

Cue the Contradictions on the World Stage.

Israel's war on Palestine has torn me in two, which is strange since I am not semitic, being neither Arabic nor Jewish. But as someone who was called David, and who underwent the covenant prescribed in Genesis 17:10 in the first few days of my life before I was able either to consent or dissent, I was in fact brought into this world by the hands of one Dr Friedman, upon whose wrist an Auschwitz tattoo bore permanent witness to the horrors he had survived. As such my life was infused with Judaism from the very start. But I am also someone who went to the multicultural Coburg West Primary School in the 1970s, populated by the children of Islamic migrants from many nations. Growing up alongside Arabic speaking children (along with Turkish and Farsi speaking children, not to mention Greek, Italian any many other languages) has meant that the healthy mix of similarities and differences experienced in a multicultural society has always been second nature to me.

So Judaism had always been in the background of my mind a semi-divine force of infinite benevolence and wisdom, beloved but absent like God himself. Doctor Friedman passed away of old age not long after I was born, so he was no longer our family's GP in my childhood – “good old doctor Freedy” as my mother would call him with genuine affection in her voice, he having delivered all five of her children. But part of that affection was also nostalgia for the “good old days” when people *had* a family doctor who came to your house when someone was sick, the same individual year in year out, with whom you shared a bond of mutual love and respect. By the time I was growing up, that service had gone the way of the morning milk deliveries by the milko with his horse and cart (I can still hear the pre-dawn clip-clop of the hooves), and the weekly grocery deliveries from the local greengrocer. Both were replaced by the supermarket, just as the doctor's visits were replaced by the local clinic where you went and saw a different doctor every time.

This nostalgia for “good old Dr Freedy” and the good old days of home-visiting GPs merged seamlessly into Sunday School lessons from the Old Testament, stories about the Jews from Adam and Eve onwards, a kind of historical good old days. I loved all those great characters like Noah and Moses, Abraham and Solomon, Jacob and his nasty brothers, and of course my personal favourite, plucky young David with his slingshot cutting the bully Goliath down to size. But none of the children at my United Nations of a school wore the skull cap, and “Jewish” was in no sense one of the nationalities united in our playground. In my childhood experience, Jews were a concept, not a direct experience. Which was the exact opposite of my experience of Muslims, with whom I mingled on a daily basis without so much as knowing the word Islam, nor having any concept of that religion. On the one side, all concept, no experience; on the other, all experience, no concept.

Months turn to years turn to decades, and a lifetime later, the war waged by Israeli Zionists upon the Palestinian and the Lebanese peoples for the profit of American and British capitalists slowly reveals its truly evil proportions. How can it be that my beloved Jewish brethren have morphed into monsters capable of perpetrating unthinkable atrocities? How can David's sons and daughters become a Goliath? Never before have the deepest truths of Hegel's philosophy been so clear: history is driven by the contradictions which tear humanity apart, and no people are exempt from these contradictions.

The so-called Stockholm Syndrome and its attendant re-enactment compulsion is a very real psychological syndrome, but never before has the world seen it acted out upon such a grand scale. In re-enacting its treatment at the hands of the Germans in the 1930s and 40s in its treatment of the

Palestinians, Israel has shown the world its neurosis in staggering, world-historical proportions. The neurotic insistence on "October 7th" repeated like a mantra, as if there was not a decades-long lead-up to Hamas's Operation Al Aqsa Flood, displays a massive repression mechanism in full swing. For nothing really began on that date. Rather, the day was the failure of ghettoization writ large, and a return of October 6th 1973. It is impossible not to know that, if you imprison a million plus people in the world's largest open air concentration camp, sooner or later, the dam will burst and a revolt like Al-Aqsa Flood is inevitable. The bubble that burst on that day was the bubble of Israeli delusion that there was "nothing to see here," and that the "Palestinian problem" would remain under the rug where it had been swept when the walls went up. If only all that effort and all that money had gone instead into diplomacy, perhaps the current catastrophic situation could somehow have been avoided. Perhaps if the war criminal Itamar Ben-Gvir and his terrorist cronies had not assassinated the wonderful Yitzhak Rabin, Israel would not have gone down the tragic path it is now irreversibly pursuing. The bard's immortal words reverberate around the world: "Of all sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these - it might have been."

Hamas is the materialization of Israel's diplomatic failure reified into a monster of its own making, and "the repressed" is now returning with a vengeance. The greatest part of this tragedy is that Zionism has hijacked the Jewish identity, turned a religion into a nationality, (con)fused with a Jewish national socialism. American Christian fundamentalism and Israeli Zionism have thus entered into an unholy alliance to wage war on Islam, all of which is used by people actually only pretending to be religious, as a pretext for billionaires to profit from the conflict which is what the war is really all about: naked greed; a crass and base motive on which no nationality nor ethnicity has a monopoly, but rather is a mutation in the very concept of religion itself. It is mammon which is waging this war of all against all, a truly appalling spectacle and a truly tragic situation. *Riza gar panton ton kakon estin ho philarguria*. No truer words have ever been written.

