

# AUSTRALIAN JEWISH QUARTERLY

MAGAZINE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY

## GAZA ESCALATION

Report from southern Israel



**AUSTRALIA REDIRECTS  
AID AWAY FROM  
PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY**

### THE MARRICKVILLE AFFAIR

An insider's story



**US LEAVES THE UN  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
COUNCIL**

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS?

We analyse the data from  
home and abroad

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## IN THIS EDITION

### **PETER WERTHEIM AM**

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for the past 40 years has written on Australian policy on Israel and the Middle East for various publications including The Guardian, The Spectator, The Australian Jewish News, and Labor Leader. He is President of the Australia Defence Association, but has written this piece in his private capacity.

### **SHERRY SUFI**

is chairman of the WA Liberal Party's policy committee. He holds a bachelor of arts (Philosophy), master of arts (Politics and International Studies) and master of history. He writes in this magazine in a personal capacity.

### **WILLIAM NEMESH**

has worked in politics over a number of years, as an advisor for various members of parliament across federal and state governments. He was recently elected to Waverley Council as a Councillor and currently works within the Jewish community as a communal advocate.



## HALEY & BISHOP STRIKE BACK

Another escalation on Israel's border with Gaza brought with it a familiar set of responses. Much of the media depicted the Palestinian objectives as uniformly "peaceful" and a rousing exercise in "non-violence". The fact that amongst the demonstrators were squads of armed fighters instructed to breach the fence and murder and abduct Israelis in border villages and communal farms, was deemed outside the scope of coverage. Also overlooked is the context: there is no civil society or freedom of assembly in Gaza, and everything that is done there is coordinated by Hamas for violent purposes.

When grasping to understand why Palestinians might want to storm the border or incinerate acres of farmlands and forests that the Palestinians supposedly cherish as their "ancestral lands", observers looked past

the swastika flags and the explicit calls to murder Jews and decided that the violence must be the natural effect of the "provocative" US Embassy move to Jerusalem. Never mind that the attempts to storm the border commenced weeks before the unveiling and are merely the latest outgrowth of the Palestinian demand to "return" to Israel. More on that from Peter Wertheim and Michael Easson.

But the news has not been uniformly bad. The Australian Government has continued to stand with Israel in international forums, opposing a General Assembly resolution blaming the violence on Israel and failing to even mention Hamas. While Foreign Minister Julie Bishop's announcement that Australia will stop providing direct aid to the Palestinian Authority over the PA's practice of incentivising terrorist attacks has sent a powerful message to the Palestinians that their use of aid to perpetuate violence and conflict will no longer be tolerated.

Another major development has been the decision by the US to withdraw from the UN's

Human Rights Council, a forum whose membership is composed of some of the greatest abusers of human rights. The US Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley has again shown her fortitude in the face of the UN's feeble culture of going along with autocracies in the hope of getting along with them.

While there is legitimate debate over whether it is best to remain and reform what is a problematic forum or exit to draw attention to the just how corroded it has become, the US decision is highly significant. It is another blow to the existing order whereby tyrants and autocrats band together to stand in judgement of liberal-democracies bound by the rule of law. The paralysis and politicisation of the Council is exacerbated by a demented fixation on the tiny Jewish State and a privileging of the Palestinians above all other peoples and all other national movements. The US announcement has brought these issues to the surface like never before.

This edition of the AJQ will examine the international



reaction to the latest Gaza escalation, will take you on a sojourn to Israel and the West Bank, give you an activist's take on the Marrickville BDS fiasco in 2011, and will lay bare the facts and data on perpetrators of antisemitism around the world.

*Alex Rychin*

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# INTRODUCING NOGA

## - 8 YEARS OLD -

*By Peter Wertheim*

**P**ermit me to introduce you to 8-year old Noga and her Mum. They and the rest of their family live on kibbutz Nahal Oz in Israel, only about 800 meters from the Gaza security barrier. Both Noga and her mother were born on the kibbutz. The photo was taken when I visited the kibbutz on Tuesday, 26 June 2018.

The kibbutz is not a “settlement”. It is not located on land that the UN refers to as the “Occupied Palestinian Territories”. The land on which Nahal Oz stands was not captured by Israel during the 1967 war. It has been part of Israel since the establishment of the State in 1948. Even the UN and various anti-Israel NGOs don’t dispute that this is sovereign Israeli territory.

Yet for many years Noga and her mother and the other residents of Nahal Oz have been under constant rocket fire, among other forms of attack, from Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza. Tuesday was no exception. Within hours after the photo was taken, 13 rockets were fired into southern Israel from Gaza. Noga and her family slept in the bomb shelter, as they have done on many nights previously. Like any 8-year old girl, she finds the

experience frightening. She can’t understand why anyone would try to kill her and her family.

And they have tried many times. Often rockets from Gaza are fired into Nahal Oz at precisely 7:00am. Why 7:00am? That’s the time when the kindergarten and the crèche open. In 2014, 4-year-old Daniel Triggerman was killed by one of these rockets when it struck his home in Nahal Oz.

Over the last month Palestinian terrorists in Gaza have found ingenious new ways to try to harm Noga, her family and community. They have been sending over kites and inflated condoms rigged with incendiary devices which have set fire to hundreds of hectares of crops and to other areas in southern Israel, depriving wildlife of their natural habitat. I could smell the pungent smell of burnt vegetation when I visited the area on Tuesday. It was the same familiar smell as that of a bushfire in Australia, and the damage caused by the kite fires was just as devastating.

Only rarely can you read about any of this in the western media. They certainly won’t tell you personal stories like that of Noga and her mother. Yet these things have been

happening on an almost daily basis.

The latest attacks began before the so-called “Gaza massacre” on May 15. One week earlier, in a blood-curdling speech, Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar openly boasted about what the so-called “peaceful protests” of the “March of Return” were really all about when he declared:

“

***Our people and our boys will surprise the entire world with what they have in store. Let them wait for our big push. We will take down the border and we will tear out their hearts from their bodies***

“

The “big push” on the barrier on May 15 was thus clearly pre-planned and orchestrated by the Hamas leadership. Hamas co-founder Mahmoud al-Zahhar openly admitted that claims that the protests were a form of “peaceful resistance” against Israel were “a clear terminological deception.”

Hamas printed maps for its operatives indicating the civilian



Peter Wertheim with Noga and her mum at kibbutz Nahal Oz in Israel

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population centres within Israel situated only a few hundred meters from the barrier which their terrorists were to attack if the attempts to breach the barrier had been successful. One of the targets was Nahal Oz.

Hamas also disseminated detailed directives via social media ahead of the May 15 violence at the barrier. These directives went so far as to name the Israeli towns and communities in which each terrorist leader would be delivering victory speeches after the protests had achieved their stated goals. Nahal Oz was one of the named communities. The number of deaths would thus have been vastly higher if Hamas had succeeded in its aim of breaching the border and sending thousands of Gazans storming into civilian population centres in Israel. Noga and her Mum would have been among those whose hearts would have been torn from their bodies if Hamas's plans had succeeded. This should not come as a surprise to anybody who knows what Hamas really is – a genocidal organisation whose Charter openly declares that its aim is to “obliterate” Israel.

So you might perhaps wonder why Noga's parents and the other members of the kibbutz keep living on Nahal Oz. The number of new people coming to live in Nahal Oz keeps growing. These are brave, tough people, and I was proud to spend a day with them as a small token of solidarity. Yet I kept wondering, why don't they take their children to live somewhere safer. As a father and a grandfather that is the question that nagged at me, and I asked them that very question.

The answer I received was emphatic. As I noted at the outset, Noga and her Mum were both born on the kibbutz. It is their home. And they are not going anywhere.



# TOGA

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# Israel, Gaza and Australia

*By Michael Easson*

There is neither joy nor bright prospects from any of the recent violence and suffering in Gaza. The tragic loss of life in May naturally focuses attention on Australia's policy concerning the Israel-Palestine conflict.

