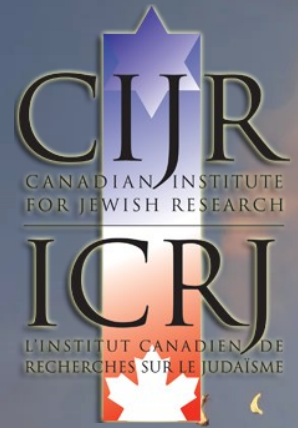


DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Issue No. 38, Spring 2024



Israel Fights Back

In this release:

- Antisemitic Marriage between Islamism and Progressive Left
- Faculty silence
- Cyberwarfare between Iran and Israel
- Media Disinformation
- AIPAC evolution; Bipartisan Support
- Secular and Religious Divide in Israel
- Jewish and Zionist identity, and more

CONTENTS



EDITORIAL

JONAH FRIED

[PAGE 3](#)



Canadian Universities (Lack of) Response to Oct. 7

JOSHUA SCHECTER

[PAGE 5](#)



How the Antisemitic Messages of Hamas and The IRGC Penetrate and Reinforce the Progressive Left

TAYLOR SHARON LEVY

[PAGE 8](#)



The Not-So-Discreet Cyberwar Between Israel and Iran

TAYLOR SHARON LEVY

[PAGE 11](#)



The PFLP-FLQ Love Affair

JONAH FRIED

[PAGE 14](#)



Advocacy Journalism, Accuracy, and the Arab-Israel Conflict

JONAH FRIED

[PAGE 17](#)



Fighting BDS and Bias in North American Student Newspapers

SOPHIE SKLAR

[PAGE 20](#)



The False Conflation of Zionism and White Supremacy

SOPHIE SKLAR

[PAGE 23](#)



AIPAC and the Future of Bipartisan Support for Israel

MITCHELL STEIN

[PAGE 25](#)



Reconciling Israel's Religious and Democratic Identity

SAMUEL MALAMUD

[PAGE 27](#)



“God Will Bring You Together Again”: The Role of Prophecy In the Jewish People’s Return to the Land of Israel

SAMUEL MALAMUD

[PAGE 30](#)



The Treatment of Animals in Judaism

HAILEY OLDFIELD

[PAGE 32](#)

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST



EDITORIAL

JONAH FRIED

At the beginning of 2023, Israelis re-elected former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. His landmark coalition - an alliance between his conservative Likud Party, several Haredi factions, and others - is the most conservative government in the Jewish State's 75-year history. Although many left-leaning Jews in Israel and the Diaspora were astonished that anyone could vote for "Bibi" again, they should not be so surprised. Iran's terrorist pawns had carried out numerous vile acts over the last two years, most recently on Holocaust Remembrance Day, when a gunman massacred several Jews praying at a Jerusalem Synagogue. As the previous (comparatively left-wing) administration learned during May 2021's operation "Guardian of the Walls", Iran's Palestinian proxies do not care who the government is.

Israelis voted for security, which on October 7th was decimated. Even as Hamas, with the support of 71% of the Palestinians, engaged in its latest intifada in all its gory and horrendous details, Canadian "progressives" - especially elite university students - celebrated the terrorists' asserted self-righteousness as if it was a noble "resistance".

This crisis threatens us all, not least Jewish undergraduates. Fortunately,

since the dawn of the twenty-first century, CIJR has been waging its own "resistance". Its student-run magazine, *Dateline: Middle East*, is an arsenal of truth. These essays do not destroy buildings, but they can influence policy. With an eye to the upcoming 2024 U.S. election, it is imperative that accuracy - not "advocacy" - guide lawmakers' deliberations. Even though many of these articles were written in 2022, they are amazingly applicable today, given the overwhelming turmoil enveloping Israel and Jews worldwide.

Concordia University undergraduate aerospace engineering student and Baruch Cohen intern Joshua Schechter was one of many Jewish students who found themselves living amidst the anti-Israel and antisemitic fray overtaking Canadian universities. He asks how administrations could remain silent in light of the atrocities visited on Israeli women and children - even before Israel initiated its war against Hamas. It's not surprising, though, given the progressive, leftist leanings that have infiltrated academia as well as the Liberal and NDP governments who just voted to withhold arms sales to Israel as it is fighting for its survival.

Taylor Levy, a York University Psychology graduate, foresaw the astonishing spike in antisemitism within universities and progressive circles we are currently witnessing, which she documented in her 2022 article titled "How the Antisemitic Messages of Hamas and the IRGC Penetrate and Reinforce the Progressive Left." She asks the prescient question of how the messaging of terrorists and terrorist regimes such as Iran "could seep into democratic countries" and be viewed in a positive light. However, this evolution didn't happen overnight. It was the result of multitudes of insidious actions on the part of the Muslim Brotherhood and Iran to insinuate themselves within the confines of the U.S.'s elite progressive newspapers, television stations, and

social media platforms. In her second article, Taylor focuses on another kind of warfare between Israel and Iran taking place on the virtual front.

I reinforce these messages in my contributions to this year's publication by focusing on Quebec and how leftist ideologies have promoted hatred of Israel for decades. A fourth-year history student at McGill, I have read various primary source materials and interpretive works. In the following pages of this *DME* issue, I show how the 1960s-1970s *Front de la Liberation du Quebec (FLQ)* weaponized Leftist anti-Zionist platitudes to promote an uncompromising, hateful agenda. I also visit the world of pro-Israel media watch-dogs and explain why liberal democracies need them now more than ever.

Unlike mainstream media, campus newspapers are often surprisingly difficult to hold accountable. At McGill, *The McGill Daily* regularly promotes anti-Zionist libels. According to Osgoode Hall law student Sophie Sklar (McGill 2021), one primary reason for this trend across universities is the false conflation of Zionism with white supremacy. Sklar is a Mizrahi Jew whose grandparents fled Iraq in the 1950s. As such, her lived experiences contradict many racist claims made against Israel. Drawing on her legal background, she also discusses the various means available to pro-Israel students for challenging misinformation in student publications.

Over time, anti-Israel lies like those rife on McGill's campus can influence real policy debates. But how should Zionist advocacy groups respond? Third-year Concordia University communications student Mitchell Stein argues that the *America-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)*'s support for extreme right-wing Republican candidates (including some 2020 Presidential election deniers) undermines bipartisan support for the Jewish State. Although the public should (rightly) blame the far left for

DATELINE EDITORIAL BOARD

Jonah Fried Editor in Chief
 Prof. Frederick Krantz Managing Editor
 Machla Abramovitz Managing Editor

On behalf of this year's Baruch Cohen interns, I want to thank Prof. Frederick Krantz for his outstanding mentorship and Publications Editor Machla Abramovitz for her incomparable work in editing and directing our articles toward a higher professional level. - Jonah Fried

CONTACT:

E-mail: cijr@isranet.org • www.isranet.org
 Canadian Institute for Jewish Research (CIJR)
 P.O. Box 175, Station H
 Montreal, Quebec H3G 2K7

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

endangering Israel, Stein believes that bi-partisan support matters, despite the "Squad's" antisemitic tendencies.

But there would be no American (or Canadian) support for Israel without Diaspora Jews. Although many formerly vital North American Jewish enclaves are (for various reasons) rapidly diminishing, students like *CIJR's Baruch Cohen Israel Intern '23* Hailey Oldfield, who is not Jewish, turn to Judaism for answers. With a clear grasp of basic concepts, Oldfield researches Torah's vegetarianism and animal rights approach.

In her view, large-scale "factory farming" and "industrial" animal-raising techniques are unethical - and she has (Talmudic) sources to prove it!

Increasingly, young secular Jews cannot emulate Oldfield's appreciation for religious texts. Subsequently, they understand and express their Zionism in secular terms.

But there is something miraculous in Israel's story, rooted in the Jewish people's millennial life. As Montreal native and Université de Montréal student of law Samuel Malamud demonstrates, Hebrew Scriptures predicted the Jewish State's modern revival long ago. For centuries, such prophecy sustained Jews' hopes for independence in the Land of Israel.

Nevertheless, Israel today is facing an unprecedented spiritual and demographic crisis. Split between a growing Haredi population and a still largely secular mainstream, many people are beginning to question whether Israel, a "Jewish State," can remain a democracy. Malamud says We can do it by rejecting the cynics. Drawing on foundational works like Plato's *Republic* and the *Tanakh*, or Bible, he argues that Israel can - and should - reconcile its religious dimension with its liberal state model.

In the grand scheme of Jewish history, sectarianism is nothing new. In Genesis, Cain beat Abel; in the first century C.E., the Pharisees and the Sadducees wrestled for canonical hegemony; more recently, (anti-)Zionism wrought deep rifts in the Jewish world. Even this *DME* issue, in many ways a testament to Zionist unity, contains countervailing perspectives on some issues: There are Secular and Orthodox Jews, not to mention (relatively) liberal and conservative Americans.

But differences do not have to mean bitterness. The point of the *CIJR Baruch Cohen Internship Program* is not to encourage ideological uniformity but to train students to think critically and learn from (sometimes) contradictory ideas. Although the Talmud shows us that multiple interpretations can coexist - Hillel and Shammai's debates remain (essentially) unresolved - disagreement has a limit. There comes a time to call a spade a spade. Given Israel's existential crisis, the spike in worldwide antisemitism, and threats like a nuclear-armed Iran looming, Israel's security must not become a casualty of the Left's overzealous foreign policy deontology.

Jonah Fried is a fourth-year honors history student at McGill University. He is also a former student union representative and editor at The McGill Tribune, one of the campus newspapers. His articles have been featured in The Jerusalem Post, The Canadian Jewish News, and other outlets.



Columbia reinstated Gaza Solidarity Encampment tents



CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES' (LACK OF) RESPONSE TO THE OCTOBER 7TH TERRORIST ATTACKS

JOSHUA SCHECTER

On October 7, 2023, Shabbat, Simchat Torah, and precisely 50 years after the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, Hamas launched a brutal and horrific terrorist attack against Israel. They murdered over 1200 Israeli civilians, maimed or injured over 4500, and abducted over 200 to the Gaza Strip, all in the most brutal manner possible. They raped girls and women, beheaded and cooked babies, and tortured families. These Hamas monsters gleefully videotaped themselves committing these horrific crimes and uploaded them to the internet for the world to see, presumably to humiliate Israel.

Despite the barbarity of these attacks, Palestinians and their supporters supported Hamas in the streets of Gaza and around the world. A pro-Palestinian protest outside the Sydney Opera House on October 9 quickly devolved into chants of "gas the Jews," burning the Israeli flag, and firing flares. In London, England, a massive pro-Palestinian rally featured chants of "Jihad! Jihad! Jihad!" in response to a speaker asking, "What is the solution to liberate people from the concentration camp called Palestine?"

Canada, too, has not been free of this hate. On October 10, two Jewish women in Vancouver were reportedly threatened with murder and sexual assault after attending a vigil for the Israeli lives lost in the terrorist attacks. In Calgary, pro-Palestinian protesters chanted, "We are the men of Mohammed Deif" in Arabic. In Toronto, protesters replaced this chant with "Khaybar, Khaybar, oh Jews, the army of Mohammed will return."

Following Hamas' terrorist attack, such rhetoric has seeped into university campuses throughout the country,

placing Jewish students at risk. At Toronto's York University, three student unions wrote a joint "statement of solidarity with Palestine" in which they justified and supported Hamas' actions as "a strong act of resistance" against the "settler-colonial apartheid state of so-called Israel" and called for the "liberation of Palestine". At Queen's University, mezuzot were torn from the walls of student dorms. A security guard at McGill University was videotaped taking down posters of kidnapped Israeli civilians from campus. Similarly, a guard at Montreal's Concordia University was filmed smiling for a selfie at an on-campus pro-Palestinian protest. These incidents only scratch the surface of the unacceptable responses to this blatant barbarity that had shocked most decent-minded people worldwide.

Suffice it to say that Hamas is a terrorist organization whose atrocities know no bounds, and celebrating their actions is reprehensible and has no place in Canada.

Yet, eight of the top 17 English-speaking universities in Canada¹ (47%) have failed to explicitly condemn Hamas' actions as terrorism, let alone denounce Hamas supporters on their campuses. Of the remainder (of the 17) who did condemn Hamas' barbarism, two used the term "terrorist violence" without explicitly calling Hamas out by name. Additionally, many universities have refrained from taking a stance, instead electing to offer subject matter experts to talk to interested students or simply reiterating the available academic and mental health resources on campus.

Notably, these responses are inconsistent with previous appalling world

events. When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Canadian universities were quick to issue explicit condemnations. The University of British Columbia responded, "These attacks are unwarranted, unprovoked, and unacceptable. We join Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and B.C. Premier John Horgan in deploring this illegal and unjust war." This sentiment and passion were missing from their statement on Hamas' terrorist attacks on October 7.

Why then were these two international incidents treated differently? It is difficult not to draw deeply troubling conclusions from this disparate treatment.

Universities are one of the pillars of Canadian society as they educate and train each generation to be the leaders, role models, and good citizens of tomorrow. If they are to fulfill this vital role and their own stated goals, they must face and address these disparities within their campuses and communities. They must condemn all terrorism equally. They must fight for the safety of their Jewish and Israeli students. They must take a moral stance on a clear good-versus-evil issue. It is unconscionable that they haven't done so already.

Here is a brief outline of some of our Canadian universities' responses to the horrendous attack against Israeli citizens, even before Israel entered Gaza to destroy Hamas's military machinery and infrastructure.

Joshua Schecter is a Baruch Cohen Intern for the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research and an undergraduate aerospace engineering student at Concordia University.

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

University	Statement	Condemned Hamas
University of Toronto	<p>Condemned "terrorist violence" without mentioning Hamas</p> <p>"condolences to all those suffering in Israel and Palestine and to everyone who has been personally impacted."</p> <p>"calls for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, grounded in dialogue."</p>	Yes. Not by name
University of British Columbia	<p>"We are deeply saddened and concerned by the recent violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the tragic loss of lives across the region. The escalation of this longstanding conflict and developing events is intensifying distress and concern among members of our university community."</p>	No
McGill University	<p>"Horrific attack by Hamas on Israel"</p> <p>"Worried about the safety of loved ones in Israel and in Gaza."</p> <p>Revoked SPHR's permission to use the university's name</p>	Yes
McMaster University	<p>"appalling atrocities committed during the Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel"</p> <p>"... there is no room for hate of any kind at McMaster."</p>	Yes
University of Alberta	<p>"you do not need to address the conflict nor the histories of Israel and Palestine to show care, compassion, and consideration for students."</p>	No
University of Montreal		
University of Waterloo	<p>"The University of Waterloo condemns the reprehensible terrorist attack on Israeli civilians this weekend and is saddened this has resulted in the outbreak of war in the Middle East."</p>	Yes
University of Ottawa	<p>"The escalation of violence in the Middle East since Hamas' attack in Israel affects us all, but some people more than others. Members of our Israeli and Palestinian communities are directly affected and especially need our support at this time."</p>	No
University of Calgary	<p>"We condemn these terrorist actions."</p> <p>"Innocents on each side of the Gaza barrier are paying an unimaginable toll, and we are saddened by the loss of life and the families impacted."</p>	Yes

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

University	Statement	Condemned Hamas
Western University		Not really
Universite Laval		
Queen's University	"terrorist attack on Israel by Hamas on October 7"	Yes
Simon Fraser University	"We condemn all acts of violence, discrimination and hate, as we work together to ensure safe and secure campuses for everyone."	Not really
Dalhousie University	Subject matter experts	No
University of Manitoba	violent conflict in Israel and Gaza "condemning terrorist violence and the kidnapping of civilians."	Yes. Not by name
University of Saskatchewan	"This outbreak of war between Israel and Hamas is extremely difficult for many members of our university community, particularly those students, faculty members, and staff who are from any of the countries and states in or near the conflict or who have family and friends there. We extend our deepest sympathies to all those who are affected at this most difficult time."	No
University of Victoria	"horror at the terrorist attacks in Israel last week and the shocking violence unfolding in Gaza"	Yes. Condemned "escalating violence" as well.
York University	"York denounces the weekend attacks against civilians in Israel and is deeply troubled by the ongoing violence."	Yes
University of Guelph	"We are deeply concerned by last weekend's attacks on Israel by Hamas and the developing war in the region."	So-so
Universite du Quebec		

- *Best universities in Canada 2022 - University Rankings*
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-canada>
- *a23Oct13.pdf* page 110 <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/senate/minutes/2023/a23Oct13.pdf>



HOW THE ANTISEMITIC MESSAGES OF HAMAS AND THE IRGC PENETRATE AND REINFORCE THE PROGRESSIVE LEFT

TAYLOR SHARON LEVY

In late May, President Biden released a strategy¹ to combat antisemitism. The Jewish community was hopeful for the positive impact such a strategy could have. That is until the strategy was released and its failure to recognize the demonization of Israel as being antisemitic was made public. The document supports several definitions of antisemitism, including the Nexus definition, which states that criticism of Zionism, an intrinsically Jewish belief, is not antisemitic. In fact, the fact sheet includes a commitment² from the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), which has ties to Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood³ and is known for its blatantly antisemitic comments.

