



WELCOME BACK

Welcome to the new look AJDS Newsletter, the second edition for 2011 and the first without Sol.

Before I elaborate on the content, I would like to acknowledge and thank Sol for his wonderful contribution and effort in compiling what I now understand is a massive undertaking.

Let me first introduce myself. My name is Sivan Barak, I am new in the AJDS, a novice at executives and newsletters, so please bear with me as the Newsletter forms and evolves under my hands. I hope it will not fall short of the standards Sol set, but rather it will take on a life and personality of its own.

My wish is to stimulate, aggravate, inspire, enlighten and entertain you, but more importantly to excite you into sounding your progressive Jewish voices loud and clear for all to hear. The AJDS is filled with passionate, thinking individual., I ask you to select the issue that 'gets you going', write a letter, discuss it with your community, engage fellow humans so that our impact is felt and heard within the Jewish community and the wider community.

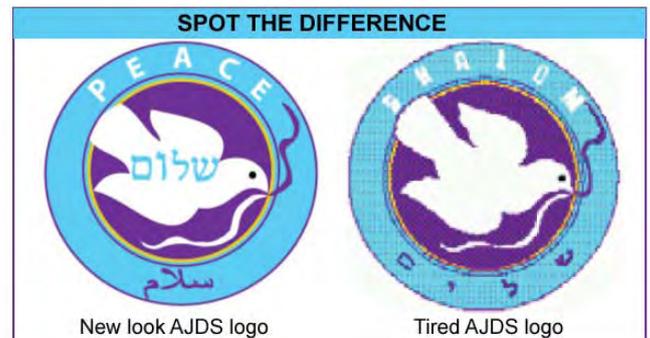
On a personal note, I am grateful for the opportunity to present debates on current issues. I promise to negotiate through the dialogue, discourse and debates that surround us, with an open mind and heart and finally I call on everyone and anyone to contribute so that these are truly the voices of us all, not just a few!

Since our AGM, so many events and changes have unfolded, from the Arab Spring, environmental disasters near and far, the BDS battles in Marrickville, boycotts at Limmud Oz, Islamophobia in St Kilda, a suburb of Melbourne in the Port Philip Council, polarization regarding asylum seekers and refugees seeking protection in Australia, the disposing of Osama Bin Laden and the foundation of the Australian branch of the New Israel Fund.

AJDS Members have published letters in the media and on the web, fought battles (and won) at the JCCV and hosted Naomi Chazan for a thought provoking night.

Next we are preparing for the Annual Renate Kamener Oration.

I hope you enjoy the read and the newly refreshed AJDS logo with the words Peace (English), Shalom (Hebrew) and Salaam (Arabic):



Happy reading and go in peace, Sivan Barak

Annual Renate Kamener Oration 2011

Gareth Evans
 on 31 July at the Leo Baeck Centre at 7pm

His topic will be

"The Role of the International Community in Preventing Genocide and other Mass Atrocity Crimes".



CHAZAN IN MARRICKVILLE

Naomi Chazan spoke to a packed hall at the Marrickville Synagogue in Sydney on Monday 12 June. For ethno-cultural tourists, a visit to the Synagogue is interesting--it's a survival of old working class and I think English Jewry from around the turn of the century. The building is simple inside, the outside quite a lovely facade.

As an outsider to Sydney I was struck by the audience--none of the usual very affluent looking types, but much more a sort of scruffy inner city Jewish audience, with a good split, thank goodness, between younger and older. I don't know if any of the pro-BDS Marrickville people had been there. I would have liked to have seen some real debate in the questioning, though it is clear that most of the audience was pretty suspicious, and some very hostile to Chazan's opinions from a Zionist point of view.

Naomi made six key points, some of which you can strongly dispute, but she has power in her argument and a long history of activism for Palestinians since at least shortly after the 67 war. Golda Meir, who was a friend of the family was very angry with her, so she is also an insider.

- 1) BDS does not stop Israel from doing 'certain things' by this she meant the occupation and so on. But it does adversely affect the working class, and this is the last group you want to hurt, rather than those who run the occupation.
- 2) Global BDS or at least a certain element in it, wants to completely delegitimize Israel, rather than just Israeli policy--she won't stand for this. She does believe in the Jewish homeland. "I have no suicidal tendencies", but "I am happy to see our borders shrink".
- 3) BDS strengthens those Israelis who believe the whole world is against them [and this by the way, is also what happens with Diaspora Jews, and I think this is what the BDS completely misunderstands, or, regrettably, some people in the camp may enjoy baiting Jewish insecurity.]
- 4) If anyone suffers from the effects of BDS it is the progressive forces in Israel who are already under attack--BDS becomes an excuse to carry out witch-hunts in Israel--look at her own case, or that of the persecution of dissenters. [At the 30 min. mark she says BDS obfuscates the two-state solution which she says is the only practical solution. In response to a later question from the audience, she said that the enormous degree of hostility between populations would not be solved in one secular democratic state--we can argue about this until the end of time.]
- 5) Directed at academics, BDS is a mistake. This she finds most offensive, because academic progressives are under attack in Israel [I would love to have asked her --isn't the point that Palestinian academic freedom is restricted by the occupation--so this is meant to highlight the issue? I am not saying I agree, I want to hear how she handles the argument.]
- 6) BDS becomes a diversion to the real issue of the occupation and injustice. There is a partner for peace, the details of the plans have been by and large worked out [here she is talking of Saudi and other plans, the Fayyad government and so on. But the key argument against this is that this has very limited legitimacy on the ground with Palestinians.]

Larry Stillman

**The Australian Jewish
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(Affiliated with the Jewish
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*The views expressed in this
Newsletter are not neces-
sarily those of the AJDS.
These are expressed in its
own statements.*

What we stand for:

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

Naomi Chazan also spoke to a well-attended drinks and nibbles function of AJDS supporters and friends on Wednesday 16 June 2011

In her presentation to the AJDS guests, Chazan said she had some working assumptions.

1) Without a Palestinian State alongside Israel there will not be a moment's peace.

