

A JEWISH VOICE AMONG PROGRESSIVES -- A PROGRESSIVE VOICE AMONG JEWS



AJDS Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 9

The Australian Jewish Democratic Society

October 2009



The Climate Crisis: a Jewish angle

Sunday 25 October 7.00pm

Community room, St Kilda Library, 150 Carlisle Street

Rabbi Jonathan Keren Black has been concerned with climate change ever since a hurricane destroyed millions of trees in the UK in 1988. He was involved in establishing the Jewish Ecological Coalition.

Pablo Brait has a background in environmental engineering and environmental policy, and is currently the volunteer and media manager at Beyond Zero Emissions. Pablo is also co-founder and convenor of Yarra Climate Action Now, a local climate action group in inner-Melbourne.

Chaired by Les Rosenblatt Convenor of the Port Phillip Environment Working Group

Sponsored by Leo Baeck Centre, the Australian Jewish Democratic Society and others to be confirmed

www.ajds.org.au

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Contact Larry Stillman at larryjhs@fastmail.fm if you have anything you wish to share online.

The Australian Jewish Democratic Society Inc

(Affiliated with the Jewish Community Council of Victoria)

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The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the AJDS. These are expressed in its own statements.

What we stand for:

- Social justice and human rights.
- Opposition to the vilification and mandatory detention of asylum seekers.
- The struggle against racism, antisemitism in particular.
- Non-violent paths to conflict resolution.
- In line with this, the search for a negotiated solution to the Israel/Palestinian conflict.
- Equal rights, including land rights and justice, for Indigenous Australians.

Monash debate on Hamas

Sol Salbe

The overflow crowd of about 400 who packed a Monash University lecture hall certainly got good value for their trip to Clayton. The debate on the topic "That the West should engage with Hamas: A solution to The Israel/Palestine conflict?" was unquestionably interesting, but what actually happened was not all that enlightening. Both sides seemed to anticipate each other's arguments, but members of the audience, whether pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli, did not hear their concerns, real or putative, addressed.

Opening the debate for the affirmative, former PM Malcolm Fraser pointed out that unconditional negotiations and discussion are the best way to peace, even among intractable enemies. He cited the cases of the USSR and the US in the 'fifties and Sinn Fein and the British government. He explained that aid workers predicted the Hamas election victory because they were aware of both the genuine help given to ordinary Palestinians by Hamas and Fatah's corruption. He argued that negotiating with Hamas would show strength rather than weakness and alluded to support for his position from the Baker-Hamilton report to President Bush, the House of Commons report on the subject and the International Crisis Group headed until recently by former Labor Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.

Fraser expressed scepticism at Israeli peace-making efforts, pointing out that the continual expansion of the settlements threw Israel's intentions into question. He concluded by stating that an Australian engagement with Hamas would actually aid President Obama's peace efforts.

Danny Lamm of the Zionist Council of Victoria was the most knowledgeable and evidently sincere member of the negative team. He remained on message throughout. For him it was simple: one cannot negotiate with a religiously motivated enemy. In the process he painted an unbelievable picture of the West Bank economic boom, telling the audience that it made Ramallah look like Chapel Street. He ignored the fact that after dropping 50 per cent of GDP, a 7 per cent growth was not all that significant. He contended that the Koran, which he quoted, made it impossible for Muslims to live with Jews. [Golden Age in Andalucia anyone?]

The clearest voice of the night belonged to Monash academic Debra Smith. She pointed out that having a charter that says X does not mean that one cannot accommodate to Y. The IRA charter expressed vehement opposition to any British role in Northern Ireland, but peace now reigns there. The IRA's political wing is in the government and it is very much part of the UK. She also pointed out that Hamas's recent drop in popularity has not been transferred to increased support for Fatah. Smith argued that there was a greater risk to the west from negating the will of the Palestinian people and that the more likely alternative in the event of a Hamas failure was not Fatah but al-Qaida. She argued that nationalism was a major driving force within Hamas.

Tim Jeffrie, the only professional debater on the night, engaged in debating tricks and did not add to discussion. He came up with the astounding contention that Fatah agrees that Israel should exist.

Michael Shaik, the public advocate for Australians for Palestine, made a useful contribution in quoting another charter, that of the Likud, which does not countenance a Palestinian state west of the river Jordan. His criticism of the Oslo accords (rather than Israel's lack of their implementation) had some validity but he appeared to have lost many in the audience by his emotional tone when he pointed to the violence of the occupation in demolishing homes and stealing water.

For Mark Dreyfus MP, it was simple: Hamas is a terrorist organisation and Gilad Shalit was kidnapped, not captured. Hamas had been abusing human rights including women's rights and union rights. He made a big point about the brutal way in which Hamas dealt with an insurrection in a mosque in which children were killed. He neglected to point out that those attacked were the local al-Qaida supporters and that at the time Hamas was being lauded for it by many in Israel and elsewhere in the west.

A longer version of this report is scheduled to appear on the AJDS website.

A hectic month for the AJDS

Sol Salbe

So every month we tell you that we have been busy. But this time we received an unexpected sign that we have been working hard: it took a non-Jewish outsider to remind us that this month marks our 25th anniversary. We simply have been too preoccupied with other (loftier?) matters to think of our celebrations.

We should also point out that computer technology also bears some of the blame. Although our editorial/organising computer was backed-up in two different places the vagaries of Microsoft mean that the extraction of all the emails has been taking far longer than necessary. Thus there may be activities that we can only tell you about next time. [A case of wait, there's more!]

Climate change

OK, what have we been working on? Some of us have been attending the Dialogue on the Middle East sponsored by the La Trobe university centre. But the main emphasis has been on our own activities. We have been talking for a long time about the importance of climate change. As the present writer likes to put it: the Jewish people have spread the risk by distributing themselves among a very large number of countries but unfortunately all these countries are on the same planet. So everyone on the planet needs to be concerned with global warming.

To that end, we in conjunction with other groups have organised a major forum on the subject. The indefatigable Les Rosenblatt has managed to secure the participation of two people who can really help educate us and the rest of the community. Rabbi Jonathan Keren Black, who is familiar to many of us, has been concerned with global warming for over 21 years. As he will no doubt be telling us in more detail, he has been practising what he preaches, from driving a hybrid car to having a very environmental abode. As an instrumental force in the forming of JECO, the Jewish Ecological Coalition, and current President of GreenFaith Australia, his voice should carry some weight.

Our other speaker, Pablo Brait, complements the picture with his background in environmental engineering and environmental policy, and by being the volunteer and media manager at Beyond Zero Emissions. As a younger generation activist, he should have appeal to those who are interested in both the science and immediate actions. Both speakers are definitely worth listening to. All details are on the advertisement on the cover.

And of course there is the Annual Dinner. It is a classical "iceberg" project for those involved – only 10 per cent of the work is visible and most people only get to see the result. So far we have arranged for an excellent speaker in the person of Denis Altman, someone with a very long record of support for gay and other human rights. Altman has also never been shy in expressing his views even when they are unpopular and out of favour with the mainstream. There is an ad on page 5, but the most important thing at the moment is to write the date December 13 on your calendar, in your diary and wherever else is required to ensure that you don't commit yourself to any other activity. This time of the year tends to be rather busy for work, family and social engagements!

Our work within the Jewish Community Council of Victoria has had some impact. The *Sensible Jew's* Alex Fein described the scene at the questions and answers segment after the Editor of the *Age*, Paul Ramadge, addressed the plenum:

Unassailable rectitude

"In short, every single question I heard, bar one, had the same tenor, and essentially the same content: there was an aggrieved and somewhat aggressive framing of everything that was put to Ramadge. Indeed, these were hardly questions at all. They were long-winded statements about the unassailable rectitude of Israeli actions, and the unconscionable bias of the *Age* reporters.

"At the conclusion of each audience member's 'question', vigorous clapping and heartfelt words of support from other members of the public flowed through the room.