At first glance, this appears as a shocking missed opportunity to rightfully combat antisemitism in all of its forms. But upon deeper understanding and reflection, it becomes apparent this is not unusual. The demonization of Israel and the amplification of organizations and people with ties to or support for terrorist organizations is commonplace amongst progressive Americans and members of Congress alike.

When Hamas released its first Covenant in 1988, the terrorist organization left little to the imagination. With references to the "warmongering"⁴ Jews behaving in similar ways to the Nazis, the Covenant called for "sincere efforts"⁴ to rid the land of the Jews. Hamas vocalized their Islamist belief that without the murder of all the Jews in the Land of Israel - and most certainly beyond - the hoped-for Day of Judge-

ment would not come upon Muslims. The discussion of the struggle against Zionism was subsumed under the larger goal of violently cleansing Jews from the Jewish people's indigenous homeland.

When the Covenant was released, the First Intifada was in full swing. The violent uprising, which saw the death of over 5,000 Palestinians and 1,400 Israelis, was put into context within Hamas' Covenant by envisioning it as part of Hamas' program to turn the land of Israel into an Islamic state. The stated goal was, in Hamas' view, already being put into action.

Since the release of the 1988 Covenant, Hamas has not succeeded in its ultimate goal, of cleansing the land of its Jewish population. And by 1997, the U.S. had listed Hamas as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)⁵, alongside twelve other terrorist groups, the majority of which were Palestinian.

NIAC Action: Lobbying for the IRGC

For years, the atrocities of terrorist regimes and their impact on Americans were undeniable and undisputed; terrorists were universally believed to be the enemy. The idea that the messaging of a terrorist organization could seep into a democratic country such as the U.S. was unimaginable.

What started in 2004 with newspaper obituaries praising the "brave fighter"⁶ and "enigmatic"⁷ Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) terrorist Yasser Arafat, had devolved by the mid-2010s into sympathetic messaging in numerous left-leaning media outlets such as the New York Times and CNN, which have given terrorists more legitimacy. This has several sources, but can large-

ly be attributed to the National Iranian American Council (NIAC), which in 2015 formed NIAC Action, a 501(c)(4) organization engaging in explicit pro-Iranian political activity. NIAC Action persistently and effectively appears to be spreading pro-Iranian messages in Congress.

NIAC Action hit the ground running in 2015 when the framework for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran Deal, was created. Iran agreed to accept some restrictions on their nuclear program such as eliminating its stockpile of medium-enriched uranium and only enriching uranium to 3.67%⁸ for 15 years. However, the deal organized by the Obama Administration was not a formal treaty - it did not need to be presented to the Senate and Congress for approval.

JCPOA was, and is, lauded by NIAC as a way to bypass war with Iran. As a policy of the Obama Administration, JCPOA was argued to ensure "Iran's nuclear program is and remains exclusively peaceful."⁹ It was withdrawn by President Trump and only to be considered again by President Biden. The deal, which would "ease crushing sanctions"¹⁰ would provide Tehran with access to up to \$275 billion during the first year of the deal and \$1 trillion by 2030.¹¹ Thus, any sanctions relief would greatly benefit the IRGC, the Iranian regime's ideological armed forces formed after the Revolution in 1979, which has been listed as a terrorist organization by the U.S. since 2019. The more money the IRGC is privy to, the more they are able to support and en-

1. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/U.S.-National-Strategy-to-Counter-Antisemitism.pdf>

2. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/05/25/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-releases-first-ever-u-s-national-strategy-to-counter-antisemitism/>

3. <https://www.adl.org/resources/background/council-american-islamic-relations-cair>

4. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp

5. <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>

6. <https://abcnews.go.com/International/News/story?id=203089>

7. <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/11/world/middleeast/yasir-arafat-father-and-leader-of-palestinian-nationalism.html>

8. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/iran-enriching-uranium-weapons-grade-nuclear-iaea-rcna72753>

9. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/issues/foreign-policy/iran-deal>

10. https://www.niacouncil.org/press_room/20-organizations-back-biden-restoration-of-iran-nuclear-deal/

11. <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/flash-briefs/2022/08/23/iran-nuclear-deal-guts-ircg-sanctions/>

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

able Hamas and Hezbollah, their satellites in Gaza and Lebanon, among others.

As the IRGC reaches closer to enriching uranium¹² to the 90% weapons grade needed for a nuclear weapon, the U.S. should be stepping up sanctions. Yet, NIAC - and much of the progressive caucus - continues to hold to the belief that empowering the IRGC with a return to JCPOA would provide the best outcome. The Biden Administration has recently been seeking informal negotiations with Iran¹³ to revive the Deal. Despite previously announcing that the deal was "dead,"¹⁴ the Biden administration is hoping to quietly skirt around the controversy by avoiding Congress. The new "mini-deal" would allow Iran to enrich uranium to 60%, well above the originally called for 3.67%.

NIAC has continuously lobbied on behalf of the Iranian regime and for a return to the JCPOA, in Congress. In 2017, nearly 100 Iranian dissidents in the U.S. called on Congress¹⁵ to launch an investigation into clandestine efforts by the Islamic Republic to use lobbyists to influence American policy. This was not the first time NIAC was put under fire. In 2008, Trita Parsi, the controversial Iranian-born founder of NIAC who has been accused of lobbying on behalf of Iran, filed a lawsuit¹⁶ against a critic of the organization, which was not registered as a Political Action Committee at the time. NIAC was obligated to release internal documents,¹⁷ which indicated a deep connection between Parsi, NIAC, and the Iranian regime; Parsi was arranging meetings between Iran's former am-

bassador to the United Nations and members of Congress.



Hamas is a Terror organization protest in front of the BBC

Then, in 2020, three Senators demanded an investigation¹⁸ into NIAC and NIAC Action for potential violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act. The call for an investigation was largely inspired by the 2008 leak of the documents. Progressive organizations that align themselves with and support the extreme-left members of Congress fired back in an open letter affirming their solidarity with NIAC and NIAC Action, which they felt were being intimidated into silencing "voices that disagree with whichever administration is in power."¹⁹

Signatories of the letter included the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights, which was accused of potential links to terrorism in the Gaza Strip²⁰ in a 2020 lawsuit, and CODEPINK, a progressive anti-war organization that met with Iran's Foreign Minister in 2019.²¹ The Texas branch of the Council for American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a civil rights non-profit born from a secret meeting between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood in 1993, also signed the letter.

Attacks on the progressives have elicited negative responses - when Representative Ilhan Omar was being removed from the House Foreign Affairs

Committee, NIAC stood with her, claiming she was "consistent in standing up for justice and against militarism at every turn."²² This may be true if one's version of "standing up for justice" requires the denunciation of the State of Israel, and "militarism" means defending one's state and society from antisemitic conspiracy theories and potentially genocidal attacks.

Hamas' Facade: The 2017 Covenant

If the propaganda messages of the Iranian regime penetrated Congress through NIAC, that would be bad enough. But a larger problem had emerged even before 2017 when anti-Israel and pro-Islamic messaging from Hamas started aligning with liberal-progressive Democrats in the U.S. and the Labour Party in the UK.

In 2017, Hamas released an updated Covenant. Putting on a facade that appealed to progressive Americans was a tactic in semantics that terrorist regimes rarely seek. In the updated Covenant, rather than referencing the evils of the Jews, Hamas now referenced the evils of Zionism - a belief intrinsic to Jewish identity. With the slight change of words, Hamas could adapt to a new wave of antisemitism that furthered their own cause. This supposedly hard-to-notice left-wing antisemitism began spreading like wildfire, perhaps without many of the Western perpetrators aware that their ideologies were aligning with terrorist regimes.

Here, Hamas took instruction from Soviet antisemitism.²³ Deeply rooted in Communist ideology and reinforced by UN-backed "Zionism is racism" slogans and Soviet opposition to the 1970s Sharansky-led "refusenik" movement, this had surfaced well before 2017 on college campuses across North America. Radicals from the pro-Palestinian movements used the distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism, which shielded them from charges of antisemitism. This supposed distinction was used to their advantage, asserting

12. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/irans-nuclear-endgame-warrants-change-us-strategy>

13. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/article-746707>

14. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/video-surfaces-of-biden-saying-iran-nuclear-deal-is-dead-white-house-doesnt-deny/>

15. <https://freebeacon.com/national-security/iranian-dissidents-demand-investigation-islamic-regimes-secret-u-s-lobbying-network/>

16. <https://www.politico.com/blogs/under-the-radar/2012/09/iranian-american-group-leader-lose-libel-case-against-writer-135502>

17. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/nov/13/exclusive-did-iranian-advocacy-group-violate-laws/>

18. <https://www.cotton.senate.gov/news/press-releases/cotton-braun-and-cruz-urge-doj-investigation-of-niac>

19. <https://www.niacouncil.org/news/letter-standwithniac/>

20. <https://charityandsecurity.org/news/d-c-circuit-court-of-appeals-upholds-dismissal-of-baseless-legal-attack-against-palestinian-rights-ngo/>

21. https://www.codepink.org/day_3

22. https://www.niacouncil.org/press_room/niac-action-statement-on-vote-to-remove-rep-ilhan-omar-from-the-house-foreign-affairs-committee/

23. <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/contemporary-anti-zionisms-connections-soviet-propaganda>

24. <https://hamas.ps/en/post/678/A-Document-of-General-Principles-and-Policies>

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

the Palestinians were victims of the Nazi-like Jews. Couple this with outright Labour antisemitism during Jeremy Corbyn's election campaign in 2017 and the rise of left-wing antisemitism during Donald Trump's Presidency and it is clear that Hamas had created the perfect recipe for influencing the minds of educated, if woefully ignorant, progressive individuals in the US.

In the updated Covenant, Hamas proclaimed that "Palestine is a land seized by a racist, anti-human and colonial Zionist project."²⁴ The language used was already familiar to the Western public and especially to students, who were frequently campaigning against Israel on college campuses. This has also been adopted to view Jews as white supremacists and racists, despite being one of the largest targets of white supremacy. By manipulating the language and using baseless buzzwords that satisfied progressive Westerners, Jews became colonizers and occupiers, both viewed as the source of much of the modern world's societal issues.

The Dissemination of Hamas' Ideology

Members of Congress have followed Hamas's lead in using this language. For instance, Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), a member of the anti-Israel "Squad" Democratic faction, has called President Biden's recent visit to Israel whitewashing "the brutality of the occupation."²⁵ Other members of the Squad have voiced similar opinions, with Congresswoman Cori Bush (MO-1), suggesting that Israel upholds a system of oppression and occupation.²⁶ Where Hamas believes Zionism to be a "threat to international security and peace,"²⁷ Representative Ilhan Omar (MN-5) has opined the Jewish people are not partners in peace and have not been "equally engaging in seeking justice around the world."²⁸

In 2021, the extreme radical Muslim Brotherhood - of which Hamas is an offshoot - praised Democratic members of Congress for their demanding protection "of Palestinians from Zionist attacks."²⁹ The Muslim Brotherhood is not alone in praising other societies for their condemnation of Israel. When a U.S. resolution condemning Hamas as a terrorist organization was rejected by the UN General Assembly, Hamas thanked member states "that stood by our people's resistance and the justice of their cause."³⁰

Israel looks to the U.S. as its strongest ally, one that would unequivocally defend it and the Jewish people. But Israel's defence, no longer a bipartisan agreement, is no longer automatic. The same members of the progressive Democratic caucus in Congress who have echoed Hamas's calls voted unsuccessfully against the funding of Israel's Iron Dome defence system. Then, in June 2023, many of the same members voted against creating an Abraham Accords special envoy,³¹ once again putting into action Hamas's declaration that Zionism is the enemy of the Arabs and in opposition to international security and peace.

Inspired by Indigenous American land equality movements, the language Hamas uses suggests that only a liberated Palestine free of Zionist Jews is a genuine nation-state. This unhistorical language - there never has been, and still is not, a universally recognized Palestine - has taken on unprecedented power, with calls to "liberate Palestine" from

the Zionists by globalizing the intifada, being chanted from the streets of New York³² to college campuses.³³

If Hamas doesn't "fight Jews because they are Jews,"³⁴ there would not be indiscriminate terrorist attacks at an increasing rate. While Jews are not always the sole victims, their murder is the intended outcome. Additionally, since the Covenant's release, Hamas officials have explicitly urged people to "cut off the heads of Jews,"³⁵ and "attack every Jew on the globe."³⁶ Progressive Westerners have taken this language to heart, with some physically attacking Jews across North America, while shouting "Free Palestine." Likewise, synagogues, Jewish-owned businesses and Jewish institutions are frequently defaced with anti-Israel graffiti or are violently attacked. In October 2018, eleven Jews were murdered in the Pittsburgh Tree of Life synagogue massacre, the worst such episode in U.S. history. In essence, these incidents target Jews because they are Jews.

In less than thirty years, the call by terrorist organizations for the destruction of American democratic values of individual liberty and freedom of expression is being amplified by increasingly widespread voices. Hamas's facade as a champion of human rights allows the organization and its enabler in the Tehran regime and its IRGC not only to delegitimize Israel and Zionism but to further their suppression of the rights and freedoms of all people - including Palestinians and Iranians.

Terrorist organizations masquerading as liberation movements have penetrated the Western progressive caucus and established a direct political connection to American governmental policy. The demonization of Israel via the spreading of antisemitic messages aligned with terrorist organizations poses a significant threat to America's liberal-democratic values and more largely, to American foreign policy. These messages can be halted only when progressive values include and recognize the Jewish people as deserving of safety.

Taylor Sharon Levy is a dedicated Masters student at Reichman University, pursuing a degree in Government with a Specialization in Counter-Terrorism and Homeland Security and a certificate in Cyber-Terrorism.

