

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH QUARTERLY

MAGAZINE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY

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OF IHRA

DARK LEGACY
of anti-Israel rallies

Labor leader makes
major policy pledges
at ECAJ event



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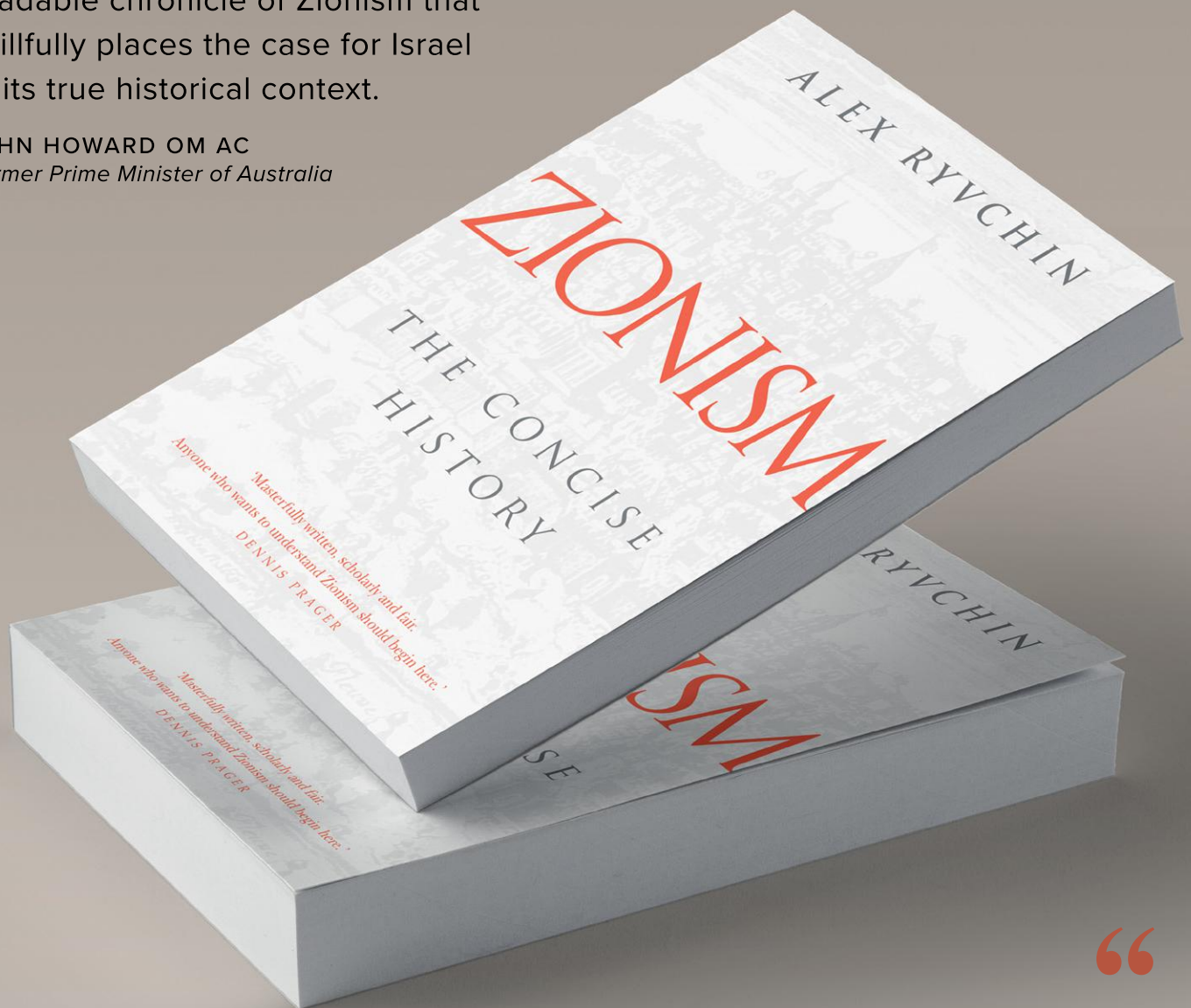
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THE WAR IS OVER BUT ANTI-ISRAEL RALLIES WILL LEAVE A DARK LEGACY

WORDS ALEX RYVCHIN

At the conclusion of a massive pro-Palestinian rally at London's Trafalgar Square, a convoy of cars packed with young men headed for the north London suburb of Golders Green, home to a large proportion of the city's Jewish community. The men were filmed bearing Palestinian flags and shouting "F*** the Jews, rape their daughters," through loudspeakers. During the rally itself, cries of "oh Jews, the army of Mohammed is returning", were recorded. Barbara Rich, a barrister and member of the London Jewish community said she "had never felt the proximity of ancient hatred here so strongly as today." Rich knows ancient hatred well as the daughter of a mother who survived the Holocaust and a father who fled the pogroms in Russia.

In Montreal, a small pro-Israel gathering was broken up by protestors who hurled rocks and shouted antisemitic slogans. In Toronto, a man with an Israeli flag was hospitalised after being severely beaten by a group of at least a dozen men with sticks. A young woman reported being sexually assaulted at the scene.

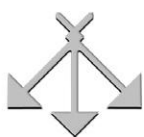
During the two weeks of the latest Israel-Hamas fighting, Jews were attacked on the streets of New York and LA by pro-Palestinian activists. Amid the violence, celebrities and public figures are beginning to rethink their hysterical reaction to Israel's latest clash with Hamas. The actor, Mark Ruffalo who had accused Israel of "genocide" over the civilian death toll in Gaza, which is around 100, subsequently apologised for his remarks, calling them "inaccurate, inflammatory and disrespectful," and acknowledging they could have been used to "justify antisemitism [in the US] and abroad." In an obviously coordinated response, several high-profile Democrats from the party's hard left paused their condemnations of Israel and expressions of intersectional sympathies with the Palestinians to issue statements condemning antisemitism along with Islamophobia, a perplexing response given that it is Jews and not Muslims that are reeling from violent assaults.

Australia has to date been spared the opinions of pop stars and athletes on how Israel and Hamas should

conduct themselves in their periodic confrontations. But the incitement and public hatred has been evident nonetheless. At rallies in Sydney, protestors displayed the flags of the Lebanese group Hizballah, whose external security wing is a designated terrorist organisation, which has routinely carried out antisemitic terrorist attacks abroad, including the bombing of the Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires in 1994 which left 85 people dead. Antisemitic placards, many with swastikas, abounded in rallies throughout the country. In Melbourne, a peaceful pro-Israel gathering proceeded despite a stream of online threats by those expressing solidarity with the Palestinians, including calls to "bring AK47s".

Attacks on Jewish targets in Australia have long coincided with escalations in the Middle East. In March 1991, the Bankstown and District War Memorial Synagogue in Sydney was virtually destroyed by arson. The attack was one of five incidents of arson and firebombing of synagogues and a child-care centre in Sydney over a five-month period.

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The attacks were believed to have been the outgrowth of a sharp spike in antisemitism in Australia during the Gulf War. Though Israel played no part, save for being the subject of Scud missiles from Iraq and threats by Saddam Hussein to unleash chemical weapons on its population, a general feeling of anti-western and anti-imperialist sentiment permeated through the anti-war movement. As history has long demonstrated, anti-anything in uncontained doses has a tendency to become antisemitism before too long.

