

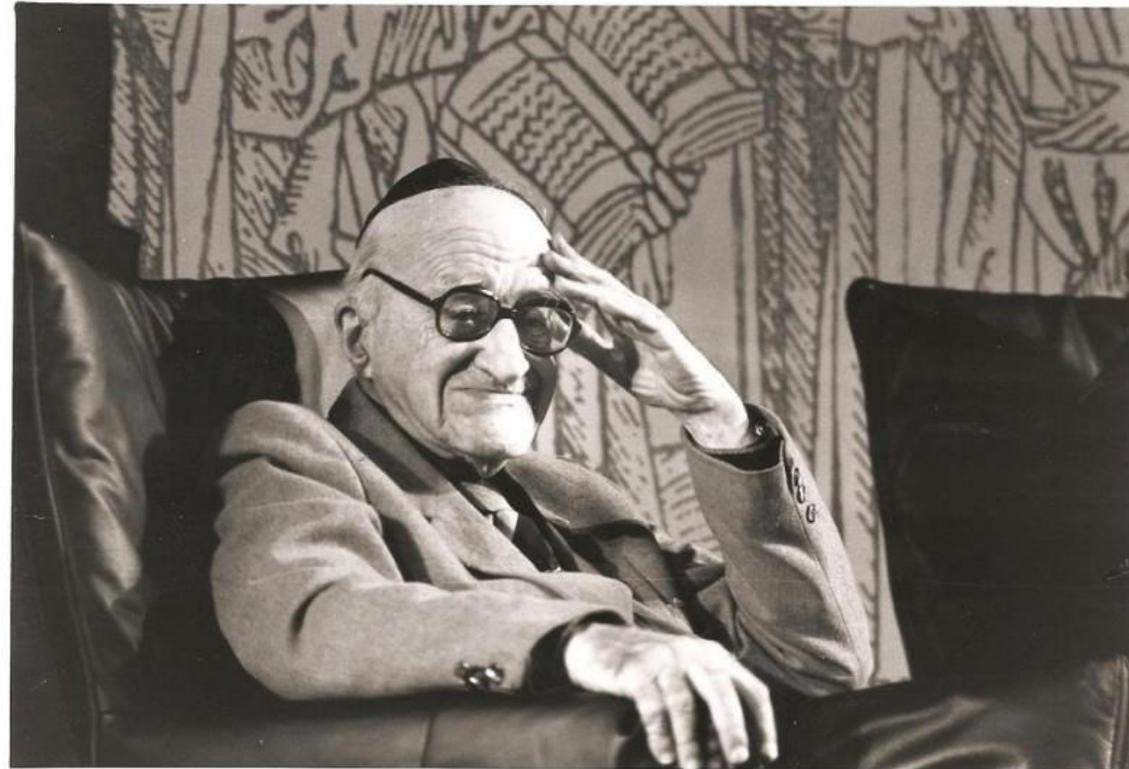
Boundaries of Israel Criticism: Understanding Yeshayahu Leibowitz

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Biography

- Born in Riga, 1903, died in Jerusalem, 1994
- Ph.D in Chemistry, MD (never practiced)
- Taught at Hebrew University for nearly six decades, with a distinguished career in bio-chemistry
- Published on bio-chemistry, history and philosophy of science, general philosophy, Jewish thought, and politics



Israel Criticism

Circa 1948, a strong critic of Ben Gurion

- *Use of Bible to justify military action*
- *Not separating religion and State*

In 1953, criticized military aggressions in “After Qibya”

- *Pointed out that before having a state, Jews could indulge in escapism, didn't need to deal with moral consequences of violent action by Jews*
- *Having a state calls for acting upon values, not only suffering because of them*
- *Elevating a people and a homeland's security to a holy status, justifies punitive action like the Qibya, and therefore corrupts*

Israel Criticism

After the Six Day War

- *Was one of the first public figures to call for a complete withdrawal from the occupied territories*
- *Compared post-war militarism to nationalism in Britain, Germany, and Japan during WW2*
- *Went against messianic notions post-war in Religious-Zionist movement*
- *Diskotel*

Israel Criticism

In 1980's and 1990's appeared regularly on television

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQNd4Vinfks>

During the Lebanon War and the Intifada called for conscientious objection to service in the occupied territories

- *Claimed that the violent right in Israeli society are Judeo-Nazis*
- *Given the Israel award, but declined in 1993*

Principles of Leibowitz Criticism

- Concerns about the integrity of Jewish religion
- Militarism in the Jewish State corrupts the State
- Combining religion and nationalism will corrupt both
- Deep and serious care and concern for the existence of the Jewish State
- Criticizing to bring change and protect the State from the within

A Prophet of the Apocalypse?

Deterioration of the Jewish people

Lose the Jewish majority state due to the occupation

Lose the democratic nature of the state

Disintegration of Religious Zionism and eventual conversion

Boycott of Israel by the international community

Disconnect between Israel and the Jewish diaspora

How would Leibowitz be treated today?

Challenges to Israel's right to exist

Any criticism of the actions of Israel's government actions is delegitimized