"Throughout it all, I marvelled at Ramadge's ability to keep his cool, remain unfailingly polite, and low key. Regardless of his merits as an editor, he certainly exhibited advanced skills in keeping his head, when all about them were losing theirs.

"Very few in the audience seemed to appreciate that Ramadge had not been compelled by a court order to appear before them. The style of questions leapt over the line from adversarial to outright inquisitorial.

"The self-righteousness in the room mingled with an uglier undertone of strength-in-numbers.

"This was on starkest display when a member of the Australian Jewish Democratic Society posed his question.

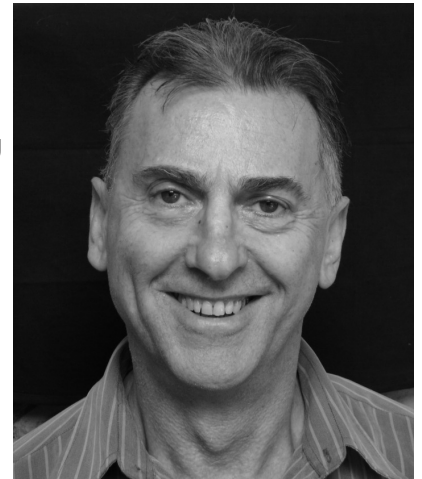
"Unlike everyone before him, he sought to praise the *Age's* Israel coverage.

"Like most people in the room, I strongly disagreed with his point of view; however, I was appalled at the general response to him from the audience.

"There were loud heckles and jeers, regular cries of, 'Sit down', and a broad-based attempt to prevent him from speaking at all.

"The absolute intolerance of dissenting opinion is perhaps the best indication of what has occurred at the centre of our community to push young people away. Who in their right mind would want to encounter such hostility and animus for simply voicing an opinion?"

Les Rosenblatt (for he was the aforementioned AJDS delegate) had his own account published by Fein, *Galus Australis* and of course our own website. No point in stealing his thunder, but it is a sign of the times that the alternative media are indeed paying attention to alternative views.



Les Rosenblatt

Boycott Israel movement – another view

Vivienne Porzsolt

[Whether we like it or not, the boycott issue is not going to disappear any time soon. The AJDS has always been opposed as an organisation to such boycotts. However it is a very important matter and any changes or fine tuning should and would only take place after a long discussion. We have carried several items on the subject in the past few months both here and on our website. In the last issue we called for further contributions and Sydney-based Editorial Committee member Vivienne Porzsolt is the first cab off the rank. Further contributions are welcome!]

Congratulations for giving front cover prominence to a discussion of the boycott movement against Israel. This is a debate the AJDS needs to have, even if it is not



The BDS movement wants to boycott all goods with the 729 Israeli barcode.

very comfortable. But then, fence-sitting is not comfortable either!

how should this be done? The Israeli peace groups have been trying heroically to 'persuade' with the usual tactics of education, demonstrations and dialogue. But there is no evidence that this is working or that their influence is growing. On the contrary.

Sol Salbe argues that the Israeli public needs to be "persuaded to change their view" as they are the main players. Indeed, but

There comes a time when dialogue fails and stronger action is needed. When I was in Israel a few years ago, I came to the conclusion that the Israeli peace movement and the Palestinians were far too weak to prevail

alone in changing Israel's course. Pressure had to come from outside. The one non-violent way of applying pressure is boycotts, sanctions and disinvestment. This is one way of pricking the Israeli bubble of complacency that things can go on like this.

While making some useful points, like the official Jewish opinion-makers, Salbe mistakes/misrepresents the nature of the boycott. He argues that there needs to be a distinction between "action against companies and institutions involved in the Occupation as well as the state itself on the one hand, and individual Israelis whose hearts and minds need to be won over." Yet this is exactly what a very wide range of Palestinian civil society combined in the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) has called for! See www.bdsmovement.net

Further, again like the official Jewish opinion-makers and many in the wider Jewish community, Salbe completely mistakes the aim of the boycott. He asks "Why should a mere boycott persuade the Israeli public to give up what they consider to be their homeland"? Who is asking them to do this? The aim of the boycott is Israeli conformity to international law and the universal principles of human rights. Is it not possible to envision a Jewish homeland that conforms to international law? Apparently he doesn't think so.

With the above phrase, Salbe has succumbed to the misconceptions too prevalent in the wider community. The AJDS exists to counter this and shine the light of reason on debates that are too often obfuscated by fear and loathing.



Vivienne Porzsolt

Redgrave slams Toronto boycotters' blurred message

Sol Salbe

Some messages are relatively clear. As much as people like Michael Danby tried to obfuscate it, the message for the recent Melbourne International Film Festival was focussed: show as many Israeli films as you like, but do not associate yourself with the state of Israel. In Toronto the message was a lot fuzzier: the boycotters again did not object to the Israeli films per se but would not countenance them being lumped together to celebrate the city of Tel Aviv. The boycotters did not do themselves any favour by using emotive and inaccurate words such as referring to the Israeli government as a "regime".

Even strong critics of Israel like Vanessa Redgrave found that position objectionable. In a letter to the *New York Review of Books* co-signed by artist Julian Schnabel and playwright Martin Sherman, Redgrave defended the festival's choice to spotlight Tel Aviv and denounced those who have called for a boycott.

"We oppose the current Israeli government, but it is a government," Redgrave and her co-signatories wrote in their letter. "Freely elected. Not a regime. Words matter." Redgrave and her co-signatories went on to say in their

letter that the films being showcased in Toronto deserved applause and encouragement, precisely because they were created by Israelis troubled by their own government's actions:

"Thousands of Palestinians have died through the years because the Israeli government, military, and part of the population fervently believe that the Arab states and, indeed, much of the world do not want Israel to exist.

"How then are we halting this never-ending cycle of violence by promoting the very fears that cause it?

"Many citizens of Tel Aviv are particularly aware of the situation of the Palestinians and are concerned about their government's policies and their country's future. And none more so than the Tel Aviv creative community. This is exemplified by Israeli films that criticise their government's behaviour. These citizens of Tel Aviv and their organisations and their cultural outlets should be applauded and encouraged."

The letter concluded: "We do not agree that this involvement is a reason to shun or protest, picket or boycott, or ban people who are expressing thoughts and confronting grief that, ironically, many of the protesters share."

AJDS Annual Dinner

With guest speaker

Denis Altman

7.00pm

Sunday 13 December

Almazett restaurant

Tickets \$50 / \$75 supporter price

Further details in next month's Newsletter

Put it in your diary now!

October marks our

25th Anniversary

Let's celebrate it

properly and in style!

Send us historical pictures, stories, anecdotes and anything else you can think of. Tell us what we should cover in our anniversary issue, who are the unsung heroes of the organisation, why the AJDS is like no other Jewish organisation and what we should be doing in the next 25 years!

Palestinian case put in Melbourne

Les Rosenblatt

Melbournians had a rare opportunity to hear a Palestinian outlining the real situation on the ground in Israel/Palestine. Saree Makdisi described and depicted the ongoing erasure of Palestinian presence from contemporary Jerusalem in a lecture titled "Jerusalem: The Occupation of Memory" at Melbourne University on 16 September. It was a powerful and disturbing presentation which demonstrated the tragically ironic contradiction of a Museum Of Tolerance, designed by Frank Gehry and promoted by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, being constructed over a Palestinian burial ground in Jerusalem. A nephew of Edward Said, Makdisi was in Australia to take up his uncle's legacy by delivering the annual Edward Said Memorial Lecture in a speaking tour. He is currently professor of English and Comparative Literature at UCLA. His late father, Anis Makdisi, was a Professor of Arabic at the American University of Beirut. His lecture in Melbourne was organised by Australians for Palestine (AfP) and co-sponsored by Melbourne University's Asia Centre.

I went along to hear him.