There are two main criticisms of current Australian policy. First, using the emotive language of detractors, Australian policy is shamefully subservient to a foreign power, Israel; and second, recent Israeli actions appear wantonly trigger-happy in the face of ostensibly peaceful protests on the border.

I dissent from both claims.

Is it true, as Crikey writer Bernard Keane wrote last week, that "Turnbull's protection of Israel [is] the exemplar of foreign influence"?

In fact, for many years under both Coalition and Labor governments, Australia has not been locked in tandem with the Israeli government on all major issues. This is evident in statements, from the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister down, noting Australia's continued, more robust, support for a two-state solution, ruling out any move of our Embassy to West Jerusalem until after peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinians, the non-attendance by our

ambassador at the opening of the new US Embassy in West Jerusalem, the issuing of public statements by successive Australian Foreign Ministers criticising Israeli settlement construction, and calling on Israel to show "restraint" when its citizens are physically attacked, and our consistent, nuanced voting that rejects one-sided United Nations General Assembly and subordinate-organ resolutions.

Last November, when the UN General Assembly declared Israel's actions in East Jerusalem to be 'Null and Void', Australia abstained, because of the egregiously one-sided wording of the motion. Canada voted 'No'. On a resolution about "the Syrian Golan", Australia abstained. Both Canada and the UK voted 'no'.

Similarly, with the recent UN Human Rights Council resolution to investigate only Israel's role in the Gaza protest deaths, Australia, with the United States, was on the losing side of a 47-nation vote. But the vote, based on a flawed resolution presented by Pakistan on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation, returned 29 votes in favour, 14 abstentions, 2 not voting and 2 against for obvious reasons. Nevertheless, the Council resolved to set up its own investigation

in a statement which condemned "the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force by the Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians, including in the context of peaceful protests." Such loaded language blatantly pre-judges matters, not least in misquoting what the principles of discrimination and proportionality actually mean in international law.

At the heart of truly fixing the Israel-Palestine issue is a generally agreed model. The best way to resolve the causes of Gaza conflicts is a lasting peace through a two-state solution that is both verifiable and truly accountable on both sides.

This was noted on 15 May by Shadow Foreign Minister Penny Wong who stated: "The deaths and injuries of Palestinian protesters in Gaza overnight are both shocking and tragic. Labor urges Israel to show restraint. We support the right for peaceful protest and call on both sides to de-escalate tensions." She went on to say: "We believe the leadership of both sides should examine what more they can do to work towards a viable two-state solution and deliver a peaceful future for both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples."



In 2017, the NSW ALP Conference resolved to:

- Note previous resolutions on Israel/Palestine carried at the 2015 ALP National Conference and the 2016 NSW Labor Annual Conference; and
- Support the recognition and right of Israel and Palestine to exist within secure and recognised borders; and
- Urge the next Labor Government to recognise Palestine.

To be achieved, the last point surely has to be read in the context of “secure and recognised borders”. Such borders will not be achieved by difficult and complex negotiations alone. They require resolute leadership on both sides prepared to tell hard truths to their respective peoples, accede to a truly lasting agreement, and exert the will and means to enforce it against their respective irredentist and other extremist elements.

For all its real and perceived faults, past or present, few seriously question Israel's capacity for the necessary accountability in such circumstances. Israel's Military Advocate General is subject to the supervisory jurisdiction of the Attorney General, which in turn is subject to rulings by Israel's Supreme Court, one of the most accessible peak courts in the world. Similarly, the killing of Afghan civilians or unarmed insurgents by Australian troops was investigated by the Australian Defence Force, not the UN.

The position of the Palestinian leadership, on the other hand, remains beset by deficits in unity, accountability and democracy that are crucial obstacles to resolving the human rights crisis in the two Palestinian territories.

In February this year UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described

the Gaza Strip, in particular, as a “constant humanitarian emergency”. He noted, without dwelling on the riven internal political and security situation, that “two million Palestinians are struggling everyday with crumbling infrastructure, an electricity crisis, a lack of basic services, chronic unemployment and a paralysed economy. All of this is taking place amid an unfolding environmental disaster.”

This makes the need for a real and enduring peace an urgent priority. Yet the Hamas leadership continue to deny Israel's right to be a country, encourages or turns a blind eye to terrorist attacks and maintains educational and public information systems that advocate hatred of Jews as Jews (not just Israelis). With an ailing Palestinian President still in office some eight years after his elected term ended, Fatah, Hamas and the nominal PLO interim statelet remain a mishmash of personal, political, religious, and indeed criminal, rivalries. Hamas are said to be confident that with their leading role in the conflict, they can defeat Fatah in any new poll, but have never allowed one in Gaza since they forced Fatah out in 2007.

The recent loss of life at the Gaza-Israel security barrier, including some children, is intolerable. Israel has long insisted that Israeli commanders and soldiers are guided by international law in their actions. Indeed, the Israel Defence Force (IDF) maintains a robust, multi-layered investigations system, with numerous checks and balances to ensure impartiality. Indeed, right now, the IDF is conducting investigations on any credible accusation or reasonable suspicion of alleged wrongdoing.

You would expect nothing less but much superficial commentary ignores or glosses over that this accountability is totally absent from Hamas intentions and actions.

### PROPORTIONATE ACTION - WHAT OF RECENT CLASHES?

The commentary in The Times of Israel by army reservist Kinley (Moshe) Tur-Paz, a founder and CEO of the Kibbutz HaDati Educational Network, who was called up for the Gaza demonstrations is persuasive and speaks to Israeli's culture of accountability. He wrote:

“

*I can understand and identify with all of those good and moral Zionists who fear that the many Palestinian victims may be our fault, the result of mistakes made by our side... I want to testify that what I saw and heard was a tremendous, supreme effort from our side to prevent, in every possible way, Palestinian deaths and injuries. Of course, the primary mission was to prevent hundreds of thousands of Gazans from infiltrating into our territory. That kind of invasion would be perilous, mortally dangerous, to the nearby communities; would permit terrorists disguised as civilians to enter our kibbutz and moshav communities, and would leave us with no choice but to target every single infiltrator. That's why our soldiers were directed to prevent infiltration, in a variety of ways, using live ammunition only as a last resort.*

“

The IDF says it attempted to avoid civilian casualties. The IDF has said that terrorists were sections of the mob that sought to cross the border. Hamas wanted them on the front line as human shields, hiding terrorists, and endangering their lives.

Before the protests, Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar said: "Let them wait for our big push... We will take down the border and we will tear out their hearts from their bodies."

Hamas Political Bureau Member Salah Al-Bardawil speaking on May 16 on Baladna TV, which broadcasts from Gaza, admitted that of the 62 people killed in clashes along the Gaza border on May 14, 50 were Hamas personnel.

The right of the Palestinian people to peaceful protest in Gaza and the West Bank deserves support—as does Israel's right to defend its borders and determine that only those entering legally, properly and peacefully can do so. Especially when Israeli population centres are in such close proximity such that they are minutes away, just by running. There is no justification in any circumstances for protesters to employ violent measures and it is incumbent on security forces to ensure that their responses to violent attempts at infiltration are appropriate and proportionate to the risk.

Last week in the New York Times, Thomas Friedman, foreign policy commentator, Pulitzer Prize winner, and critic of Israeli Prime Minister "Bibi" Netanyahu, wrote about the disgraceful Hamas leadership. He lamented: "What if all two million Palestinians of Gaza marched to the Israeli border fence with an olive branch in one hand and a sign in Hebrew and Arabic in the other, saying... 'We, the Palestinian people of Gaza, want to sign a peace treaty with the Jewish people...'" But Hamas never

thinks like that. For them, perpetuating the conflict on their religious and ideological terms is everything.