The 2008 Gaza War, led to a three-fold increase in incidents of antisemitism in Australia. Protestors at Palestinian solidarity rallies chanted “bomb the Jews” and banners asserted that the Jews “deserved the Holocaust.” Around the time of the last major Gaza conflict, in 2014, at a Perth shopping centre a visiting Rabbi from Jerusalem and his assistant were set upon by six teenagers threatening to “fix [them] up” for “killing babies in Gaza.” In Sydney,

eight teenagers boarded a school bus servicing three Jewish schools and threatened to “slit the throats” of 30 terrified primary school children aged between 5 and 12, while shouting “free Palestine”, “Heil Hitler” and “all Jews must die.” The words “Zionist scum” were daubed on the wall of a Perth Jewish school.

Scenes of carnage from the Middle East have long animated the Australian public. The smouldering carcasses of Israeli passenger buses during the Second Intifada, the wails of air raid sirens, the roar of fighter jets, the scrambling of families to find shelter or to recover their dead. Public demonstrations can serve as a potent release of empathy to such events. Yet they can also reveal the worst of a movement; the sinister elements that reside within it, that seek to exploit popular outrage or grief to advance unconnected, long-held views that are dangerous and abhorrent. Political and community leaders have the obligation of keeping legitimate

peaceful protest from escalating into these extremes, and to prevent the introduction of the hatreds and violence of overseas conflicts into Australia.

The capacity of Australians to impact the hostility between the State of Israel and the Palestinian militants that seek its destruction, is limited. The clash of religious and nationalist movements and the power plays of rival factions and politicians are hardly susceptible to being modified by sentiments expressed on Australian streets 14,000kms away. But the manner in which the conflict has been reported, the words of public figures and the slogans of banners and flags of terrorist organisations directed by Australians to Australians will linger and the fabric of our cohesion, our shared freedoms to live in peace and stability may be irrevocably frayed.

This article was also published in The Spectator



ECAJ HOSTS MEETING BETWEEN FEDERAL OPPOSITION LEADER ANTHONY ALBANESE AND NATIONAL JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

On 13 July the ECAJ hosted Federal Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese for an online meeting with Australian Jewish leaders from around the country, chaired by ECAJ president Jillian Segal. ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim moderated the discussion which focused on the ALP's positions on Israel, combating antisemitism, communal security and other key issues for Jewish Australians.

During the interview, Albanese sent a strong message denouncing the use of the apartheid analogy to demonise Israel. "The use of terms like apartheid not only is not appropriate to describe the Israeli political system and structure, it also cheapens the struggle against apartheid that occurred in South Africa led by Mandela and others. It's a dangerous thing when people look for simplistic terms that are ahistorical. They are not only offensive to the people and structures to which they are directed but they are also offensive to where the term originated." Albanese also condemned the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) campaign, and recalled his active opposition to Marrickville Council's 2011 resolution

endorsing BDS – which he described at the time as "counterproductive self-indulgence."

In relation to recent attempts to gain acceptance for BDS, Mr Albanese said: "I pledge my ongoing opposition to BDS" and to recognise the rise of antisemitism both from the extreme right and extreme left.

He further endorsed Shadow Foreign Minister Penny Wong's rejection of the recent Queensland Labor conference resolution which accused Israel of "ethnic cleansing" and "apartheid".

Anthony Albanese added that if something along the lines of the Queensland resolution or a resolution supporting BDS were to be moved at a future State or Federal conference he would be opposed to it, as would his senior colleagues.

Re-affirming his and Labor's support for a two-State resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Anthony Albanese said "I have always been very concerned about those who argue, including some on the Left as well, that we can have a one-State

solution. A single, secular, democratic State is in my view just a recipe for ongoing conflict." Referring to the UN's historic endorsement of the two-State principle, he said "It has to be recognised why the Jewish State of Israel arose."

He added that he looks forward to engaging with the new Israeli government, especially over "issues we have in common" such as "scarcity of water", and "new technology".

He readily acknowledged that he would be critical of the actions of both Israel and the Palestinian leadership where and when he felt it appropriate. However, "where it goes into antisemitism – attacks on students, targeting Jewish schools and synagogues – there is a responsibility by political leaders to be aware of it and to speak about it."

Repeatedly expressing concern at the rise of antisemitism Anthony Albanese, when asked whether a future Labor government would follow the UK and other countries in endorsing the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, replied "Yes, is the



very clear answer. The Labor party has done that [in statements in 2016 and 2019], and that is our view. It is critical that there is leadership on those issues, leadership against any form of racism”.

He also said that, although this is under review, he was “absolutely” in favour of aligning specific elements of the Australian curriculum with broader government policies to combat specific

forms of racism and other forms of prejudice in order to promote social cohesion. He expressed support for educating students not only about positive values but also to recognise and challenge specific forms of prejudice, including antisemitism.

Noting that he hopes “to lead a Labor government in the next 12 months”, he emphasised that “we wouldn’t take any action (to recognise a Palestinian

State) without consulting relevant organisations and nations, including the Jewish community, Israel and the Palestinian community.”

The meeting received significant coverage with many supporting Albanese’s strong stand against antisemitism, regardless of any criticism he may have of Israel’s actions or policies.

ISRAEL AND APARTHEID: *Language Matters*

WORDS MICHAEL EASSON

George Browning's recent online critique of Israel as an apartheid state is highly critical of Labor Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese's refusal to deploy that label. Like Browning, I agree that words matter. Which is why I contest his commentary. This article highlights the background to Browning's remarks, offers a brief analysis of the apartheid analogy, and offers a social democratic perspective about the Israel-Palestine debate.

On Tuesday 13 July, Anthony Albanese publicly spoke via Zoom to an Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) sponsored event with around 70 attendees, mainly leaders representing the Jewish communal roof bodies, related organisations, and friends. The full video can be found here (on the ECAJ website).

Albanese said:

"I think that the use of terms like apartheid, not only is not appropriate for describing the Israeli political system and structure. It also I think cheapens to be frank the struggle against apartheid that occurred in South Africa led by Mandela and others. ... It's a dangerous thing where people look for simplistic terms that are ahistorical, because they are not only offensive to the people, the structures to which they are directed, they are offensive to where the terms originated as well."

Before analysing those remarks, it is interesting that "Albo" made clear he is a long-term supporter of the

rights of Palestinians to statehood, explained that he has been critical of certain Israeli policies (illegal settlements, etc.), but he said he had long opposed Boycotts, Divestments and Sanctions (BDS), expressed sympathy about the existential threats that Israel has faced since its modern foundation, and said how appalled he is about the rise in antisemitism on the far right & far left.

This is no sudden change of heart by the Opposition Leader. For decades, he has both been a member of the Australia-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group and the Australian Parliamentary Friends of Palestine. In 2011, during the New South Wales state election for Marrickville, his local bailiwick, and a seat held by his then wife, Carmel Tebbutt, the Greens bizarrely made the promotion of BDS a cornerstone of their campaign. Albo and Tebbutt called out the obsessive focus of the Greens against Israel, and they opposed BDS. The Greens were trounced in that election.

In Albo's ECAJ Zoom call, he re-affirmed Labor's support for a two-state resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, saying: "I have always been very concerned about those who argue, including some on the Left as well, that we can have a one-State solution. A single, secular, democratic State is in my view just a recipe for ongoing conflict." Referring to the UN's historic endorsement of the two-State principle, he said, "It has to be recognised why the Jewish State of Israel arose." Those

remarks show Mr Albanese is sensible. He endorsed the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, an organisation bringing together experts and governments on Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. The definition includes as an example "claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour."

Albo nailed Labor as the foremost Australian champions of the two-state solution. He showed that there is no incompatibility in proclaiming that a true friend of Israelis can be a supporter of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

But what about the apartheid label? Surely it is simplistic, naïve, ahistorical – terms Albo used – to describe Israel with that word.