Sonia Karkar of AfP opened proceedings with a tribute to Edward Said's work and memory, and then introduced Melbourne University Professor Ghassan Hage as chairperson who in turn introduced Saree Makdisi to the audience of about 150 people of Palestinian, Anglo-Australian, Arabic, Jewish and other ethnicities. Makdisi's most recent book, *Palestine Inside Out: An Everyday Occupation* was on sale in the foyer and several people had already purchased copies on entering. Makdisi began to speak in front of a large dual-image projection of photos he'd taken in and around Jerusalem and the West Bank which he used to illustrate his points.

He covered the unrelenting expansion of the ideological,

social, economic and real land control through which Israeli society was eliminating any reminders of Palestinian occupancy which might discomfort Israeli (Jewish) citizens and their visitors and tourists. We saw how sections of the Israeli-constructed "separation wall" had been landscaped on the Israeli side to soften and aestheticise its appearance while on the Palestinian side its crude brutalistic style was completely unrelieved. We saw how the Gehry-designed Tolerance Museum used references to the wall within its design to facilitate hints of a complementary aesthetic, while its interior exhibitions and curatorial priorities excluded tolerance of/for Palestinians. We saw the starkly different infrastructural project designs for Israeli-use freeways and roads throughout the West Bank compared with the potholed underpasses and tracks designated for Palestinian use and transport in the same areas. We were shown the conversion and neglect of tombstones and ruins which had had a Palestinian provenance in areas in which Israelis were eager to park their vehicles or establish businesses and dwellings. And we were shown the linguistic and bureaucratic manipulation of names, signs, number-plates and identity symbols which accompanied all this in the urban and non-urban spaces to the east of Jerusalem.

Makdisi's commentary was articulate and complex in its interpretative probing of the meanings of such images. It was a potent reminder of how "facts on the ground" are vulnerable to the instabilities of possession and power. Despite its dark message, it did not relinquish hope that insight would sustain resilience and recovery of a shared future.



Saree Makdisi

Global warming threatens the Middle East

Little by little, Egypt's Mediterranean coastline is being swallowed up by the sea because of global warming, in some places as much as 100 metres a year. Eventually priceless farmland in the low-lying Nile Delta, Egypt's breadbasket, will be inundated. Two-thirds of the country's 70 million population lives in the delta, which produces 60 per cent of Egypt's food. As the polar ice caps melt, much of the northern delta, including the ancient port city of Alexandria, will disappear under the Mediterranean, scientists say.

Scientists believe that within 100 years, 20 per cent of the delta will be on the seabed. If the doomsday scenario of Greenland and western Antarctica disappearing as well occurs, the sea will reach as far inland as Cairo's suburbs. Climate change poses serious dangers for the Middle East, one of the most volatile regions on the planet. Proponents of tough legislation against greenhouse gas emissions warn that global warming could lead to even greater instability in a region where history's first battle was recorded in 1274 BC

The main problem, they say, is not just dwindling supplies of water, already a scarce commodity in the region, but flooding caused by rising sea levels. This, along with thermal expansion of warming ocean waters, will critically affect food production, bringing hunger, political instability and potential cataclysm -- not to mention hordes of hungry refugees pouring across the Mediterranean into southern Europe.

"We will pay for this one way or another," General Anthony Zinni, who commanded US forces in the Middle East until he retired in 2006, warned recently. "We will pay to reduce greenhouse gases today and we'll have to take an economic hit of some kind. Or we'll pay the price later in military terms. And that will involve human lives. There will be a human toll."

In May 2007, the British government, which has championed the struggle against global warming, sought to focus global attention on the security threat posed by climate change. "Resource-based conflicts are not new," said Margaret Beckett, then Britain's Foreign Secretary. "But in climate change we have a new and potentially disastrous dynamic."

Beckett said that the Middle East, with 5 per cent of the world's population but only 1 per cent of its water, would

be particularly affected by climate change. Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq would be especially hard hit by a drop in rainfall, with some 2 million people displaced in the Nile Delta by rising sea levels.

Beckett said the Nile, lifeblood of Egypt since the time of the pharaohs, could lose 80 per cent of its flow into the North African country. Egyptian officials say the Nile flow could drop by as much as 70 per cent over the next 50 years. Beckett's dire predictions echoed the European Commission, which warned in January that global warming could touch off a chain of regional conflicts over dwindling resources, worsening poverty, famine, mass migrations unprecedented in modern times and the proliferation of infectious diseases such as malaria, cholera and dengue fever.

Christian Aid, a leading relief agency, estimates that global warming will create at least 1 billion refugees by 2050 as water shortages and crop failures drive them from their homes. Water will be a critical element in any peace negotiations between Israel with the Palestinians and Syria, but the Jewish state says its rainfall has decreased by 100 millimetres a year, threatening final status talks.

Increasingly, international monitors say that climate change and environmental degradation threaten to spark a series of wars in the Middle East. The brutal conflict in Sudan's Darfur region, which still splutters on despite peacemaking efforts, is seen to be in large part the result of worsening drought and desertification and thus a matrix of what may lie ahead.

In May 2008, the World Economic Forum warned that climate change and energy security were among the greatest risks facing the Middle East. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that by 2080 up to 3.2 billion people -- one third of the planet's population -- will be short of water, with up to 600 million short of food and up to 7 million facing coastal flooding.

Many of those will be in the Middle East, joining the millions of Palestinians and Iraqis who are already refugees. The impact of these events will be greatly worsened by rapid population growth in the Middle East and North Africa, from 127 million in 1970 to 305 million in 2005.

This UPI report was first published in the *Teheran Times*.

More questions about burning boat inquiry

Pamela Curr

The NT police inquiry into the asylum-seeker boat fire raises more questions than answers as to the cause of the fire. While strongly exonerating the Australian Navy from any wrongdoing, the inquiry claims that film footage of the events showing Naval personnel kicking victims away from rescue boats cannot be seen or considered.

The inquiry concludes that an unknown asylum seeker deliberately lit the fire but that there is not enough evidence to charge this person. Claims that asylum seekers poured petrol all over the boat do not provide an explanation as to how this took place: for 24 hours the Navy had total control of the boat and that the asylum seekers were sitting on the deck floor under armed guard which would

make it difficult to do what the police inquiry claims.

There is also no explanation as to how a fire could be deliberately started if strict boarding protocols were carried out. These protocols dictate that naval personnel when boarding an asylum-seeker boat must secure and contain the passengers immediately under armed guard, must then search the boat for weapons and flammable materials and remove those. How is it that the men were sat on the deck floor for 24 hours under guard, next to the leaking petrol drums? All witnesses have commented on the strong smell of petrol on the boat. How and why did naval personnel allow these frightened men to smoke in close proximity to the fuel?

(Continued on page 7)

Handing on the Key

Ruth Arber

Sited within one small room within the Immigration Museum, the exhibition *Handing on the Key* tells the story of Palestinian Australian emigration concisely. Moving around the room, the contents in the first glass case illustrate “a contested land” whose demography has been changed by centuries of conquests. The last, the formation of the state of Israel, resulted in more than 700,000 Arabs fleeing or being forced from their homes. For many Palestinians, this resulted in their migration to countries outside the Middle East, including Australia. The next glass case describes the migration of Palestinians to Australia. Artifacts and photos represent the over 7000 people in Australia identifying themselves as Palestinian. Tattered passports attest to the travails of a stateless people. In the middle of the room an exhibition of traditional Palestinian dress is attributed to the connection between clothing, region and identity. The final panel provides vignettes describing the different ways how Palestinians negotiate their Australian-Palestinian identities. Young voices are angry. “The sons and daughters of Palestinians are reminded daily of the issues that drove their parents to leave their homeland and the international debate over language and belonging bestowed on them by birth”.