Israelis know there is a world of woe ahead. Jews know from the Talmud, with the biblical Exodus from Egypt, that when the Egyptian chariots pursuing the Israelites were drowned in the Red Sea, the Almighty scolded them with the words: "How dare you sing for joy when My creatures are dying" (Talmud, Megillah 10b and Sanhedrin 39b).

The Talmud also teaches that personal elation should never allow forgetting the

misfortunes afflicting others (Berachot 31a). The cup of deliverance cannot be full when others suffer.

The tragedy of Israel and Palestine is that everyone's humanity is diminished if peace remains a forlorn prospect and hostage to deliberately propagated hatred. Especially this is so when people are regarded as merely political tools to be expended – not as men, women and children all with rights, prospects, and intrinsic worth as individuals.



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# MARRICKVILLE 2011

## An activist's story

*By William Nemesh*

There is a gathering of representatives of the Jewish community in NSW on the third Tuesday of each month. These are known as plenum meetings of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. They are a forum for discussion and debate where the issues of the NSW Jewish community are raised and policy is developed. The 15th of February 2011 was one such Tuesday, the first meeting for the year. As with other meetings issues were raised, questions asked and reports read.

At this particular gathering, four journalists who had recently visited Israel were also invited to share and discuss their experiences. There was nothing out of the ordinary except for an impulsive but fateful decision that was made by two of the representatives present. It was this decision that would briefly alter their lives, impact the Jewish community and in a small but not insignificant way change the course of NSW politics. The two representatives were John Nemesh, who is my father, and me. And this is our story...

### BACKGROUND

In the months preceding that plenum meeting, Marrickville Council, a municipality in the inner-west of

Sydney passed a resolution calling for Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions ("BDS") against Israel. It was the first time in Australia's history that such a motion had been passed by a government body. It had been done at the instigation of the Greens Councillors, a deliberate and calculated move designed to 'wedge' their Labor rivals.

Local government has no jurisdiction or competence to make foreign policy pronouncements, least of all to impose boycotts against allied nations. Local government is about delivering core essential services to residents. I should know, as I am currently a councillor on Waverley Council. As intended, the motion thrust BDS into the media spotlight and outraged the Jewish community. For the first time in a very long time, many in the Jewish community in Australia felt that their community was under siege.

The BDS campaign can be traced to the infamous "anti-racism" NGO conference held in Durban in 2001, which was marked by rampant displays of antisemitism. BDS remains an insidious and disingenuous global campaign to deny the right of national self-determination of the Jewish people by delegitimising the State of Israel.

BDS leaders have openly called for Israel's destruction. It is therefore unsurprising that such a campaign is often laced with acerbic hatred and strong antisemitic undertones.

But in December 2010 Marrickville Council had actively endorsed and encouraged such a policy. The Mayor of Marrickville, Greens Councillor Fiona Byrne, had gone along with a motion endorsing BDS moved by Greens councillor Cathy Peters. The speakers for the motion had been Sylvia Hale and Jennifer Killen, neither of whom was a councillor. Peters, Hale and Killen were prominent anti-Israel activists. They had helped push through a pro-BDS motion by the NSW Branch of the Greens about a week earlier. The BDS campaign in Australia had grown from a small chorus of far-left activists to something more sinister. It had infected the NSW Greens Party like a virus.

More significantly, Byrne had also been pre-selected as the Greens candidate for the seat of Marrickville in the upcoming NSW State election which was to be held on 26 March 2011. Ms Byrne had made an unsuccessful run for State parliament in the 2007 election.

The Liberal Party was predicted to win the 2011 NSW State election in



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a landslide (which they did) having been in opposition for 16 years. The incumbent ALP member for Marrickville and Deputy Premier, Carmel Tebbutt, was expected to lose her seat to Fiona Byrne despite holding a healthy 7.5% margin. A Galaxy poll two weeks out from the election had the two-party-preferred figures at 57% to 43% in favour to the Greens based on similar preference flows to the 2007 election, a 14.5% swing.

Given the controversy over the BDS resolution of the Greens-dominated Marrickville Council, a Greens victory in the state seat of Marrickville would have been trumpeted by the Greens as evidence of support and political legitimacy for the BDS campaign. The chances of the ALP holding onto Marrickville were slipping.

And so as heated debate sounded throughout the room during the Board of Deputies plenum meeting that Tuesday evening, with voices filled with passion but undeniable anxiety, the question on everyone's mind was, what could be done to stop this madness?

I sat next to my father who was visibly shaken by the discussion. In a cool whisper he turned to me and said 'William, in my heart I am a proud Zionist, I cannot sit idly by and watch this happen. This is like Europe 70 years ago, such hatred led to the near destruction of our family and our people. We must fight whatever the cost'.

And so, a decision was made, he and I would become active anti-BDS campaigners.

### THE PLAN

There was just over a month until the election, and time was running



Former Mayor  
of Marrickville  
*Fiona Byrne*

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out. I temporarily put my university studies on hold and offered to run a campaign. As a 20-year-old elected member of the university student union I was already ensconced in the world of politics.


I realised very early on having analysed the results from the previous state election that preference flows would be the key. In NSW, voting is by the optional preferential system, and the Liberal Party had refused (for their own good reasons) to preference the ALP above the Greens in any seat. In the 2007 NSW state election in Marrickville, more preferences had flowed from the Liberal Party to the Greens than to any other party. The same Galaxy poll which predicted ALP defeat two weeks prior to the 2011 election also found that 65% of Liberal voters would exhaust their preferences. Of those Liberal voters who indicated a preference, 45% would go to the Greens compared to 34% to the ALP. If this was replicated on election-day the ALP would lose

the state seat of Marrickville to the Greens, and lose badly.

And so, our campaign strategy was born and it was simple: target Liberal voters and encourage them to preference Labor above the Greens. We didn't have the time or resources to letterbox or doorknock the electorate. We knew that to get our message out we had to be bold. Of the limited options available we decided to use corflutes, or cardboard posters, traditionally used to identify candidates by placing a picture of themselves in highly visible locations. I developed several corflute designs each with slightly different wording reminding and explaining to Liberal voters why they needed to preference the ALP above the Greens.

For just over two weeks, four nights a week John and I along with some friends would drive into Marrickville and strategically place these corflutes on telegraph poles often working to 4am. Each morning in peak hour traffic a squad of Greens volunteers would unceremoniously - and illegally





- rip them down, usually drawing more attention than would otherwise be expected. In a YouTube video posted by Fiona Byrne she offered to auction off one of our stolen corflutes. As it turned out the Greens were spreading our message for us.

In a relatively short period of time this campaign made national headlines with several articles written in the SMH, Daily Telegraph and the Australian Greens volunteers eventually started to patrol the area at night because, as one stated in a police report, we looked like 'Jewish university students'. Despite physical and verbal harassment from these vigilantes, we pressed on with steadfast determination. We would play by the rules and beat the Greens at their own game. campaigners.

### ELECTION DAY

The Greens and Fiona Byrne were intent on justifying the Council boycott decision in the face of growing criticism. When asked if she would consider boycotting China over its treatment of Tibet, Ms Byrne indicated she would. This predictably enraged the Chinese community. As a result, a Chinese businessman who lived in Marrickville decided to

donate a number of shirts to us. On these shirts we placed stickers which read 'Boycott the Greens' – I thought this was a nice touch. I asked several friends if they were so inclined to wear these shirts at polling booths on election day. Ten agreed and so between 10am and 2pm on 26 March, they stood in pairs at selected booths. They stood defiant despite the abuse often bordering on antisemitism levelled at them from Greens volunteers. The abuse was anticipated. For every second that a Greens volunteer was yelling obscenities and abusing one of my volunteers they weren't handing out how to vote cards.

### THE RESULT

The ALP retained Marrickville by a wafer-thin margin of 676 votes with 50.9% of the two-party preferred count. Out of the distribution of Liberal votes, 1295 went to the ALP and 1165 went to the Greens, a noticeable shift from the 2007 election result and a dramatic improvement on the polling only two weeks earlier. The Greens lost the unlosable election, and they wanted revenge.