Browning has a bet each way (as the title of his article suggests). On the one hand, he says: "I applaud the courage of Mr Albanese and his colleagues in the Labor Party for making this stand and for staking a claim on the right side of history", which is a reference to support for Palestinian statehood. But he bluntly says: "The focus of the anger lies in his refusal to accept the word Apartheid as the most apt way of describing Israel's treatment of Palestinians."

Let us analyse the concept. "Apartheid" is an Afrikaans word that describes racial segregation and discrimination that was enforced violently by white minority

governments on non-whites in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. We all know about the “whites only” restrictions. But the system was much more insidious.

Laws included the South African Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 which banned interracial marriages. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Amendment Act No 21 of 1968 purported to invalidate any marriage outside South Africa between a male citizen and a woman of another racial group. The Immorality and Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Amendment Act No 72 of 1985 consolidated various edicts. Unmarried sexual intercourse between Europeans and non-Europeans was illegal. The Group Areas Act of 1950 allocated blacks to one of ten designated black bantus or homelands, requiring blacks to have passports to enter South Africa.

The contrast with Israel is manifest. Arabs and Jews can and do intermarry; freedom in sexual relations is championed. There is a vibrant, effective human rights culture. The sole legal distinction between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel is that the latter are not required to serve in the Israeli army. This spares Israel’s Arab citizens from the obligation to take up arms against other Arabs. But many do volunteer.

In Israel, 21% of the population are Arab Israelis. and they vote. Elected Arab members of parliament sit in the Knesset. Raleb Majadele, a former Israeli Labour parliamentarian, served in various Cabinets from 2004 to 2015. At the elite Technion University, 20 % of students are of Arab background. Many Arab Israelis reach eminence in the professions. For example, Salim Joubran, on the Supreme Court, 2003-2017. Over a decade ago, the then Israeli Arab District Court Judge George Karra convicted and sentenced the former President of Israel, Moshe Katsav, to jail for seven years on a rape finding. In 2017, Karra was appointed a member of the Israeli Supreme Court.

Within Israel’s boisterous democracy all shades of opinion are aired; some even warn of the danger of apartheid should the West Bank be annexed; some warn in a stentorian voice that the threshold has been crossed. But rhetoric aside, within Israel the facts on the ground speak for themselves.

The situation is not ideal. Discrimination, inequalities, and injustices abound.

Sadly, discrimination exists everywhere. It exists in Israel. It exists in Australia. But discrimination is not apartheid.

Double standards abound. Australia is not routinely described as an apartheid state for its historic and ongoing mistreatment of its First Nations peoples.

Consider Turkey’s treatment of the Kurds, Morocco’s brutality towards the Western Saharan people, China’s confinement of its Uyghur minority to concentration camps – none of these nations are commonly condemned for engaging in apartheid. It is only the state of Israel that is singled out for differential and discriminatory treatment in the international arena.

The deployment of the apartheid slur is a calculated insult. Its purpose is to delegitimise the nation-state of Israel. In the past few months, a new dynamic is emerging in Israel. A former Israeli Labour Leader, Isaac Herzog, was overwhelmingly elected as President by the Knesset. The new Israeli government is very diverse, straddling left to right. Nervous anticipation marks most assessments. The government includes hardliners, ex-Likudniks, centrists, a wheelchair mobile minister, a Reform Rabbi, an openly gay minister, the Russian immigrants party, the remnants of the old Israeli Labour Party, and members of an Israeli Arab Islamic Party. It should not work in theory, but in practice, it currently holds together. A spirit of dignity pervades the new government. The mix of pro-settler ministers and liberal opponents threatens stability, however. A huge stimulus to support Arab Israeli projects,

in infrastructure, schools, training, communal services, is a large focus of the new government. The Arab vote matters. Women freely vote, in contrast to the rest of the Middle East.

I see Albo’s perspective as superior to Browning’s because Albo sees virtue signalling for what it is – unhelpful at best, and likely to make complex problems more, not less, difficult to resolve. Albo articulates a vision of a peaceful settlement; he sees two states bringing mutual benefit to the citizens of both. Albo understands twisting the meaning of apartheid to Israel is wrong and destructive. It also insults those who suffered through actual apartheid.

Albo was clear on the zoom call (which is public) that the ALP wants to work towards the achievement of two states, via a negotiated settlement between Israelis and the Palestinians. Browning claims that one “racial group” reigns supreme over another in Israel. But this claim stands in contrast to the actual reality: a nation with parliamentarians and government members from at least four religions and many ethnicities.

Finally, though he hovers over the point, Browning’s rhetoric seemingly calls for either the extension of Israeli law, with all its rights and responsibilities, overall the people currently in the areas of the Palestinian Authority (i.e., annexation by Israel) or the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state (which will not happen without war and a likely enormous loss of life). The conclusion to draw is that just as the BDS movement brought suffering to many Palestinians, with Browning’s nostrums the challenges, unintended consequences, the paradoxes, are not thought through.

Browning shows that even people of goodwill, compassion, with disdain for racism, seeking justice and dignity, can disagree. Not surprisingly, as a retired Anglican Bishop he tries to apply Christian principles to his assessment. His determination as President of the Australia Palestine

Advocacy Network (APAN), quoting from their website, to “harness... the passion of Australians to advocate for Australian policy to support Palestinian human rights, justice, and equality” is no mean feat. Especially considering the vile breaches of human rights in Gaza by Hamas, the PLO kleptocracy on the West Bank, and the widespread suppression of basic freedoms. Additionally, there is the problem that Palestinian schools propagandise children against the very existence of Israel, inciting hatred. The Palestinian Authority gives out payments to families of suicide bombers and terrorists arrested and detained. This highlights reasons for the lack of trust between neighbouring peoples.

I am sure many observers of the Israeli-Palestinian debate are appalled by the frequency of animus over the accuracy, selective facts, the “yes, but” arguments which seek to out trump opponents.

But it should not be all dust and confusion. Here are ten principles that I believe social democrats should apply to the region:

- 1. Democracy preferred to dictatorial regimes and movements;*
- 2. Human rights for all, across the Middle East;*
- 3. Celebration of the diversity and vitality of the cultures of the Middle East;*
- 4. Rejection of tyranny, misogyny, homophobia, racism, and theocracy;*
- 5. Opposition to racism in all forms –the racism of the far-right and far-left, racism against people from Muslim majority countries and backgrounds, and against the resurgence of antisemitism;*
- 6. Support of the right of both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples to self-determination through a negotiated lasting peace and a two-state solution;*
- 7. Defence of Israel’s moral worth and inherent right to exist as the nation-state of the Jewish people;*

8. Stand with the Palestinian people in their legitimate aspiration for a nation-state of their own;

9. Criticism of Israel, as of any other nation-state, is legitimate. But the de-legitimisation of Israel, the demonisation of Israel, and the singling out of Israel for differential and discriminatory treatment in the international arena deserves the strongest opposition; and

10. Solidarity with all peoples in the Middle East fighting against tyranny and oppression.

I see Albo’s explanations in his recent talk as speaking clearly in support of those principles. Language matters, as do the ideas behind the words.

This piece was also published in Pearls and Irritations



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RELISTING OF HIZBALLAH

On 11 May 2021 the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) commenced a review of the relisting of Hizballah's External Security Organisation as a terrorist organisation under the Criminal Code Act 1995. ECAJ had made a formal submission in response to this review, supporting the decision of the Minister for Home Affairs to proscribe the so-called 'External Security Organisation' (ESO) of Hizballah as a terrorist organisation.

The ECAJ has taken issue with the fact that the listing has once again been limited to the ESO, while the other elements of Hizballah have been excluded. This review has recently gained clear urgency when during the recent conflict in Gaza, flags of the Hizballah were seen in anti-Israel rallies in Sydney.