This exhibition is not the description of one narrative, but of three. The Palestinian story is book-ended by two panels. Threaded throughout the exhibition, the narrative of the handing of the Key provides a metaphor of home, freedom and ownership. It is a symbol of hope that Palestinians will one day return to the land of their people. The last panel explains that: *Palestinians are a people defined by what they have lost. Their lives have been shaped by a sense of injustice reinforced by continuing dispossession and conflict ... bringing their culture and creating a new life for themselves here.*

The second narrative is that of the Jews and of Israel. On the other side of the narrow passageway leading to the exhibition a film describes stories of freedom. The montage of filmstrips leads with an assemblage of Hassidic Jews wearing yellow stars and watching in dismay as Jewish books are thrown on the fire. The film tracks



through other vignettes: Chile, Burma, China, Gaza... It is not just that the story of the esoteric Jew is provided as the archetype of freedom. Their suffering is displayed in ironic contrast to the Palestinian story. Moreover, the story of Palestinian habitation of the land parallels the Israeli pioneering story, men standing in front of vineyards, groups of families in front of the Judean Hills. Israel is not mentioned by name at all. Muted discussions about Jews, the Jewish state and Zionists provide an almost silent but powerful shadow narrative within the museum story.



Ruth Arber

In describing the western and third narrative, the Australian narrative, I turn to Edward Said's (1991) notion of the Orient. The idea, imagery and vocabulary of the Orient, and here he refers to both Israelis and Palestinians, is created both “in and for the West”. The long list of acknowledgements to the Palestinian Australians who gave voice to the exhibition is one shaped within the auspices of the Victorian immigration exhibition. It remains within the power of the museum staff to decide who shall speak and about what and when and how. Representations made within the exhibition cautiously give voice to Palestinian Australians and yet demonstrate the ways that they are integrated into Australian culture. Exhibitions of clothes display an exotic culture; colourful and Other. Photos exhibit Palestinian identities well

assimilated into everyday Australian life. A family group stands in front of a typical Australian house; a man stands with his foot on a red Holden, two old men play chess in the garden. It is perhaps this story – this multicultural story – which draws together the tense relationships which underpin the different narratives described here. The exhibition closes with this wonderful poem.

*One bright morning
(No-one remembers when or why)
Adding stone upon stone
People started building a home.
Marsuk Halabi*

Ruth Arber is a Deakin University academic who publishes in the area of race and education.

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The inquiry claims that the boat was being transferred to Christmas Island when the Navy themselves have admitted that the men were not told what was going to happen to them or where they were going. Indeed evidence was presented that some men were told that they were being sent back to Indonesia without any refugee assessment. This was a practice of the previous government, but not of the Rudd Government (at least so far) which is more inclined to adhere to the International conventions which Australia has signed. This begs another question -- were

the Navy “riding cowboy” and trying to frighten the asylum seekers or were they intending to push them back to Indonesia?

An urgent coronial inquiry is needed to provide answers to these questions and provide some truth and clarity to ensure that such a tragedy is not repeated. It would seem that this police inquiry is based on half the evidence, with a strong bias to ensure that the Navy is presented in a good light.

Pamela Curr is Campaign Coordinator of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

“Justice delayed is justice denied”

Joharah Baker

This time, Palestinians were sure they had an ace in the hole. For the first time in a very long time, a credible, balanced and efficient international investigation on Israel's actions against Palestinians has been conducted and its findings released. The UN Fact-Finding Mission, led by Justice Richard Goldstone, into Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip last winter, in which nearly 1,500 Palestinians were killed, was pretty much what the Palestinians have always been hoping for – a respected and credible international voice for those Palestinians without one, a voice that has witnessed the injustice and refused to remain silent. Finally, Goldstone's mission was representative of a voice with the diplomatic clout to put words into actions and maybe, just maybe, force Israel to face the crimes it has committed.

Yes, Palestinians everywhere were looking forward to the 2 October vote in the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, which would, if it won a majority, effectively refer the findings of the report to the UN Security Council for further action and possibly put those responsible for war crimes before an international criminal court.

So, when news broke that voting on the report had been delayed to the council's March session -- a long five months from now -- jaws dropped to the floor in dismay. Since then there has been a flurry of press conferences, tongue-twisted justifications and blundering, babbling politicians trying to defend, rationalise or deny the indefensible – that the PLO had been party to the decision to postpone the voting.

Four days later, the game is still on. After the initial shock of the news resided, Palestinians were up in arms, pointing icy fingers at the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and in Geneva, accusing them of the worst of vices – betraying their own people. From that leadership came contradictory statements meant as damage control, some defending the decision as a means of "ensuring a consensus" on the vote, others speaking their mind, saying the deferral was a mistake and still others, namely Geneva's UN Ambassador Ibrahim Khreisheh, charging on October 5 that the postponement was actually in the Palestinians' interest since the report also charged Hamas with war crimes for firing rockets into Israel, something he said the leadership would work to drop.

As for President Mahmoud Abbas, who, according to some media reports, was paid a visit by the US Consul-

General who put tremendous pressure on him to drop the Palestinians' request for Goldstone's report to go to a vote, is now saying it was the Arabs who asked for the postponement. "We are only observers in the UN, we cannot make such a decision," Abbas said in a press conference. Abbas also formed an "investigation committee" to look into the reasons behind the postponement.

For average Palestinians, something about this is just not right. While it is understandable that the United States would go to great lengths to defend Israel, even in the case of its blatant violation of humanitarian law and war crimes in Gaza, it is unfathomable that the Palestinian leadership would kowtow to such pressure. Needless to say, the victims of Gaza who lost loved ones, homes, jobs and land due to Israel's brutal pounding of the Strip for 22 days on end, feel betrayed and sold out, especially since the excuses given are just not convincing. The Human Rights Council, a body of 47 UN member states, works on a majority-vote basis, not one of consensus. That is to say, any resolution that wins the majority votes is passed and does not need the entire Council to accept. In the case of the HRC, this particular vote was as good



Judge Richard Goldstone



Goldstone's report looked at the use of phosphorus in Gaza

as won. Since its creation in 2006, the Council has passed several resolutions on Israel's human rights violations in the Palestinian territories, and is deemed by some western countries as anti-Israel. Even before the scheduled voting day, both Israel's and Palestine's ambassadors knew where it was going. Khreisheh boasted to the press that he already had the votes needed while Israeli ambassador Aharon Leshno-Yaar admitted he could "never get the numbers" needed to block it.

This means that by now the findings of the Goldstone Report, which found Israel responsible for "serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law," should have been on their way to the UN Security Council, whose resolutions are legally binding. This would have hopefully led to a probe of war crimes in the

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(Continued from page 8)

International Criminal Court, something Israel and the United States have clearly opposed since the release of the report.

It is certainly not surprising that the United States could have put extreme pressure on the Palestinians to neutralise the report by requesting a postponement on its vote. This is the American way when it comes to Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. It is also no wonder that Israel would use every trick in the book to twist the Palestinians' arm, including holding a contract for the launching of Al Wataniya Mobile Company ransom should Palestinians refuse to drop their endorsement of the October 2 vote on the report. These are so-called "enemies" and the Palestinians expect only the worst from them.

No, what is so hard to swallow, what cuts painfully deep, is the possibility that our own leadership, those who

vowed to fight side by side with us in our struggle for freedom, could be accomplices to this undermining of justice. What's more, those in favour of the decision continue to insist that the move is in the best interests of our people.

None of the arguments hold any water for the majority of the people, especially those in Gaza who have been waiting for months for some justice to prevail.

DISGRACE

Justice Richard Goldstone's UN report accusing Israel of war crimes has been received as nothing short of a mockery of international justice. What damage has it done to Israel's international credibility?

FULL COVERAGE 3, 17, 18, 19 & 20

The Australian Jewish News' banner headline attacking the Goldstone report

The Goldstone Report should have gone to vote, plain and simple. The fact that it was deferred until next March is simply abominable, especially if the leadership had a hand in it. To quote a coalition of 16 Palestinian human rights and legal organisations that condemned the postponement decision, "Justice delayed is justice denied."