### THE AFTERMATH

Licking the wounds of defeat, members of the Greens party decided to lodge a vexatious complaint to the police over our signs, which they claimed were unauthorised. The complaint turned into a full blown police investigation that involved multiple interviews and required my father to obtain legal counsel. State electoral law requires the names of an authoriser and a printer to be placed on all electoral signage. Our signs were duly authorised but did not have the name of the printer on them. For that minor transgression, a mistake coincidentally Christine Milne, a former national leader of the Greens had also made, my father was charged by police for distributing election material without particulars. The hypocrisy speaks for itself, one rule for the Greens and one rule for everyone else.

As the current NSW opposition Luke Foley said in Parliament at the time, 'the Greens regularly rail against our law and order system, always deeming it heavy-handed and always condemning tough laws. Yet they throw the book at Dr Nemesh, the



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son of a Holocaust survivor, for daring to object to their Israel boycott’.

The matter proceeded to local court and attracted further media coverage both locally and abroad. The magistrate branded the pursuit of John Nemesh as ‘fairly disgraceful’ and the matter being of ‘very low’ importance. After a guilty plea, the magistrate entered no conviction.

### LESSONS

The short-lived BDS campaign was politically defeated after the Greens lost Marrickville in the 2011 state election. It was a watershed moment. The NSW Greens silently walked back their pro-BDS resolution at the end of 2011. Marrickville Council voted not to proceed with its previous BDS motion. Cate Faehrmann, one of the more rational NSW Greens figures, wrote: ‘the party’s handling of the boycott, divestment and sanctions policy against Israel was an unnecessary distraction from issues relevant to a state election’.

Since that time no government body or political party at a local, state or federal level has sought to embrace BDS. The defeat of the Greens in the Marrickville was absolute, their policies completely repudiated. Although the part we played was small, our success could be quantified. Preferences were not the only reason the Greens were defeated, but they played a crucial part. The lesson in all of this is if you don’t like the way things are then go out and make a positive change. We did and we have no regrets.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Alex Ryvchin in his book *The Anti-Israel Agenda* devotes an entire chapter to the Marrickville saga. There were many people who played their

part in ensuring BDS was defeated at the local government level. Members of the Inner West Chavura, a friendship group of Jewish residents living in the inner-west of Sydney, handed out anti-BDS flyers at markets and at street stalls and they (and others) turned up to Council meetings and met with the Mayor to voice their opposition. Some may also remember during this period there were vocal and sometimes violent protests against some of the Max Brenner chocolate stores. Max Brenner is a chocolate franchise which started in Israel. People like Sergio Redegalli, the Newtown mural artist and Phil Levy assisted to organise counter protests. In doing so they highlighted the absurdity of boycotting a chocolate store in Australia.

There were many others who helped John Nemesh and me during this time, from the campaign to the court case thereafter. I mention my good friend Dikla Blum. Others wish to remain anonymous.

In the words of Louis Brandeis ‘sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants’ and the media, in particular Imre Salusinszky of the Australian, was a star that burned brightly to expose the danger and folly of an elected Greens member in Marrickville.

Lastly, an observation. Never were so many members of the Jewish community invited to Carmel Tebbutt’s and Anthony Albanese’s post-election celebrations.



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# NOTES FROM THE GREAT DEBATE

## Israel vs Palestine

*By Sherry Sufi*

**T**he Israel-Palestine conflict is often described as the most intractable territorial dispute on the planet. Examine the two perspectives in detail and that description won't seem exaggerated. In short, there are competing nationalist claims over the same territory by two distinct people, each with its own perceived relationship with the land.

The conflict itself is seven decades old. Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza are now five decades old. Lack of engagement between Jewish and Palestinian communities worldwide hasn't helped improve the prospects of a solution.

With a vision to bring the two people together, the Policy Committee of the Liberal Party of WA took an unprecedented step and hosted a great debate titled 'Israel-Palestine: Is Peace Possible?' featuring representatives from Australia's peak Jewish and Palestinian community organisations.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ)'s very own co-CEO and internationally acclaimed writer Alex Ryvchin played the lead role representing Team Israel on the panel. It was a night of robust debate and a lively Q&A session with an audience of over 400 attendees.

Many provocative points were raised by the six panellists and members of the audience. For full details, check out the recording at <https://bit.ly/2l2ISuC> or search the event title on YouTube.

No doubt, there are many barriers to a solution. Commentators talk about the Hamas tunnels, Israeli settlements, PA martyrs fund, the status of East Jerusalem. The list goes on. If one observation must be shared from last month's debate, almost every barrier could be overcome through negotiations and compromise, except one. The Palestinian demand for a 'right of return' into the State of Israel.

In short, between 500,000 to 700,000 Palestinians were displaced during the 1948 war. Exact numbers vary according to the source. The Israelis say many of those Palestinians left voluntarily at the urging of their leaders who anticipated a complete Arab conquest of the land. The Palestinians say those Palestinians were forcibly evicted by Zionist militias.

Today more than six million people outside the region identify as Palestinians. This number includes the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of those displaced 70 years ago. Palestinian leaders and activists around the world make it a compulsory precondition that all six million overseas Palestinians be granted the option to move to Israel.

They say unless Israel agrees to this demand, all bets are off. Israel is already home to two million Palestinians otherwise known as Arab-Israelis. They account for one fifth of the country's total population

in contrast with its six million Jewish Israelis. Arab-Israelis are educated at Israeli schools and universities.

They form Arab political parties. They vote in Israeli elections and have democratic representation in Israel's Parliament, the Knesset. They feature in Israeli cinema. They serve in the armed forces. Israel to date has done more to accommodate its minorities than a typical democratic country.

Arabic is an officially recognised second language in Israel. It features on the country's street signs, postage stamps, currency notes and newspapers. Israeli cuisine is largely based on Arab recipes of Levantine and North African varieties. This cross-cultural synthesis and limited binationalism have so far been possible because Arab-Israelis as 20% of the total population are a manageable minority.

For the majority, Israel is a Jewish nation-state just as France is a French nation-state or China is a Chinese nation-state. The Israeli flag bears the Star of David. The lyrics of the Israeli national anthem, HaTikvah, encapsulate the 2,000 year long Jewish yearning for a return to Zion and Jerusalem.

Despite the obvious benefits of Israeli citizenship, many Arab Israelis remain separated from their relatives in the West Bank and Gaza or in overseas refugee camps. It is understandable why so many struggle to relate to the distinctly Jewish symbolism of Israeli national identity.



But then one wonders, how could another six million raised overseas with the grievance that Zionists “stole” their country be expected to become loyal Israeli citizens if this ‘right of return’ was actually granted? In short, neither could they, nor do they want to.

Becoming Arab-Israelis and living alongside Jewish Israelis is evidently not the end goal. If taken to its logical conclusion, this ‘right of return’ would leave Israel with a total of eight million Palestinians and six million Jews. The country would lose its Jewish majority.

Once the Palestinians become the majority, there is nothing stopping them from using Israeli democracy to stack out the Knesset and pass or repeal whatever legislation necessary to commence what in their eyes would be a process of gradual decolonisation.

The end goal would be to free up all of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza and to create a single Palestinian State from the river to the sea. What would happen to the Jews? Depends who you ask.

Some Palestinians say the Jews could live as a protected minority in the Palestinian State. They point to history as proof that Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews under Arab and Turkish rule were not subjected to the kind of systematic antisemitism that affected Ashkenazi Jews throughout Christian Europe and Russia.

Other Palestinians say the Ashkenazi Jews must return to Europe and Russia once the Palestinian State comes into being. They point to the discredited “Khazar theory” as proof that the Ashkenazim are foreign colonisers and not the true Semitic descendants of the ancient Israelites.