The Committee held a public hearing on 10 June hearing from Government agencies such as the Department of Home Affairs, ASIO and the Australian Government Solicitor, as well as from community groups and experts on Hizballah, who provided relevant evidence.

During the hearing, Chair of the Committee, Senator James Paterson, said that public hearings on these re-listings are an important part of the PJCIS's oversight functions and added "The decision to list or not list an entity as a terrorist organisation is significant, and parliamentary scrutiny of these decisions is crucial".

ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim said the committee's report has "at last shattered the myth that Hizballah's External Security Organisation operates as a discrete entity within it".

"We are especially heartened by the rare bipartisan unanimity on the committee about the need to proscribe Hizballah in its entirety," Wertheim stated.

"The onus now falls squarely on the Department of Home Affairs and DFAT to acknowledge that Hizballah operates with one heart and mind and that terrorism and other forms of criminality are an inseparable part of its enterprise, so that the whole organisation can be proscribed."

Following this, the PJCIS published on 22 June, its recommendation that the Federal government consider listing Hizballah in its entirety as a terrorist organisation. "The evidence provided to the committee was overwhelmingly supportive of proscribing Hizballah in its entirety as a terrorist organisation, rather than only the ESO. On the strength of this evidence, the committee thinks it's time for the government to consider expanding the listing as all of our Five Eyes partners have done," Senator Paterson said.

Deputy Chair Mr Anthony Byrne MP concurred, "It's clear that the distinction drawn between the ESO and the rest of Hizballah is arbitrary, and in the committee's judgement, not something Australia should persist with."

Extracts from the ECAJ submission:

"Hizballah is prosecuting a long war of annihilation against the State of Israel and it sees Jewish communities everywhere as targets of opportunity in that war. It appears that no country is immune from possible future



terrorist attacks by Hizballah and that preparatory activities are ongoing in many parts of the world...The threat posed by Hizballah is heightened by its role as a proxy for the governing regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

"To accept simplistically that the internal functional divisions within Hizballah signify the existence of discrete organisations is to endorse a fiction. In reality, there is a seamless integration between all facets of the organisation in chain of command, finances and personnel. This reality has been confirmed in the listing practices of other States and by the public statements made in support of those practices. It has also been confirmed in statements made by senior Hizballah commanders themselves. By their own admission, responsibility for terrorist activities reaches to the highest levels of command within Hizballah. It follows that Hizballah in its entirety, and not merely the

ESO, meets the Criminal Code requirements for proscription."

"Altogether, 22 countries and 2 regional organisations currently list Hizballah as a whole as a terrorist organisation. Two countries and one regional organisation limit their listing to the 'Military Wing'. Australia alone limits its listing to the ESO."

"Except for Israel, the countries... which have proscribed Hizballah in its entirety have also managed to maintain friendly relations with Lebanon. It is clearly possible to do both."

"Given its history around the world and in Australia, it is evident that the activities of Hizballah as a whole represent a security threat, a threat to social cohesion and a crime risk to all Australians, and to the Australian Jewish community in particular. We have therefore advocated for some time

that Australia list Hizballah in its entirety as a terrorist organisation, as have the other like-minded countries referred to previously."

"Because Hizballah operates with one heart and mind, the pretence that its internal divisions of labour represent discrete organisations potentially hamstring Australia's security and law enforcement agencies in protecting Australians from future terrorist activities by Hizballah of the kind they have carried on in other parts of the world."

"[A]lthough for the reasons already provided we would consider it an inadequate measure, Australia's listing of Hizballah should, at a minimum, be extended to the whole of the operation nominally controlled by the military council, namely the so-called 'Military Wing' of Hizballah, and should not be limited to the ESO."

ECAJ SUBMISSION TO AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM REVIEW CONSULTATION

In 2020, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has launched a process to review the Australian Curriculum from Foundation to Year 10 by refining, realigning and reducing the existing content of the curriculum in all eight learning areas by the end of 2021. The review process involved teachers and curriculum experts from all states and territories, the government and non-government sectors and consultation with national teacher and principal professional associations, parent groups and subject matter experts, including a 10-week public consultation period on proposed revisions this year from the end of April to 8 July.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry has lodged a submission in response to ACARA's Australian Curriculum Review Consultation focusing on key areas of concern for our Community.

The submission noted three dimensions to the revised curriculum, namely (i) content and elaborations for each of the learning areas (ii) general capabilities and (iii) cross-

curriculum priorities, with the second including the development of "Intercultural Understanding". In regards to that, the ECAJ raised the concern about the proposed reformulation of some of the sub-elements of this general capability. Another aspect was the need for the revised curriculum to establish a clear alignment between these general capabilities on the one hand and specific items of content and elaborations in named learning areas such as English, History, Science, the Humanities Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) and Geography, on the other.

The submission emphasized the increase in incidents reported by vulnerable communities of antisocial, prejudice-motivated conduct at schools, and the background of aggravated political and social polarisation fuelled by social media, therefore stating that the development in students of general capabilities of intercultural and ethical understanding has become more important than ever, and should be given high priority in the Australian curriculum.

The main points detailed in the submission:

- Highlight the increase in the number and severity of incidents of racially and religiously based bullying and abuse at certain public schools involving Jewish students as young as five years of age.

- Call for students to be educated to recognise and challenge specific forms of prejudice and extremism from the beginning of school, with reinforcement at appropriate points in the curriculum to Year 10.

- Call for students to learn to self-reflect about their own prejudices, and on the destructive effects of prejudice both in Australia and in other parts of the world, both historically and in contemporary society.

- Recommend that the Digital Literacy general capability address and challenge cyber bullying and online forms of racism, specifically including antisemitism, and instil respectful practices online.

- Make specific recommendations along the above lines for inclusion in the curriculum.

The ECAJ gratefully acknowledges the valuable input of educators and other stakeholders with whom it consulted. The full submission can be read on the ECAJ website.

Antisemitism

SEE IT?

EXPERIENCE IT?

REPORT IT.

WHY REPORT IT?

As the elected representative national body of the Australian Jewish community, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), liaises with government, the media and law enforcement to help keep our community safe.

It is vital therefore that we have accurate data on antisemitic incidents, whether vandalism of property, verbal abuse, online threats, leaflets or posters, or acts of violence.

WHERE TO REPORT IT?

Incidents of antisemitism occurring in Australia can be reported directly to Julie Nathan, the ECAJ Research Director, and author of the annual Report on Antisemitism in Australia.

Report antisemitism to: julie@ecaj.org.au



**Executive Council
of Australian Jewry Inc.**

AUSTRALIA PLEDGES TO EMBRACE THE IHRA WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), has warmly welcomed the announcement made by Prime Minister Scott Morrison by video link to the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism on 13 October 2021 that the Australian government “pledges to embrace the definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)”.

The Prime Minister emphasised that Australia has made this pledge “as a people and as a nation”, adding: “Antisemitism has no place in Australia. It has no place anywhere in the world”.

“The use of the word ‘embrace’ means that the Australian government sees this pledge not only as a formal, international

commitment but also as a profound expression from the heart of our most abiding national values – a fair go for all, mutual respect and personal freedom”, said ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim.

“It is also a matter of national honour that Australia has joined the ranks of other nations which have adopted the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism”.

ECAJ President, Jillian Segal AO thanked co-CEOs Peter Wertheim and Alex Ryvchin for their efforts, as well as the Expert Members of the Australian Government Delegation to IHRA, the Zionist Federation of Australia and AIJAC. “We have all worked closely on this issue, especially over the last 12 months”, she said. “I also acknowledge the support of a great many parliamentarians from the government and the opposition,

including Federal Opposition leader, Anthony Albanese”.