Joharah Baker is a writer for the Media and Information Program at the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH).

Our exclusive right to self-defence

Larry Derfner

Virtually all of Israel is now speaking in one voice against the Goldstone report, against any attempt to blame us over the war in Gaza. We've honed our message to a sharp point and, inspired by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's performance at the UN, we're delivering it with just the right tone of outrage: How dare anyone deny us the right to self-defence! How dare anyone deny us the right to fight back against terrorism!

Very nice. Puts everyone else on the defensive. The right to self-defence is up there with motherhood and apple pie -- who's going to come out against it, especially for us, for Israel, for the Jews, for the people of the Holocaust?

The right to self-defence -- perfect.

But I'd like to ask: Do the Palestinians also have the right to self-defence? We probably wouldn't admit it out loud, but in our heads we would say -- again, in one voice -- "No!" This is the Israeli notion of a fair deal: We're entitled to do whatever the hell we want to the Palestinians because, by definition, whatever we do to them is self-defence. They, however, are not entitled to lift a finger against us because, by definition, whatever they do to us is terrorism.

That's the way it's always been, that's the way it was in Operation Cast Lead.

And there are no limits on our right to self-defence. There is no such thing as "disproportionate." We can blockade Gaza, we can answer Qassams with F-16s and Apaches, we can take 100 eyes for an eye. We can deliberately destroy thousands of Gazan homes, the Gazan parlia-

ment, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, courthouses, the only Gazan flour plant, the main poultry farm, a sewage treatment plant, water wells and God knows what else.

Deliberately.

After all, we're acting in self-defence. By definition. And what right do the Palestinians have to defend themselves against this?

None.

Why? Because we're better than them. Because we're a democracy and they're a bunch of Islamo-fascists. Because ours is a culture of life and theirs is a culture of death. Because they're out to destroy us and all we are saying is give peace a chance. One look at the ruins of Gaza ought to make that plain enough.

Here is our idea of the "laws of war": When Israeli bulldozers rolled across the border into Gazan villages and flattened house after house so Hamas wouldn't have them for cover after the IDF pulled out, that was self-defence. But if a Palestinian boy who'd lived in one of those houses threw a stone at one of the bulldozers, that was terrorism.

The Goldstones of the world call this hypocrisy, a double standard. How dare they! Around here, we call it moral clarity.

Larry Derfner is a columnist and feature writer with the *Jerusalem Post*.



RAISINS AND ALMONDS

Don't be palmed off with the bad oil

It is disappointing that Food Standards Australia New Zealand does not require palm oil identification in packaged foods (Letters, October 2). Those concerned about the proliferation of Indonesian palm oil plantations and consequent habitat destruction may wish to follow my rule of thumb. If a product's ingredients include vegetable oil, take note of the saturated fat content. If it is half or more of the total oil content, it is a fairly safe bet that the "vegetable oil" is palm oil. [The production of palm oil is one of the worst causes of environmental degradation to Australia's north-Ed.]

If enough consumers shun palm oil-based foods such as biscuits and instant noodles, food manufacturers may feel compelled to use other oils with less environmental impact, with the bonus for consumers of a reduction in saturated fat intake.

[A letter from Anne Ackroyd to the SMH.]

PA seeks ITU help over mobile frequencies from Israel

The Palestinian Authority said it had asked the International Telecommunication Union to press Israel for more mobile frequencies. The ITU said in a brief statement that it had received the Palestinian request, asking both parties to cooperate. The radio frequency dispute between Israel and the Palestinians has been dragging on for over two years. Under an agreement between Israel and the PA signed in July 2008, Israel has to release 4.8 MHz, but so far it has released only 3.8 MHz. Following last year's agreement brokered by US and Middle East envoy Tony Blair, the PA awarded Wataniya Palestine a contract, making it the second mobile operator after the Jawwal network. Wataniya had hoped to launch its service by 15 October but has threatened to pull out if it cannot have the full 4.8 MHz. In June, the company demanded its investment back unless the frequencies were opened. The PA submission to the ITU said that if Wataniya withdrew from one of the largest investments in PA history, the government would lose revenue of more than USD 354 million in licence fees and taxes. The submission also said a withdrawal would kill off an investment of more than USD 700 million over 10 years that would create hundreds of skilled jobs and generate thousands more indirectly. **From Telecompaper via AJDS member Helena Grunfeld.]**

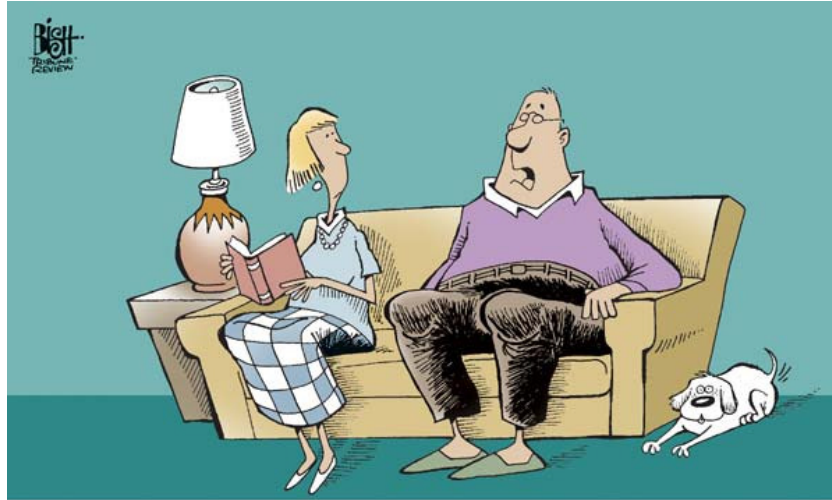
Palestinian TV airs daring satire

On "Saturday Night Live," which has long parodied politicians ranging from Jimmy Carter to Sarah Palin, these

characters would be well within bounds: An Islamist judge who is a latent homosexual. A negotiator who emerges from peace talks stripped to his boxers. A president who worries about his Israeli-issued checkpoint pass. But this is Palestinian state TV.

Première during the holy month of Ramadan, the first-ever Palestinian political satire show turns national leaders and military strongmen into absurd protagonists on its nightly broadcasts, winning a growing viewership.

A rarity across the Middle East, the comedic production known as "Watan a la Watar" marks a seminal experiment in self-mockery and free speech in a society torn by internal politics and hemmed in by Israel's military occupation.



IF A MAN YELLS "YOU LIE!" IN A ROOM FULL OF POLITICIANS, HOW DO THEY KNOW WHO HE'S TALKING TO?

"Through comedy you can reach the heart of the audience more quickly," says actor Manal Awad during a break in filming at an upscale Ramallah loft studio. "The Palestinian people deserve to laugh because we have enough drama. If you make people laugh at difficult topics, you force them to look at things with a different point of view."

[From Joshua Mitnick of the *Christian Science Monitor*.]

Anti gay church branches out to attack Jews

Wearing a T-shirt that proclaimed "God Hates Fags" and waving a quartet of antisemitic signs on the busy street corner, Shirley Phelps-Roper was getting exactly what she wanted: attention.

"You killed Jesus, you need to repent," she called out calmly in front of Beth Chayim Chada-shim, a Reform synagogue in Los Angeles, where she and a few other members of the Westboro Baptist Church stood surrounded by photographers, police and a few angry passers-by.

Infamous for their odious protests at military funerals, the



Antisemitic hatred in action

(Continued on page 11)

Al Jazeera censors West Papua film

Jason MacLeod

Recently, I watched *Pride of Warriors*, a documentary about resistance in West Papua. The filmmaker, Jono van Hest, had asked me to comment on the film's content as he prepared it for public broadcast on Al Jazeera International. Then, after an article about the film, which quoted Indonesian government sources, appeared in the *Jakarta Post*, *Pride of Warriors* was pulled from the broadcaster's schedule.