Ms Chazan outlined five prospects for the shape of things to come, ranging from a negotiated peace to absolutely nothing happening, the one state solution and so on. She argued that each side will have to give up more than they ever thought possible.

On the critical issue of a just solution to the refugee problem she said that in all probability it does not mean the right of return to Israel, but a right of return to the State of Palestine. This would be facilitated by an acknowledgement that Israel bears partial (her emphasis) responsibility for the refugee problem.

2) Occupation is immoral and it is immoral to rule another people; it undermines one's own being. It is awful for the occupied and unacceptable for the occupier. It is a cancer.

You cannot correct history, but acknowledge mistakes. The details, she said, have been around for years, but the will is lacking.

As a leading spokesperson of the Zionist left, that is probably as much as you will get for from this 'block' from someone who is a left political 'realist' rather than 'sloganeer' or ideologist. She did make the point that even raising the issue of an apology was totally heretical in some quarters and this might be why she spoke of a partial apology.



Robin Margo S.C., a former Rhodes Scholar and the immediate past president of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, has been named as the inaugural chair of the New Israel Fund's Australian branch.

"NIF strives to promote the vision of Zionism that is contained, indeed promised, in Israel's Declaration of Independence, namely 'equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex'," said Mr Margo.

"NIF supports a Jewish democratic state and pursues those Zionist ideals by working to increase social justice in Israeli society. We have been encouraged by the way NIF's values seem to resonate with many in the Australian Jewish community, including many of its younger members. They are similar after all to what we all wish for Australia."

The New Israel Fund works only within Israel. Over more than three decades, it has provided in excess of \$US200 million to more than 800 *amutot* (NGOs), all recognised by the Israeli government.

NIF is widely credited for the role it has played in building Israeli civil society, promoting rights for women, the disabled, the GLBT community and minority groups, and for furthering religious pluralism and equality and democracy for all Israelis.

Organisations funded by the NIF have made many significant contributions in helping Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East; become a fairer and more just and inclusive society. The following are a few examples only out of a very long list. One grantee, The Coalition for Affordable Housing, this year successfully lobbied for housing projects in Tel Aviv, Ashdod and Ra'anana for Israelis with limited financial means.

Another, Tebeka, successfully defended the right of Ethiopian Jews to equal participation in Israeli schools. The leading human rights organisation in the territories, B'Tselem, seed-funded by NIF, was acknowledged recently by the Israeli government for assisting the IDF to improve its procedures for urban warfare designed to minimise civilian casualties.

EVEN MORE ON BDS

Statement to the JCCV plenum meeting by Harold Zwier for the Australian Jewish Democratic Society - June 6, 2011

In August last year, a meeting of the Australian Jewish Democratic Society passed a resolution, which dealt with the issue of the Boycotts, Divestment & Sanctions campaign against Israel - the BDS campaign.

Some of you may be aware that I opposed this resolution and subsequently resigned both from the AJDS executive and as delegate to the JCCV. I want this plenum to be aware that my concern with the AJDS resolution at that time was that its wording implied an alignment with the BDS campaign against Israel - even though this was not its intention.

Although I opposed the AJDS resolution, I watched with some dismay from the sidelines as this plenum, with only 6 hours' notice, debated a resolution condemning the AJDS at its October 2010 meeting - even though the AJDS was unable to attend that meeting and was therefore unable to put its position to the plenum.

At the last plenum meeting, a couple of months back - in April, the president of the JCCV was somewhat put out - not unreasonably - when I invited him to attend an AJDS executive meeting with 24 hours' notice. In contrast, the AJDS was given less than 6 hours' notice of the JCCV resolution. These sorts of political games reflect no credit on the JCCV.

For the information of delegates, we invited John Searle to our May executive meeting and had a good discussion with him on a range of issues.

In February this year, at the Annual General Meeting of the AJDS a number of members voiced the view that the wording of the AJDS resolution was inflammatory and unnecessarily brought the AJDS into conflict with significant parts of the Jewish community. At that AGM I re-joined the AJDS executive on the understanding that I would argue against our resolution within the executive. The AGM accepted my stated position on this issue.

Let me move to a clear statement about the position of the AJDS on BDS and on the issue of goods produced by Israeli settlements in the occupied territories:

The AJDS is opposed to any Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign aimed at the breadth of Israeli economic, cultural or intellectual activity. The AJDS opposes BDS.

The AJDS does support a two state solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

As the US President said three weeks ago: "a lasting peace will involve two states for two peoples: Israel as a Jewish state and the homeland for the Jewish people, and the state of Palestine as the homeland for the Palestinian people, each state enjoying self-determination, mutual recognition and peace."

Whatever one may believe about the bona fides of Palestinians, the AJDS along with many others in the worldwide Jewish community see Israeli settlements in the occupied territories as a major impediment to equitably splitting the available territory - not by any means the only impediment to resolving the conflict, but nevertheless a significant impediment.

To that end the AJDS lends its support to those who choose not to buy goods manufactured in the settlements.

The logic is clear.

The settlement project is reinforced and entrenched by economic success and this, in our view, is detrimental to Israel's long term future. The list of settlements and products can be found on the Gush Shalom web site:

http://gush-shalom.org.toibillboard.info/products_eng.htm but the reality is, that deciding not to buy settlement products is a negative action borne out of the current political impasse. Ultimately, our concern is with the lack of political imagination in the current leadership of both Israelis and Palestinians whose limited vision is only capable of rejecting each and every opportunity for positive change.

I want to make one final plea. I want the delegates at this council to recognise that within our community there are a diversity of views about Israel and its problems. More often than you might think, the voices of uncompromising support for Israel and the voices of fear and the voices that paint us as victims drown out or inhibit voices that genuinely want to question or express concern about Israeli government policies, actions and direction.

Recognise that just as supporting Australia does not mean we need to avoid looking at our society critically, so too with Israel - voices of critical and uncritical support are no less voices of support for Israel.

