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NEW ESSAYS ON ZIONISM

Edited by

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and Michael B. Oren

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FOREWORD

THOUGH JEWS HAVE ALWAYS lived in their historical homeland, it was not until the second half of the 20th century that a large part of the Jewish people returned to settle in the land of Israel. There they built major cities—Tel Aviv, Haifa, Beersheva, and Jerusalem—a social and economic infrastructure, national institutions of culture and education, and a democratic system of government. They also built a sovereign state, the State of Israel, created in 1948 and subsequently recognized by most nations of the world. Today, Israel is home to the world's largest Jewish community. It maintains a vibrant, free press, a diverse and dynamic culture, and a powerful citizen army. After two thousand years of statelessness, the Jewish people have achieved a vital national home.

Should this state exist? Does this small, precariously positioned Jewish state have a moral, political, or religious significance that can justify the hardship involved in maintaining it, in defending it? And if it has such significance, is this something that can speak to non-Jews as well, or is it a matter of concern only to Jews?

There was a time when such questions seemed pressing. Throughout the 19th century, the idea of a Jewish state was invoked time and again,