Either way, the idea that Israel has a right to continue on as a nation-state where those who identify as Jews get to be a majority seems missing from the Palestinian train of thought.



Palestinian activists never miss an opportunity to point out that Hamas is only a militant organisation run by fanatics and it does not represent how most Palestinians think. True, it does not, if we are talking about the ‘means’ to achieve the end goal.

As for the goal itself, any fair-minded observer can see how the desired outcome is the same. Hamas seeks the dismantling of Israel through an armed struggle. Palestinian activists seek the dismantling of Israel through non-violent means, such as demanding a full ‘right of return’ into Israel.

In fairness, if the bid for Palestinian statehood was not contingent upon bringing down Israel, independence would have been achieved long ago. Multiple offers have been made by

successive Israeli governments to help make this happen.

The most recent was in 2008. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert offered an independent Palestinian State based more or less on pre-1967 borders. Sadly the offer was not taken up because it did not include a ‘right of return’ into Israel.

Imagine if that had gone ahead. Today there would be an independent Palestine on the world map formed out of the West Bank and Gaza with land swaps in exchange for the Israeli settlements.

Like any sovereign nation-state, such a country would be free to determine its own immigration policy as it saw fit. It could grant all six million overseas Palestinians immediate citizenship and the chance to come home and help build their newly minted nation-state.





Those who trace their family roots to Haifa or Acre, now in Israel, could not expect to move to those cities. As a way forwards, they could move to Ramallah or Nablus and start fresh in an independent Palestine, which beats the alternatives of living under an occupation or in a refugee camp.

As a relevant aside, there are many million Pakistanis today whose parents or grandparents once had a home across the border in Delhi, Lucknow or Agra, now in India. There are many million Indians today whose parents or grandparents once had a home across the border in Lahore, Karachi or Peshawar, now in Pakistan.

There is no global campaign for people on either side to permanently return to the homes of their parents or

grandparents. If anything, the laws of both India and Pakistan explicitly prohibit the acquisition of citizenship by someone who either left or was evicted during the turbulence of partition in 1947. Descendants included. People can however move freely on temporary visas for a holiday.

These laws are designed to enable each nation-state to maintain its demographic integrity as it sees fit. Israel should be entitled to the same, as should a future Palestinian State. Once relations normalise, there is no reason why Israelis and Palestinians could not visit each other's countries on temporary visas for a holiday with family and friends.

Instead of demanding a return into Israel, if Palestinian leaders had sought a return into an independent Palestinian State, consensus within left-right Israeli politics would have favoured the proposal. Fair-minded Jews would have supported it, as would the international community. Two states for two people should have become reality decades ago.

Sovereign neighbours living side by side like Australia and New Zealand. Many of us still remain optimistic that is the ideal solution. For it to happen, the global effort to send the Trojan Horse of 6 million Palestinians into the State of Israel under the guise of this so-called 'right of return' must at once be abandoned.

No nation willingly signs its own death warrant. Yet Palestinian activists believe they could pull it off. Particularly in this day and age of social media where memes and hashtags can reach millions within seconds. As far as they can see, they are only seeking justice and equality in the face of settler colonialism.

Those who crave a world without Israel have pursued conventional warfare, then guerrilla warfare and now diplomatic warfare. Time and again, the State of Israel has proven itself capable

of defending its people. It has won its right to exist and with it, the right to govern itself as it sees fit to serve the interests of its people at home and abroad. What about the Palestinians? In short, two states for two people.

That has been the position of most Jews since the first wave of Jewish settlers began making Aliyah into Ottoman Palestine from 1882 on. It remains the position of most Jewish intellectuals of our time. It has been the position of successive Israeli governments. It has been the position of successive American governments. And to date, it remains the position of the Australian government.

To conclude, peace is possible. For Palestine to appear as an independent sovereign nation-state, Palestinian leaders and activists around the world must concentrate their effort towards achieving a state for the Palestinian nation, not taking a state away from the Jewish nation. The sooner the 'right of return' into Israel is replaced with a constructive bid for Palestinian Statehood, the sooner we can achieve a solution based on co-existence.

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# To Jerusalem and Back

*By Alex Ryvchin*

I land at Ben-Gurion Airport just before midnight and begin the long ascent to Jerusalem. The headiness hits me immediately and will remain until I depart 10 days later. A few hours later I sit bleary-eyed at breakfast ahead of a day spent trading ideas with some of Israel's finest intellects from diplomacy, journalism and academia.

I take lunch with the Director-General of the Foreign Ministry, Yuval Rotem, former Ambassador to Australia. A perfect specimen of energy meeting acumen, sneeringly called "cunning" by Bob Carr in his diaries, Yuval at once sees the big picture while recalling the smallest detail.

In the evening, I dine on Kurdish dumplings and hummus while discussing war and peace with a spokesman for the Israeli Prime Minister.

The following morning I depart for the Palestinian Territories to visit a Palestinian refugee camp, meet the Mayor of Bethlehem, and venture into darkest Hebron.

I enter the camp, really just a common village of paved roads and stone houses, the entrance to which is adorned by an enormous key symbolising the Palestinian quest to return to what is now Israel. The enormity of the key aptly captures the degree to which the Palestinians are

anchored in the past, unable to conceive of a future. Everywhere I turn I see the images of their "martyrs". A corflute shows a young man with a Hamas headband and the smouldering wreck of an Israeli passenger bus he detonated. Where I come from such people are considered the lowest of cowards whose names should be blotted out. Here their names are exalted.

Next - the mayor of Bethlehem. A great walrus of a man, he enthusiastically shakes my hand no fewer than 6 times. We discuss the peace process, Rabin, Olmert, Sharon. I am impressed by his reasonableness. As he speaks, I picture EU officials leaving his company beaming to one another, "now there's a man you can do business with!" But the longer he talks without interjection the more his stream of consciousness takes him down avenues of delusion and conspiracy.

On my way out, the Mayor's elegant young deputy diverts me to the balcony overlooking Manger Square. She recounts a recent indignation at the hands of an Israeli soldier who forbade her from entering a closed military zone. She speaks of her desire to live in peace and dignity. Her eyes flash with such intense passion that a lesser Zionist would have crumbled and given her east Jerusalem right there and then.

In Hebron I stand at the spot where a Palestinian sniper shot a ten-month old baby girl as she lay in her stroller. I inspect the shuttered shops of Shuhada Street and squeeze past queuing Palestinian men, their faces fixed with simmering rage, chanting "Allahu Akhbar" while waiting at a checkpoint to pray at the Cave of the Patriarchs. The indignity of being made to queue by young Jews in fatigues is clear, but then nothing in Hebron is simple and everything is conditioned by bloody history.

I stop to speak to a young soldier heading for the front line. His nervous energy is palpable. I wish him strength. As I leave Hebron I hear the rhythmic thuds of tear gas rounds.

The following day I spend with Sharren Haskel, a rising star of the Israeli Parliament, whose intense passion matches that of the young PLO official on the balcony over Bethlehem. She invites me to attend a Memorial Day ceremony in Itamar, deep in the West Bank.

Itamar means one thing to me - the Fogel family. In 2011, two cousins from the Arab village of Awarta penetrated the perimeter fence of Itamar, broke into the home of the Fogel family and hacked Ruth and Ehud Fogel to death in their beds before killing their three children.

Three-month old Hadas Fogel was decapitated in her cot.

Sharren warns me that some will surely disapprove of a Jewish leader spending Memorial Day in the settlements. But on a day to mourn the Jewish dead, I couldn't care less what side of a defunct armistice line they died on, and I can think of no worthier place to be than the home of the Fogels.

We drive through the exquisite countryside of the West Bank - biblical and bucolic. The ceremony begins. We bake in the hilltop sun. The mood is sombre and pained. Teenagers recite prayers for the fallen, community leaders weep as they deliver their addresses, and a kid strums a guitar while his friend in a knitted kippa sings beautiful lamentations. My attention is seized by a short, stocky man who shuffles to the podium before reciting the prayer for the dead (Kaddish).