Many supporters of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign are using "Zionism" as a swear word, much as did the Polish nationalists in 1968 and others since then. This is a perfect way to obfuscate any argument on the Middle East. As an overlay to the dictionary definition, it means a Good Thing to most Jews and a Bad Thing to most Arabs, especially Palestinians. To most Australians, it's a matter of supreme indifference. This fact, that the word means different things to different people, is why it should be used with extreme caution. Of course the fundamental reason for the Middle East impasse is the Occupation -- the attempted replacement of one population by another. That's how the Arab world sees it and it's a view with a lot of substance. Tragically, most Israelis fail to understand Arab resentment, which has often expressed itself in terrorist attacks and the use (by Hamas in particular) of anti-Semitic propaganda such as The Protocols of Zion. This historical forgery, in fact, is the basis of the

Hamas Covenant, which quotes from it with approval. But no one has clean hands in the Middle East. The Israeli authorities have often behaved with great callousness in their treatment of the Arab population. So it's a highly polarized situation, and if one is looking for solutions, I believe it's a great mistake to take firm sides one way or another. And that's what BDS does -- it posits Good Guys versus Bad Guys. But life is more than a 1930s cowboy film. There is no guarantee that either the Good Guys or the Bad Guys are going to win. And while there are superficial similarities, Israel is not Apartheid South Africa. To insist that it is, is to obfuscate matters even further and draw attention away from the real injustices suffered by the Palestinians.

The best side to support is that of negotiation, irrespective of the myriad rights and wrongs on all sides. That's how the Greens and others ought to be handling it.
Steve Brook

Netanyahu talks to a Joint Meeting of the U.S. Congress

“Two years ago, I publicly committed to a solution of two states for two peoples: A Palestinian state alongside the Jewish state. I recognize that in a genuine peace, we will be required to give up parts of the Jewish homeland.”

“ You see, our conflict has never been about the establishment of a Palestinian state. It has always been about the existence of the Jewish state. This is what this conflict is about. In 1947, the United Nations voted to partition the land into a Jewish state and an Arab state. The Jews said yes. The Palestinians said no. In recent years, the Palestinians twice refused generous offers by Israeli Prime Ministers, to establish a Palestinian state on virtually all the territory won by Israel in the Six Day War. But as President Obama said, the border will be different than the one that

existed on June 4, 1967. Israel will not return to the indefensible lines of 1967.”



Israel Palestine 1967 borders

Demonstration in Tel-Aviv Rabin Square

Israelis gathered at Rabin Square in Tel Aviv square with signs warning that Netanyahu is leading Israel into a disaster. That same Saturday I was at the monthly Women In Black vigil in the CBD outside the GPO and held a sign in support of Israelis saying –

YES to a Palestinian State.

Sivan Barak



- The issue of Asylum Seekers, boat people and refugees raises vigorous debate among Australians and politicians it is mentioned often in the news and was just featured on the SBS television three day series “Go Back To Where You Came From.”

*Robin Rothfield who was described by Andrew Crook in **Crickey** as a ‘well-meaning rabble rouser’ has written about his experiences within the Labor party with the refugee policy.*

LABOR DISAPPOINTS ON REFUGEE POLICY

In July 2008 Senator Chris Evans, then Minister for Immigration, issued a paper entitled *New Directions in Detention* in which he made the following points:

- detention in immigration detention centres is for the management of health, identity and security risks to the community and is to be for the shortest practicable time – once checks have been successfully completed continued detention while immigration status is resolved is unwarranted
- Labor’s detention values explicitly ban the detention of children in immigration detention centres. Children in the company of family members will be accommodated in immigration residential housing or community settings.

The above points were reinforced by the ALP National Platform 2009.

Time spent in detention

The average time spent in detention has grown from 25 days in 2008 to 183 days in 2010. Overcrowding in detention camps is widely seen as a major factor in the unrest which has occurred over recent weeks. This is in part a consequence

of the backlog caused by the Rudd Government suspension last year of processing of claims by arrivals from Afghanistan (six months) and Sri Lanka (three months).

Delays in completion of security checks are another factor. During a Senate estimates hearing held late February 2011 the Immigration Department revealed that 900 people were being held in detention centres because ASIO had not completed its security checks. These 900 people had already been accepted in Australia as genuine refugees and most were being held on Christmas Island. They can be held indefinitely, because there is no limit on the time ASIO can take to deliver an answer on their security clearance. This situation is clearly unsatisfactory; if ASIO cannot complete security checks on a detainee within 90 days then unless clear evidence has emerged of a security risk, the detainee should be released into the community.

(Cont. on page 7)

(Cont. from page 6)

The effects of detention on the mental health of detainees

Professor Patrick McGorry (Australian of the Year in 2010 for his services to youth mental health) and Professor Louise Newman OAM (an advisor to the Federal Government on the mental health issues of detainees as Chair of the Detention Expert Advisory Group) have cautioned against keeping people with histories of torture and trauma in remote facilities. In fact, Professor McGorry has described detention centres as 'factories for producing mental illness and mental disorder'.

Children in detention

In October 2010 the Prime Minister announced that children would be released into the community. At this time, there were then 742 children in detention of whom 276 were unaccompanied minors. In March 2011 five months later there were 1084 children in detention of whom 456 were unaccompanied minors. Acceleration of the process of relocation to community housing is of utmost importance.

Processing of Afghan asylum seekers and non-refoulement

In June 2010, in the Uruzgan province of Afghanistan 11 Hazaras were decapitated. In July 2010 six Afghan policemen were decapitated. In late 2008, a repatriated asylum seeker, Tour Gul, who had been given assurances of safety by the Australian government, was shot four times in the head by the Taliban.

Another returnee, Abdul Azmin Rajabi, saw his nine and six-year-old daughters Yalda and Rowna killed as a consequence of his being targeted four months after returning from detention in Nauru.

Yet remarkably, in July 2010 it was revealed that the acceptance rate for the processing of Afghan asylum seekers had declined sharply from 98% to 30%.