“This is a watershed in Australia in the unending battle against antisemitism”, Segal said. “It is the beginning, not the end of the journey. In order to make good on the Prime Minister’s pledge that Australia embraces the IHRA Working Definition as a nation and a people, it will need to be adopted by the public and private sectors, the University sector, civil society, school education systems and sporting organisations among others”.

“The government’s announcement has set the standard, for which we are grateful, and the challenge of making the Working Definition a reality in daily life lies before us.”



JEWISH WORLD

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THE LEGACY OF *Isi Leibler*

WORDS SUZANNE D. RUTLAND, OAM, PROFESSOR EMERITA

The passing of Isi Leibler, a giant in his generation, leaves a significant gap in the Jewish world. There is so much to write about his manifold contributions and legacy, but one thread that ran through his life story from the 1950s onwards was his deep involvement with and commitment to Australian Jewry's lay leadership institutions, particularly its national body, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ). Isi was a passionate Zionist and eventually he and his beloved wife Naomi settled in Israel in 1999 joining three of their children, who had gone on Aliyah previously – later joined by his eldest son, Romy. Yet, he devoted his energies and demonstrated strong tenacity in his efforts for the ECAJ. Through this leadership, both Australian and World Jewry realised many important goals.

Isi was born in Antwerp in 1934. His father Abraham (Roman) Leibler had moved with his parents from a small shtetl in Poland to Antwerp in the period and the family went into the diamond business. Due to the foresight of his mother, Rachel,

the family found a safe haven on Australian shores in 1939. His experiences as a 'reffer' Jewish schoolboy growing up in Melbourne, combined with his parents' deep involvement in Mizrahi religious Zionism, was to shape his life's endeavours.

After completing his Honours year in political science at the University of Melbourne, Isi went to Israel to study Hebrew with the aim of becoming an Israeli diplomat, but that was not to be. In 1957 his father died and his mother, Rachel, insisted that he not return home for his father's funeral but that he had to go straight to Antwerp to learn the diamond trade. This proved to be the turning point in his life – both personally and communally. He returned to Melbourne, worked to rebuild his father's business and in 1958 married Naomi Porush, who became his life partner for 62 years. Isi's business career later led to his becoming involved in the travel business and growing his travel company Jetset into one of the largest in the world. Yet, this was

merely a stepping-stone to enable him to follow his real passion – to work for the people of Israel and the Jewish world, a journey which had started when he was a teenager as leader of B'nei Akiva.

On his return to Melbourne after Roman's death, he assumed his late father's mantle in 1958 in what was then called the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies – now the Jewish Community Council of Victoria. He quickly became chairman of the Public Relations Committee, also serving in this capacity on the ECAJ when it was in Melbourne. In this role he pursued every avenue to combat antisemitism on the right at both state and federal levels. In doing this, he worked closely with his mentor, leading barrister, Maurice Ashkanasy, who dominated Victorian and federal Jewish communal leadership from the 1940s to the 1970s. Fighting against antisemitism was to remain a key concern throughout his time with the ECAJ.

At the same time, he also became involved with the campaign for Soviet Jewry. During a visit to Israel in the late 1950s he met the legendary Shaul Avigur, then the head of the Lishkat Hakesher (Liaison Bureau), who persuaded him to take on the issue of Soviet Jewry – he was to dedicate three decades of his life to this cause with commitment and passion.

His first achievement, supported by Ashkanasy, was to persuade William Crawford Haworth (later Sir), Liberal member for the Melbourne seat of Isaacs (from 1949 to 1969), which had a large Jewish electorate, to raise the issue of the persecution of Soviet Jews in the House of Representatives. As Sam Lipski and I discuss in our book, *Let My People Go: The Untold Story of Australia and Soviet Jews, 1959-1989*, the debate that followed led to Australia being the first country to raise the issue of Jewish practice and the abuse of human rights in the Soviet Union at the United Nations General Assembly in November 1962.

Again in 1966, as a representative of the ECAJ, he stood up to Dr Nahum Goldmann, as Isi described him ‘the King of the Jews’, at a meeting of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in Brussels. He accused Goldmann of *stadlanus*, because he was advocating secret diplomacy with the Soviets rather than public demonstrations against their persecution of Jews. Here was this young 32-year-old

upstart from Downunder – what I call the Edge of the Diaspora – standing up and attacking the most senior leader of the Jewish Diaspora.

Ashkanasy supported his young protégé, who had already created an international reputation for himself through his publication of a booklet, *The Soviet Union and Human Rights* in 1965. Together in December 1966 they wrote a strong letter that they sent to every Jewish community affiliated with the WJC criticising Goldmann’s approach.

This was to highlight Isi’s leadership style – he was prepared to stand up for what he believed in, regardless of the opposition. Commenting later on his leadership approach, he stressed that he believed a leader’s job was to lead, even if this went against the stream.

Subsequently, through the ECAJ, he managed to involve Australian Jewry across the spectrum, working with the Chairs of the Soviet Jewry campaign, Robert Goot in Sydney in the 1970s, followed by Melbournian Sam Salcman and later Diane Shteinman in Sydney.

By the 1970s, Isi had moved into the top echelons of Australian community leadership. After serving as president of the Board from 1974-1978, he was elected as president of the ECAJ. He was to serve a total of four terms – his last ending in 1995. As such, his

length of service only mirrored that of two older community stalwarts – Ashkanasy and Sydney David Einfeld.

Isi’s ability to build close friendships with key figures – and that particularly applied to both Bob Hawke of the Labor Party and Malcolm Fraser of the Liberal Party – was important with all his activities. These connections also added new status to the ECAJ. Both Fraser and later Hawke strongly supported Isi in his efforts to free Soviet Jewry and their support, especially in terms of his visits to the Soviet Union, was crucial. And, despite the political divide, it was Isi’s passionate belief in human rights of Soviet Jews that motivated both prime ministers.

Isi also played a key role in Asia with both China and India recognising Israel in 1992. Central to his Asian success, was the support he gained from the Australian Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, who instructed the Australian ambassadors to provide access to Isi with every Asian country he was trying to influence. This was true both in terms of supporting the rescission of UNGA Resolution 3379, Zionism = Racism and in recognising Israel, as with China and India, or strengthening ties with Israel.

It was Isi’s love of books and his amazing documentary collection that I was given access to twenty years ago that contributed to the key role he played on the world

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scene. When he was in Jerusalem in 1957, after completing Honours in Political Science at the University of Melbourne, Isi wrote to his parents that he would begin salivating from excitement whenever he passed a bookshop. At that time, he had to check how much he could spend with his parents, but later with his business success, he could buy whatever he wanted and until his last days he was still ordering books.

Isi wanted to complete a doctorate based on his research on the Soviet Union and human rights, but with his business and family commitments in the late 1960s, he did not manage to fulfill this dream. Yet, it was Isi's intellectual depth in addition to his business success that set him apart

from many other Jewish leaders. He was not only an activist but a commentator, starting with his first booklet on Soviet Jewry in the 1960s. His ongoing research and writing continued until the end of his life with his other publications and Jerusalem Post columns, 'Candidly Speaking', among others. With each of his main publications he consulted widely, and while he held strong opinions and could arouse conflict over key issues, he was also prepared to admit when he was proved to be wrong.

Throughout his many years of ECAJ leadership, Isi was involved in a myriad of issues. These included advocating for Israel, supporting efforts in terms of restitution for Australian Holocaust

survivors through the Claims Conference, promoting approaches to bring Nazi war criminals to justice, amending the 1975 Racial Vilification Act, and the list goes on. Whatever were the burning issues of the day, Isi was active in dealing with them.

