

Chants and Symbols of the Antizionist Movement

Chants and symbols featured in pro-Palestinian protests are deeply polarizing linguistic and visual tools highly effective at capturing public attention. These chants and symbols do not just demand policy changes, but compress centuries of complex history, trauma, and political aspirations into easily digestible and emotionally charged words and visuals.

In K-12 environments, these chants and symbols are of particular concern. Unlike universities, where adults have the freedom to opt out, K-12 schools are compulsory spaces where minors can neither escape nor always have the background knowledge to accurately evaluate contentious content.

The following are a selection of common chants and visual symbols and the disruptive impact they may have on the school environment.

CHANTS

From the River to the Sea

A call to replace the Jewish state with a Palestinian Arab state from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, thereby including the entire land of Israel. The chant is an existential threat, a call to ethnically cleanse the land of Israel of its Jewish inhabitants, and a direct endorsement of violence.

Globalize the Intifada/Long Live the Intifada

The second intifada, Arabic for “uprising,” from 2000 to 2005 – a relentless Palestinian campaign of suicide bombings, stabbings, and shootings that killed over 1,000 Israelis and foreign visitors, mostly civilians – was a period marked by intense trauma and civilian bloodshed. These chants are a literal directive to export that model of violence against civilian targets worldwide, including Jewish institutions. As such, diaspora Jews see such chants as explicit threats to their safety.

Free Free Palestine

Because it is frequently chanted in tandem with, or as a prelude to, “from the river to the sea,” Free, Free Palestine is a call for the complete erasure of Israel, rather than for a Palestinian state alongside it. Like the chant “Globalize the Intifada,” this slogan crosses the line from legitimate criticism of Israeli government policy into rhetoric that justifies violence against Israelis and seeks the destruction of the Jewish nation-state.

End the Occupation

While this phrase may appear to be a benign call for peace, many Palestinians, including extremist elements like Hamas, explicitly date the “occupation” to Israel’s creation in 1948. Consequently, the use of this phrase is not a mere critique of Israeli security control over lands won in the 1967 war but, rather, rhetorical camouflage for the erasure of sovereign Israel from the map.

Decolonize Palestine

The term “decolonize” infuses the Palestinian cause with moral urgency, framing support for Palestine as a mandatory act of global justice against Western imperialism. Jews, however, have a 3,000-year continuous connection to the land, and Jewish immigrants arrived as refugees fleeing persecution, not as expansionist agents of an imperial mother country. Over half of Israeli Jews are of Middle Eastern or North African descent. “Decolonization” implies the violent expulsion of the “colonizers,” raising acute fears of the mass ethnic cleansing of Israeli Jews.

Resistance is Justified When People are Occupied

In the wake of Hamas’s October 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel, this slogan is frequently invoked at rallies to excuse, legitimize, or openly celebrate acts of terrorism, including the deliberate slaughter, rape, and kidnapping of Israeli civilians. Calling the massacre of innocents “justified resistance” is morally repugnant and attempts to legitimize atrocities under the guise of human rights.

CHANTS

End the Siege

Pro-Palestinian protestors argue that restrictions imposed on Gaza by Israel (and Egypt) after Hamas's takeover of the area in 2007 constitute collective punishment. However, the slogan ignores the security context that makes the restrictions necessary. Unconditionally ending the restrictions would allow Hamas, an internationally designated terrorist organization, to freely import weapons, directly endangering Israeli citizens and the lives of Gazans themselves.

Antizionism is not Antisemitism

Pro-Palestinian activists argue that they are not targeting Jews as a religious or racial minority like the medieval Church or Nazis did, respectively. Rather, antizionists recast Jews as hyper-white, racist, genocidal colonizers using the language of social justice. Antizionists draw upon Soviet antizionism which framed anti-Jewish hatred in the language of anti-imperialism during the Cold War and the Arab nationalist and Islamist movements which framed Jewish statehood as colonialism. Antizionist rhetoric uses ancient and medieval anti-Jewish tropes, such as blood libels and global conspiracies, for the purpose of justifying the elimination of the only Jewish state and normalizing campaigns to isolate Jews worldwide.

SYMBOLS



Keffiyeh: The keffiyeh has been adopted globally as an expression of support for the Palestinian cause. Routinely worn by former Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat, it gained popularity with terrorists, has been appropriated by protestors to conceal their faces, and has resulted in its now unavoidable association with terrorism and anti-Jewish extremism.