He has the face of a broken man, of one whose pain is fresh. The father of a recently fallen soldier perhaps.

When the ceremony concludes, Sharren mingles with the people while I stand back and take in the majesty of the surrounds and the weight of the moment. Sharren walks over with the man from the podium and introduces him to me as Boaz Shabo. It's a name I have heard but cannot immediately place. He tells me how much it means to him that I came. I am humbled. "Come, I want to show you," he tells me, leading me to a huddled group of people obscuring a monument of some sort.

They part reverentially for Boaz and I see four identical graves littered with small stones left by mourners. "This is my wife, Rachel and these are our three sons." Before there was the Fogel family there was the Shabo family. As Boaz worked late one evening, terrorists broke into his home and murdered his wife and their three

children, the youngest a boy of 5. Boaz and I lock in a long embrace and I wish him strength and long life.

In my remaining days in Israel I catch up with the Leader of the Israeli Opposition, Isaac "Bogie" Herzog and meet Tzipi Livni to discuss peace and the Palestinians. I participate in a mission of the World Jewish Congress's Jewish Diplomatic Corps, which takes me to meet Nobel Laureates and tech geniuses in Haifa, to a park in Tel Aviv to speak to Israeli high-school kids studying international affairs, and to Jerusalem to hear from politicians and strategists of all political persuasions.

I leave the country dizzier still from the beauty of its soulful people, the splendour of the land, the scale of the nation's achievements, and the

enormity of its threats. I think of the grandeur of Jerusalem. Most of all, I think about Boaz Shabo's tormented face and the price of having a Jewish state. Indeed, the price of being Jewish.

As I wait to check my bags at Ben-Gurion Airport I flick through stories about Boaz. Five years after the massacre he remarried and two years later, after losing his three sons to terrorists, his second wife gave him triplets. "Never give in to despair. There is always a light at the top, even if it might involve a hard climb," Boaz told the papers after the birth. And therein lies the story of the Jewish people and the destiny of their tiny nation-state. Strength, defiance and progress. Eyes fixed to the future while never forgetting the lessons of the past.

**Alex Ryvchin with Boaz Shabo at a Memorial Day ceremony in Itamar**





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# Contemporary Sources of Antisemitic Incidents

*By Julie Nathan*

**T**here is much debate over who poses the greatest threat to Jews in the twenty-first century. Some point to the far Right, others to the Islamists, and some to the far Left. Often, it is ideological or political considerations that determine where the pointing is directed towards, rather than looking objectively at the statistics.

While the main sources of antisemitic incidents and discourse remains the same, the proportion of antisemitism emanating from each category is contentious territory.

Most reports or data on antisemitic incidents do not contain the source of, or motivation for, the antisemitism – whether political or religious, and many do not state the ethnicity, gender or age, of the perpetrator. This is partly due to the perpetrators of antisemitic incidents, eg vandalism, arson, etc, often being unidentified and unknown. However, the motivation for some incidents can be identified, eg when graffiti or a leaflet has the name of a group attached, or when arrests are made, or in cases of physical assault and verbal abuse, aspects of the identity and motivation of the perpetrator are often identifiable due to the close proximity of perpetrator and victim. Overall, in comparison to the amount of information on antisemitic incidents (victim, incident

type, date, place etc) there is much less information on the perpetrators of these acts.

The following information on the sources of antisemitic incidents, therefore, is not meant to be conclusive or even a comprehensive study, but rather an overview to indicate what the available studies show. The following, therefore, will only tell a partial story, and must be seen in that light, and read with that caution.

The four countries with the highest numbers of Jews, outside of Israel, are the USA, France, Canada, and Britain. Data and studies from these countries, plus Australia, that provide information on perpetrators of antisemitic incidents is set out below.

## EUROPE – SEVEN COUNTRIES

A study on “Antisemitic Violence in Europe” conducted by Oslo University in 2005-2015, and published in 2017, looked at seven European countries – Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the UK. Four of these countries have large Jewish minorities, and all have a data collection system for antisemitic incidents.

The study noted that “France and the UK have the largest total number

of violent incidents when we adjust for different reporting levels, estimated at 4,092 and 3,844 incidents during the period 2005–2015.”

In brief, the study found that those “exposed to [antisemitic] violence and serious threats” in France, the UK, Germany and Sweden “most often perceived the perpetrator(s) to be “someone with a Muslim extremist view”” and that “right-wing extremists, who are often associated with antisemitism, in fact constitute a clear minority of perpetrators.” In addition, “in France, Sweden and the UK (but not in Germany) the perpetrator was perceived to be left-wing more often than right-wing.” However, “perpetrators in Russia are described exclusively as right-wing extremists (neo-Nazis and skinheads).”

In the two countries with the largest Jewish populations (France and Britain), the victims of antisemitic incidents perceived Muslims to be the number one perpetrators, then the left-wing, then the right-wing. In Russia, however, most perpetrators were perceived to be from the far right.

Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld, a scholar of antisemitism, wrote in 2018 that “Muslim anti-Semitism in Europe has been greatly under-researched. Many authorities have tried to keep statistical data and other information



about anti-Semitic attitudes among Muslim immigrants and their descendants out of the limelight. This has occurred despite the fact that all resolved murders of Jews in Western Europe in the past decade have been committed by Muslims. The same is largely true for other extreme anti-Semitic incidents. Among these are serious attacks on synagogues in France.”

Gerstenfeld continued, noting that in 2003, The Center for Research on Anti-Semitism (CRA) at the Technical University of Berlin, which was charged with conducting a study on European antisemitism, by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), “identified young Muslims of Arab descent as the main perpetrators of physical attacks against Jews and the desecration and destruction of synagogues. The EUMC did not publish the study. The CRA stated that the reason for not publishing the document was that it exposed the many Muslim perpetrators of anti-Semitic incidents.” In the end, the World Jewish Congress obtained and published the CRA report.

## FRANCE

In France, there have been thirteen murders of Jews motivated by antisemitism since 2003 – all committed by Muslims. These include: Sébastien Selam (2003), Ilan Halimi (2006), Rabbi Yonatan Sandler, Aryeh Sandler, aged 6, Gabriel Sandler, aged 3, Miriam Monsonego, aged 8 (at a Jewish school in Toulouse in 2012), Elsa Cayat (at Charlie Hebdo in 2015), Yohan Cohen, Yoav Hattab, François-Michel Saada and Philippe Braham (at the Hyper Cacher in 2015), Sarah Halimi (2017), and Mireille Knoll (2018).

It should be noted that a Muslim, Lassana Bathily, working at the Hyper Cacher saved the lives of many other Jews by hiding them from the gunman. Elsa Cayat is included in this list as the Islamist murderers chose to spare all the women except one, the only Jewish woman who was identified as Jewish by the perpetrators and had received racist death threats from Islamists in the past. Georges Wolinski, although Jewish, is excluded from the list, as he was killed primarily because he worked at Charlie Hebdo, along with the other male workers.

The former Prime Minister of France, Manuel Valls, stated in 2016 that “The problem, is that anti-Semitism today in France comes less from the far right than from individuals of the Muslim faith or culture”. He added that in France, for at least two decades, all attacks against Jews in which the perpetrator has been identified have come from Muslims.

An extensive article in the New York Times in 2018 states: “Anti-Semitism was supposed to be a disease of the far right. But the people actually killing Jews in France these days are not members of the National Front. They are Islamists. “The major crimes against the Jewish community – Ilan Halimi, the Toulouse killings, the Hyper Cacher killings, Sarah Halimi – all of them have all been carried out by radicalized Muslims,” Robert Ejnes, the executive director of CRIF, an umbrella organization of French Jewish groups. [...] Jews represent less than 1 percent of the population in France, yet in 2014, 51 percent of all racist attacks were carried out against them, according to the French Interior Ministry.”