Van Hest's documentary was inspired by the arrival of 43 West Papuan refugees in Australia in January 2006. Faced with an Indonesian ban on foreign media, van Hest smuggled six video cameras into West Papua, which has been controlled by Indonesia since a sham referendum in 1969. Since then, West Papuans have been working to enlarge the prospects of freedom.

Two things about the film stand out to me. The first is the filmmaker's decision to portray unarmed civilian-based opposition to the Indonesian government's rule in West Papua. Van Hest highlights four separate stories: of Yani, the daughter of an independence leader, who was kidnapped and tortured because of her father's political activity; of Matias Bunai, a customary leader from Paniai who is fighting to keep his culture alive; of the rebel leader Tadius Yogi who has put down his guns and now advocates a peaceful solution to the conflict; and of Sampari, a group of young dancers who were interrogated by the Indonesian security forces for performing a dance.

These are stories that the Indonesian government does not want you to hear. As Al Jazeera has bought the rights to the film, its refusal to air it has effectively killed the film's distribution.

Matias and the Sampari dancers are struggling for fundamental freedoms: the right to display Papuan symbols like the banned Morning Star flag; the ability to practise their own cultural traditions in peace. These demands could be realised under the framework of an enlightened Indonesian state. Instead they are met with harsh repression

(Continued from page 10)

anti-gay church has branched out to target Jews in the past six months, picketing more than 170 synagogues and community centres with brightly coloured signs bearing slogans such as "God Hates Jews" and "Israel is Doomed."

While most mainstream organisations chose to ignore the antisemites, others have found creative ways to defy the picketers. Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum actually sent a thank-you note to Fred Phelps after Westboro picketed Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, a predominantly gay synagogue in New York's West Village, in June. That's be-

from the Indonesian security forces and central government.

The second thing that stands out for me is that the Indonesian government's alleged response to *Pride of Warriors* appears to be part of a sophisticated pattern of repression and control to maintain rule in West Papua. Brian Martin from the University of Wollongong has developed a framework for understanding how powerholders attempt to inhibit outrage to injustice.

Firstly, the Indonesian government effectively restricts international media and independent scrutiny of what is happening in its restive Pacific periphery. The recent banning of Red Cross visits to West Papua and the apparent attempt to prevent the broadcast of van Hest's film are the latest instances in a long sequence of silencing and marginalising critical voices.

Secondly, the Indonesian government stigmatises Papuan dissent and devalues Papuan identities.

Finally, the Indonesian government will use threats and intimidation to silence dissent. This is certainly what happens to Papuan political leaders and their families, including Edison Waromi and his daughter Yani, whose story of abduction and assault is featured in van Hest's film. While Papuans like Filep Karma receive a 15-year jail sentence for organising a nonviolent flag raising, few Indonesian police and soldiers are brought to justice for human rights violations. Of course, Papuans are not passive or silent in the face of this repression. They expose cover-ups and emphasise the overwhelmingly peaceful nature of the resistance and the courage and humanity of those involved. They reinterpret their experience under occupation as an injustice, mobilise public concern (rather than relying on formal procedures), and resist intimidation and bribery.

Van Hest has recorded the stories of West Papuans and brought them to a wider international audience. That is what the Indonesian government truly fears. By refusing to screen his film, Al Jazeera has come down on the side of hardliners in Indonesia.

Jason MacLeod is based at the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland, where he lectures in nonviolent political change and researches West Papuan resistance movements. Abridged from an article in TruthOut.org.

cause the congregation's supporters pledged money for every minute the Phelps family parked outside their temple holding hateful signs. The protest lasted 47 minutes, and the congregation raised \$13,500. Kleinbaum also led a peaceful prayer vigil outside the synagogue.

"I come from an activist background, and I do believe that voices of hate, even if they're marginal, need to be responded to," Kleinbaum said. "I personally believe it's a mistake just to ignore them. We have to stand up to evil now, and we have to do so in a way that's creative and focused and non-violent."

[From Rebecca Dube at the Forward.]



Jason MacLeod



Hunting Communists? They were really after Jews

Michael Freedland

It was a milestone in Hollywood history — actors, writers, producers blacklisted for their political beliefs. Sixty years ago, men and women, some of them with flourishing careers, were made to answer the question: “Are you now, or have you ever been, a Communist?”

The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), anticipating the “investigations” of Senator Joseph McCarthy shortly afterwards, chose Hollywood for the start of its onslaught against communism. At least, that is what they said they were doing. But any investigation into the investigations, to coin a phrase, reveals it was something else. For “Communist”, read “Jew”.

The hearings that took place in Los Angeles and in Washington between 1947 and the mid-'50s were as much (some would say more) antisemitic as anti-Communist. Hollywood was chosen for the attack because of the great publicity value the movie capital offered. It was also a great opportunity to get at the Jews of Hollywood. One after the other, the people called to give evidence to HUAC (in effect, put on trial by the committee) were Jews — not exclusively so, but enough to make the case.

On the floor of the House of Representatives itself, Congressman John Rankin made a speech which consisted of virtually nothing more than a list of Jewish names. The wife of the actor Melvin Douglas, Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas — whom a certain HUAC member named Richard Milhous Nixon had insulted by saying she was “pink, down to her underwear” — asked which films the committee really believed were helping the Communist Party. Rankin answered by reading some of the names that had appeared on a petition to congress: “One is Danny Kaye,” he began. “We found his real name was David Daniel Kaminsky. Then there was Eddie Cantor. His real name was Edward (sic) Iskowitz. Edward G Robinson, his name is Emmanuel Goldenberg.” The final cut was when he added, almost as an afterthought, the name of the congresswoman’s husband: “There’s another one here who calls himself Melvyn Douglas, whose real name is Melvyn Hesselberg.”

The musician Larry Adler, a refugee from Hollywood after being warned he was about to be put on the blacklist, told me shortly before his death: “What was worse were the letters Rankin wrote. One I saw began, ‘Dear Kike’.”

The petition Rankin mentioned was in support of the so-called Hollywood Ten, most of whom were writers, jailed after being denied the opportunity of making a statement

in their defence. They were unable to claim either the First Amendment, guaranteeing freedom of speech, or the Fifth, which said they could not be asked to incriminate themselves. Six of the Ten — John Howard Lawson, Alvah Bessie, Herbert Biberman, Lester Cole, Albert Maltz and Samuel Ornitz — were Jews.

Their appeal to the Supreme Court was rejected. The original chairman of HUAC, Martin Dies, had invoked the 1918 Sedition Act, which declared that anyone who was foreign-born (even if subsequently naturalised) could be declared a “non-citizen” — because “there are too many Jews in Hollywood”.

The most important Jews in Hollywood were, of course, the studio bosses — people like the Warner Brothers, Louis B Mayer of MGM, and Harry Cohn of Columbia.

They were among those responsible for the Waldorf Declaration — a statement issued after a gathering at the New York hotel which declared that they would never employ a Communist. The only one who would not sign was Samuel Goldwyn (born Shmuel Gelbfisch), who said that nobody was going to tell him how to run his operation.