Despite Isi's commitment to Jewish communal service in Australia and his almost five decades of service from the 1950s to the 1990s, he did not manage to create a firm financial basis for Jewish lay leadership either at the state level for Victoria, or at the national level. The ECAJ was established in August 1944 based on rotation between the two major centres – Melbourne in Sydney with its headquarters being located in the

respective Boards of Deputies. From 1952, when Australian Jewry became part of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany (known as the Claims Conference), the ECAJ was responsible for administering the funds both for individual restitution and community institutions, and it received a subvention for administration, enabling some professional structure.

However, this financial support ended in 1965, and until 2008 the organisation was run on a shoestring budget. Each Jewish centre was supposed to pay annual membership fees but often centres failed to meet their commitments and the absence of a permanent office meant that there was no continuity in professional leadership. In the period after 1965, the membership fees, combined with key volunteers making important contributions sustained the ECAJ, over time this became inadequate in meeting the challenges facing the community.

During his four terms as president, Isi met this shortfall by using his own office staff and staff employed through the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs, which he chaired. He always ensured that he had an executive director, including Hilary Rubinstein, Danielle Charak and Michael Cohen. Cohen often also ran the Asia Pacific Jewish Association, founded and led by Isi in 1980, which sought to meet the religious and educational needs of the small communities in the region, helping to strengthen these communities. He also organised colloquia in Singapore in 1984 and Hong Kong in 1987.

Nevertheless, by his fourth term he realised that this situation of relying on his office staff and Melbourne Jewish employees was unsatisfactory.

Drawing on the American model, Sydney-based Jeremy Jones was appointed as Executive Vice-President in 1992. Jones had worked as Public Relations Director for the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies in the early 1980s during the presidency of Leslie Caplan and then had gone overseas for a year. When he returned in 1985, Caplan did not wish to lose his expertise and organised for him to be employed by Australia-Israel Publications (AIP), which later became the Australia-Israel Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC). At the same time, Jeremy served as ECAJ Director when it was in Sydney.

Thus, in November 1992, as described in my biography, *Lone Voice: The Wars of Isi Leibler* (pp.510-512), the Sydney leadership supported Isi's election for a fourth term:

... in part because his expertise was unsurpassed and, truth be told, because Isi had the money and the willingness to fund the cash-strapped organization. As Sam Lipski reported in the *Australian Jewish News* in December 1992, Caplan was blunt: "The ECAJ does not have an office; it does not have a chair; it doesn't have a typewriter"; the organization relied on others for its backup...

It was uncontested that Isi, now sixty-two, was the most influential figure in Australian Jewry. This stature gave him elbow room to make the council more consultative without fear of his goals being undermined. Times were changing, and top-down leadership was no longer the best way to achieve results. Moreover, Jewish people, like everyone else, had been battered by the 1991 economic recession, which complicated the structure and organization of the community...

Not for the first time, Isi would have to reach into his pocket to help cover communal expenses while sharing decision-making power...

Isi had lobbied – unsuccessfully – for the Victorian community to introduce a joint communal appeal similar to the Sydney model. As a result, he was left with little choice but to run things on a shoestring budget. Fortunately, Jeremy Jones's job was covered by Australia/Israel Publications, and the ECAJ made do with a single part-time administrative assistant.

In October 1993, the council's honorary treasurer Gerry Levy made public what everyone knew: "The operation of the ECAJ would not have been possible but for the assistance of Australia/Israel Publications, the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs, Mr Leibler's office and most importantly Mr Leibler himself." Unable to raise needed funds from the community's coffers and even with Isi at the helm, the Executive Council was constrained in what it could accomplish.

Despite the financial constraints, Isi succeeded in laying the groundwork for a permanent ECAJ administrative office in Sydney. Meanwhile he showed full confidence in Jeremy Jones, who struck him as an outstanding professional. Paradoxically, since Jones was not on the ECAJ payroll, he was not personally beholden to Isi and felt at ease telling his president when he disagreed with him, even as Isi felt comfortable deferring to Jones on the merits.

Yet, with Isi's retirement from the ECAJ, the ECAJ still did not have a permanent, professional secretariat. Every subsequent president expressed their strong concerns about this lack and advocated the need for change. It took until 2009 during the first presidency of Sydney-based Robert Goot for this to happen. In June 2009 Peter Wertheim, was appointed as executive director of the ECAJ and a



permanent office was established in Sydney. Wertheim brought with him a wealth of experience, having been a practicing solicitor for over 30 years, served as president of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, and been involved in many key ECAJ activities on a voluntary basis. Commenting on

his appointment, Isi said he wished he would have had Peter Wertheim running ECAJ during his presidency. Since then, the professional structure of the ECAJ has broadened, with the appointment of Alex Ryvchin as co-CEO with Wertheim. These changes have ensured the continuation of

strong national leadership, something that was so important to Isi and something to which he dedicated much of his life. Their following in his footsteps is part of his legacy.

REVENGE THROUGH REMEMBRANCE: WHY WE HONOUR THE MARTYRED SOVIET JEWS

WORDS ALEX RYVCHIN

Alex Ryvchin, Co-CEO of the ECAJ delivered the keynote address at the community's annual Yom HaShoah commemoration event, before an audience of federal and state parliamentarians, diplomats, civic and communal leaders. His speech told the chilling story of the extermination of the Soviet Jews during the Holocaust by the Nazi killing squads and their local collaborators. Long overlooked in the study and commemoration of the Holocaust, their stories are now being told.

In *The Jews of Silence*, Elie Wiesel writes that there is only one reason why a Jew travels to Kiev. That is to see Babi Yar. So it was for me when a few years ago, I returned to Kiev, thirty years after my family had surrendered their Soviet passports, became stateless, emerged through the gauntlet of abuse and ritual humiliation that applying to abandon the Soviet Union entailed, and quit that place forever. My family had lived and toiled and fallen in defence of that soil for as many generations as we can trace. Yet the material aggregate of our family history was a few canvas bags crammed with photo albums and the necessities that my parents

and grandparents assumed could not be obtained outside the Soviet sphere, ceramic containers adorned with little moles and hedgehogs and a couple of Zenit wristwatches that could be pawned if circumstances necessitated.

When I landed back in Kiev, after successfully making it through passport control without being denounced as a rootless cosmopolitan or interrogated as a Zionist agitator (the clerk was in fact genial bordering on flirtatious), I felt a great anxiety to get to Babi Yar immediately as if to see a frail relative for whom time was limited. Kiev is a glorious city, particularly in late September when I arrived. The weather is still mild, the air is sharp and filled with the smell of chestnuts that leaves you heady, the food is sensational, the sites are powerful and evocative. But none of this interested me. Not even the black caviar in the Bessarabian Market or the statue of Bulgakov and the debauched feline from *The Master and Margarita*, at his feet. All I wanted was to be at the killing field known as Babi Yar. Just a few years ago, the story of

what happened in that place, was virtually unknown, except by scholars and deep readers of the Holocaust. But every Jew from the Soviet Union knows the words “Babi Yar” and is immediately frozen into panic by them. Babi Yar stands for the culmination of centuries of degrading the Jew in the eyes of the wider population. The church, the Tsars, the intelligentsia, the propaganda of the Communist Party and the lionised nationalist butchers like Bogdan Chmelnitsky all bear responsibility for this.

When I travelled to Babi Yar, it was in part an act of commemoration to honour the memories of our sacred dead across Europe. To remember the lives of the Jews of Kiev, people indistinguishable from me in appearance, in native tongue, in cuisine, and to contemplate by what chance my family had the fortune to be evacuated a few weeks before the city fell, a turn of fate through which I was born, and 33,771 wretched souls went to that ravine in late September 1941 joined by tens of thousands more over the remainder of the war.