In France, the murder of Jews was perpetrated exclusively by Muslims. As to other forms of antisemitic incidents, high level claims are made that Muslims feature prominently, but

actual studies on the composition of perpetrators has not been conclusively determined.

## BRITAIN

In Britain, both the police and the Community Security Trust (CST), a Jewish community organisation, monitor, document and analyse antisemitic incidents.

In identifying the political, religious or ethnic identity of a perpetrator, Dave Rich of CST noted in 2014 that the use of the Nazi term “Heil Hitler” is not confined to neo-Nazis or the far right, but he writes that paradoxically “Those British Muslims who verbally abuse British Jews on the street are more likely to shout ‘Heil Hitler’ than ‘Allahu Akhbar’ when they do so.” Clearly, the term is recognised widely as being extremely offensive to Jews. Rich adds that “The most acute threat to Jewish life in Europe today comes from the jihadists of al-Qaeda, ISIS and their supporters. Much antisemitic hate crime in Western Europe is perpetrated by Muslim youths (although this varies from country to country, and from city to city).”

In its “Antisemitic Incidents Report 2017”, the CST stated (page 29): “a description of the ethnic appearance of the offenders was obtained in 420, or 30 per cent, of the 1,382 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in 2017. Of these, 225 offenders were described as ‘White – North European’ (54 per cent); 13 offenders were described as ‘White – South European’ (three per cent); 77 offenders were described as ‘Black’ (18 per cent); 74 offenders were described as ‘South Asian’ (18 per cent); one offender was described as ‘Far East or South East Asian’ (0.2 per cent); and 30 offenders were described as being ‘Arab or North African’ (seven per cent).” Of note,

"CST uses the 'IC1-6' system, used by the UK Police services, for categorising the ethnic appearance of offenders." The report cautions that "While it is possible to collect data regarding the ethnic appearance of incident offenders, this data is not direct evidence of the offenders' religious affiliations."

According to these statistics, albeit referring only to 30% of incidents, the ethnic appearance breakdown of perpetrators is 57% of European background, 18% Black, and 25% composed of those of South Asian (predominantly Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Indian), Arab or North African background.

In previous years, 'TellMama' (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks), which documents anti-Muslim incidents, expressed concern at the high proportion of Muslims involved in antisemitic incidents, when in September 2014 noted that "The CST have just released their July figures on antisemitic hate crimes and the figures make for grim reading, particularly when victim feedback on the profiles of their perpetrators indicate that a high proportion of the 107 cases where the profiles of the perpetrator are known, are of a Muslim background. (Victims reported perpetrator profiles in 107 out of the 302 cases in July 2014)."

The 'Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism' in February 2015, noted (page 77) that: "indications from victim feedback on the profiles of perpetrators, that a high proportion of cases involved someone from a Muslim background."

A report by the 'Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy' by Günther Jikeli in May 2015 stated: "Statistics for France and Great Britain from the last decade show that

antisemitic perpetrators have been disproportionately of Muslim origin. Exact numbers are difficult to establish, however, because most perpetrators have not been identified. Cautious estimations put the percentage of Muslim perpetrators of antisemitic acts in Great Britain at between 20 and 30 percent, while the percentage of Muslims in the general population stands at 5 percent. About 30 percent of the perpetrators in all antisemitic incidents in France in recent years have been identified as Muslim/Arab. [...] Muslims make up 6 to 8 percent of the total population of France."

In Britain, those of European background are the clear majority of ethnically identified perpetrators, at 57%. The next group, at 25%, is composed of people of South Asian (Pakistani, Bangladeshi, or Indian), Arab or North African background; this group would predominantly be composed of Muslims, since those lands, apart from India (which has the largest Muslim minority in the world), are Muslim-majority countries.

Statistically, those of European background are responsible for over twice as many incidents as those of a Muslim background. However, Muslims are disproportionally represented as perpetrators – five times their proportion of the British population – given that Muslims account for 4-5% of the British population.

## CANADA

According to Statistics Canada, a government body, in reference to their 'Police-reported hate crimes by motivation and region, 2016' (Table 2), the most targeted group for hate crimes in Canada were Jews, followed by Blacks, then Muslims, then LGBTI people. Of note, Jews make up only about 1% of the population of Canada.

On the perpetrators, Statistics Canada found that "Persons accused of crimes targeting Jewish populations tended to be young compared to those accused of other types of hate crimes, with 40% being under the age of 17. Moreover, accused persons were almost always male (89%)."

According to Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, the sources of antisemitism in Canada are from "the old white supremacist form of anti-Semitism" and antisemitism "coming from the Muslim and the very left-wing academic, intellectual movement that is promoting things like boycotts and really the delegitimization of Israel, and that in turn is sending a ripple effect that creates more anti-Semitism for the general Jewish population."

## USA

In the United States, the FBI collects and analyses hate crime statistics across the nation. For the seventeen years from 2000 to 2016 (the last year available), anti-Jewish hate crimes constituted between 55% and 74% of all hate crimes in the U.S. in the "Religion" category. In this category, Jews consistently are the foremost victims of hate crime. However, overall, Jews are the second most targeted group for all categories of hate crimes, after Blacks. Of note, Jews comprise only 2% of the American population.

The FBI categorises Offenders, with a slight change in terminology from 2013, according to race ("White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander", mixed, and unknown) and ethnicity ("Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino", mixed, and

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ON THE JEWISH STATE

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unknown). None of these categories provide much information to indicate motivation. Of note, in a US Census report for 2010, on the "Definition of Race Categories" it states: "'White' refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa."

If the FBI uses the same definition of 'White' as the US Census Bureau (both government bodies) this means that 'White' can include a range of political and religious ideologies, and ethnicities from neo-Nazis, white supremacists, the KKK, Christian Identitarians, Islamists, survivalists, socialists and so on; and 'Black' can also include a range of political and religious ideologies, eg the antisemitic group Nation of Islam.

A report released in December 2016 by the Community Security Service (CSS) in the USA, 'Terrorist Incidents and Attacks Against Jews and Israelis in the United States 1969-2016' authored by Yehudit Barsky, catalogued 104 serious incidents (including arson, shootings, and explosive devices) against Jews and Jewish institutions from 1969-2016. The CSS executive summary states: "Of the incidents where motivation can be ascertained, white supremacist and radical Islamist ideologies were a central influencing factor."

An extensive and comprehensive article in 'The Tower' in 2017 by Johanna Markind investigates the perpetrators of antisemitic hate crimes in the USA. Markind states that: "Circumstantial evidence suggests the main perpetrators of anti-Semitic crimes come from two separate sources: right-wing groups such as white supremacists and neo-Nazis, and Muslims and/or Arabs. Unfortunately, little information has been systematically collected on the subject." She notes that both the FBI

and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) provide little in the way of the identity of perpetrators.

However, as written by Markind, the FBI recorded, in the case of anti-Jewish hate crimes, that of the 635 offenders in 2014, 87 were 'White', 20 were 'Black', 11 were 'Non-Hispanic', and 513 were unknown; in 2015, of the 695 offenders, 121 were 'White', 31 'Black', 13 were 'Non-Hispanic', and 533 unknown. FBI data does not provide, or does not know, the race or ethnicity of over 75% of the perpetrators of anti-Jewish hate crime.

Markind noted that the media often make assumptions about the perpetrators. For example when a Chanukah menorah was twisted into a Nazi swastika, on the front lawn of a Jewish home in Arizona in December 2016, the assumption was that it was done by white supremacists. As it turned out, an African-American and his three unidentified accomplices were responsible for the antisemitic act. This provides a good example that the nature of the act itself cannot provide conclusive evidence of who the perpetrator is.

## AUSTRALIA

In Australia, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), the peak representative body of the Australian Jewish community, publishes an annual report on antisemitism in Australia. Each report covers a twelve month period.