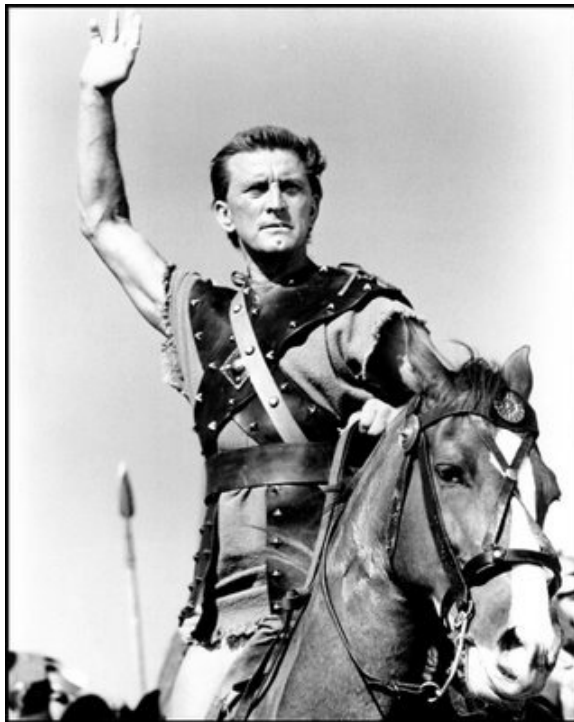
The signatories were cowards. They were scared that if they did not come out in support of HUAC, they themselves would be condemned as Communists, resulting in the collapse of their businesses. Once on the blacklist, actors could not get parts, writers could not submit scripts, directors could not get work.

Writers, however, did learn how to use “fronts” (Woody Allen made a film using blacklisted actors and writers — nearly all of them Jewish — called *The Front*, about a writer getting a restaurant cashier to submit scripts in his name). Actors had many more difficulties. No one could prove that Edward G Robinson

was a Communist, but he had a reputation for being left-wing. So this superstar was put on a “grey list”. Warners would not give him more than a few subsidiary roles in “B” pictures and ordered an article to be published under his name, called “The Reds made a sucker of me”.

He was luckier than many. The tough guy actor John Garfield (originally Jules Garfinkle) died from a heart attack at the age of 39 on the eve of being called before HUAC. A leading Broadway actor, J Edward Bromberg came to Britain, too, after being blacklisted — and died of a heart attack. The Jewish actress Lee Grant was blacklisted for speaking at a memorial service for Bromberg. She was told she could get off the list if she named her husband as

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Kirk Douglas

“I have been working for Hollywood for 60 years, made 85 pictures,” said Douglas. “The thing I am most proud of is breaking the blacklist.”

Marek Edelman's life of resistance

There were many descriptions of Marek Edelman, who died earlier this month, but the most telling one was that of the fighter who stood his ground. He was a fighter from his teenage years to his last day. He stayed fighting in the Warsaw ghetto till the last moment, and later refused to leave his native country, Poland. Marek Edelman was a very special person who was mourned not only by his fellow Bundists but by social democrats, revolutionary Marxists, Zionists and even the US State Department.

Although Edelman's birth certificate has never been found, it is believed that he was 90 when he died and that his father died when he was very young. His mother, however, was a big influence. He inherited her Bundist politics. But to describe his upbringing in that movement as anti-Zionist is analogous to describing Sir Robert Menzies as forming the anti-Trotskyist Liberal party – accurate as far as it goes, but how far is that? After all, in its time it was the most popular of the three currents vying for support among Eastern European Jewry.

Jewish Fighting Organisation

All the Jewish groups were determined to fight the Nazis. The Zionists (except the Beitarists who remained a separate force) joined with other Left groups to form the Jewish Fighting Organisation. The mass deportations to the death camps started on 23 July 1942, but the intense period of resistance started on 19 April the following year when the occupation forces moved to liquidate the Warsaw Ghetto. It was one of history's most heroic battles and is a well known story, although Edelman was always among those who tried to downplay the heroism as something displayed by those who had no choice. Many years later he explained why he was a deputy to Mordechai Anielewicz, of the left-wing Hashomer Hatzair movement, who was chosen as leader of the revolt. Edelman declared, in a book-long interview published last year in Poland: "Anielewicz wanted very much to be the leader, so we elected him. None of us wanted [the job] as much as he did. That was the only reason -- and the correct one. He had leadership qualities and he wanted to do it. What more is there to say?"

Edelman took over as leader on Anielewicz's death, finally leading those remaining in their escape from the Ghetto through the sewers, continuing to fight the Nazis with the Polish resistance. He took part in the general Warsaw Uprising over a year later. After the war he went to medical school, and was later recognised for pioneering work in the field of heart surgery. That wasn't enough to protect him from the wave of antisemitism in Poland after the so-called March Events of 1968. Many years later he described how he was blocked by the

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a Communist. She refused — and did not work for twelve years. Bromberg "died of a broken heart", the Israeli-born actor Theodore Bikel told me. "He was a victim of those antisemites, those fascists."

The blacklist lasted for those twelve years, but ended because of Jews, too. Kirk Douglas (Issur Danielovich) with

guard at the entrance to the hospital, who told him: "You may not know it, Dr Edelman, but you no longer work here." His wife and children left for Paris but he refused to do so. His experiences then were certainly one of the reasons he joined the Solidarity movement, even though by that stage he had his job back as well as a hero's recognition by the authorities.



Marek Edelman

Edelman visited his old comrades in Israel and maintained contact with them. But he never changed his view that the formation of Israel was a historical mistake. He was highly critical of Israel's practices towards the Palestinians. During the most violent period of the Second Intifada, he wrote an open letter "to commanders of the Palestinian military, paramilitary and partisan operations; to all the soldiers of the Palestinian fighting organisations." While not wavering from his long-term support for the Palestinian struggle, he called for a change of tactics: "Nowhere in the world can a guerrilla force bring conclusive victory, nowhere can it be defeated by weapon-full armies, Neither can your war attain any resolution. Blood will be spilled in vain and lives will be lost on both sides.

No peace without concession

"We have never been careless with life. We have never sent our soldiers to certain death. Life is one for eternity. Nobody has the right to mindlessly take it away. It is high time for everybody to understand just that..."

"You have to want peace in order to save the lives of hundreds and perhaps thousands of people, and to create a better future for your loved ones, for your children....some of you know me. You are wise and intelligent enough to understand that without peace there is no future for Palestine, and that peace can be attained only at the cost of both sides agreeing to some concessions."

Former Likud Defence Minister Moshe Arens, who has taken a lot of interest in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising described his own failed attempts to secure an honorary degree for Edelman. "I ran into stubborn opposition ... in Israel. He had received Poland's highest honour, and at the 65th commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising he was awarded the French Legion of Honour medal. He died not having received the recognition from Israel that he so richly deserved."

Sol Salbe

Spartacus, and Otto Preminger, who was directing *Exodus*, insisted that the writer of both films, the Hollywood Ten member Dalton Trumbo, should use his real name, not a nom de plume. "I have been working for Hollywood for 60 years, made 85 pictures," said Douglas. "The thing I am most proud of is breaking the blacklist."

Originally published in the London Jewish Chronicle.

The tropes of “Jewish antisemitism”

Antony Lerman

From the moment he took the job heading the UN Human Rights Council's mission to investigate human rights and international humanitarian law violations during the Gaza conflict, it was inevitable that Judge Richard Goldstone, born into a South African Jewish family, would be labelled a "self-hating Jew" and a Jewish antisemite. Immediately on the release in September of his findings, which concluded that both Israel and Hamas had committed war crimes, Israel's Finance Minister, Yuval Steinitz, couldn't wait to make this accusation.

He certainly wasn't alone. The charge is so popular these days that people who use it must have felt as though they had won the lottery when they were presented with such a high-profile target like Goldstone. They were probably still savouring Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's outburst in August when he railed against the two senior and Jewish aides of President Obama, Rahm Emanuel and David Axelrod, calling them "self-hating Jews".

Bogus and bankrupt

If anything finally shows up the concept as bogus and bankrupt, it should be its use against Goldstone. Jewish self-hatred means rejecting everything about yourself that is Jewish because it is so hateful to you. As a description of Goldstone, nothing could be further from the truth. A life-long Zionist and a Governor of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Goldstone believes bringing war criminals to justice stems from the lessons of the Holocaust and that the creation of Israel symbolised what the post-war human rights movement was all about. But to those who level the accusation, the real degree of Jewish affiliation of the accused is irrelevant.