Watermelon: Sharing the colors of the Palestinian flag, the watermelon emerged as a proxy to bypass Israel's 1967 temporary Palestinian flag ban.

When drawn in the geographic shape of the Israeli map, it denies Israel's right to exist, fostering a climate of exclusion and violence. Digitally, the emoji functions as an encrypted tool to evade content moderation filters designed to flag hate speech, harassment, and propaganda.



Inverted Red Triangle: Mirroring the shape on the Palestinian flag, the inverted red triangle represents resistance and militancy. Often appearing in Hamas videos as a target-

marker, it is an explicit glorification of terrorism, given its use in vandalism to intimidate Jewish institutions and persons outside the Middle East. In June 2026, eight pro-Palestinian activists indicted in the U.S. for conspiring to run a criminal intimidation campaign against University of Michigan officials used inverted red triangles and bloody hands (see below) to mark their victims.



Bloody Hands: Pro-Palestinian activists use bloody hands to accuse Israel of committing a genocide against Palestinians. Bloody hands also incite

violence against Jews, representing a modern-day blood libel, similar to how false accusations of Jews harvesting blood of non-Jews for religious rituals led to mass violence against Jewish people. The hands also recall the October 2000 incident when Palestinian Aziz Salha was photographed waving his bloody hands to a crowd of cheering Palestinians from the window of a Ramallah police station where he participated in murdering two Israeli soldiers.



Key: Pro-Palestinian activists use a key to symbolize their professed "right of return" to homes from which they fled or were forced during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. A key,

however, is not a benign symbol of remembrance but an uncompromising political tool aimed at Israel's erasure. It represents a refusal to accept the 1948 Arab defeat and a demand for a demographic influx that would dismantle the world's only Jewish state, effectively achieving via migration what Arab armies failed to achieve militarily. Because peace frameworks aim to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the 1967, not 1948, borders, brandishing keys suggests Palestinians do not want merely a state of their own in the West Bank and Gaza but, rather, claim land inside Israel proper, signaling rejection of a two-state compromise.

SYMBOLS



Map of All of Israel and the Palestinian Territories with the Palestinian Flag

Colors: Pro-Palestinian activists often wear this image of all of Israel and the Palestinian territories on clothing or as a necklace. Similar to the chant “from the river to the sea,” the image erases the state of Israel, claiming all the land

for a Palestinian state, and demonstrates that those who display it, despite their outspoken calls for “peace” and “justice,” reject international peace frameworks that call for territorial compromise and, instead, seek Israel’s destruction.



Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound:

Built after the 7th-century Muslim conquest, Al-Aqsa Mosque sits atop the Temple Mount, Judaism’s holiest site

and the location of the First and Second Temples (destroyed by the Babylonians and Romans, respectively). The compound remains the focal point of global Jewish prayer, while also serving as a recurrent flashpoint. Israel has conducted targeted security raids and closures on the compound after Palestinians stored weapons inside or initiated violence from the site. Hamas named its October 7, 2023, attack on Israel “Operation Al-Aqsa Flood,” centering the mosque and Jerusalem to position the massacre as a necessary defense against perceived Israeli encroachment, unify Palestinians, and rally pan-Arab support.



Handala: This caricature of a barefoot refugee child with its hands crossed behind its back and turned around has come to symbolize Palestinians displaced during the 1948 Arab-Israel war. However, the *handala* sanitizes a complex geopolitical conflict by hiding a maximalist political agenda

behind the innocent image of a child. By representing the Palestinian cause exclusively as a defenseless, impoverished child, the symbol erases decades of Palestinian rejectionism (*handala's* posture is the literal embodiment of rejectionism), military aggression, and state-sanctioned terrorism.



Olive Tree: Palestinians employ an olive tree (or branch) to represent an enduring and deeply rooted commitment to a land they claim is theirs.

Palestinian co-option of the olive tree, however, seeks to erase 3,000 years of Jewish history in the land and its central role in Judaism as one of seven species deeply woven into Jewish law, liturgy, and celebrations. Judaism’s Torah explicitly names olives and the other species to highlight the rich abundance and divine blessings of the Land of Israel.