On Questioning the Jewish State

- To understand - Analysis and debate -

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I was raised in a religious Jewish environment, and though we were not strongly Zionist, I always took it to be self-evident that "Israel has a right to exist." Now anyone who has debated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will have encountered this phrase often. Defenders of Israeli policies routinely accuse Israel's critics of denying her right to exist, while the critics (outside of a small group on the left, where I now find myself) bend over backward to insist that, despite their criticisms, of course they affirm it. The general mainstream consensus seems to be that to deny Israel's right to exist is a clear indication of anti-Semitism (a charge Jews like myself are not immune to), and therefore not an option for people of conscience.