25. <https://twitter.com/rashidatlaib/status/1548076677040709632?s=12&t=jejaRwclW8V2UpUPByObjw>

26. <https://twitter.com/RepCori/status/1392991612364591107>

27. <https://hamas.ps/en/post/678/A-Document-of-General-Principles-and-Policies>

28. <https://www.newsweek.com/ilhan-omar-has-problem-jews-opinion-1605824>

29. <https://freebeacon.com/national-security/muslim-brotherhood-praises-dems-for-abandoning-israel-in-time-of-war/>

30. <https://globalnews.ca/news/4740431/un-hamas-resolution-general-assembly/>

31. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-house-passes-bill-to-establish-special-envoy-for-advancing-abraham-accords/>

32. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/article-704827>

33. <https://nypost.com/2023/01/14/university-of-michigan-protesters-call-for-intifada-demise-of-israel/>

34. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/09/world/middleeast/hamas-gaza-israel-jews.html>

35. <https://nypost.com/2021/05/12/hamas-official-tells-people-to-cut-off-the-heads-of-jews-report/>

36. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/senior-hamas-official-calls-on-members-of-palestinian-diaspora-to-kill-jews/>



THE NOT-SO-DISCREET CYBERWAR BETWEEN ISRAEL AND IRAN

TAYLOR SHARON LEVY

In 1993, researchers at the RAND Corporation, an American think tank, became credited for being some of the first to use the term "cyberwar." In anticipation of the arising challenges that security officials would face in coming years, "Cyberwar is Coming!" was a warning for the perhaps limitless possibilities of warfare.

Cyber operations are still new warfare, therefore they can impact military hardware that may be vulnerable and exploited.² Still, it has been used more frequently in recent years. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the country has targeted Ukraine with cyber operations that operated in unison with more conventional military operations. For instance, in March 2022,³ Russian strikes hit government buildings in Dnipro as the government agency was targeted with a destructive implant.

Americans, too, have noticed the worrying uptick in cyber operations. In one Gallup poll, 84 percent of American respondents⁴ said cyberterrorism was a critical threat to American interests. It was followed by Iran's development of nuclear weapons at 74 percent. Cyberterrorism threatens not only American interests but also Israel's interests as the country continuously works to avoid a nuclear confrontation with Iran. However, the ability to use the cyber front to conduct terrorist activities has been taken advantage of by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), with Israel as its primary target.



Financing terror through cryptocurrency

In the cyber age, terrorist organizations have come to rely on sophisticated tools such as cryptocurrency. Crypto is now widely used and terrorists have quickly adapted to finance their activities and raise funds using this tool. The increasingly large web of terrorist organizations further enables the exchange of money through crypto as the transfer of funds can be done from any number of organizations and people involved.

In late June, the Israeli government announced it seized millions of dollars in cryptocurrency⁵ linked to the IRGC and their proxy Hezbollah, located in Lebanon. The funding, which comes from a third party, is handed over to terrorist groups such as Hezbollah via money exchangers, hoping for a discrete way to finance terrorists. Because cryptocurrency often provides a higher level of anonymity, the IRGC's Quds Force has successfully funded daily

terrorist activities.

The US State Department estimated in 2020 the Iranian-backed terror group was provided with \$700 million per year⁶ from Iran. Thus the seizure of cryptocurrency could lead to a halt or decrease in funding for Hezbollah's activities in the following months.

The operation to seize cryptocurrency linked to Hezbollah and the IRGC was not the only operation of its kind that Israel has conducted. Since 2021,

Israel has seized 189 cryptocurrency accounts⁷ linked to terrorist organizations. This work has been conducted by the Defense Ministry's National Bureau for Counter Terrorism Financing (NBCTF). Under Israel's Anti-Terrorism Law 5776-2016, the property belonging to two Binance accounts⁸ was confiscated in order to "thwart the activity of the terrorist organization the Islamic State (ISIS)."

This is in addition to the seizure of over 80 Binance accounts with crypto worth over \$137, 870 USD (500,000 NIS) in April 2023. All 80 accounts belonged to three Gaza-based companies that Israel has described as terrorist organizations or those involved with severe terror crimes on suspicion that they transfer funds to Hamas.

As terrorist regimes continue to pivot and transition to using cyber methods to conduct their daily activities, Israel and the US have had to adapt quickly in order to put a halt to the funds being transferred before it is too late. For this reason, Hamas has had to stop

1. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/RP223.html>

2. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-19-128>

3. <https://www.cyber.gc.ca/en/guidance/cyber-threat-bulletin-cyber-threat-activity-related-russian-invasion-ukraine>

4. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/472544/cyber-disruption-critical-threat.aspx>

5. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-first-israel-seizes-crypto-accounts-linked-to-irans-quds-force-hezbollah/>

6. <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-hezbollah#:~:text=Iran%20provides%20most%20of%20Hezbollah%27s,to%202020%20State%20Department%20estimates>

7. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-seizes-189-crypto-accounts-linked-to-terror-groups-since-2021-report/>

8. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-seized-binance-crypto-accounts-thwart-islamic-state-document-shows-2023-05-04/>

9. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-suspends-bitcoin-fundraising-citing-hostile-activity-against-donors/>

10. <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Outlaw-Regime-2020-A-Chronicle-of-Irans-Destabilizing-Activity.pdf>

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

raising funds via Bitcoin, due to the "hostile"⁹ activity Israel and the US were causing. Hamas has continuously appealed for donations from its supporters through Bitcoin, which has, until now, been successful in raising funds.

Nonetheless, Hamas is part of the Palestinian terror factions that receive \$100 million annually¹⁰ from Iran, making them dependent on the largest financier of terrorism. The proxy war between Israel and Iran continues to adapt and escalate, with cryptocurrency working to undermine Israeli security.

The beginnings of a cyberwar

Since there is no widespread agreement on what cyberspace is and how it should be commanded or used in warfare, governments as well as non-state actors that are influenced by governments, are compelled to continuously revise their methods of cyber security and warfare. Cyber technology is constantly changing, which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu noted was "moving very rapidly to a situation where, with the click of a button, you can bring down nations to their knees very rapidly."¹¹

The Iranian regime consistently uses strategic and psychological tactics to cultivate fear in Israeli society. In fact, Chief Commander of the IRGC, Major General Hussein Salami stated the "atmosphere is a combination of psychological warfare and cyber operation."¹² As terrorist groups in the Gaza Strip fired rockets at Israel in May 2023, hackers linked to Russia and Iran unsuccessfully attempted to sabotage the rocket alert sirens in Israel.¹³ The warning systems provide Israelis with 15 to 90 seconds to find shelter. This attempt highlighted the growing threat of the Iranian regime, which has begun working more closely with its proxies to coordinate attacks.

In 2020, Israel experienced a string of

cyber attacks¹⁴ at the hands of Muddy-Water, a hacker group widely considered an element of the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security.¹⁵ The group conducted numerous ransomware attacks on Israeli companies, resembling a Russian operation to attack Ukraine in 2017.

The Iranian government has been persistent in its attacks against Israel, Israeli companies and, perhaps most consequentially, Israeli civilians. Again in 2020, Iran attempted to target Israel's drinking water, whereby a public health crisis could have consequently arisen. By searching for and attacking vulnerable sectors of Israeli society, Iran poses a long-term strategic threat that is potentially overlooked due to the international communities focus on Iran's nuclear program. Evidently, Iran has seen the cyber sphere as a long-term goal since 2013 when it introduced drone hacking to the high school curriculum.¹⁸

Iran's investment in hacking and the cyber sphere continues outside of school-aged children. As of 2019, the Basij, a civilian paramilitary organization controlled by the IRGC potentially had 120,000 cyberwar volunteers.¹⁹ While the numbers may be exaggerated in order to sway public opinion, the ability to enable civilians to conduct cyber operations displays the IRGC's intent to forge wars on new fronts.

Israel has been steadily preparing for the increase in the intensity of cyber attacks from Iran. The start-up nation saw record funding for cybersecurity startups reaching \$8.8 billion in 2021. And in just ten years, the number of active cybersecurity companies in Israel increased drastically from 162 to 459,²⁰ after Israel officially adopted the resolution²¹ to become a leader in cyberspace capabilities in 2011.

Since the Iranian Revolution, Iran has been consistent in its goal of destroying the only Jewish state. For Iran, cy-

berspace has become a technique outside of their nuclear program in which they are able to uphold their promise directly and without using their proxies in Gaza, Lebanon or elsewhere. As Iran enriches their uranium closer to the 90 percent needed for weapons-grade, the war between wars is sustained.

Foreign influences in the Israel-Iran war

Although Israel hopes to be a leader in the cyber field, the US and Russia both have extensive missions in cybersecurity. For the US, this has evolved as a critical necessity in order to protect internal information, especially in government agencies, from leaking. Between 2011-2013, Iran conducted a series of Cyber Enabled Economic Warfare (CEEW)²² against the United States. The regime organized a series of attacks against the US financial system by continuously overwhelming them with traffic, testing its vulnerability. Since then, the IRGC has systematically engaged in disinformation campaigns and penetrated critical infrastructure in the US.

Russia's influence in Iran can also not be diminished. In 2021, the two countries signed an accord to exchange technology and cooperate with one another, providing them with the opportunity to coordinate "activities given the growing importance of cyber issues and their increasing impact."²³ Despite the countries' long-standing suspicion of one another, these moves to work closely pose an immediate threat to global institutions and particularly Israel and the US.

Before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, it was the second-most targeted country²⁴ for cyberattacks between July 2020 and June 2021. This may have foreshadowed the Russian invasion as Russia has since used cyber attacks – either alone or in coordination with conventional warfare. If this pattern remains true for other countries, Israel could see a large-scale escalation with Iran via one of its

11. <https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/speechtech310117>

12. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/iran-and-cyber-power>

13. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/slapdash-attempt-to-hack-rocket-sirens-may-be-cause-for-serious-alarm-about-iran/>

14. <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2022/10/28/the-dangers-of-irans-cyber-ambitions/>

15. <https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/muddywater>

18. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/10252413/Iran-to-teach-drone-hunting-to-school-students.html>

19. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/iran-and-cyber-power>

20. <https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/cybersecurity-in-israel%3A-fortifying-digital-defenses-amid-elevated-risks>

21. <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/22530-document-05-government-israel-resolution-no>

22. <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2022/10/28/the-dangers-of-irans-cyber-ambitions/>

23. <https://tass.com/politics/1248963>

24. <https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/cybersecurity-in-israel%3A-fortifying-digital-defenses-amid-elevated-risks>

25. <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2023/03/28/iran-obtains-advanced-cyber-warfare-capabilities-from-russia/>

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST



Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh meeting Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei

proxies such as Hezbollah.

Since the accord was signed, Russia and Iran have worked closely together. For instance, Russia has received shipments of Iranian drones,²⁵ using them for their antagonist war against Ukraine. At the same time, Russia started providing Iran with digital surveillance software, which the regime subsequently used to allow internet traffic as anti-regime protests took to the streets. This coordination further enables the two countries to expedite their own ambitions in unison.

Despite the lack of concrete success Iran has had in the cyberwar thus far, the regime has not yet given up, nor does it appear that they are planning to any time soon. While traditional warfare should still be recognized as being more impactful on society, the power of the cybersphere

should not be underestimated. In the coming years, cyber warfare will continue to attempt to influence public opinion through psychological warfare and work hand-in-hand with traditional methods of warfare. Cybersecurity is an indispensable tool that Israel must continue to develop in order to secure its cyber borders in the same way in which the army defends on land. It is with this coordination of abilities that Israel must continue to adapt in order to counter threats in any method of warfare.

Taylor Sharon Levy is a dedicated Masters student at Reichman University, pursuing a degree in Government with a Specialization in Counter-Terrorism and Homeland Security and a certificate in Cyber-Terrorism.



THE PFLP-FLQ LOVE AFFAIR

JONAH FRIED

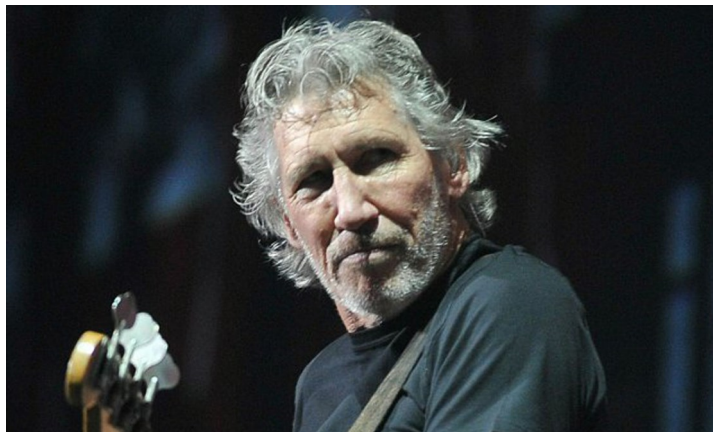
Canadian Jewish organizations were outraged on July 14, 2022, after former Pink Floyd band singer Roger Waters spoke to anti-Zionist McGill students at a Palestine "solidarity" conference.¹ Several Leftist groups, including the Canadian Communist Party, co-hosted the event.

Although Waters has allegedly made antisemitic statements in the past², Hillel Montreal and other groups were more alarmed about the event's possible ties to terrorist groups.³ According to B'nai Brith Canada, Samidoun.net—a pro-Palestine publication that sponsored the July 14 summit—is connected to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).⁴ Of course, no courts vindicated these claims. Yet if proven, they would suggest active links between extremist groups and Canadian student-led anti-Zionist advocacy.

This would not be the first time Quebec student radicals have associated with Palestinian terrorists. In the 1960s-1970s, the Front de Liberation du Quebec (FLQ) allied itself with the PFLP and other Arab liberation movements. The Francophone extremists even committed terrorist acts ostensibly on the Palestinians' behalf.

Terrorist groups are rarely ideological monoliths. The FLQ was no exception: it was rife with infighting. Although the organization started in 1962 as a right-wing Rally for National Independence (RIN) subsidiary, the Front quickly took

a far-left turn.⁵ Later, some FLQ members would even denounce the RIN as "petit bourgeois."⁶ Still, all shared the Quebecirredentist cause, whether for Marxist-liberation reasons or particularistic nationalist ones.



Pink Floyd's Roger Waters, renowned antisemite

As Michael McLaughlin recounts in his 1998 book, *Last Stop, Paris: The Assassination of Mario Bachand and the Death of the FLQ*, there were at least three loosely connected "waves" of FLQ terror in Quebec from 1963-1972.⁷ These attacks ranged from arson attacks on government buildings to well-thought-out bombing campaigns—notably a May 1963 stunt where operatives stuffed over ten sticks of dynamite in Westmount mailboxes. Although we can cautiously categorize the 1962-1964 FLQ as "nationalist," the post-1965 Front was Marxist-Leninist and internationally oriented.

This "new" FLQ saw Quebec's conflict as a class struggle. Drawing on Lenin, Frantz Fanon, and other Marxist-Liberation nationalists, they argued that Francophones had a right to national self-determination because they

were historically oppressed. For them, the enemy was capitalism and Anglo-American imperialism, not the English speakers per se. This secular socialist mantra distinguished them from the "pre-revolutionary" RIN and other nationalist associations.⁸ Still, there were significant parallels: as historian Daniel Rickenbacher has argued, such "far-right liberation nationalism" is an unacknowledged "pre-cursor of New Left Third World activism... in Quebec."⁹ Lantot's father, for example, was a fascist, and the

terrorist later admitted that his father's beliefs (including his antisemitism) influenced his outlook.¹⁰ Likewise, Bachand's father was also a right-wing nationalist (one reason corrections officers worried about releasing him on parole, as they thought his father might encourage him to return to terrorism).¹¹ Similar observations could be made of many in the FLQ.

Blurry lines or not, there were, at least in theory, essential differences between the fascist FLQ and the Marxist-Leninists. Although there were also clear links between Palestinian Arab nationalist groups and fascism—the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem infamously allied with Hitler—the FLQ only started explicitly supporting the Palestinians

Blurred lines or not, there were, at least in theory, essential differences between the fascist FLQ and the Marxist-Leninists. Although there were also clear links between Palestinian Arab nationalist groups and fascism—the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem infamously allied with Hitler—the FLQ only started explicitly supporting the Palestinians

1. Charles-Éric Blais-Poulin, « Roger Waters solidaire des militants propalestiniens de McGill, » La Presse, July 15, 2022.