The ECAJ Report on Antisemitism in Australia in 2016, with a total of 210 incidents, included information on the ethnic composition of the perpetrators of some types of antisemitic incidents, namely physical assault and verbal abuse (both types of incidents are where the victim and perpetrator are within close physical



proximity). Of the 91 incidents of assault and abuse in Sydney and Melbourne (the two main Jewish population centres in Australia), there were 43 incidents where the ethnicity of the perpetrator/s was identified in the reporting of the incident. Many incidents had multiple perpetrators.

The data showed that of the 72 perpetrators whose ethnicity was logged, these were composed of 34 Caucasian, 31 Middle Eastern, 5 Maori/Polynesian, and 2 African. Percentage-wise, it comprised Caucasian at 47%, Middle Eastern at 43%, and 'Other' at 10%.

However, the breakdown between Sydney and Melbourne told a different story. In Sydney, it comprised Caucasian (17 perpetrators) at 39%, and Middle Eastern (22 perpetrators)





at 51%. In Melbourne, it comprised Caucasian (17 perpetrators) at 58%, and Middle Eastern (9 perpetrators) at 31%. In both Sydney and Melbourne, 'Other' comprised 10%.

It is to be noted that this data only applies to 43 out of the 91 incidents of assault and abuse in Sydney and Melbourne, ie to 47% of these incidents, and therefore only tells a partial story. However, it does provide some indication of the composition of the ethnic sources of antisemitic incidents.

In the subsequent ECAJ Report on Antisemitism in Australia in 2017, 22% of the 230 recorded incidents were perpetrated by one group, a neo-Nazi group. These incidents comprised putting up posters, stickers, graffiti and murals. Some of these posters

were calling to legalise the execution of Jews, demonising Jews as poisoning Australian society, and blaming Jews for non-white immigration.

In summary, in Australia over 2016 and 2017 (the years where statistics on some perpetrators were compiled and analysed), ethnically, in 2016, Caucasians and Middle Eastern people are predominantly responsible in near equal proportions, at 47% and 43% respectively, for assault and abuse; while politically, in 2017, the extreme far right (ie neo-Nazis /white supremacists, understood to be composed of Caucasians) are disproportionately responsible for posters and stickers, at 22%.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census in 2006,

approximately 370,000 people recorded Middle Eastern ancestry (which includes all ethnicities and national groups in the Middle East, such as Arab, Assyrian, Jewish). The ABS Census in 2016, recorded that over 320,000 (1.4% of) Australians spoke Arabic at home, and 604,000 (2.6% of) Australians recorded their religion as Islam.

## CONCLUSION

In the West, from the data and reports available (as above), the majority of perpetrators of antisemitic incidents come from two sources – Caucasians and Muslims. This shows racial and religious components, but not the political bent of perpetrators, whether far right, far left, or other. The reports also show that the motivation and demographic of perpetrators of antisemitic incidents vary from country to country and from year to year.

Information gleaned from the reports above, where perpetrators have been identified by various means, indicate the following:

- In France, all antisemitic murders are perpetrated by Muslims and apparently all or most serious attacks on Jews have also been perpetrated by Muslims.
- In Britain, the majority of perpetrators are of European background, with those from immigrant Muslim backgrounds at around half the rate. However, in Europe, another study found that in France, the UK, Germany and Sweden, the perpetrator is most often perceived to be an extremist Muslim; and in France, the UK, and Sweden, the perpetrator was perceived to be left-wing more often than right-wing.
- In Russia, most perpetrators are right-wing extremists (assumed to be European).

- In Canada, there is insufficient data to make an assessment.

- In the USA, perpetrators are predominantly 'White' (which includes those of European, North African and Middle Eastern backgrounds), extreme right-wing and Islamists.

- In Australia, for physical assault and verbal abuse in 2016, perpetrators are roughly equal between Caucasian and Muslim, and in 2017, most perpetrators of antisemitic posters were by the extreme right-wing.

The fact that Caucasians are one of the two main sources of perpetrators is not surprising, given that the West is populated primarily by Caucasians. The fact that Muslims in the West are one of the two main sources of perpetrators is of great concern, given that Muslims comprise only 2-8% of the population of the countries noted above, but comprise between 20-30% of perpetrators. The disproportional representation of Muslims as perpetrators sends a worrying signal. It should also be noted that Caucasian and Muslim are not mutually exclusive terms, although the term Muslim in these studies usually refers to people of Arab (North African and Middle Eastern) and South Asian (Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Indian) backgrounds.

However, despite widely held assumptions, the relationship between the nature of incidents and perpetrators is not always clear cut. For example, yelling out "Heil Hitler" and the use of swastikas can come from Muslims or non-whites, as much as from neo-Nazis. Being identified as "White" (with the corollary assumption, in regard to perpetrators of antisemitic incidents, of being white supremacists or neo-Nazis) in the US includes not just those of

European background, but also those of North African and Middle Eastern backgrounds, ie Muslims.

In summary, in the twenty first century so far, when it comes to murdering Jews, the ultimate act of Jew-hatred, Islamists have been and continue to be the greatest threat to Jews. However, given the exponential rise in extreme right-wing activity with neo-Nazis openly calling for the murder of Jews, it remains to be seen where that takes us.

This study only dealt with incidents, not discourse. However, the discourse about Jews, Judaism and Israel, as well as the societal atmosphere and cultural history often have a profound influence on the levels, intensity and motivation to commit antisemitic incidents. It is recognised that the discourse, online and offline, has a considerable influence on the incidents.

Violence does not occur in a vacuum. It is words, when given free reign, which create a poisonous atmosphere for those targeted by racism. It is words that incite hatred and violence.

As Irwin Cotler, former Canadian Minister for Justice, stated: "The Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers - it began with words."

Part of the fight against antisemitic incidents involves identifying the sources of the incidents, ensuring full legal sanction against perpetrators and their enablers, and public condemnations and action against those who spread, encourage or incite demonisation of Jews and violence against Jews and Jewish institutions. Antisemitism does not just affect Jews, it infects and cripples a whole society.





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# IN PICTURES

## ECAJ IMPACT

A sample of our leadership and advocacy  
- at home and abroad.



ECAJ Immediate Past President Robert Goot greeting PM of Czech Republic Andrej Babiš



ECAJ President Anton Block leading the singing of the national anthems at the official Yom Haatzmaut event in Melbourne



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin on Sky News discussing the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal



Alex Ryvchin (C) at the launch of his book in the Western Australian parliament with (L-R) Shadow Attorney-General Hon. Michael Mischin MLC, President of the Legislative Council Hon Kate Doust MLC, Labor candidate for Stirling Melita Markey and Senator Dean Smith



ECAJ President Anton Block (R) with Nicole Brittain from Gandel Philanthropy and Professor Andrew Markus, author of the Gen17 Report at the Melbourne launch of the Report



ECAJ Co-CEO Peter Wertheim (R) at the WJC National Directors Forum with (L-R) Gillian Meron, CEO of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Wendy Kahn, National Director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and WJC CEO Robert Singer



Robert Goot with World Jewish Congress Treasurer Cella Safra and President of the Latin American Jewish Congress Adrian Werthein



Robert Goot with President of the Czech Republic Miloš Zeman



Alex Ryvchin speaking about the rise of populism at a JCA annual appeal event



ECAJ Research Officer Julie Nathan with Robyn Lenn, outgoing International Council of Jewish Women president (L) and Penelope Conway (R) with the incoming president



Peter Wertheim speaking at the conference of the International Council of Jewish Women



Peter Wertheim on ABC TV discussing the significance of Yom HaZikaron and Yom Haatzmaut to Israel and the Jewish people.



Alex Ryvchin presenting opening arguments in the "Great Debate: Israel v Palestine" held in Perth.



Anton Block chairing a Q&A with Isaac Herzog MK



Anton Block speaking at the Melbourne launch of the Gen17 Report.



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