I also came in hope of grasping how the events that happened there could occur. How it could be that within days of the withdrawal of the Red Army from the city, a peaceful, well-integrated civilian community could simply be plucked from their ordinary lives and led to that ravine, looted, stripped naked and murdered in their tens of thousands. How could their Ukrainian neighbours line the streets to watch the spectacle of howling Jewish children being taken to die, of old women carrying their bundles to nowhere, while the unceasing staccato of gunfire played the beat of their slow death march? How could they have cheered and taunted, helped themselves to the possessions of people among whom they had lived for generations, and deposited more tip-offs to the Germans about hiding Jews than the Nazis could process? And how could these scenes be

repeated, day after day, in towns and cities and villages across thousands of miles of Soviet territory?

How was it that a force of 3,000 killers of the Einsatzgruppen could be allowed to carry out the murders of 1.5 million people in a land they did not know? How could it pass that the well-educated, cultured men that filled the ranks of the killing squads could perform their work of hunting and terminating every single Jew, not only with a deathly efficiency but with an unmistakable sadism?

What cowardice, what malice, what mania lurks within ordinary men and women that such crimes, rendered on the weak and defenceless, could occur?

It was my vain attempt to gain some insight into these questions that had

drawn me to Kiev. And I left no closer to understanding. Only with a fear that everything we think we know about one another, the rationalism and underlying goodness that we claim for ourselves and thus impute to others, is a mirage. That all it takes is upheaval, the erosion of order and the emergence of opportunity for aspects of humanity that we pretend don't exist, to overwhelm everything. I nevertheless returned home with a renewed determination to ensure that what happened to the Jews of the Soviet Union during the Holocaust, the identities of their killers, the depravity of their methods and the stories of their victims should be known to every Jew. I am not alone in this undertaking. Over the past few years, articles have been published in journals and newspapers, commemoration ceremonies have been held, a monument was unveiled in Sydney, and a spectacular production of Shostakovich's Babi Yar Symphony was staged in Melbourne. The decision by the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies to focus this year's Yom HaShoah event on the Holocaust in the former Soviet Union will mean a great deal to every Australian Jew of Soviet descent. More than that, it will mean that through these acts of remembrance and education, in some small way, we have thwarted the killers who sought to obliterate not only Jewish life but any memory that our people ever lived and died.

This article was also published in The Australian Jewish News.

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Q&A

JEWISH ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP CORPS *spotlight on members*

The Jewish Advocacy & Leadership Corps is the flagship program of the ECAJ. Bringing together the brightest young professionals in the Jewish community, it provides training and development to prepare our members to lead and advocate, and actively guides members into crucial communal positions around the country.

TAL SZUMER MENASHE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Tell us a little bit about your background and professional experience.

I was born and spent my early years on a small kibbutz near the Kinneret called Kadarim and moved to Australia at age 8. This kibbutznik then became something of a beach bum, and from 8 to 18 I lived on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland.

I completed a double degree in law and government and international relations at Griffith University in Brisbane in 2020 and now I am in the graduate program at the National Indigenous Australians Agency in Canberra.

What is the reason you decided to join the JAL Corps program? What are the unique skills the program offers?

My family always impressed upon me the importance of place, history, and belonging and the role that an active community plays in the life of individuals. During my uni years in Brisbane, I experienced the difference that individuals make to creating those community. I think communities have changed drastically in the last 50 years, the Australian and global societies, the Jewish communities as well.

What are the main challenges facing Jewish communities today and what are the possible ways to address them?

In some ways we are not as connected as we used to be, and in other ways we are more connected than ever before.

Keeping our community connected and engaged is a significant challenge, while it requires a lot of creative problem solving, it also requires some good old hard work and enthusiasm for the benefits of community however it is expressed.

How do you see your contribution to the leadership of the Community in the future?

I think making young people feel welcome and engaged in their community is the way forward and I look forward to learning from, and developing with, the other leaders and members of the JAL Corp this year and into the future.





Q&A

JEWISH ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP CORPS *spotlight on members*

LIAM O'CALLAGHAN
NEW SOUTH WALES

Tell us a little bit about your background and professional experience.

My name is Liam O'Callaghan and I work as a political staffer. After a stint in NSW Parliament, I have been working for a Federal Senator as a speechwriter and advisor for the last two years. For the past three years I have also been the Chair of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies' Social Justice Committee.

What is the reason you decided to join the JAL Corps program? What are the unique skills the program offers?

I joined the JAL program because I wanted to meet with Jewish leaders my age from all around the country, make connections with them, and discuss the problems that face our respective communities. The JAL program so far has given me that

opportunity, as well as some excellent insights into Jewish history, the media, and contemporary Zionism.

What are the main challenges facing Jewish communities today and what are the possible ways to address them?

I believe that the two main problems facing Jewish communities around the world today are the rise in antisemitism, started by ancient prejudices and turbocharged by social media and the internet, as well as a growing apathy amongst young people to get involved in communal activities. To combat antisemitism I think we need more education on the Jewish narrative, as well as greater visibility in Australia as to our customs, practices, and beliefs. In relation to the lack of young leaders in

communal activities and politics I think our current leaders need to be more vocal about issues that matter to people my age like climate change, the stalled peace process, and social justice.

How do you see your contribution to the leadership of the Community in the future?

I aim to stay a Director of the Board of Deputies for the next 5 years but after then I would love to try my hands at a completely new organisation and get involved in their leadership. Hopefully, through this program, I will be able to find another organisation that inspires me.

BUILDING FUTURE LEADERSHIP IN THE CONTINUOUS FIGHT AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

WORDS JULIA SUSSMAN
JEWISH ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP CORPS

The growing reach of antisemitism is hitting closer to home than ever before. Our community's need for political support and stability is once again paramount. During the most recent Israel conflict, we were reminded how quickly antisemitism can rise and infect hearts and minds. Jewish communities worldwide were impacted by the alarming toll of clear-cut cases of hatred and discrimination for no reason other than the subject of the attack being Jewish.

We are fortunate to have highly organised communal roof bodies in the ECAJ and the Board of Deputies with the ability to react and defend us when Israel and the Jewish people are under attack. However, the changing landscape of social media means we need to increase our online presence, strengthen our voice and further our reach if we want to gain any traction on limiting the spread and instances of antisemitism and their pernicious political consequences for our community.

To make this happen, we need to engage our young adult audience, activate our community, and build a strong and united online voice. I believe I have the experience, dedication, and vision to lead this effort.

Our community is fortunate to have an extensive list of leadership and advocacy programs; I have participated in most of them and even run a few. We need to focus on activating the graduates of these programs to engage in the work required to combat antisemitic rhetoric and build political security. To achieve this, we need to give the young adult audience a voice and a platform to do what we do best, be a voice on social media to engage our peers, political leaders, influential change-makers and other community leadership bodies. By establishing a targeted and unified response, we create the opportunity to build a community of educated advocates with the skills to disarm the dangerous antisemitic testaments we are all feeling the impact of.

I am the Co-Founder and Managing Director of Youth HEAR, an organisation dedicated to mitigating hate by connecting young adults with the memory of the Holocaust. I also fill the role of Co-Chair of the Sydney Alliance and am a Director of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. Through my journey to get to these roles, I have been supported and heard by our community. I have developed my voice and had unbelievable inspiration and mentors who have helped shape my skills and network. The JAL Corps program has complied in all these steps and put it in a coordinated program for my cohort and future cohorts of active and engaged advocates for our community. The JAL Corps program allows the participants to workshop ideas, responses, and engagement strategies with 40 of their fellow young adult leaders. This is unique to the JAL program and offers a powerful forum for our community to build its voice and advocacy to combat antisemitism.