2. Canadian Foreign Policy Institute, "Standing up for student solidarity with Palestine featuring Pink Floyd singer Roger Waters," July 14, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/canadapolicy/videos/3119093655070348/>.

3. Hillel Montreal, "Waters' Lack of Judgment is Troubling," July 15, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/HillelMTL>.

4. Michael Mostyn, "A terrorist is living among civilians in Canada," The Jerusalem Post, May 9, 2022.

5. Michael McLoughlin, *Last Stop, Paris: The Assassination of Mario Bachand and the Death of the FLQ* (Toronto: Viking, 1998), 12.

6. *Ibid.*, 76.

7. *Ibid.*, 80.

8. McLaughlin, 76.

9. Daniel Rickenbacher, "The Anti-Israel Movement in Québec in the 1970s: At the Ideological Crossroads of the New Left and Liberation-Nationalism," *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études Juives Canadiennes* 29 (2021): 103.

10. *Ibid.*, 90.

11. McLaughlin, 67.

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

after its members adopted the rhetoric of Marxist-Leninism. In this context, Francophone support for the Palestinian cause emerged from international socialism and its global anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist perspective.

The alliance extended beyond words. According to Canadian intelligence reports, on August 12, 1969, a "very powerful bomb" detonated at the National Revenue Agency in Montreal, injuring one security guard. A poster near the building entrance read, "Support the National Liberation Struggle of the people of Palestine—Smash US imperialism and Zionism" (sic). At the same time, they sprayed a mailbox at the scene with the initials "FLQ."¹²

This attack occurred only two years after the Six Day War when Israel occupied the West Bank, Sinai Desert, and other territories. This post-1967 war period was not a Pax Israelite: on the contrary, after the fighting stopped, Arab leaders met in Khartoum, Sudan, to discuss a long-term strategy to defeat the Jewish State. At this conference, the Arab League arrived at the "three no's" of rejectionism: no peace, no recognition, no negotiation with Israel.¹³ By the time Quebec militants embraced Palestine, Gamal Nasser had, on March 8, 1969, declared a "war of attrition" against Israel.¹⁴

This proximity is worth emphasizing because, as Michael R. Fischbach argues in his 2020 book, *The Movement and the Middle East: How the Arab-Israeli Conflict Divided the American Left*, the 1967 war put the Palestinian cause on the New Left map. With unprecedented media coverage, many North American radicals were exposed for the first time to Keffiyehwearing Arab guerrillas.¹⁵ Even though Israel was

outgunned nearly three-to-one (which is why its victory in the conflict was so astounding), the Palestinian militants appeared to be the underdogs. Israel also did not curry any favor with Leftists when it humiliated Gamal Nasser, the poster child of global anti-imperialism. Nasser was like an Arab Castro: his communist anti-imperialist rhetoric shielded him from progressive scrutiny despite tyrannical tactics.¹⁶

These optics combined to darken Israel's image in progressive circles. Against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, Israel's stunning victory seemed inseparable from Anglo-American imperialism. College students across the United States and Canada started, for the first time, to promote the Palestinian cause. Quebec was no exception. But as the August 1969 bombing suggests, their support also extended to extremism.

The 1969 bombing may be one of the most explicit examples, but it was not the only one. FLQ sympathizers repeatedly targeted McGill University for its alleged ties to "Jewish capitalism."¹⁷ During the October Crisis, the group circulated pamphlets denouncing Montreal's Jewish elite. Worse, Lactot originally planned to kidnap a Jewish diplomat, "any" Jewish diplomat, rather than a British one.¹⁸ He eventually settled on Israeli commerce attache Moise Golan.

Fortunately for Golan, the RCMP was tracking Lanctot. On February 26, 1970, the terrorist and his partner-in-crime, Pierre Marcil, were stopped in a white van at Rue. St Denis.¹⁹ Officers seized a sawed-off M-1 rifle, the names of prominent Montreal journalists, and plans for abducting Golan. Although

police charged the pair with criminal conspiracy, Lanctot was released on bail so that the secret service could track FLQ activities.²⁰ According to McLaughlin, the RCMP frequently exploited the FLQ's Palestine sympathies to monitor them and the PFLP.

In June 1970, Pierre Nadeau—a Canadian journalist reporting on the Arab-Israeli conflict, which may have also been a secret service agent—"discovered" Norman Roy and Michel Lambert, two FLQ members, at a Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DPFLP) training camp in Javesh, Jordan.²¹ Although the program focused on training Leftist extremists, the mainstream Palestinian Arab movement was much more right-wing. The DPFLP, which saw itself as a non-nationalist, revolutionary movement, was the product of a violent February 1969 split within the PFLP.²² This distinction is worth remembering as the Palestinian cause is increasingly misrepresented as a Marxist issue when, in fact, many PFLP leaders were much more inclined toward right-wing "national liberation" (and extermination) ideologies. Partly because of this instability, in 1970, fighting erupted between the Jordanian military and the Palestinian pseudo-state. This event presaged the "Black September" civil war later that year.

Nevertheless, the DPFLP program sponsored many radical socialist movements. Most notably, in June 1969, members of the Nazi-inspired Baader-Meinhof gang stayed there.²³ That August, the group returned to Europe and carried out some of the worst terrorist attacks in postwar Europe. This was not the only time Palestinian terrorists trained or at least attempted to train other radical extremists. In fact, according to the FBI, Al-Fatah representatives at a January 1970 conference in Montreal even tried to recruit Quebec students to an

19. Ira Robinson, *A History of Antisemitism in Canada* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015), 122.

20. McLaughlin, 118.

21. *Ibid.*, 181.

22. United States Department of State, "Patterns of global terrorism" (1989), 58, [https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/ Digitization/125318NCJRS.pdf](https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/125318NCJRS.pdf).

23. McLaughlin, 181.

12. Anthony Kellett, Bruce Beanlands, and James Deacon, "Terrorism in Canada: 1960-1989." *Public Safety Canada No. 1990-16* (November 15, 2000), 267, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/hv%206433.c2%20t4%201990-eng.pdf>.

13. Yoram Meital, "The Khartoum Conference and Egyptian Policy after the 1967 War: A Reexamination," *Middle East Journal* 54, no. 1 (2000): 68. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329432>.

14. Simon Dunstan, *The Yom Kippur War 1973 Vol II: The Sinai* (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2003), 7-14.

15. Michael R. Fischbach, *The Movement and the Middle East* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2020), 4.

16. Gordan H. Torrey and John F. Devlin, "Arab Socialism," *Journal of International Affairs* 19, no. 1 (1965): 60, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24363337>.

17. Gilles Cournoyer, letter to the editor of *Le Devoir*, October 1, 1969, in Michael M. Solomon, "Canada," in *American Jewish Year Book* 71 (1970): 356, http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1970_7_Canada.pdf.

18. Jean-François Nadeau, *The Canadian Führer: The Life of Adrien Arcand*. Translated by Robert Chodos, Eric Hamovitch, and Susan Joanis. (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 2011), 268-70.

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

"international brigade."²⁴

The FLQ may have taken that offer. According to Nadeau, Roy and Lambert were learning "selective assassination." Although McLaughlin suspects Roy was a double agent working for Western intelligence agencies, there were clear ties between the FLQ and PFLP. On January 5, 1971, *Le Journal Montreal* published an essay allegedly from the FLQ comparing their movement to Al-Fatah, with photos of Quebec "comrades" holding rocket launchers. McLaughlin, of course, believes this may have been an RCMP ploy to fool the real FLQ—but be this as it may, it shows that the Secret Service believed the image of Palestine was important for Quebec radicals. Indeed, FLQ extremists resurfaced again with Palestinian combatants in 1972, this time in Lebanon (McLaughlin suspects it was the same two FLQ members).²⁵

Even if the organizations were not complex enough to be linked in opera-

24. McLaughlin, 181.

25. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "The Fedayeen Impact—Middle East and United States" (June 1970), 51, https://www.governmentattic.org/2docs/FBI_Monograph_Fedayeen-Impact_1970.pdf.

26. McLaughlin, 199.

27. Ibid

tional capacities, their virulent ideologies united people continents apart. Their trajectories were also similar in that both were divided as to whether they were "international" socialists or national liberationists. As the RCMP observed, terrorist groups like the FLQ frequently "piggyback" on popular issues like labor disputes.²⁶ Terrorist groups are remarkably similar in their "black and white" worldview, idealizing the "we" and projecting all evils on the enemy "them."²⁷

That is why it can be shortsighted to infer too much from distinctions between right-wing terror and Leftist extremism. The case of FLQ antisemitism makes all too apparent the surprising overlap between Marxist-driven anti-Zionism and far-right Jew-hatred. Populist "social justice" rhetoric was just a foil for 1970s terrorists—why should anyone doubt that the same holds today for some of Israel's most fervent detractors?

This partly explains the FLQ's antisemitic streak. Not only were many of them born to outright fascist parents, but they genuinely believed that Jewish people were conspiring to oppress the global working class. Their Marxist-Leninist outlook associated Jews with capitalism and capitalism with Anglo-

American hegemony. As the United States was Israel's primary benefactor, Quebec's early anti-Zionists argued that the Jewish State was a proxy for global industrial elites' war on workers. This, combined with the Palestinians' anti-British sympathies, encouraged cooperation between Palestinian terrorists and Quebec radicals.

With this historical context, it is worth raising the alarm whenever anti-Israel activists link the Palestinian cause to global forces of anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, and even gender oppression. These baseless conspiracies are hurting students at McGill—last June, SPHR alleged that Zionist students are surveilling, doxing, and sexually harassing Palestinian peers—and they culminate in outrages like BDS's Boston Mapping Project. Unless Jewish community leaders remain vigilant, radicalized terrorist sympathizers may be encouraged to do far, far worse.

Jonah Fried is a fourth-year honors history student at McGill University. He is also a former student union representative and editor at *The McGill Tribune*, one of the campus newspapers. His articles have been featured in *The Jerusalem Post*, *The Canadian Jewish News*, and other outlets.

All References.

Primary sources

Royal Canadian Mounted Police :

- Kellett, Anthony, Bruce Beanlands, and James Deacon. "Terrorism in Canada: 1960-1989." Public Safety Canada No. 1990-16 (November 15, 2000), <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/hv%206433.c2%20t4%201990-eng.pdf>.

Federal Bureau of Investigation

- FBI. "The Fedayeen Impact—Middle East and United States" (June 1970), https://www.governmentattic.org/2docs/FBI_Monograph_FedayeenImpact_1970.pdf.

United States Department of State

- United States Department of State. "Patterns of global terrorism" (1989), <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/125318NCJRS.pdf>.

American Jewish Yearbook

- Cournoyer, Gilles. Letter to the editor of *Le Devoir*, October 1, 1969. In Michael M. Solomon, "Canada," in *American Jewish Year Book 71* (1970): 356, http://www.ajarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1970_7_Canada.pdf.

Secondary Sources

- Blais-Poulin, Charles-Éric. « Roger Waters solidaire des militants propalestiniens de McGill. » *La Presse*, July 15, 2022. <https://www.lapresse.ca/arts/musique/2022-07-15/roger-waters-solidaire-des-militants-propalestiniens-de-mcgill.php>.
- Becker, Jillian. *Hitler's Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang*. 1st ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1977.
- Canadian Foreign Policy Institute. "Standing up for student solidarity with Palestine featuring Pink Floyd singer Roger Waters," July 14, 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/canadapolicy/videos/3119093655070348/>.
- Dunstan, Simon, and Kevin Lyles. *The Yom Kippur War 1973*. Vol. 2, the Sinai /. Campaign 126. Oxford, UK: Osprey, 2003.
- Fischbach, Michael R. *The Movement, and the Middle East*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2020.
- Hillel Montreal. "Waters' Lack of Judgment is Troubling," July 15, 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/HillelMTL>.
- McLoughlin, Michael. *Last Stop, Paris: The Assassination of Mario Bachand and the Death of the FLQ*. Toronto: Viking, 1998.

- Mostyn, Michael. "A terrorist is living among civilians in Canada." *The Jerusalem Post*, May 9, 2022. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-706256>.
- Meital, Yoram. "The Khartoum Conference and Egyptian Policy after the 1967 War: A Reexamination." *Middle East Journal* 54, no. 1 (2000): 68. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329432>.
- Nadeau, Jean-François. *The Canadian Führer: The Life of Adrien Arcand*. Translated by Robert Chodos, Eric Hamovitch, and Susan Joanis, 268-70. Toronto: J. Lorimer, 2011.
- Rickenbacher, Daniel. "The Anti-Israel Movement in Québec in the 1970s: At the Ideological Crossroads of the New Left and Liberation-Nationalism." *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études Juives Canadiennes* 29 (2021): 81-111.
- Robinson, Ira. *A History of Antisemitism in Canada*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015.
- Torrey, Gordan H. and John F. Devlin. "Arab Socialism." *Journal of International Affairs* 19, no. 1 (1965): 47-62, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24363337>.



ADVOCACY JOURNALISM, ACCURACY, AND THE ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT

JONAH FRIED

On August 15, 2022, the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA) slammed¹ *The New York Times* for an article² about a shooting near the Western Wall in Jerusalem. In the piece, *Times* correspondent Patrick Kingsley wrote:

Sacred to Jews and Muslims, the nearby Temple Mount houses the third-holiest mosque in Islam and was the location in antiquity of two ancient Jewish temples that remain important to Jewish identity.

For the Boston-based media watchdog, Kingsley's phrasing, which fails to acknowledge that the Temple Mount is the holiest place in Judaism, risks "erasing Jewish history." After CAMERA demanded a correction, the *Times* on August 17 changed the article to reflect that the Mount is the "holiest site in Judaism." A small concession, the updated article is, nonetheless, a victory for the pro-Israel community. Although it may seem frivolous for Israel advocacy groups to demand media corrections, they are not just making a point. Misleading language, inaccurate statistics, and other errors are often weaponized against the Jewish State.

CAMERA (where I am an undergraduate Fellow), Honest Reporting, and other pro-Israel research associations are engaged in what we might call "fact-checking." Their work is more overtly political than other professional anti-misinformation hubs, but their methods are similar.

Although newspapers existed before the nineteenth century, mainstream, international reporting exploded in the 1850s. During this period, "sensationalist" reporters exaggerated

information because hysteria was good for business—the crazier the story, the more copies sold. In the United States, such "yellow journalism" arguably³ contributed to the Spanish-American war. Across Europe, nationalist journalists inflamed xenophobic passions, provoking pogroms against Jews, Muslims, Roma, and other minorities. In fact, according to some historians, antisemitic⁴ 19th-century Russian newspapers, not the government, caused the infamous 1881 pogroms and later incidents.

Western newspapers changed⁵ considerably in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with government-regulated professional standards and national institutions like the Associated Press (AP). But these checks and balances do not mean today's journalists are perfect. The Arab-Israeli conflict is complicated—not to mention deeply controversial and highly-charged ideologically—and small mistakes and distortions can quickly explode into propaganda.

According to Israeli historian Eliezer Tauber, slanted reporting on the battle at Deir Yassin⁶ during the 1948 Israeli independence war may have exacerbated the Palestinian refugee crisis. Early reports—relying mainly on second-hand accounts—claimed that some 200 civilians, including women and children, were raped and slaughtered. Meanwhile, primary sources (Jewish and Arab) indicate that few non-combatants were killed and that no one was sexually assaulted. Nevertheless, the exaggerated stories served as Arab League propaganda, encouraging

Palestinians to flee what they thought was an impending genocide.

During the 1982 Lebanon War, many American, Canadian, and European papers reported⁷ that Israel had no legitimate reason for attacking its northern neighbor—even though Lebanon hosted the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), an entity programmatically dedicated to destroying the Jewish state, and which had launched repeated cross-border terrorist attacks. Some outlets even accused Israel of perpetrating a second "holocaust." In this context, groups like CAMERA and Honest Reporting formed to challenge anti-Israel media coverage.