Now it's quite obvious that calling someone a self-hating Jew in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict is intended as a demeaning political insult, a way of delegitimising the views of Jews with whom you violently disagree. But one of the reasons why the charge is so ubiquitous and is impervious to evidence and argument that proves it to be bogus is that it's not just used as an epithet. To some scholars and serious commentators, Jewish self-hatred is a proven psychopathological condition, an academically respectable category, and exponents of it can be found throughout history. Their testimony helps to underpin the accusation.

Professor Robert Wistrich, who heads an antisemitism research centre at the Hebrew University, accepts the concept without question and taught a course on it. Lord Sacks, Britain's mainstream Orthodox Chief Rabbi, endorsing the concept in his last two books, says it was born in 15th-century Spain. A recent convert to this way of thinking is David Aaronovitch, the *Times* and *Jewish Chronicle* columnist, who "discovered" that there was such a thing as a genuine self-hating Jew after encountering the virulently anti-Jewish writings of Otto Weininger, the brilliant young Viennese Jew who converted to Christianity in 1902 and killed himself a year later. And Robin Shepherd, of the Henry Jackson Society, in a thoroughly wrong-headed book out this month subtitled *Europe's Problem with Israel*, uses the concept to explain why leftwing Jews "publicly turn against Israel".

This is sheer intellectual laziness, or an ideological or political predisposition dressed up in academic language, or both. In fact, the way all of the key historical figures from the late 19th and early 20th centuries who are used to prove the existence of Jewish self-hatred – Weininger, Sigmund Freud, Karl Kraus, Heinrich Heine – related to their Jewishness has been shown to be far too complex to allow the self-hating Jew label to be anything other than a crude mis-characterisation. Moreover, the perceived antisemitism in their writings was mirrored in the writings of Zionists, especially the founder of political Zionism Theodor Herzl. He painted the weak ghetto Jew, in his 1897 essay "Mauschel", as "a distortion of the human character, unspeakably mean and repellent", interested only in "mean profit". Far from being the antithesis of Jewish self-hatred, it is arguable that Zionism was actually a display of it.

The Jewish self-hatred accusation assumes that there is a correct manner and degree to which people should express their Jewish identities in public; and that there is a particular set of core values and institutions which one should favour. Neither of these assumptions is justifiable on the basis of Jewish teachings or Jewish history. The accusation also assumes that Jewishness "is or should be a primary identity", and therefore to reject it or criticise it is somehow unnatural and wrong.

Identity

Yet, criticising an aspect of one's identity does not automatically imply criticism of that identity per se. Implied in the concept of Jewish self-hatred is the notion of a Jewish essence. But the long history of the Jews – integral to which is conversion, assimilation, a wide variety of sometimes clashing Jewish identities, the understanding that Jewishness can be any one of or any combination of religion, ethnicity or culture – makes nonsense of such an idea.

Those who use the accusation sit in judgment on the Jewishness of others. This might be understandable (though insulting) if you are, say, an Orthodox Zionist Jew. But it's clear that many prominent accusers are not of that persuasion. They are, rather, people who would object very strongly to Orthodox rabbis sitting in judgment when they claim the right to determine who is a Jew.

When the self-hating Jew allegation is levelled at someone with the degree of integrity of Judge Goldstone, who takes such pride in his Jewishness, and is orchestrated by the Israeli government and prominent Jewish leaders and commentators, the ugly desperation of the accusers is laid bare. Regrettably, given the appalling state of public debate about antisemitism and Israel-Palestine among Jews, no matter how clearly and how often the charge of Jewish self-hatred is shown to be nothing more than a political and personal insult that demeans the accuser and demonises the accused, it won't be going away any time soon.

Antony Lerman is the former director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research.



Antony Lerman

Jews on line

Vivienne Porzolt

There has been a veritable explosion of Jewish news/discussion on line. *J Wire* has been around a while, without announcing its presence with much vigour. Then we have the *Sensible Jew* blog by Alex Fein. Like too many in the community, she loves to hate Antony Loewenstein rather than read what he says. However, she brings a welcome challenge to the dominance of the official leadership and its intolerance of diverse views. Yet its name, "Sensible Jew", is heavily ideological, that is, Jews who agree with us, and it excludes serious criticism of Israel or questioning the nature of its role in Jewish life as not "sensible".

And now we have *Galus Australis*. While it claims to be non-ideological and that "it does not subscribe to any particular viewpoint", this is far from so. The name, meaning "Australian exile", hints at a strong Zionist agenda. Ironically the Ashkenazi rendition of the name excludes Israelis who like Sephardim, Anglo Jews, and Yiddishists will find the name incomprehensibly alien. It too loves to hate Loewenstein, but much more vociferously than *Sensible Jew*. For instance, Anthony Frosh claims in a vituperative article that Loewenstein "vouches for the credentials of Hamas." Philip Mendes is prominently featured with his recent launching of the official attack on Jews who question Zionism as "not really Jewish." However, *Galus Australis* has recently opened up to more liberal views, including Les Rosenblatt and Larry Stillman of the AJDS. It is therefore also

a welcome addition to the Jewish communal media which for too long has been monopolised by the *Australian Jewish News*.

Of course *Galus Australis* covers a wider range of Jewish issues than the Middle East, including religious ones, but others are more qualified than I to comment on the latter. Like the *Jewish News*, (at least until the recent change in AJN editorial policy), in the letters/comments section, it lets it rip.

The communal pre-occupation with Anthony Loewenstein is quite extraordinary. All the communal fears have been focused on this single individual.

Continually, the official media and leadership pick at the scabs of the emotional traumas born by our community from the Holocaust history, keeping the wounds open and inflamed. This no doubt maintains a usefully high level of fear that cushions the leadership and Israel from criticism and the community from inconvenient truths.

The deep denial of the realities of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is frightening. This reached a new high with the Wild West-style poster cover of the AJN of 25 September with a Wanted Dead or Alive full face photo of Judge Richard Goldstone. Headlined DISGRACE, the disgrace surely belongs to the AJN for its inflammatory mendacity.

For all this, the growing diversity of Jewish media must be welcomed and the AJDS *Newsletter* is part of the mix.

GALUS AUSTRALIS

Jewish Life in the Antipodes

Fears on October

Robi Damelin

Before you reach for your gun or a stone or a hand grenade or whatever weapon suits your fancy, before you are drawn in by the manic rhetoric of protecting your holy rights, before you are swept along with the crowd to protect all that is rightfully yours, remember the consequences. We, the Palestinians and the Israelis of the Parents Circle-Families Forum, know well what life becomes when we lose our children and brothers and sisters and family members.

How invincible we all feel before the knock on the door with the news which devastates a family and all who surround it! Please protect your children for they are our future. Please, before you reach for a weapon or give in to an anger mostly created for political reasons, know that no piece of land, no matter how holy, can make up for a smile from your child you will never see again.

Please leave behind this need to be right, leave behind all that inflames you to violent reactions and look into the eyes of your children and thank whoever it is you believe in for the blessing of their love. Look into their eyes and think about their lives and the responsibility we all owe to them. They do not choose a side at birth, as babies they are not aware of colour, symbols, flags or borders. They have not decided where to pray, or even how; when they cry, the colour of their tears are all the same.

How academic to talk on the media of a third Intifada, how academic to analyse political motivations, and how we all are herded into the machinations of political agendas without fighting back. We hear the voices of our children screaming from their graves, "Stop the violence!" You of all people of Israel and Palestine know what happens when we give in to these base emotions. You of all people know that after we were gone, all that's left is the endless longing, the hole in your heart, the bittersweet feeling that surrounds even the most happy of occasions.

Tell them to remember us all before they reach for that weapon; there is no revenge for a lost loved one.

Robi Damelin, Parents Circle - Families Forum, Bereaved Palestinian and Israeli Families for Reconciliation.



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