'20 OLYMPICS IN '21 AMIDST COVID-19: *The Experience of Israel and Australia*

WORDS JEREMY UNGAR
JEWISH ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP CORPS

The dust has settled on the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as the Olympic torch is extinguished and passed on to Paris for 2024. I can't help but note a few observations – the 2020 Olympics was held in 2021 but not rebranded as such, much like COVID-19, which broke in Wuhan in December 2019, but received the world's attention only in the beginning of 2020. After the Olympic Games was postponed in 2020, I didn't think it would be a fair Games if it was to be held the following year- not because of the ROC competitors, but more due to the fact that the countries with fit athletes who could train, travel and be vaccinated would have better chances to succeed, leaving in their wake the less fortunate countries that couldn't afford to make the trade-off and send their Olympians to the unknown.

The 2020 Tokyo Olympics was a very successful Olympic Games for Australia and the most successful Olympic Games for Israel. Is it a coincidence that these two countries, overcame their 2020 COVID challenges better than most?

Israel championed her fight against COVID as the rest of the world watched the little battler on the Mediterranean slice swiftly vaccinate their adult population.

Rewind a few months and Israel, despite their accelerating MedTech industry, faced the challenge of a strong-headed population not obeying stay-at-home orders in cultural clusters, with the country on the brink of being overtaken by the virus and enacting very strict lockdown restrictions. With telehealth solutions, robotic doctors, and nurses; and makeshift army barrack-style treatment tents, Israel fought and kept the virus at bay just in time for the super-successful fast-paced vaccine rollout to achieve herd immunity. And so, Israelis went back to work, resumed business as per normal and athletes were able to train, travel to Tokyo and bring back two gold and two bronze medals – an unprecedented achievement.

Israeli success, notably in gymnastics, in the Olympics was helped by its

Russian immigrants, just as they have helped Israeli technological developments since the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet Union and mass-migration of scores of highly educated and scientifically skilled migrants to Israel.

Australia had a different battle to contend with against the global pandemic. In Australia, we successfully curtailed the virus in the beginning whilst we lived our lives as normal when countries around the world were succumbing in droves. Athletes learnt of the delayed Olympic Games, which was a blessing for some who were injured and would struggle to qualify for the 2020 deadline, but a curse for the ageing athletes who might not be able to extend their training for another year. It's no secret that Australia invests heavily in athletes competing on the world stage, especially in fields of previous success, such as swimming.

Despite a few bungles by State Government allowing the virus to circulate, and some mishaps by the





Federal Government in not securing vaccines, Australians managed to live a relatively normal life and have their athletes do their physical due diligence, while the Government fast-tracked the Olympians' vaccination campaign ahead of the vulnerable and potential super-spreaders, for them to embark on flights to Tokyo and compete, where we won 17 gold medals and finished in sixth place. Pretty impressive for a nation of only 25 million people.

Unfortunately, the Delta variant struck while the athletes were away. However, for two weeks us sport-loving Australians managed to forget about forced lockdown, routine testing, and vaccinations. We even also managed to secure the rights to the 2032 Olympic Games, beating out no other country with the disposable Government income to tender for the bid. Delta also struck Israel but differently to Australia, in that it hit the young population but similarly how both countries' populations were living with relative freedom beforehand. Israel has now embarked on vaccinating their elderly population with a third vaccine and questions are arising whether this will be an ongoing occurrence like the flu shot. They have also begun vaccinating children.

Israel and Australia both see the Olympics as a chance to shine on the world stage before a global audience. Time will tell if money and effort was well-spent on the Olympics. Although, it seems that on a world stage both countries are champions against the pandemic in 2021, where we have athletes returning home with gold medals. Both countries are competitive and reward success and both countries' athletes were successful in crowd-less stadia against largely depleting non-first-world nations who really

couldn't sacrifice the same for temporary glory. Since Israeli medical technology is world-class and Australian athletes are world-class trainers and performers, it begs the question - was it all worth it? For those two weeks it was. 2022 and 2023 will be the proving ground of community sentiment around money-well-spent and we hope that 2024 in Paris will yield further successes, with all of us able to travel and support our Green and Gold and Blue and White teams.

Jeremy holds a Master's Degree in Business Economics and specialised in Microeconomics, Game Theory, and International Trade Economics. He is working at the Israel Trade and Economic Commission in Sydney, Australia, which is the commercial and investment arm of the Israeli Embassy in Australia. He helps Israeli companies export to Australia by providing market reports and connections with local contacts. Jeremy manages the following sectors at the trade commission: Healthcare & Medical, Electronics, Food, Automotive, Industry 4.0, IoT, Dental, Packaging & Plastics, Education. He is also a member of the Jewish Advocacy & Leadership Corps.

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Maccabi Australia Inc
National Council of Jewish Women
B'nai B'rith of Australia/ NZ
Jewish National Fund of Australia
Joint Distribution Committee Australia

OBSERVERS

Council of Progressive Rabbis
Federation of Australian Jewish Ex-Service Associations
New Zealand Jewish Council
Zionist Federation of Australia
Council of Orthodox Synagogues of Australia

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The ECAJ acknowledges and thanks these organisations for their generous support of our work

ECAJ IMPACT IN PICTURES

A sample of our LEADERSHIP and
ADVOCACY - *at home and abroad.*



Meeting of faith community representatives with NSW Minister for Education, Sarah Mitchell.



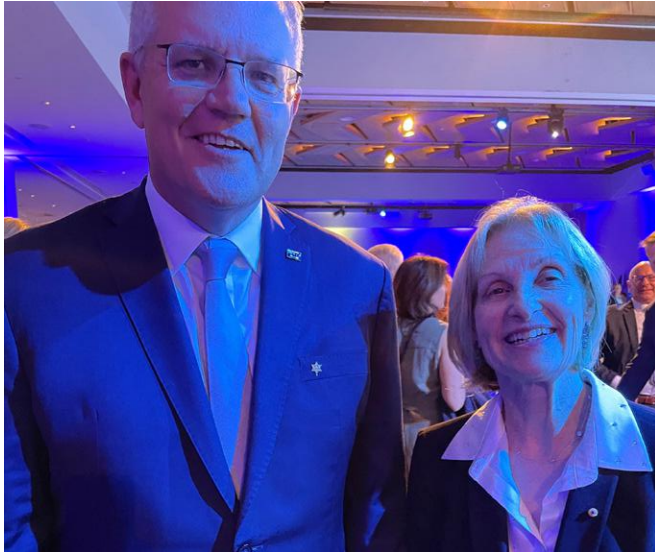
ECAJ President Jillian Segal AO at Yom Haatzmaut function Sydney.



Alex Rytchyn delivering the keynote address at the Yom HaShoah commemoration event in Sydney.



Alex Rytchyn speaking at the Mt. Meron Disaster commemoration event in Sydney.



ECAJ President Jillian Segal AO and Prime Minister Scott Morrison at UIA Dinner Sydney.



Vic Alhadeff joins the ECAJ as a media consultant.



Alex Ryvchin on Sky News discussing media bias during the latest Israel-Hamas fighting.



Alex Ryvchin speaking to Kesser Torah students on combating online antisemitism and anti-Zionism during the latest Israel-Hamas fighting.



Dave Sharma MP and ECAJ President Jillian Segal AO - Rally for Israel.



Alex Ryvchin speaking at the WJC 16th plenary assembly on Zionism and Generation Z.



Peter Wertheim presenting the ECAJ submission to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence & Security session discussing listing of Hizballah ESO as a terrorist organization.



President Jillian Segal AO Address at the Rally for Israel.



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