Pro-Israel "fact-checking" is, admittedly, a partisan movement. (Although CAMERA says it is nonpartisan, that does not mean it refrains from taking political positions—only that it does not endorse candidates or specific policies). But that does not mean they are wrong. The volume of corrections CAMERA and other groups have obtained since 1982 demonstrates the need for accountability in Middle East reporting.

Still, anti-Israel groups like *Mondoweiss* often accuse pro-Israel media monitors of "lobbying" and "harassing" reporters. Whether this criticism is fair or not, it is hypocritical: anti-Zionists use the same tactics. Although they may not brand themselves as pro-Palestine media watchdogs, they use similar emotionally-charged rhetoric to shame newspapers into changing their coverage. In April 2022, Laura Albast and Cat Knarr argued⁸ in *The Washington Post* that the mainstream media "white-washes" Israeli "state violence" against Palestinians. For its part, *Mondoweiss* "indicted"⁹ the New York Times for its "deliberate" decision not to cover an

1. <https://www.camera.org/article/the-media-erodes-the-jewish-claim-to-jerusalem-and-the-temple-mount-with-the-new-york-times-leading-the-way/>

2. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/13/world/middleeast/jerusalem-shooting-israel.html>

3. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44630677>

4. https://brill.com/view/journals/cas/17/2/article-p199_4.xml?ebody=previewpdf-60547

5. <https://mcgill-on-worldcat-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/atoztitles/link?sid=jstor%3Aajstor&genre=book&title=Invention+of+Journalism+Ethics&isbn=9780773528109&isbn=9780773576384>

6. <https://www.asmeascholars.org/the-massacre-that-never-was>

7. <https://www.amazon.ca/Operation-Peace-Galilee-Israeli-Plo-Lebanon/dp/0809015048>

8. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/04/28/jerusalem-al-aqsa-media-coverage-israeli-violence-palestinians/>

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Amnesty International report charging Israel with "apartheid."

Although anti-Zionists may not like it, they are also bullying the mainstream media to suit their narrative. These narrative wars are nothing new, but the internet exacerbates them. In 2008, *The Electronic Intifada* alleged that CAMERA staff monitors Israel-related entries on Wikipedia to prevent them from becoming "tainted by anti-Israel editors." CAMERA denied orchestrating the campaign; however, Wikipedia banned several accounts it believed were associated with CAMERA staff.

In an article soon after the scandal, *The American Prospect* editor Gershom Gorenberg wrote¹⁰ that groups like CAMERA fail to recognize "the difference between advocacy and accuracy."

Gorenberg also said CAMERA never corrects errors in its articles: Although CAMERA's Gilead Iri wrote that *only* the Carter administration declared Israeli settlements illegal, the Ford and Johnson governments also did. When Gorenberg was writing, CAMERA had not corrected that claim, but the organization later clarified¹¹ that no American government *since* Carter's had declared Israel's settlements unlawful.

Nevertheless, Gorenberg is not entirely wrong: there is a difference between advocacy and accuracy. But newspapers rarely make that distinction. Many papers consistently hire editors who are at least as partisan as CAMERA is, and their reporting tends to reflect that. That does not mean their articles are baseless, but it does mean that their journalism blurs the lines between advocacy and accuracy. In our imperfect world, where media is increasingly consolidated in the hands of a few companies—and where the kinds of people who go into journalism do it for partisan reasons often — Gorenberg's thesis is misplaced, *null ab initio*.

Wikipedia editors¹² are no different—

9. <https://mondoweiss.net/2022/02/a-week-has-passed-and-still-not-a-single-word-in-the-nytimes-about-amnesty-internationals-landmark-report-that-found-israel-practices-apartheid/>

10. <https://prospect.org/article/mideast-editing-wars/>

11. <https://www.camera.org/article/updated-camera-alert-inaccurate-terms-in-coverage-of-bush-statement/>

they are anonymous and primarily not accountable for what they write—and Israel is not the only subject where political controversy arises. A 2014 study¹³ found that, while Israel was one of the most-edited Wikipedia entries in all languages, other topics like homosexuality, anarchy, and religious figures like Muhammad and Jesus were similarly contested.

It would be preposterous to claim that a Wikipedia page is, without question, "accurate." Every university student knows that one should always check other peer-reviewed sources.

Like the mainstream news media, Wikipedia is a battleground in the Arab-Israeli conflict. (In this regard, Gorenberg also appears to forget that pro-Palestine groups had engaged¹⁴ in the same strategy well before 2008.) On controversial subjects, it is not surprising that partisan editors battle over internet entries. It may be an ugly business, but that does not mean, *ipso facto*, that the editors' opinions are wrong.

The truth about "the Truth," at least for political subjects, is that it is not universal. The fact that something is considered political *means that it is debated*. Although readers may balk whenever CAMERA calls the media antisemitic—or whenever *Mondoweiss* condemns the press as racist and Islamophobic—one should be equally skeptical of sanctimonious, seemingly innocuous mainstream articles that quietly push a particular agenda.

Is this narrative tug-of-war good for democracy? Probably not. But there is hardly any alternative. Although the media industry is increasingly professional, few, if any, newspapers are always "objective." Journalists are not omniscient: they are often partial and ill-informed and sometimes make errors. Moreover, private companies such as *Bloomberg* may be accountable to their stakeholders, and state-owned broadcasters like *Al-Jazeera* might be unlikely to take positions contrary to their government's interests.

12. <https://www.camera.org/article/camera-column-the-wild-west-of-wikipedia/>

13. <https://arxiv.org/abs/1305.5566v1>

14. <https://rb.gy/76k3w2>

The purpose of pointing out who owns a newspaper or funds a certain think-tank should not be to discredit them. Many philanthropists donate to various causes, sometimes bipartisan, for multiple reasons. Should Democrats stop voting for candidates they support just because George Soros, a liberal Jewish-American billionaire, contributed to their campaigns? Of course not. Anti-Zionists call groups like CAMERA a "lobby" to appeal to progressives who deplore the outsized influence of money in American politics. This allegation is a cop-out. It distracts readers from the Arab-Israeli conflict, focusing on the funder. Not that these donations are not worth mentioning—they are. But unsavory characters like Arab dictatorships and oil companies have previously funded anti-Israel groups and university Middle East studies departments. Although that does not, *ipso facto*, delegitimize groups like the 1950s Organization of Arab Students (OAS received¹⁵ Saudi funding, among other sources), it is an essential context for understanding their rhetoric and activities.

Other pro-Israel groups like NGO Monitor document the sources behind many anti-Israel not-for-profits. Like the OAS, many so-called human rights groups' sponsors are questionable, to say the least. But just as a left-wing observer should not ignore what *The Times of Israel* says just because one of its founders¹⁶ was a right-wing financier, a Zionist should not point out who funds a particular NGO as if to imply that everything they publish is necessarily a lie. Every side of the Arab-Israeli conflict is "lobbying" for something. People should not be turned off to the pro-Israel perspective just because it seems to have more money than the pro-Palestinian side or to the anti-Israel side because Saudi Arabia agrees with what one group says. And although many progressives tout their "grassroots funding" sources, that is also "partisan" financing because the donor gave it for a political purpose. Acknowledging that something is political does not disqualify it. Progressive donations tend to be smaller, meaning they have fewer resources to spread their message, but that alone does not make their speech any more or less close to "the Truth."

15. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26528952>

16. https://ballotpedia.org/Seth_Klarman

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST



The upshot is that readers should be skeptical of everything they read, no matter their partisan background. Anti-Zionist groups are not wrong just because they are "propagandists." They are wrong because their facts are wrong. Take the recent example of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who claimed Israel waged "more than 50 holocausts" on Palestinians. He has also argued¹⁷ that money-hungry Jewish elites caused the Holocaust, not antisemitism.

Pro-Israel media watchdogs can be biased, but it is still worth listening to them. On the weight of evidence, Zionist arguments tend to be more consistent, nuanced, and root-

ed in historical fact—that is, closer to "the Truth." That is why they are more credible than anti-Zionist screeds and why students should know better than to listen to what a publication like *Samidoun.net* has to say.

Jonah Fried is a fourth-year honors history student at McGill University. He is also a former student union representative and editor at The McGill Tribune, one of the campus newspapers. His articles have been featured in The Jerusalem Post, The Canadian Jewish News, and other outlets.

17. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43967600>



FIGHTING BDS AND BIAS IN NORTH AMERICAN STUDENT NEWSPAPERS

SOPHIE SKLAR

When on April 29, Harvard University's student magazine *The Crimson*¹, reversed its decision from two years before and publicly endorsed BDS and the Harvard College Palestine Solidarity Committee, it sent shock waves throughout the academic community. Many former *Crimson* editors spoke out² against this editorial decision decrying their lack of understanding of BDS – the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state. However, former *Crimson* editor Dara Horn went further; she publicly called out the editors for their refusal to rely on facts and their lack of critical thinking skills. She wrote,³

"The editorial made clear that the editors were inspired less by events overseas [terrorist attacks against Israelis] than by events in front of students' noses—specifically, a billboard-sized mural created by Harvard's Palestine Solidarity Committee. ... As my old newspaper put it: "Art is a potent form of resistance, and we are humbled by our peers' passion and skill."

And, what was this "art" that so inspired this editorial Board? It "consisted entirely of large words, which read—wait for it—"Zionism is Racism Settler Colonialism White Supremacy Apartheid." In other words, pure propaganda that "would have been at home in any Middle Eastern authoritarian state, where it would have been painted by government lackeys to illustrate classic regime talking points that openly genocidal groups like Hamas, Hezbollah and their state sponsors in Iran have been pushing to local and Western audiences for years."

Former *Crimson* editors may have been shocked by this disturbing turn of events. However, most Jewish, pro-

Israel university students are too familiar with uncritical editorial positions against Israel that often cross the line into antisemitism and are inspired by similar propaganda.

Unlike Harvard, the *McGill Daily*, McGill University's student magazine, began its editorial assault on Israel years before. As a student, I remember reading a particularly outrageous 2019 article, "Israel is an Apartheid State,"⁴ which contained not even a semblance of objectivity. Instead, peppered throughout the editorial were antisemitic tropes and factual inaccuracies, such as the assertion that "Israel upholds an institutionalized and oppressive system of [...] domination and oppression over Palestinians as a group; that is, a system of apartheid." Then, on April 4, 2022, weeks before the *Crimson* editorial appeared, its editorial Board published a call for divestment⁵ from Israeli companies, and officially labeled Israel an "apartheid state."

And it's not only McGill. In May 2021, Kingston, Ontario's Queen's University student journal, *The Queens Journal*, took an editorial position⁶ supporting BDS. It wrote,

"The *Journal* stands in solidarity with those students and faculty affected by the ongoing occupation of Palestine. ... This month, we'll be donating to the BDS movement. We encourage you to consider donating to this or any other organisations working to provide relief to those being driven out of their homes in Palestine."

So, why do these student newspapers repeatedly feel compelled to take a stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict while rarely engaging in other international

human rights issues, and what, if anything, can Jewish pro-Israel students do to counter these hateful narratives?

Why are Student Newspapers so Eager to Endorse BDS?

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) report "The Anti-Israel Movement on U.S. Campuses, 2020-2021"⁷ attempts to answer these questions: It provides a detailed look at the massive spread of BDS on university campuses as reflected in student newspapers. The report explains, "This [trend] reflects a stance among some parts of the left, which alleges that Israeli human rights violations against the Palestinians, or at times [even] the very existence of Israel, are representative of the worst of global systemic injustices."

Allied with "woke" politics and leftism, and in particular, the "anti-colonial" and "anti-imperialist" schools of thought, BDS ideology aligns Israel and Jews with colonialists and white supremacists and, regardless of indisputable archeological and historical proofs, rejects Jewish claims to their ancestral homeland.

Student newspapers quickly latch onto this perspective, as it fits neatly into the "anti-imperialist" mindset with which many student publications are closely associated. Without critically thinking or evaluating the messaging they publish, editors also see communicating anti-Israel and pro-BDS sentiment as a means of ingratiating themselves amongst the larger progressive student body.

What Can Pro-Israel Students Do?

I often scrolled through the latest edition of the *McGill Daily*, outraged to see my legitimacy and humanity as a pro-Israel Jew denied in headlines across the front page and dismayed by zero pushback from the larger student

1. <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2022/4/29/editorial-bds/>

2. <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2022/5/4/kahn-staff-ed-dissent-bds/>

3. <https://www.commonsense.news/p/at-harvard-facts-are-for-losers>

4. <https://www.mcgilldaily.com/2019/03/israel-is-an-apartheid-state/>

5. <https://www.mcgilldaily.com/2022/04/labeaus-mro-opposes-inclusion-diversity-and-respect-%ef%bf%bc/>

6. <https://www.newstbt.com/post/student-run-newspaper-the-queens-journal-get-s-called-out-for-unbias-stance>

7. <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/anti-israel-movement-us-campuses-2020-2021>

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

body.

While some University administrations and faculty associations seek to uplift Jewish students during these difficult times, confronting the dominant campus narratives is often challenging. For example, *McGill Daily* editors cite their "Letters Policy"⁸ when faced with angry students. This policy authorizes editors to reject letters whose content they deem "racially or ethnically discriminatory." Articles or letters to the editor that present Israel in an even remotely favorable light or give a platform to Jewish voices on campus fall into this category.

But can they legally do this, given their mandate to represent the entire student body, especially while receiving over \$300,000 in student fees? Apparently, yes. The *McGill Daily* and its French-language equivalent *Le Délit*⁹ is published by the Daily Publication Society (DPS), a non-profit, fully independent student corporation that works much like a labour union. Subsequently, any student can sit on its Board of Directors, exempt from administrative control. For its part, McGill University refuses to interfere unless the Board violates DPS guidelines. The same applies to most Jewish community organizations, such as Hillel and Federation CIJA, who, for the most part, stand back, allowing this usurping of power to take place.

But not to despair. Despite this systemic pro-BDS orientation, resources and options are available to combat the spread of BDS on campus and the demonization of the Jewish state in university newspapers.

Jewish students can turn to Hillel and Chabad for support and help. Further, external organizations are mandated to support Jewish students in their fight for equal treatment on campus, including Honest Reporting Canada, CAMERA on Campus, and *Bnai Brith* Canada.

Jewish students can also author op-eds, letters to the editors, or articles exposing the falsehoods and harms perpetrated by these editorial endorsements and other forms of anti-

Israel propaganda. While some publications, such as the *Daily*, often refuse to publish these letters or articles, other publications - such as CIJR's *DateLine: Middle East*, give pro-Israel voices a platform for responding and engaging in in-depth discussions of these matters. Social media posts can also be exceptionally effective. Facebook and Twitter are great platforms for circulating articles, op-eds, or blog posts that aim to combat the poisonous narratives perpetrated by student publications.

If a local university paper refuses to publish your article, campus legal clinics can compel the journal to publish it. In 2019, the *McGill Daily* published¹⁰ its definition of Zionism as "represent(ing) a racist attitude and violent practice

From personal experience, I know how BDS and other pro-Palestinian groups create a hostile, isolating, and potentially unsafe climate for pro-Zionist students. Regardless, Jewish students and pro-Israel allies can effectively counter these agendas through the help of multiple support groups on and off campus.

Moreover, Jewish students can actively advocate for antisemitism-awareness training programs and promote motions in student constitutions to protect Jewish voices on campus and in student newspapers. They can also reach out to local synagogues, community groups, and the Israeli Consulate/Embassy.

One contemporary example of how community support can create an im-



BDS – Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel comes to the fore during campus explosion against Israel following Oct. 7.

against Palestinians" that "only recognizes Israeli/Jewish hegemony and legitimacy to self-determination in Palestine."