This was followed by an announcement by Minister Chris Bowen in October 2010 that the rejection rate for the processing of asylum seekers from Afghanistan was expected to increase. The Minister made this announcement

in advance of decisions based on the merits of individual cases. Then in January 2011 the Minister announced that he had reached agreement with President Karzai for the return of failed Afghan asylum seekers to Afghanistan. This announcement clearly violates Australia's international non-refoulement obligations and is contrary to the ALP National Platform 2009 (chapter 7, paragraph 156) which stipulates that:

- Australia will comply with its international non-refoulement obligations (i.e. no-one will be deported where this places the deportee at risk of persecution involving execution or torture)

The East Timor Solution, Manus Island and the Agreement with Malaysia

Prime Minister Julia Gillard in her July 2010 speech to the Lowy Institute in defence of her position to set up a regional processing centre in East Timor stated:

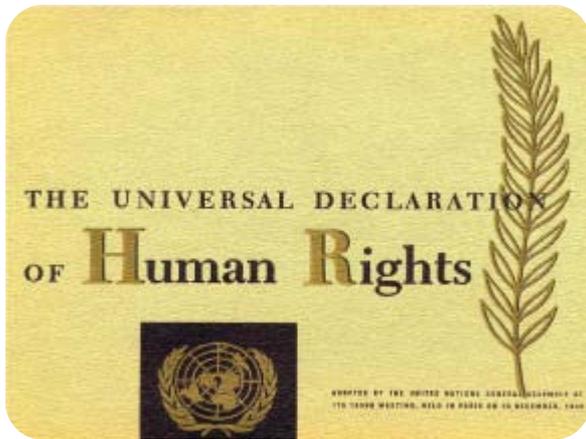
*Why risk a dangerous journey if you will simply be returned to the regional processing centre?
Arriving by boat would just be a ticket back to the regional processing centre.*

This proposition is in direct contravention of the ALP National Platform 2009 (chapter 7, paragraph 157) which states:

- Protection claims made in Australia will be assessed by Australians on Australian territory.

The Government of Timor-Leste has now rejected the Australian proposal. The latest initiatives, to re-open the detention facility on Manus Island, Papua-New Guinea and to send 800 asylum seekers to camps in Malaysia, a non-signatory to the Refugee Convention, in return for a commitment to accept 4000 refugees from Malaysia over the next four years also contravenes the ALP Platform and breaches our obligations under the Refugee Convention. Such extreme policies are disappointing to say the least.

Robin Rothfield is Secretary of Labor for Refugees, Victoria



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Article 14

Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Amnesty Australia put out a statement in an effort to dispel much of the misinformation in the media.

In Australia, the debate around asylum seekers and

refugees has largely been framed by myths and misconceptions. Community attitudes have been shaped by emphasis and rhetoric around “border protection” concerns, and the idea that asylum seekers are “breaking the rules”.

Despite the rhetoric, the facts are simple;

- **Asylum seekers are not breaking the rules** - it is legal to seek asylum by boat in Australia (Australian Migration Act 1958)
- **Asylum seekers arriving by boat make up less than 2% of Australia’s annual immigration** - at current arrival rates (5000 people a year) it would take 20 years to fill the MCG
- **Nearly all asylum seekers arriving by boat are genuine refugees** fleeing persecution, torture and violence.

Following on from the review by Robin is this report from Parliament.

[Australian House of Representatives Hansard 25 May 2011.](#) [Ms Melissa Parke is a member of the Australian Labor Party.](#)

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (16:35): While the death of Osama Bin Laden brought an understandable analysis of its effect on Islamic extremism, there continues to be inadequate recognition of the fact that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, now in its 63rd year, remains both a powerful rallying cause for such extremist groups and the source of general grievance for Muslims worldwide.

In recent years, the Pentagon and US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates have noted that the absence of Middle East peace is having a negative effect on US national security interests in the region.

The failure to resolve the long-running conflict also impacts on Australia’s national security, from its relevance to our military involvement in Afghanistan to the reality of its impact on our near

neighbour Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim nation.

I have recently returned from a study tour of Palestine together with my parliamentary colleagues, the members for Calwell, Farrer and Shortland. This was the first time I had been back in the region since I worked for the UN refugee agency UNRWA in Gaza from 2002 to 2004.

I stand here tonight as someone who has lived and worked in the region and seen both sides of the conflict. I am not pro-Israel or pro-Palestine but pro-reconciliation, pro-peace and pro-justice. It is the policy of Australia’s major political parties and it is Australian government policy to support a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. This necessarily means independent states of Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security. There must be a win-win outcome

for the two sides or there will be no resolution of the conflict. There must be a commitment to non-violence on the part of both sides and all forms of violence against civilians are to be condemned in the strongest terms. However, too often the conflict is spoken of as if it is only the Palestinians who need to change their behaviour. The frequent rocket fire from Gaza into Israel by militant groups is a clear violation of international law. But so too is the disproportionate use of force by Israel against civilians that was evident in the war on Gaza. Also contrary to international law is the blockade on Gaza, which constitutes collective punishment of the civilian population, which has crippled the economy and left thousands of young people without any prospect of work or of leading lives of dignity and which has left 80 per cent of the Gaza population dependent on aid. So too is the program of establishing Israeli cities, roads and the wall in the occupied territory.

In East Jerusalem and the West Bank, almost every aspect of Palestinian life and the economy is controlled by checkpoints, closures, settlements and their buffer zones, and by Israeli-exclusive roads, the wall, house demolitions and an opaque administrative system of permits—required for building, residency, driving, work, access to agricultural land et cetera—that severely restricts freedom of movement, access to health and education services and the capacity of Christians and Muslims to access holy places. It is this context of occupation that is often missing in discussions about the conflict, which usually centre around the issue of security alone.

Security for both Israelis and Palestinians is a legitimate issue, but it should be understood that there is no parity of power in this equation. Israel is one of the largest military powers in the world and the only nuclear power in the Middle East. It has militarily occupied Palestine for 44 years. Last week US President Barack Obama called for a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders. He noted:

The Palestinian people must have the right to govern themselves, and reach their potential, in a sovereign and contiguous state.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has rejected the 1967 borders as 'indefensible'. Yet the illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are an ongoing poke in the eye to the peace process and to a two-state solution because these so-called 'facts on the ground' form physical obstacles that may foreclose the establishment of a viable Palestinian state.

