1, 2025



Dov Waxman Follow

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In the first paragraph of the article, Waxman says:

> For the past 21 months of horrific violence and heartbreaking suffering in the Gaza Strip, I've been wrestling with the contentious question of whether Israel is committing the crime of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. I initially rejected the genocide charge, but I have changed my mind.

On October 30, 2023, he penned an article publicly denying the charge of genocide in Gaza and only came to finally admit it as such years later as he states that "it has been a long and emotionally difficult process over the past 22 months of horrific violence and heartbreaking suffering in Gaza for me to conclude that Israel is guilty of genocide."

Despite this pathetic fact, in his Medium article he *still* places blame on the Palestinian resistance for the genocide and destruction of Gaza:

> It seems indisputable that Israel is responsible, directly or indirectly, for a huge number of civilian deaths and immense human suffering in Gaza, and that Israel has deliberately made much of the territory uninhabitable (I also blame Hamas for causing so much death and destruction in Gaza).

An academic whose position is underwritten by a major Zionist donor, who was a genocide denier for years, is now being platformed by a "leftist" outlet to lecture us about the dangers of "conflating Jews with Israel," painting Jews as victims of Zionism. Almost three years into a Jewish-led and supported genocide, and the focus remains on the feelings and image of the perpetrator group.

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