The two student authors fought back when the paper refused to publish a rebuttal.¹¹ They won their case after the McGill administration finally intervened. The students had cited Section 10.2 of the MOA, which compels the DPS to publish letters sent by students, even if they don't conform with the opinions of the Editorial Board.

mense difference is a lawsuit by McGill students currently filed against the university that has received support from B'nai Brith, Canada.¹² The lawsuit attempts to combat a document endorsed by the Students Society of McGill University, which calls for a boycott of many Jewish clubs and associations on campus. The document accuses these clubs of engaging in "settler-colonial apartheid against Palestinians." B'nai Brith Canada is lending their voice, support, and resources to all Jewish students on campus so they do not have to combat the antisemitic climate at McGill alone.

8. <https://www.mcgilltribune.com/news/deputy-provost-compels-mcgill-daily-to-publish-letter-about-zionism-111919/>
9. <http://delitfrancais.com/>

10. <https://thecjn.ca/news/canada/university-steps-in-over-mcgill-daily-anti-zionism-ban/>
11. <https://www.mcgilldaily.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Response-to-McGill-Daily-on-Zionism.pdf>

12. <https://www.bnaibrith.ca/bnai-brith-joins-student-lawsuit-on-mcgill-student-societys-anti-israel-referendum/>

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST



Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV) applauds the Montreal City Council for abandoning a motion to adopt the controversial International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism

Additionally, a current McGill student, Jonah Fried, sued the school¹³ and several campus student groups over an anti-Israel student referendum held last spring. B'nai Brith Canada's Legal Defense Program is supporting the lawsuit; Fried, a 2022 CIJR Baruch Cohen intern, is also receiving legal representation from the organization. Through these acts, B'nai Brith Canada exemplifies how Jewish groups and associations can uplift and support Jewish students to alter the present toxic climates on their campuses.

Jewish students must remember that their anti-BDS struggle is crucial in their fight against antisemitism and the delegitimization of democratic Israel. It is also a key element in the more significant battle against the politicization of our campuses, expressed in attacks against academic freedom and the drive to "cancel" voices that disagree with the cur-

rently-dominant ideological worldview. Our struggles are not only about Israel and ourselves but strike at the heart of what constitutes academic freedom: a process wherein all opinions and perspectives can be discussed intelligently and with the utmost respect.

Above all, keep informed of the facts and issues concerning the Arab-Israel conflict. Don't be intimidated by propaganda. But above all, they refuse to be marginalized and suppressed. Silencing one side of a complex and multifaceted historical-political issue – in this case, Israel's - is not only antisemitic but violates the dictums of free speech and critical discourse.

Sophie Noa Sklar has a BA in History and World Religions from McGill University and is currently a law student at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toron-

13. <https://www.jpost.com/bds-threat/article-713742>



THE FALSE CONFLATION OF ZIONISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY

SOPHIE SKLAR

Perhaps one of the most personally painful claims about Zionism I have encountered as a student at McGill is that Israel is a white ethno-state and that Zionism espouses "white supremacy." My former campus newspaper, the *McGill Tribune*, went as far as to label Zionism a movement of "inherent anti-Arab racism."¹ Further, the paper published an op-ed² calling for Zionism to be labeled a "legitimate form of racial discrimination according to McGill's "decolonization" and EDI initiatives."

These claims, and the hundreds of others like them, align Zionism, the nationalist movement that calls for establishing Jews in their historic homeland with white supremacy. This ideological correlation is on par with the latest cultural trend of resurgent identity politics that labels individuals who do not comply with the "woke" agenda as "colonizers" and "white supremacists."

Accordingly, many Israelis have faced a long history of persecution and have been painted as victimizers oppressing innocent ethnic minorities living amongst them. Nothing can be further from the truth. Aligning Zionists with white supremacy is akin to completely erasing the historical victimization of the Jewish people, who were largely powerless to protect themselves from "the oldest hatred," antisemitism, until the founding of the State of Israel 75 years ago. Israel incorporated oppressed and marginalized Jewish populations from across the globe – from victims of the Holocaust to those expelled from Arab countries. It gave these populations agency and the power to control their

lives and shape a collective destiny for one of the first times in their long and tragic history of oppression.

And this consciousness of victimhood is what they brought with them in establishing a democratic country, Israel – the only one in the region – where non-Jews share equal rights under the



Israeli Chief Sephardi Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef, left, and Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi David Lau

law with the Jewish majority.

This false conflation of Zionism and "white supremacy" exposes anti-Zionist advocates' ignorance regarding Jews and Israel. Moreover, their cavalier insistence that Israel is an extension of powerful "white European colonizers" countervails fundamental woke tenets to which they religiously adhere, given that many Jews and Zionists, and a majority of Israelis today, do not identify as white and are not European. And by so insisting, the racist "woke" ideologues effectively erase an entire sector of world Jewry and Jewish Israelis.

Debunking the Myth

Aligning Israel with white supremacy is false on many fronts, especially regarding the majority Jewish population of

Israel³ expelled from the MENA (the Middle East and North Africa) region.

Mizrahi Jews - Jews who lived throughout the MENA region from Biblical times into the modern era - totaled 4.6 million as of 2018, comprising 25–30% of the global Jewish population. They also include most Jews living in Israel today. Only about 30%⁴ of Israeli Jews are Ashkenazi or descendants of European Jews. Despite contributing to all aspects of life and society for over 3,000 years, during the early to mid- 20th Century, over 850,000 Mizrahi and Sephardi Jews⁵ fled or were expelled from Arab and Muslim countries, leaving everything behind. While most countries hesitated or refused to absorb Jewish refugees, the newly-formed Jewish state made it its mission to assist the victims of these ethnic cleansing campaigns.

So, to hear Jews and Zionists labeled "white supremacists" is not only profoundly shocking and disturbing, it is laughable.

My Story

This false conflation is especially pertinent to me as the granddaughter of Mizrahi Jews forcibly displaced from homelands where they lived for thousands of years: My maternal grandparents trace their roots to the Tehran region of Iran and the Basra region of Iraq.

1. <https://thecjn.ca/news/canada/university-steps-in-over-mcgill-daily-anti-zionism-ban/>
2. <https://www.mcgilltribune.com/how-mcgill-fails-palestinian-students/>

3. <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-mazzig-mizrahi-jews-israel-20190520-story.html>

4. <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/04/world/americas/04iht-nations.4.8182206.html>

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Since the Babylonian expulsion, my family has lived and thrived in Iraq. Iraqi Jews played an essential role in the early days of Iraq's independence, in the formation of Iraqi cuisine, culture, and commerce, and were deeply intertwined in the lives of non-Jewish Iraqis. Jews were judges, members of the Iraqi parliament, and teachers. Iraq's first finance minister, Sir Sassoon Eskell, was Jewish.

Beginning in the 1940s, the Iraqi government, which was pro-Nazi during world war II, gradually reduced the rights of Jewish citizens. In July 1948, the government decreed Zionism a capital offense, with a minimum sentence of seven years imprisonment. The government could now convict any Jew of Zionism based solely on the testimony of two Muslim witnesses. My great-grandfather and great-uncle were arrested - on no evidence - for the crime of being Zionists. While detained, my great-grandmother burned our entire family history - including photos, documents, and virtually any paper evidence of the family's existence - to eliminate any connection to Israel. My grandmother, Betty (born in Basra as Suad), kept only one small black-and-white photo of herself as a child.

The enduring trauma my grandmother faced throughout her early years pains me deeply to this day. My Mizrahi family is only one of many who erased all evidence of their Jewish/ Zionist existence to avoid imprisonment. Think of all the art, photography, music, family archives, Judaica, and other crucial pieces of Jewish-Iraqi history the government forced them to destroy.



Maabara 1950, Israel

More tragically, many Jews were forcibly removed from their homes and executed. They were also physically persecuted. Notable examples include the Farhud⁵ pogrom, an outbreak of mob violence against Baghdad Jewry on June 1, 1941.

My great-uncle Naim Dallal (1923-2020) was riding a public bus when non-Jewish Iraqis stopped the bus to kill Jews. Naim explained in a 2016 interview⁶ that because he didn't look Jewish, he was able to escape.



Intimidation of Jewish College Students on the Increase

They decimated Jewish life in Basra and Baghdad: Jewish faith and culture were subverted and concealed. And, if that wasn't bad enough, the situation soon worsened.

When the State of Israel was created in 1948, Iraq was placed under martial law - accompanied by a significant uptick in Jewish persecution. Zionist activity was now punishable by death, and Jews were forbidden to engage in banking or foreign business within Iraq. Shafiq Ades, a notable Iraqi-Jewish businessman, was

convicted of selling goods to Israel and hanged. Finally, in 1950, the Iraqi Government passed a law legalizing Jewish emigration: 121,633 Jews fled the country, relinquishing their Iraqi citizenship and abandoning their property. That same year, they dismissed Jews from government posts, and the government confiscated \$80 million in Jewish property.

From this time onwards, it was clear that there was no place left for Jews in Iraq. From 1951 to 1952, Operations Ezra and Nehemiah airlifted between 120,000 and 130,000 Iraqi Jews to Israel, the primary source of refuge from the violent persecution my family directly faced.

While Iraqi Jews' story is only one configuration, every MENA Jewish population has its rich and deep Arabic history, each of which ended tragically, with the modern State of Israel as their only haven.

When students at McGill or individuals on social media, claiming to support equity-seeking and marginalized groups, absurdly label Zionists and Israeli Jews "white supremacists," they erase my family's rich and varied history. They also negate my family's pain: their forced expulsion, the loss of all family history, relics, and property, the lives they worked so hard to build, and the abandonment of the only home they had known for thousands of years. And finally, they symbolically perpetrate a new Farhud by denying history, the world's abandonment of Mizrahi Jews during their grief and persecution. Without Israel, the Jewish state, these Jews would have been left with no refuge and nowhere to turn.

Sophie Noa Sklar has a BA in History and World Religions from McGill University and is currently a law student at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto, where she studies the intersections between

5. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-farhud>
6. <https://sephardivoices.com/naim-dallal-iraq/>



AIPAC AND THE FUTURE OF BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

MITCHELL STEIN

As the future of bipartisan support for Israel comes under question, The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the leading pro-Israel lobbying group in the United States, finds itself far removed from its once-respected position among many politicians and pundits across the political aisle. As a result of an internal policy change in support of political campaigns, the organization has made itself a public enemy of the far-left and, more importantly, garnered criticism from many on the center-left.

Central to Israel's well-being is the recognition that Israel must never become a partisan issue in the United States. AIPAC has historically been at the center of those efforts, creating a platform where politicians who typically stand at opposite ideological ends can unite in agreeing on one issue critical to American values: support for Israel. To achieve its ends, AIPAC remained steadfastly nonpartisan. What made it a favored organization among politicians and pundits of all stripes was its commitment to stay away from partisan politics, only advocating for bipartisan support for Israel and ensuring the safety of the Jewish State. However, this stance quickly unraveled with the introduction of the organization's first political action committee (PAC) in December 2021, which funds candidates that AIPAC deems critical to Israel's security and prosperity.

So, what changed? In September 2021, eight Democratic members of Congress, including three members of the far-left progressive "Squad," Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, and Ayanna Pressley, voted to defund American support for Israel's defensive system,

the Iron Dome (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the Squad's fourth member, abstained from the vote). Even though they lost, and funding increased after an overwhelming vote of 420-9, AIPAC discerned in this audacious attempt to deny Israel the means to protect its citizens the rumblings of a future storm



Benjamin Netanyahu addresses AIPAC convention

threatening the Democratic Party's traditional support for Israel.

AIPAC's decision to jump head-on into the political arena proved enormously controversial. It wasn't only the progressive far-left that reacted negatively to AIPAC's move; moderate pro-Israel progressives also did. When AIPAC supported 32 Republican candidates that voted against Joe Biden's certification as President following the 2020 Presidential Election, progressive Jewish groups such as the Anti-Defamation League were vocally critical. Haile Soifer of the Jewish Democratic Council of America also accused AIPAC of compromising its "support of America's democracy to support Israel," and Richard Haass of the Council on Foreign Relations called AIPAC's decision "morally bankrupt."¹

AIPAC is not new to such criticism. Leading the anti-AIPAC charge, Senator Bernie Sanders publicly declared "war" on Israel's leading lobby in a *New York Times* article² to secure "the future of the Democratic Party." Later, in a *New York Times* op-ed,³ he elaborated on his positions by blaming Israel for the Gaza blockade; Two months earlier, he had boycotted AIPAC's March 2020 conference.

AIPAC fought back through its surrogate group, the United Democracy Project (UDP). In turn, extreme left progressives strategically argued that AIPAC funds candidates that compete with "progressive" values, including campaigns that work to defeat those critical of the State of Israel. By so doing, they touched the nerves of many pro-Israel progressives.

Former New York City mayor Bill de Blasio is a case in point. A staunch pro-Israel Democrat, he repeatedly condemned the BDS movement, publicly speaking out against the ice-cream company Ben & Jerry's when the company announced their boycott of Israel over sales in the West Bank. However, in June 2022, while reiterating his support for Israel, he felt he could no longer support AIPAC because of its involvement in local elections and would not seek its endorsement for Congress.

De Blasio cited a 2021 Democratic primary race in which Democrat Shontel Brown defeated Democrat Nina Turner

- [1. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/mar/23/aipac-pro-israel-group-backs-insurrectionist-republicans>](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/mar/23/aipac-pro-israel-group-backs-insurrectionist-republicans)
- [2. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/20/us/politics/bernie-sanders-aipac-super-pac.html>](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/20/us/politics/bernie-sanders-aipac-super-pac.html)
- [3. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/14/opinion/bernie-sanders-israel-palestine-gaza.html>](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/14/opinion/bernie-sanders-israel-palestine-gaza.html)

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST



An anti-Israel protest in Washington, DC

in a Cleveland district in an area with a large Jewish population. Far-left activists blamed Turner's defeat on groups like AIPAC and the Democratic Majority for Israel (DMFI); they accused them of running attack ads against anti-Israel candidates and funding campaigns on behalf of their competitors based on their pro-Israel positions. During the May 2020 Sheikh Jarrah dispute, Turner stood squarely on the side of the Palestinians, tweeting⁴ that "[IFNOT]NOW: American Jews are joining with Palestinians and others in front of the State Department to say #SaveSheikhJarrah and #EndApartheid." She also conditioned U.S. aid to Israel.

AIPAC read Turner's position as indicative of a malaise spreading throughout the Democratic Party that cannot be allowed to fester and grow. The only solution? By keeping out of Congress its most viral spreaders. And AIPAC seems to have chosen well as to who to support. Take defeated candidate Michigan Rep. Andy Levin of Michigan. Levin defines himself as an ardent Zionist and supporter of Israel. Still, this year, he introduced a bill that deemed the Old City of Jerusalem alongside the West Bank "occupied." Levin's bill breaks with U.S. policy toward Jerusalem that would have considered even The Western Wall as "occupied Palestinian territory." Levin lost his race to Haley Stevens, an AIPAC-backed candidate who opposed such policies.

But was it AIPAC's support that helped defeat him? Perhaps most Americans recognize the Western Wall's status as significantly Jewish. Perhaps staunch pro-Israel, pro-peace policies are good policies that most Americans support? While social media may tell one story of anti-Israel rhetoric

across the progressive board, the wins and losses played out on the political battlefield might indicate something else. Perhaps "being pro-Israel is both good policy and good politics,"⁵ as AIPAC insists.

Michigan's Haley Stevens, a progressive Democrat, was endorsed by AIPAC and Emily's List,⁶ a pro-abortion PAC. Elsewhere, Ritchie Torres, the prominent pro-Israel progressive Democrat, continues to show that anti-Israel rhetoric is not a staple of Democratic progressivism, continually earning him the support of pro-Israel groups, including the Democratic Majority for Israel (DMFI).