Despite the challenges presented by the occupation, the Palestinian authority has been advancing peaceful resolution of the conflict, and the relative peace experienced by Israeli citizens in recent years is a direct result of these efforts. This is more than the peace that existed at the time of the Northern Ireland agreement brokered by George Mitchell. And, instead of being seen as a threat, the unity agreement between Fatah and Hamas should be regarded as a positive step towards the possibility of peace. Earlier this month Haaretz, Israel's oldest daily newspaper, reported that the Israeli foreign ministry had advised the government to see the reconciliation as a strategic opportunity and to refrain from attacking it. The Haaretz editorial said:



It would be correct for Israel to recognize the Palestinian unity government in order to conduct a dialogue and neighbourly relations with the Palestinian state in the future. Israelis and Palestinians alike are entitled to live in peace with dignity and freedom, and to choose their own

governments.

It is not sustainable to require Palestinians to be stateless persons under the control of another country forever. On our visit we saw Palestinians drawing renewed hope from the Arab spring unfolding in the region around them. Australia, as a respected middle power country, is in a position to play a constructive role to help ensure a balanced outcome for both sides and to act as a living bridge between despair and hope. *(Time expired)*

THE RENATE KAMENER SCHOLARSHIP

The first Renate Kamener Scholarship for an Indigenous student at the University of Melbourne has been awarded. The scholar is Aimee McCartney who is studying first year Arts at the University of Melbourne.

The Renate Kamener Scholarship has been established by Bob, Larry and Marty Kamener and the Australian Jewish Democratic Society. It recognises and honours Renate Kamener's commitment to supporting reconciliation and opportunity for all.

Renate Kamener made an extraordinary contribution to humanity. She was born in Germany in 1933 and her family emigrated to South Africa where Renate qualified as a teacher. At great personal risk, she and her husband Bob worked actively against apartheid. They immigrated to Australia looking for a better environment for their two young sons. Renate worked as a humanities teacher influencing, inspiring and supporting many young people. She had a passion for peace in our world and worked with many community groups including Friends of Peace Now, Australian Jewish Democratic Society and a Muslim Jewish group Salaam Shalom in support of that goal.

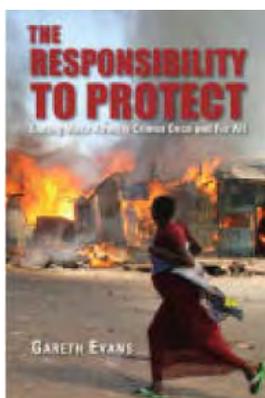
Her persistence and vision was formally recognised when, at the end of 2008, she attended Government House to receive a prized

Award for Community Service to Multiculturalism. She died on 12 March 2009. The scholarship is being established to encourage and enable more Indigenous students to study at the University of Melbourne and at Ormond College. It will assist young Indigenous Australians to live in college in a nurturing and academically supportive environment, focus on their studies and work with other members of college to broaden understanding of Indigenous issues. It recognises the importance of assisting students in the sometimes challenging transition to studying at the University of Melbourne and living away from home and community.

Ormond has a number of Indigenous students in residence and the scholarship will support this program.

Funding for this first scholarship was raised at the "Renate Kamener Oration" last year at the Leo Baeck Centre in Kew. Professor Peter Singer spoke on the obligations of society to support those most disadvantaged around the world. This year's Renate Kamener Oration will be given by Gareth Evans on 31 July at the Leo Baeck Centre.

The topic will be "The Role of the International Community in Preventing Genocide and other Mass Atrocity Crimes".



The Responsibility to protect by Gareth Evans

After the Holocaust, the world vowed it would never again permit such atrocities to occur. Yet many mass atrocity crimes have since gone unchecked, from the killing fields of Cambodia to the machetes of Rwanda to the ongoing nightmare in Darfur. In this book, International Crisis Group President Gareth Evans shows how the emergence of the new **Responsibility to Protect (R2P)** norm has fundamentally changed this landscape and can effectively mean an end once and for all to such large scale suffering.

The St Kilda Neighbourhood House Controversy

A campaign to bar a Muslim prayer group from using an East St Kilda Community House for one hour a week is being driven by extremists with an anti-Muslim agenda. The public controversy was manufactured by a group calling themselves the Q Society. The Q Society identified a need for a planning amendment to the Community House that would affect all groups that use the space.

Q society spokesperson Vickie Janson, who ran for Victorian Upper House for the Christian Democratic Party of Fred Nile and does not live in the area, is leading a campaign of innuendo and mis-information. St Kilda East's relatively high population of Jews have taken an interest in the issue. For the most part, Jewish organisations

have recognised the right of people of goodwill to practise their faith in the Neighbourhood House.

The Australian Jewish Democratic Society (AJDS) has a long and proud history of standing for social justice. While prejudice exists in every community, it is disappointing to see it emerge in our own. Human rights are indivisible; they cannot exclude any one group. If Jews, Christians and atheists can use the space, what argument can there be to exclude Muslims?

AJDS urges everyone in our community to condemn this blatant instance of religious intolerance, and support the campaign for a new planning permit for the Alma Rd Community House



The St Kilda Community House

In the wash up from the controversy over the use of the Alma Rd Community House by a Muslim prayer group, what are we left with? What insights can we gain as Jews, and as an organisation?

For those unfamiliar with the controversy, the neighbourhood house, located in East St Kilda, is a place where locals can attend activities and hold events. The house backs onto a park, making it a popular venue for children's parties. It is also regularly used for meetings, social and adult learning activities.

Two years ago, a group of local Muslims started booking the house for a prayer group for an hour on Fridays. The booking was entirely regular and in keeping with the aims of the house, but a small group of locals took umbrage. Finding no other

grounds on which to object, they identified a technical problem with the out-of-date planning permit. Around this they built an aggressive and organised campaign against the prayer group, and formed a national organisation named the Q Society to promote their anti-Islamist cause.

Local Community

surprisingly, these objectors found some purchase with the local community – both Jewish and gentile. They garnered over 50 local objections to an amendment to bring the planning permit in line with current use, and over 400 signatures for their petition, of which at least half were local and perhaps one third Jewish.

(Cont. page 12)

(Cont. page 11)

While the organisers of the objection were not necessarily Jewish, they campaigned strongly around the assumption that Jews would or should necessarily fear Muslims.

The approval of the amended planning permit by the Port Phillip council was probably a foregone conclusion. Public appreciation of the support by Jewish organisations for the Muslim prayer group in the media and by the Mayor of Port Phillip, the interfaith opportunities and the failure of the Q Society to gain traction after a certain point were by no means so certain.

This outcome was a result of many different factors: the media, stakeholders in the broader community and the responses (and sometimes the lack thereof) of leaders in the Jewish community.

The Anti-Defamation Commission led by Deborah Stone took the most public and outspoken position. Deborah circulated a notice to all ADC members about the issue, encouraging them to support the 'diversity' petition established in opposition to the Q Society petition. She also wrote a powerful article, posted on Galus Australis showing the absurdity of the objections. She took a lot of criticism for her stance. The Australian Jewish Democratic Society and the Jewish Christian Muslim Association led by Rabbi Shamir Caplan both issued public statements. Both worked tirelessly to get out accurate information, allowing people to make decisions informed by information not fear.

In summary, there were three factors that influenced the final outcome.

1. Making sure that community leaders were informed. (In this instance, I could not have guessed who would take the lead – ADC not JCCV, and Orthodox Rabbi's, rather than those from the progressive or reform movements).

AJDS through the work of Harold Zwier can take credit for ensuring that Jewish leaders had the understanding and opportunity to make a statement.

2. Ensuring that the community has accurate information is another factor. In this case, it meant dispelling rumours that a mosque for 100 Muslim extremists was being planned. Credit here belongs to the media in the first instance, as well as to the AJDS (a fantastic effort by Larry Stillman), and other community leaders and individuals.

3. And finally, I believe that one of the most important factors was leadership. The fact that some brave people spoke out (sometimes unpopularly), encouraging the congregations and communities to see the issue from a human rights perspective rather a perspective of fear and anger, changed the dynamic of discussion in the Jewish community.

In closing, AJDS played a fundamental role in ensuring that human rights are upheld, and that people could make informed decisions, and that leaders were encouraged to lead. It could have turned out very differently.

Sandra Joffe

[A Panel on dissent in the Jewish Community @ Limmud Oz Sydney](#)

Larry Stillman, Michael Brull, a young writer and blogger and Mark Baker, of the Centre for Jewish Civilization at Monash, representing three different viewpoints on a left continuum, talked about dissent in the Jewish community for a panel at Limmud Oz 2011 in Sydney. The session was chaired by Angela Budai, replacing Jenny Green who withdrew in protest at the censoring by the organisers of Peter Slezak and Viv Porzolt. Their session on another topic was cancelled because of their political views on BDS. Angela read a statement which we should perhaps endorse as an organization.

"Limmud Oz is brilliant. It has always been a wonderful place to be challenged by a range of different voices in our community.

I am disappointed in the decision to not allow presenters because of their political position. I thought a lot about my involvement in Limmud Oz this year.

After going through this process I decided to continue to participate as well as present sessions at Limmud. I believe in inclusion not exclusion. I believe it is better to encourage engagement than disengagement."

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ANDRE KUPFER
North Caulfield, Vic

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It is imperative that as a community we articulate the community's expectation that the Yeshivah Centre follow the path of other communal organisations, and be held accountable through:

1. Elections for governing body – enabling congregants and the parent body to vote in regular elections, which determine the composition of the Yeshivah Centre executive/governing body; and

2. Publish annual financial accounts – the publication and dissemination on an annual basis of Yeshivah Centre's detailed financial accounts – to ensure transparency and accountability in the application of communal money.

BRUCE COOKE
Easterwick, Vic

ADC right to support Islamic prayer group

MICHAEL Burd (AJN 04/03) asks why the Anti-Defamation Commission (ADC) should support the right of a Muslim group to hold prayer meetings at a location "in the heart of the Jewish community". He feels that there are many ADC supporters who would not want to see this happen.

The ADC is absolutely right in taking this stance. This has nothing to do with advocacy on behalf of the Islamic community, as Mr Burd suggests.

It has everything to do with freedom of religious expression for all faith groups in a multicultural society.

It is about countering the views of a small but vocal minority who feel insecure in the presence of those who don't

conform to their lifestyle or beliefs.

Thankfully we live in an open society that values diversity, and has laws and rights protecting all of us against racial and religious discrimination. Occasionally we need to take action when those rights are under threat, and that's what ADC does best, and is doing in this instance.

JAMES ALTMAN
President, B'nai B'rith
Australia /New Zealand

Rabbinical backing for Muslim group

AS a group of Orthodox rabbis, we note with concern the negative publicity regarding the proposed extension of the Alma Road Community House, to allow for Muslim prayers on Friday mornings by the St Kilda Islamic Society.

As religious leaders and in keeping with Jewish tradition, we condemn all forms of racism and promote religious tolerance and harmony.

We thus support the proposal and the St Kilda Islamic Society, assuming it meets with all standard council regulations.

Melbourne is a city known for its tolerance and embrace of diversity, and it is a sad day when we try to limit the freedom of any religious group to express its right to pray. Prayer is fundamental to the human spirit and we welcome the provision of adequate facilities to members of all faiths.

RABBIS RALPH GENENDE, IAN GOODHARDT, JAMES KENNARD, STEPHEN LINK, STEPHEN BORODA, SHAMIR CAPLAN
Melbourne, Vic

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TENSE Gleanings from *The AJN*, Friday, March 7, 1969



IT'S A BIT RICH!

AUSTRALIA'S BEST PAID WORKERS CRY POOR

Helen Rosenbaum

Amidst the rent-a-crowd protests in W.A. last year and the laments of an industry forecasting its demise with a serious mining resource rent tax, its important to maintain a grip on some mining industry realities.