Support for Israel among progressives is ideologically nuanced, as it is among the right and centrists: They often disagree among themselves as regards a one-state vs. a two-state solution and which land is deemed "occupied." Therefore, taking definitive, traditional stands might prove self-defeating. However, given the trend toward progressivism within the Democratic Party, what can AIPAC do to maintain its Democratic support? By limiting their definition of what support for Israel entails, AIPAC risks losing pro-Israel political advocates in the long run and might end up labeled a right-wing group, cementing the false impression that supporting Israel is solely a right-wing value.

Despite the vocal strength of its far-left members, for now, Democratic support for Israel remains staunch, as evident in the Party's voting pattern. However, with anti-Israel sentiment growing among the far-left fringe, the necessity for a pro-Israel platform that most Democrats support is crucial, or Israel will find itself isolated and supported only by the political right.

Mitchell Stein is a Communications and Israel Studies major at Montreal's Concordia University. He is currently living in Miami, FL.

4. <https://jewishinsider.com/2021/05/nina-turner-and-shontel-brown-diverge-on-israel-gaza-conflict/>
5. <https://twitter.com/AIPAC/status/1554658070818603010>
6. <https://www.emilyslist.org/news/entry/emilys-list-endorses-congresswoman-haley-stevens-for-reelection-in-michigan>



RECONCILING ISRAEL'S RELIGIOUS AND DEMOCRATIC IDENTITY

SAMUEL MALAMUD

Undoubtedly, the State of Israel's democratic and Jewish character is a foundational principle that confirms the State's unique essence and *raison d'être*. As stated in the Israeli Declaration of Independence, the Land of Israel is not only "the birthplace of the Jewish people," where their "spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped," but modern citizenship in it also ensures "complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race or sex."

However, extreme divisions across the religious spectrum on matters of public policy, such as marriage, divorce, and public transportation on the Sabbath, to name a few, demonstrate a concerning divide in Israeli society regarding the relationship between the State's dominant characteristics.

For example, most Hilonim, Israel's secular population, favor same-sex marriage and the legalization of public transportation on Shabbat (the Jewish day of rest). They base their stance on democratic principles such as equality and freedom of conscience, which they prioritize over halakhic standards (Jewish law), an integral aspect of Israel's Jewish religious identity (Pew Research Center "Israel's Religiously Divided Society").

In contrast, most Haredim, Israel's ultra-orthodox population, oppose same-sex marriage and the operation of public transportation on Shabbat. They believe that matters of marriage, divorce, and transportation should continue to be under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Rabbinate and governed by halakha. Most Haredim characterize Jewish identity as strictly adhering to halakha and advocating for the integration of halakhic standards into positive Israeli law regardless of the risks it poses to Israel's democratic principles. For example, many consider the Haredi request for gender segregation in public transport as discriminatory against women (Pew Research Center "Israel's

Religiously Divided Society").



The secular and religious divide in Israel comes to a head over the draft

Can both identities be reconciled without one invalidating the other? Can the Israeli system be considered democratic with halakhic norms integrated into it?

In short, yes. Through historical agreements between religious leaders and Zionist pioneers, the coexistence and unique relationship between Israel's religious and secular judiciaries, and the population's will to maintain both identities, Israel successfully blends its Judaic heritage and commitment to preserving modern liberal-democratic values.

Nevertheless, to address this question effectively, we must first comprehend what democracy, its origins, and what its various models consist of. In addition, we must describe the Jewish dimension of Israel's unique democratic system and explain how the two have historically coexisted.

The principle of democracy is much more than the appointment of government officials through elections and simple majority rule. The origins of democracy reach back to Antiquity and were debated by ancient Greek Philos-

ophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

In Book VIII of *The Republic*, Plato describes democracy as one of the five "basic" forms of government. According to Plato, democracy (direct rule by the demos, the people) is one of the worst forms of government since positions of power are given by lot, which risks placing power in the hands of those not competent to rule. Furthermore, democracy's overemphasis on individual freedom represents the often-chaotic nature of the people living within it.

"Freedom, I replied, which, as they tell you in a democracy, is the glory of the State—and that, therefore, in a democracy alone will the freeman of nature deign to dwell."¹

Plato agrees with Socrates that various intermediate forms exist within each general form of government. This idea remains relevant today as multiple variations of democracy have developed, notably French "direct" and "indirect" and American "republican" democracy. For example, although most contemporary democracies function under the liberal democratic system, Swiss direct democracy, unlike the wider French variety, "allows the electorate to express their individual opinion on decisions taken by the Swiss Parliament and to propose amendments to the Federal Constitution."

So, where does Israel fit in this picture?

Israel's political system resembles most modern-day parliamentary democracies based on the separation of powers and checks and balances. It has a Knesset (Israel's unicameral parliament), which consists of one-hundred-twenty members, a government (executive

1. Plato. *The Republic of Plato*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett, Henry Frowde - Oxford University Press, 1888. Project Gutenberg EBook, www.gutenberg.org/files/55201/55201-h/55201-h.htm

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

branch) that the Knesset elects, and a judiciary that holds the state legislative and executive branches accountable through judicial review.

Notably, Israel does not have a written constitution. In addition to the Israeli Declaration of Independence, the Knesset enacts Basic Laws that enjoy supra-legislative and constitutional status and are of higher legislative authority than ordinary laws. Enshrined in Israel's Basic laws are fundamental human rights relating to human dignity, liberty, property, movement, privacy, and freedom of occupation. However, despite having constitutional status, these rights are relative and may "be infringed to preserve the social framework." Therefore, when meeting the required constitutional conditions, courts may justify the infringement of these rights by ordinary laws.²

In contrast, under the Status Quo Arrangement and Israeli Declaration of Independence, the State guaranteed fundamental freedoms such as the freedom of religion and conscience to demonstrate to the United Nations that Israel will be a state which promotes democratic values.

Therefore, violating these rights would breach Israel's promise to the United Nations as a democratic state, ultimately delegitimizing its existence.

"The countries establishment requires the U.N. approval, which is not possible if freedom of conscience is not guaranteed to all its citizens...it is obvious that, retroactively, equality of rights must be guaranteed for all citizens, and there must be no coercion or discrimination in matters of religion or any other matters."³

However, Israel is also a "Jewish state," indicating that Tanakh (the Hebrew Bible) has a critical constitutive place in the Israeli system. How does Israel balance preserving these fundamental rights and democratic principles with Tanakh standards, which arguably infringe on fundamental rights?

Historically, before the State's establishment, the State balanced halakhic standards and democratic principles through agreements made between

the Old Yishuv, the religious Jewish community in Israel before the first Zionist immigration wave of 1882, and the New Yishuv, Jewish Zionists who immigrated to Israel following 1882.

The Old Yishuv existed in Israel before the State's establishment, during the times of the Ottoman Empire and Mandatory Palestine. The residents were Orthodox Jews who spent most of their time learning Torah (the Old Testament), living mainly off donations from Jews in the Diaspora, otherwise known as halukka. The New Yishuv refers to the first waves of Zionist Jews who immigrated to Israel to establish a national identity and economic independence. They promoted secular and socialist values and began making their mark with the "First Aliyah" of 1882.⁴

In 1947, to address his concerns regarding the stability of the Old Yishuv's religious institutions and the attack on religious values with the emerging secular State of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, former Prime Minister and Chairman of The Jewish Agency Executive, sent a letter to the Ultra-Orthodox Agudat Israel (Ultra-Orthodox political party) to form a united policy to present to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. In its Status Quo Arrangement, Ben-Gurion clarifies that Israel "won't be a theocratic state" and that "equality of rights must be guaranteed for all citizens, and there must be no coercion or discrimination in matters of religion or any other matters."

However, Ben-Gurion and the Jewish Agency also understood the concerns of religious parties. While Israel was not a "theocratic" state, its foundation upon "the Rock of Israel" was recognized. Fundamental aspects of Orthodox Jewish life, such as Shabbat (the Jewish Sabbath), Kashrut (Jewish religious laws on food), Ishut (personal status), and education, were legally recognized and protected.

The letter describes Shabbat as "the legal day of rest in the Jewish state" and ensures that government kitchens serving Jews ought to have kosher food. Each religious denomination will

have complete autonomy in its educational systems where "the government will not violate the religious status and religious conscience of any group of Jews." There will also be a single judicial system for marriage and divorce conducted by Rabbinical Courts. In short, the Jewish Agency will continue to ensure the individual freedoms and democratic principles necessary to obtain the United Nations' approval over the State's establishment.

Nevertheless, to prevent dividing Israel's pious and secular population and preserve the State's Jewish tradition, the Jewish Agency meets Agudat Israel's request of delegating authority over matters of Ishut, Shabbat, and Kashrut to religious authorities and providing them with full educational autonomy.

The historic agreement between Zionist and religious leaders to balance fundamental human rights with underlying components of Orthodox tradition is reflected in Israel's contemporary institutions, specifically its judicial system. Israeli secular courts, notably the Supreme Court of Israel, and Rabbinical Courts, under the supervision of the Chief Rabbinate, each have their exclusive jurisdictions and share a unique relationship.

Hebraic, British, Ottoman, and American traditions shaped Israel's modern juridical system. The Hebraic influence consists of implementing Jewish religious standards in Israel's legal system, such as Jewish halakha in family law. The Israeli legal system combines British and American Common Law traditions reliant on precedent-set law with Ottoman Civil Law tradition. Although mainly based on Common Law, Israel codifies its civil laws similar to the Meccelle, otherwise known as the Ottoman Civil Code of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Furthermore, certain features of Turkish Ottoman law remain operational today, such as marriage law and personal status under the jurisdiction of religious courts.⁵

The Supreme Court of Israel, consisting of fifteen judges, acts as the High

2. United Mizrahi Bank v. Migdal Cooperative Village
3. Status Quo Arrangement

4. Shilo, Margalit. "Old Yishuv: Palestine at the End of the Ottoman Period." Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women. 23 June 2021. Jewish Women's Archive. <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/old-yishuv-palestine-at-end-of-ottoman-period>

5. Levush, Ruth. "Features – A Guide to the Israeli Legal System." Law and Technology Resources for Legal Professionals, Jan. 2001. <https://www.llrx.com/2001/01/features-a-guide-to-the-israeli-legal-system/>

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Court of Justice and an administrative court. The Court has the power of judicial review under section 15 of Basic Law and, when serving as the High Court of Justice, ensures respect for the separation of powers by ruling on the constitutionality of laws enacted by the Knesset and occasionally reviewing the executive's actions.⁶

Additionally, the Supreme Court has the authority of judicial review over Rabbinical Courts under section 15 (d)(4) of Basic Law. However, this authority over religious courts is narrower than secular courts due to sensitivity and respect for the separation between religious and secular judiciaries. For the Supreme Court to justifiably review a decision made by a religious court, they must demonstrate an *ultra vires* action should, for example, religious courts exceed their jurisdiction in a decision. Consequently, religious courts are considerably autonomous and may judge according to halakhic standards.

The extent of the Supreme Court's authority of judicial review over religious courts continues to be a hot topic of debate today. Some scholars, such as Dr. Hillel Sommer of Reichman University (formerly IDC Herzliya), believe that the Supreme Court should not review landmark decisions by religious courts. Sommer views this as an attempt by the Supreme Court to employ civil norms in religious courts. On the other hand, scholars such as Professor Barak Erez does not view the Supreme Court increasing its power of judicial review over religious courts as a threat.⁶

Lastly, the Chief Rabbinate has exclusive jurisdiction over personal status issues of Jews in Israel, such as marriage, divorces, conversions, kashrut, supervision of Jewish holy sites, mikveh (ritual baths), yeshivot (Jewish educational institutions), and overseeing Rabbinical courts in Israel. Like the civil court system, Rabbinical Court decisions are applied and enforced by the State.⁷

As mentioned earlier, Israel's religious and secular political leaders found a way to successfully merge the State's Orthodox tradition with liberal-democratic principles through historical agreements now reflected in the State's current institutions. But does the State lose its democratic character

Indigenous groups to fish in areas forbidden for the rest of the population?

Canada's legal obligation to reconcile with Indigenous communities does not affect its democratic character. Giving constitutional status to Aboriginal rights and treaties does not provide

Indigenous people an unfair advantage. Instead, it enables them to exercise their cultural practices in their ancestral homeland within the larger framework of the national community.

Similarly, Zionist leaders, in the effort to establish a Jewish state, had a legal obligation to preserve the Land's Orthodox tradition and enable religious communities to practice their culture in their ancestral homeland. Not doing so would deny Israel its religious identity, which is inseparable from the land. It would result in Israel being

just another conventional liberal democracy, non--representative of the will and specific wants and needs of Israel's population.

The difficulty of reconciling Israel's religious and secular identity is not only a significant concern for the religious and secular rights of Jews but also of Arabs (and this after they sought to destroy the new state!). However, after reviewing the above analysis, it seems clear that Israel's religious and secular identity can be reconciled without one invalidating the other. I would argue that, in Israel, both identities strengthen each other to the point where one cannot exist without the other. The State of Israel would not be able to exist if it was not a democracy according to international standards. Equally, it would not fulfill its purpose as a country if it were to undermine its indivisible Jewish identity. What we have now is an accurate representation of what the majority of the state wants, which, in my view, is as democratic as it can get.

Samuel Malamud studies foreign legal systems at the Université de Montréal. He aims to continue writing about issues and topics related to Judaism and Israel advocacy alongside his legal studies.



Young male religious Jews

when halakhic standards are governing areas of Israeli Jewish life? How can Israel call itself the only democracy in the Middle East yet continue obstructing public transportation on Shabbat, same-sex marriages, and require Jewish Israelis to receive a Gett (document under Jewish law which effectuates a divorce) to formally recognize a divorce? Wouldn't that violate people's freedom of belief and conscience guaranteed by the State?

Every democracy is unique in its history and identity. Various countries have historical issues they must come to terms with. For example, colonized countries had and arguably still are obligated to reconcile with their Indigenous populations. However, it gets complicated when historical reconciliation collides with democratic principles.

For example, existing Aboriginal and treaty rights were given constitutional status in Canada under section 35 (1) of the Constitution Act (1982) as a form of restitution for Canada's unfulfilled treaty promises to Indigenous communities. Would we now call Canada undemocratic for legally granting specific rights and privileges to Aboriginal groups but not the rest of its citizens? Is it not undemocratic to allow

6. https://knesset.gov.il/constitution/ConstP9_eng.htm

7. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israeli-ministry-of-religious-services>

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST



"GOD WILL BRING YOU TOGETHER AGAIN": THE ROLE OF PROPHECY IN THE JEWISH PEOPLE'S RETURN TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL

SAMUEL MALAMUD

"I have watched with genuine admiration the steady and unmistakable progress made in the rehabilitation of Palestine, which, desolate for centuries, is now renewing its youth and vitality through the enthusiasm, hard work, and self-sacrifice of the Jewish pioneers who toil there in a spirit of peace and social justice." So wrote former President Herbert Hoover in his 1922 private letter to Lewis L. Strauss, accurately describing, on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, what has been and continues to be the story of the State of Israel.

Israel has accomplished much since its creation in 1948, notwithstanding its having had to fight a long list of wars and grapple with an ongoing drought crisis, and this with a considerably small population. Throughout the last eight decades, the state has developed countless medical and technological advancements, became a world leader in agriculture and water desalination, formed one of the strongest militaries in the world, and maintained diplomatic and trade relations with most countries.

Israel is the story of the Jewish people



Was the Jews' return to the Land of Israel prophesized centuries ago in the Tanach?

returning to a Jewish state in their ancestral homeland. A nation that transformed a barren land again into a land of milk and honey remains a beacon of light to other nations. Are these achievements random, or did prophecy inform them in *Tanakh* (Hebrew Bible)? A thorough examination of numerous verses in the *Tanakh*, including commentaries on those verses from some of the greatest *Chakhamim* (Jewish sages), lends credence to the view that the accomplishments referenced above were not wholly accidental or unexpected but were Biblically envisioned and predicted.