Reality No 1: The average salary of an employee of the Mining, Oil and Gas industries is the highest in Australia. At 143,702 per annum, it is 1.6 times the average Australian salary of almost \$88,000. (See Table 1 below).

Workers in the mining industry on average earn:

- 1.45 times more than an employee in the IT and Telecommunications sector
- 1.7 times the salary of the legal profession
- Almost twice the salary of those working in the medical and health care professions (1.8 times)
- More than twice the average salary in the education sector (2.1 times)
- 2.3 times an employee in the automotive industry

Reality No 2: Employees entering the mining industry at graduate level or working in technical positions not requiring a university qualification earn more than experienced, well qualified professionals to whom we entrust our lives, health and children. (See Tables 2 below.)

For example: A graduate mining engineer (or field assistant, welder or laboratory technician) can earn more than a radiographer or a registered nurse and the same as some hospital registrars, clinical psychologists, and senior pathologists and occupational therapists. They also earn more than the many people who work in the education sector from child care workers to university lecturers. Some graduates and people working technical roles within the mining industry will also be earning as much as some university deans.

Once mining industry site allowances (15 – 45% of base salary) are factored in, the comparisons will be even more startling.

Reality No 3: The mining industry has plenty of room to move. By bringing mining salaries from senior executives to field assistants in line with the economic realities faced by millions of Australians, it will find much scope to reduce costs and maintain jobs.

The protests of the mining industry are not the genuine concerns of a sector seeking to make a fair contribution to Australian society. Instead they represent the desire to hold on to financial privilege.

Privilege that arises from the resources owned by all of us and most particularly Indigenous Australians.

TABLE 1 Average Salary Comparisons Across Australian Employment Sectors

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Avg. Min</u>	<u>Avg. Max</u>	<u>Average</u>
Average Australian Salary			\$87,924
Mining, Oil & Gas	\$54,928	\$276,200	\$143,702
Engineering	\$50,492	\$208,361	\$112,766
Construction, Building & Architecture	\$45,908	\$197,379	\$109,102
IT & Telecommunications	\$43,729	\$179,913	\$98,776
Sales	\$39,750	\$180,625	\$84,157
Marketing	\$45,727	\$175,909	\$83,989
Legal	\$45,797	\$197,059	\$83,078
Property & Real Estate	\$38,913	\$152,500	\$80,168
Manufacturing	\$39,806	\$145,418	\$78,934
Government & Defence	\$47,216	\$143,691	\$78,847
Medical & Healthcare	\$27,179	\$157,549	\$78,013
Primary Industry	\$46,129	\$151,250	\$71,779
Education	\$40,910	\$108,916	\$67,817
Trades and Services Positions	\$32,055	\$104,686	\$65,383
Community, Sport & Leisure	\$29,070	\$130,758	\$65,321
Automotive	\$36,286	\$122,350	\$63,359
Admin/Office Support	\$31,273	\$89,082	\$53,467

Source: MyCareer Job Listings Salary Centre. The information above is extracted from a listing of 30 sectors. Figures are updated weekly from advertised jobs and therefore represent the current "going rates". The full listing can be viewed at www.mycareer.com.au/salary-centre

The decision by our theatre establishment to stage dramas in the new culture auditorium in the settlement of Ariel presents the performing public with a real test, the likes of which it has probably never seen.

We will know the answer in the coming weeks: Is there genuine theatre in Israel, or is it just puppet theatre? Are our theatre artists really actors, playwrights and directors, or are they marionettes? Israeli theatre presents "Moral Blindness" - a play with infinite acts.

The decision by our theatre establishment to stage dramas in the new culture auditorium in the settlement of Ariel presents the performing public with a real test, the likes of which it has probably never seen. The challenge now facing our theatre world has huge importance. The decision of the weeks ahead will refashion all our theatre professionals. After years of theatre that staged prudent commercial dramas alongside quite a few courageous political plays confronting deep moral questions, our actors now face the drama of their lives.

Actually, what is at stake is not a play, but rather life itself. Should they stage their productions at the Ariel facility, we will know that the actors standing there are mere recitation automatons, and their entire theatrical enterprise will be a living prison. Should Israel's actors, directors and playwrights decide to take part in the most appalling drama of all, they will deserve at the end of their productions jeers of derision, the likes of which they have never heard.

The drama at Ariel will be the worst theatrical show ever performed here; nobody will need the verdict of theatre critics to draw this conclusion. Seeing that a Cameri production of "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" may be staged as one of the premier plays at Ariel's hall of shame, Bertolt Brecht, no doubt, will be rolling in his grave. Not much has remained of the Green Line.

(Cont. on page 16)

(Cont. from page 15)

At a time when the Tate Modern in London is presenting the impressive video work of Francis Alys, an artist who walked with a bucket of paint to draw the Green Line anew, Israel is doing its utmost to blur it. Now theatre has mobilized on behalf of this campaign of obfuscation and darkness. Yes, there is a difference between legitimate, sovereign Israel and the areas of its occupation. Yes, there is a moral difference between appearing here and appearing there, in the heart of an illegal settlement (illegal, like all of its settlement siblings) built on a plot of stolen land, in a performance designed to help settlers pass their time pleasantly, while surrounded by people who have been deprived of all their rights.

Is there really a need to mention all this, especially to artists and creators? It turns out there is. Theater managers have raced to escape culpability. "Settlers also deserve culture," said Tzipi Pines, a Beit Lessin director, in pathetic futility. Others talk about state budget allocations upon which their theatres depend. Does money buy everything?

That is the question. It's a question that needs to be put to all our new Faustians. Does state financing provide a warrant for any theatrical abomination?

Of course, the settlers' board, the Yesha Council, quickly designated the new patrons of the Ariel theatre "the state's finest sons, who defend the state while actors stage their works."

The state's finest sons?

Defenders of the state? They are our worst sons, and they endanger the state's future more than any other group in society.

Theater is not an army, actors are not soldiers, and artists who boycott performances are not draft dodgers. The few dozen theatre figures who have signed the statement saying they will boycott Ariel are people of conscience who deserve praise. Should more be added to this list, the show won't go on at Ariel. It's not easy to rebel against the one who gives you bread; it's not easy to disobey in your workplace.

But this is a real test. After the Habima and Cameri theatres perform at Ariel, they shouldn't be surprised to find performance halls around the world locking their doors to them. In contrast to theatre managements here, the world knows how to distinguish between Israel and Ariel. The world knows that a boycott is a just weapon in a struggle against immoral theatre. Thus, before the curtain goes up at Ariel, the call must go out to Israel's artists: Don't lend a hand to this theatre of the absurd. Be actors (and real people), not puppets.

Gideon Levy

Haaretz Newspaper Wed, June 08, 2011



Gideon Levy is a Haaretz columnist and a member of the newspaper's editorial board. Levy joined Haaretz in 1982, and spent four years as the newspaper's deputy editor. He is the author of the weekly Twilight Zone feature, which covers the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza over the last 25 years, as well as the writer of political editorials for the newspaper. Levy was the recipient of the Euro-Med Journalist Prize for 2008; the Leipzig Freedom Prize in 2001; the Israeli Journalists' Union Prize in 1997; and The Association of Human Rights in Israel Award for 1996. His new book, *The Punishment of Gaza*, was published in July 2010 by Verso Publishing House in London and New York.

GALUS AUSTRALIS

Jewish Life in the Antipodes

<http://galusaustralis.com/>

Is it worth being in touch with people on Facebook or Galus Australis?

I seem to spend an inordinate amount of time on Facebook these days, and some people may well ask, is it worth it? Isn't it just another form of socializing? Last night, I received an email from a colleague in Canada who thinks it is a waste of time. He is a new parent, and he said "it was all diaper talk from the new parents and no deep discussion on political happenings."

Perhaps it is a matter of attitude, purpose and personality when looking at why people use Facebook. My purpose for using Facebook is largely political: I want to stay informed, and be informed, mostly on the Israel-Palestine issue. Of course, I see what Facebook 'friends', mostly colleagues around the world are doing, and I like to see what my younger cousins are up to (as well as my son), but I put a lot of effort into locating information from diverse sources and link it up to Facebook so that people can be better informed.

The result of my efforts is that I now receive frequent 'posts' (mostly in Hebrew) from Israeli activists and website, information that barely rates a mention in the press in Australia, though it also gets into the English-language edition of Haaretz or sites like 972+ (a left-Israeli blogging site, using the country's international dialling code as a name). I have no hesitation in asking people for more information, and this demonstrates the power of such online tools.

For example, I contacted academics in Ramallah about an important survey of Palestinian public opinion, and they quickly put me onto the details, and I passed them onto other people. This could never have happened in the past.

As another example, Hagit Bak, who was in Australia about a year ago with her husband on sabbatical, is very active in Machsom Watch, and spends a lot of her time in Hebron, making sure that local Palestinians' rights are respected at the control barriers. She has also spent some time in Arwata, the village near Itamar where settlers were murdered. Notwithstanding the terrible crime, she blogged about the reign of terror and collective punishment that has been going on for the past month or so in the village, courtesy of the Israeli military.

Just letting many people know of her work may help break down some of the stereotypes which exist in some quarters about the inherent evils of all Zionists/Israelis.

Facebook and the AJDS website, and publishing on sites such as New Matilda or Galus Australis have also been very useful in campaigns such as exposing the racists behind the attempt to stop a Muslim group meeting at a community house in St Kilda.

Interestingly, I am having increasing contact with a number of younger diaspora Palestinians--some who won't even say where they live--and we conduct a vigorous, but respectful debate.

What is increasingly clear to me is that there is a huge amount of ignorance about 'Jews', because of the political crisis, where Jews are viewed entirely through a political lens. It has been quite a challenge for me, as a secular 'post-Zionist', to have to 'explain' the complexity of Jewish life, including the deep connection that many people have to the traditional land of Israel, one that cannot be automatically dismissed as 'false' or just a 'historical fiction'. Mutual understanding is I hope a path to mutual action even though we don't agree on everything.

Larry Stillman

Letter in the AJN

AJDS letter re: Goldstone clarifications

In his April 1, Washington Post opinion piece, Richard Goldstone said that if more information had been forthcoming from Israel when he chaired the fact-finding mission appointed by the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the section concerning intentional killing of civilians by Israel, would have been different.

That it was Israel's refusal to co-operate with the UN fact-finding mission which adversely affected the outcome, is an important qualification that has been somehow lost in the justificatory headlines and commentary that have appeared in the AJN.

But what of the rest of the first Goldstone report, or the additional report released on 18 March by the UNHRC, a report which continues to be critical of Israel and Hamas? Has that report been "qualified" or "disowned" by Goldstone?

Not at all. It also needs to be observed that the UN again spoke with Gilad Shalit's father.

The UNHRC mission and the original Goldstone report called for his release.

In fact, here are Goldstone's most recently reported remarks about the report as a whole:

"I have no reason to believe any part of the report needs to be reconsidered at this time."

Of 400 Israeli investigations--there have been 52 criminal investigations. So far, only three cases have been submitted to prosecution; two have resulted in convictions, while the trial of one case is still ongoing. This lack of movement is regrettable. In another case, theft of a credit card by a soldier in Gaza resulted in a far more serious penalty than using a nine-year-old as a human shield, and this has not been the only case of a light touch.

We also note that Hamas has not conducted any investigations into the launching of rocket and mortar attacks against Israel and deserve the strongly critical remarks in the most recent UNHRC report.

Larry Stillman, Sivan Barak
Australian Jewish Democratic Society

Newsletter committee

Currently this Committee includes the wonderful Steve Brook and yours truly. While I volunteered to edit and compile the AJDS newsletter I had no idea about how big was the vacuum Sol Salbe left behind!

I would really appreciate any help, feedback, assistance, creative energy and input. This is an open invitation to anyone who wants to join forces with me and work towards a creating a 'punchy', relevant newsletter.

Contact me on Mobile 0406 082 093 or Email nanabanana.sivan@gmail.com

JOIN US!!!!



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Australian Jewish Democratic Society

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