1) **וְשָׁב יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת-שְׁבוּתְךָ וְרַחֲמֶךָ וְשָׁב וּקְבָצְךָ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר הִפְיָצְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה:**

"Then your God the Lord will restore your fortunes and take you back in love. [God] will bring you together again from all the peoples where your God the Lord has scattered you." (Deuteronomy 30:3)

Israel's Jewish population has increased unprecedentedly over the past two hundred years. In 1882, only twenty-four thousand Jews were living in Israel. At the state's establishment in 1948, that number had grown thirty-fold to a Jewish population of just under seven hundred and twenty thousand. Today, over seven million Jews live in Israel, comprising almost half the world's Jewish population.¹

The return to Israel of millions of Jews is a miracle. This widespread emigration from all corners has contributed to the state's rapid population increase. Israel currently has a larger Jewish population than the United States. Between 2010 and 2050, demographers expect Israel's Jewish population² to grow by about two and a half million people and the American Jewish population to decrease by about three hundred and thirty thousand people. In short, the ingathering of exiles is happening before our eyes, with Israel becoming the primary residence of many Jews.

From a religious perspective, the anticipated return of millions of Jews represents the re-establishment of the long-lost relationship between Hashem (God) and *Bene Israel* (the Jewish people). Rabbinic sage *Rashbi* (Rabbi Simon ben Yohai) taught in a *Baraita*³ (ancient oral teaching of Jewish law) that the verse "then the Lord your God will resort your fortunes" also demonstrates God's return to the Land of Israel. The verse does not state that God "will bring back" the Jewish people but implies that God is returning to the Land of Israel with the Jewish people (*Tractate Megillah 29a*). The verse's religious significance is profound: With God at their side, the Jewish people are at their strongest point as both nation and faith.

2) **וְהַשְׁפַּתִּי אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְשָׁמְנוּ עָלֶיהָ: אֵיבֵיכֶם הַיֹּשְׁבִים בָּהּ**

"I will make the land desolate, so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled by it." (Leviticus 26:32)

For centuries, what is today a beautiful and vibrant land was described by

1. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-and-non-jewish-population-of-israel-palestine-1517-present>
2. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/04/02/jews/>
3. <https://www.sefaria.org/Megillah.29a.4?lang=bi>

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

many as barren, with agricultural success deemed impossible to achieve. Israel, primarily a desert environment, was too dry or swampy to plant on and suffered from a water shortage. The prestigious American writer Mark Twain⁴ in his visit to the Holy Land in 1867, did not err when describing Israel as a "hopeless, dreary, and heartbroken land." Even Twain himself, a non-Jew, said that "no man can stand here by deserted Ain Mellahah (an area in North East Israel) and say the prophecy (that the Land will be desolate) has not been fulfilled." Additionally, when Israel was under Turkish Ottoman rule, Muslim landlords⁵ did not hesitate to sell their land to Jews and Jewish organizations, such as the Jewish National Fund, for this very reason.

The above is just one of the many examples of ruling empires having difficulty cultivating the Land of Israel. In this regard, it is consistent with the verse in Leviticus as interpreted by religious sages *Rabbeinu Behya* (Bahya ben Asher) and *Rashi* (Shlomo Yitzhaki) that the Jewish people's enemies, settling in this Land, will never feel comfortable nor find satisfaction.

3) **אֲתֵם הָרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹנְפֶכֶם תִּתְּנוּ וְיִפְרִיכֶם תִּשְׂאוּ לְעַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי קָרְבוּ לְכוּ:**

"But you, O mountains of Israel, shall yield your produce and bear your fruit for My people Israel, for their return is near." (Ezekiel: 36:8)

Former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion could not have been more correct when stating, "In Israel, to be a realist, you must believe in miracles." The Land has miraculously been restored and is thriving under its Jewish landowners. What was a barren desert for centuries is now a land of blessing and prosperity. Israel is the only nation in the world that entered the twenty-first century with more trees than it had one hundred years ago: the Jewish National Fund⁶ has planted over two hundred and fifty million trees since its founding in 1901.

Innovations⁷ such as drip irrigation to save water supply, soil improve-

4. <https://blog.nli.org.il/en/mark-twain-in-palestine/>
5. <https://israelmyglory.org/article/the-ottoman-legacy/>
6. <https://www.jnf.org/our-work/forestry-green-innovations>

ments, and the establishment of kibbutzim (literally meaning "gatherings"), dedicating most of their time to the development and sustainability of Israel's agricultural sector, revolutionized Israeli agriculture. Despite only twenty percent of Israel's surface being naturally cultivable, innovative investments in the state's agro-industry made areas of the Negev (desert) fertile and blooming for the first time in centuries. The Land once referred to as cursed by its occupying nations is now abundant again: It is also a significant exporter⁸ of avocados, olive oil, pomegranates, flowers, citrus fruits, almonds, and a world leader in agricultural technologies.

Since its establishment, Israel has flourished as a "Land flowing with milk and honey."⁹ The average Israeli cow produces twelve thousand liters of milk per year, more than most countries produce and double that Australia makes.¹⁰ Israel is also known for its Medjool date, "the biggest, sweetest, and most visually appealing variety of date," which exports forty-two tons yearly, far more than the United States and Jordan.¹¹

4) **וְרָאוּ גוֹיִם צְדָקְךָ וְכָל-מְלָכִים כְּבוֹדְךָ יִקְרָא לְךָ שֵׁם הַדָּשׁ אֲשֶׁר פִּי יְהוָה יִקְבְּנוּ:**

"Nations will see your righteousness, and all the kings your honor." (Isaiah 62:2)

It took a while, but Israeli foreign and trade relations with other countries have improved markedly since the state's establishment. Israel is a member of the United Nations and today has diplomatic ties¹² with one hundred and sixty-four of the United Nations' one hundred ninety-two member states. Many of these include Israel's Arab neighbours: Egypt¹³ signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, and Jordan¹⁴ similarly signed its treaty in

7. <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/israel-making-the-deserts-bloom/>
8. <https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/agriculture-in-israel-market>
9. <https://www.sefaria.org/Deuteronomy.26.9>
10. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2015-06-22/israeli-dairy-industry-pushes-boundaries-to-lead-world/6563694>
11. <https://www.calcalistech.com/ctech/articles/0.7340.L-3800636.00.html>
12. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/899341/diplomatic-relations-with-israel-2/>
13. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/overview-of-israel-jordan-cooperation-2>
14. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/overview-of-israel-jordan-cooperation>

1994. In addition, Bahrain,¹⁵ Morocco,¹⁶ the United Arab Emirates,¹⁷ and Sudan¹⁸ recently agreed to establish diplomatic relations with Israel (the "Abraham Accords") despite having called for the state's destruction decades before.

Much to the chagrin of far-left progressives, more and more countries seek to improve foreign and economic relations with the state. The Abraham Accords with Israel's Arab neighbours broke previously insurmountable barriers. While BDS advocates, on and off campuses, try to impose boycotts, divestments, and sanctions on Israeli companies, the state is doing billions of dollars in trade deals¹⁹ with the United Arab Emirates, something many of us would have never dreamed of seeing in our lifetimes.

The above provides merely a taste of the long list of prophecies about Israel found in Tanakh that appears to have been fulfilled. This list is enough to suggest that Israel's achievements, prophesized centuries ago, are far from random. It is exciting to know that Scripture indicates that an inevitable overarching Providential plan guides Israel's future. Why is this important? Because it provides reassurance and counters uncertainty. In an age where Israel is constantly being targeted from all sides, whether in the United Nations, on the military front, or by protestors on college campuses, it is comforting to believe that the state, informed by prophecy, will eventually prevail over its enemies.

Samuel Malamud studies foreign legal systems at the Université de Montréal. He aims to continue writing about issues and topics related to Judaism and Israel advocacy alongside his legal studies.

15. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-54124996>
16. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55266089>
17. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2020/08/13/trump-israel-united-arab-emirates-agree-establish-diplomatic-ties/3364243001/>
18. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/israel-sudan-agree-to-normalize-ties-in-u-s-brokered-deal-11603469178>
19. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/31/israel-signs-trade-deal-with-uae-its-biggest-with-any-arab-country.html>



THE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS IN JUDAISM

HAILEY OLDFIELD

Many of my generation trend toward veganism, deciding to abstain from all animal products, including meat, eggs, and dairy. How we are meant to act in our relationships with animals, as implicit in the Torah, and interpreted in many Rabbinic teachings, is relevant to this modern discussion about animals' place in our society.

Judaism treats animal welfare as a matter of great importance. A minority of Halachically practicing Jews who advocate for vegetarianism and veganism on religious and ethical grounds sought answers directly from the Torah and Talmud about how humans should treat the animal kingdom and co-exist with them. It's a complex dynamic relationship between G-d, man, and the animal kingdom that unfolds slowly over two parshiot (Torah portions) – Genesis and Noah.

On the sixth day of Creation, G-d said to man and woman, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food." (Gen. 1:28).

Just before stating the above, G-d granted to man "*dominion* over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the livestock and all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." (Gen. 1:27)

The word "*dominion*" implies that the Torah did not grant an immediate license to consume animals because G-d originally intended humans to eat plants before they discovered the difference between good and evil in the Garden of Eden. The word "*dominion*," some Jewish Biblical commentators such as Aaron S. Gross, Asa Keisar, Lewis Regenstein, and Yael Tischler argue, indicated a caretaking role rather than a violent one. This role was abrogated immediately after their

transgression when the Torah informs that "G-d made for Adam and his wife garments of skin and clothed them." (Gen. 3:21)

After G-d cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden, they worked on the land and bore children. Descended from paradise, G-d had not permitted them to consume animals. They ate from the plants of the field. However, after the human population grew and G-d saw humanity succumb to its evil inclina-



Veganism – Did G-d originally intend for men and women to eat meat?

tions, He flooded the earth.

Where does the consumption of meat come into the picture? After the flood, G-d permitted Noah to eat animals. He said, "The fear of you and dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand, they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything." (Gen. 8:18).

However, there were qualifications. G-d prohibited man from eating meat with "*lifeblood*" still in it while it is still alive. This prohibition is the fourth law of the seven Noahdik Laws to which all humanity must adhere. G-d seems to have permitted animals for man to eat out of a concession to man's weakness and inclination towards bloodthirsty actions. The thinking goes, rather than kill each other, kill animals for food.

However, in doing so, they must protect animals from unnecessary suffering, such as severing limbs of live animals (Gen. 9:3-4). This obligation also applies to killing animals for clothing.

In his article "Judaism and Animal Rights," Richard Schwartz references Jewish philosophy and pre-State Israel Chief Rabbi Isaac Hakohen Kook. Judaism accepts that animals have emotions, familial bonds, and emotional and physical limitations. According to Schwartz, Rabbi Kook "believed that these many dietary constraints imply a reprimand and are designed to keep alive a sense of reverence for life so that people would eventually return to vegetarian diets." Rabbi Kook, however, was not a vegetarian.

By excluding animals from the human diet, can we deduce that God's original intention was that man and woman align with the good within themselves? If so, perhaps veganism reflects the moral and ethical good humans should strive toward.

G-d also offered concessions and compromises in other areas of behaviour to minimize the suffering of the victims of human violence. Passages in Deuteronomy (Deut. 21:10-14) allow men to violate beautiful, non-Jewish women captured during a war but place restrictions that make breaking them less appealing. The abducted woman must shave her head and be left untouched to mourn her family for one month before the captor is permitted to approach her for consensual or non-consensual relations. Moreover, her captor must marry her after the allotted time, should he still want her. G-d similarly allows men to take non-Jewish slaves (25:39-46), with restrictions on how they should treat them.

Today, we consider it immoral to violate women against their will or to en-

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

slave people. However, these are modern concepts. When people saw nothing wrong about either of these two activities, these obligations stopped men from succumbing to their wartime passions and, regarding slaves, their natural inclinations towards lording it over others indiscriminately. They also protect victims' rights, albeit not to modern standards. By raising man's consciousness, G-d enables him to mature emotionally and spiritually -- a slow process.

The same with animals, G-d imposed inconvenient obligations that protect animals from emotional and physical pain and, in the process, raised man's consciousness concerning his relationship with the animal kingdom. Fundamental to Judaism is the prohibition against causing animals unnecessary pain.

Take these two Talmudic illustrations regarding man's obligation to show compassion towards animals:

"One day, the maidservant of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi was sweeping his house. There were young weasels [karkushta] lying about, and she was sweeping them out. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said to her: Let them be, as it is written: "The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works" (Psalms 145:9). They said in Heaven: Since he was compassionate, we shall be compassionate on him, and he was relieved of his suffering."

Now note the reverse. "Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's suffering came upon him due to an incident. What was that incident that led to his suffering? The Gemara answers that there was a certain calf that was being led to slaughter. The calf went and hung its head on the corner of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's garment and wept. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said to it: Go, as you were created for this purpose. It was said in Heaven: Since he was not compassionate toward the calf, let afflictions come upon him."

Why should heaven have afflicted the great rabbi if G-d created the calf for man's consumption or if its emotions were unmerited? Instead, perhaps "dominion" implies protective steward-

ship and employment, such as plowing or wool for clothing.



Vegan chicken from Beyond Meat

Practicing Jews, as with most people, are largely unaware of how animals are farmed for food and do not think that animal suffering results from their consumption choices. Large-scale animal agriculture and governments go to great lengths to hide how they produce animal products (burgers, fried chicken, eggs.). It is essential that these conditions, a few of which are listed below, become widely known so that consumers stop funding industries that perpetrate horrendous suffering.

Moreover, I believe that the caveats that G-d imposes to protect animals make the large-scale farming of animals impossible. In this regard, the Torah prohibits the widespread consumption of meat.

About 99% of the animals raised for human consumption in the western world are factory farmed. Standards in only three animal agricultural industries – egg, dairy, and fish farming – include macerating all male chicks alive, permanently separating calves from their mothers minutes after birth, and slowly and painfully killing farmed fish in ice water baths. Raising and killing the annual billions of animals that it takes to feed our western world's population in a profitable and economically sustainable way requires such conditions.

There are no existing methods of large-scale animal farming that do not necessitate severe abuses of animals farmed. In justification, many industry owners point out that these animals or fish would not have been born if not for human consumption. However, regardless of the circumstances of their births, we now know that animals are sentient creatures, who feel suffering, joy, and familial bonds, and should be entitled to an appropriate level of human consideration.

Richard Schwartz, in his "The Schwartz Collection on Judaism, Vegetarianism, and Animal Rights," notes the following:

"The Psalms indicate G-d's concern for animals, for "His tender mercies are over all His creatures" (Ps. 145:9). They pictured G-d as "satisfying the desire of every living creature" (Ps. 145:16), "providing food for the beasts and birds" (Ps. 147:9). and, in

general, "preserving both man and beast." (Ps. 36:7). Consistent with Jewish teachings, we cannot equate animals with human beings. But, one need not believe that humans and animals have the same value to protest against the cruel treatment that animals are subjected to today."

These treatments directly violate the Tanakh's many beautiful teachings on animals. "There are many Torah laws involving compassion for animals. An ox is not to be muzzled when threshing in a field of corn (Deuteronomy 25:4). A farmer should not plow with an ox and an ass together (so that the weaker animal would not suffer pain in trying to keep up with the stronger one) (Deuteronomy 22:10). Animals, as well as people, are to be allowed to rest on the Sabbath day (Exodus 20:10)." From teachings scattered throughout the Hebrew Bible, G-d clearly intended for humans to treat all His living creations with kindness and respect.

Hailey Oldfield has a degree in Liberal Arts and Photography from Concordia University and lives in Montreal.