The old cautionary tale of the boy who cried wolf has a simple moral: if you abuse a mechanism put in place to protect you, its efficacy is quickly degraded, and when the time comes that real protection is actually needed, it will no longer be forthcoming. The reckless accusation of antisemitism levelled against anyone making any criticism of Israel is dangerous in exactly this way: fatigued by spurious charges of antisemitism, a jaded world will eventually come to ignore this cry.

Having so far failed to drag the USA into an outright war with Iran through its series of targeted assassinations of Iranian and Palestinian leaders, Israel has now resorted to terrorism with its use of booby-trapped electronic communication devices in Lebanon and Syria. This is no spur of the moment attack: clearly, months if not years of planning have gone into this scheme. Now that these devices are exploding, maiming and killing not only Hezbollah militants, but any civilian who is unlucky enough to be in the vicinity, such as the nine year old girl and the eleven year old boy killed on Monday 16th September, the deep truth of Nietzsche's warning "When fighting monsters, beware you do not become one of them" makes itself ever more manifest.

Israel has for decades styled itself as a force of modernity surrounded by a barbaric Arabic world. It's assumed superiority was not only economic, but also cultural (Israel counting itself as European in a broad sense: university educated, secular, progressive), and, of course, religious (God's 'chosen people,' no less). With this assumed maturity came responsibilities and duties, both domestic and international. A society under the rule of law; a diligent legal system free from bias and corruption; a preference for diplomacy over aggression; a denunciation of terrorism and revenge as valid political mechanisms. Ben-Gvir, Netanyahu and the rest of the Likud party have now succeeded in destroying whatever progress Israel had made in the direction of living up to such ideals. For whatever validity

this self-narrative may once have had, it now lies in ruin, just as surely as the buildings of the Gaza strip.

On the one hand, it has been Iran, not Israel, which has shown restraint by not retaliating against the obvious Israeli provocations. In bombing its Syrian Embassy, and assassinating Ismael Haniyeh in Tehran, Israel has been poking very hard at the Persian giant, trying to get it to lash out in anger, and thereby trigger further American military involvement in the conflict. Israel's actions in Gaza have contributed to an ever-escalating spiral of violence, revenge following upon revenge without end. And on the other hand, the Islamic world seems to have turned away from terrorism, and returned instead to more traditional forms of warfare, launching missiles aimed at military targets, rather than terrorizing civilians. This role-reversal throws into sharp relief one of the deepest truths about this war: family feuds are the worst wars of all. For the war between Palestine and Israel is essentially a war between the descendants of Abraham over their inheritance. This observation is also a grounds for hope, for the same could be said of both England and Germany, and of China and Japan. In both cases, nationalities which are relatives removed by only a thousand or so years turned against one another in the twentieth century with a savage fury. And yet here we are, less than a century later, and Brits holiday in Germany and Germans in Britain, and likewise Chinese-Japanese tourism is a bustling business, something unthinkable a couple of generations ago. Will Israelis and Palestinians, Iranians and Lebanese, Jordanians, Egyptians, Syrians, Iraqis, Saudis and Yemenis all mingle peacefully in the middle east of the 22nd and 23rd centuries? History would seem to indicate that optimism is justified, but not without the agonies of bloodshed and warfare first, a warfare that I fear is really only just beginning.

Australian neutrality in the face of this escalating warfare is critical. The quarrels of the old countries have no place here in Australia, and migrants must check their historical baggage at the border. Old world feuds do not belong in our new world: that is precisely what makes it and keeps it new. Australia has no use for the hyphenated prefixes marring the culture of the USA, whose highly selective use makes them so problematic, African-Americans and Native-Americans having to wear their prefixes for example, while European-Americans or British-Americans are never referred to as such, but are called simply "American," thereby implicitly asserting their default-case status. There are no Lebanese-Australians, Israeli-Australians, Palestinian-Australians, English-Australians, Greek-Australians, Italian-Australians and so on. All Australians are simply Australian. We all know our own heritage, just as we all know our religion (or lack thereof), or our political persuasion. These are all critical, but regardless of where we are coming from, we are all simply Australian.

This is why the ABC's reportage of Israel's recent act of indiscriminate terrorism via booby-trapped pagers and walkie-talkies is so profoundly problematic. For Israel's terrorism is being described on the ABC as "[impressive](#)," "[successful](#)," and "[well planned and executed](#)." Of course, no such descriptions are ever applied by the ABC to Hamas, Hezbollah, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, or any other Islamic entity, whose military actions are invariably reported in tones of condemnation and indignation. Although it must be noted that the ABC don't go as far as Rupert Murdoch's extremist Sky News, who sickeningly celebrated this terrorism (which was in fact [the biggest act of terrorism since September 11th](#)), praising it as "[absolutely brilliant](#)." Here is one example of the kind of thing that actually happened in what the media of Murdoch and the ABC choose to describe as "impressive" and "brilliant":

"Fatima [Abdullah, aged 9] was in the kitchen on Tuesday when a pager on the table began to beep. She picked up the device to bring it to her father and was holding it when it exploded, mangling her face and leaving the room covered in blood. "Fatima was taking

courses in English” her aunt Ms Mousawi said. “She loved English.”
(from John McEvoy on Twitter @jmcevoy_2).

The blatant taking of sides by the Murdoch media and the ABC is not simply [poor journalism](#), but is in fact a recklessly irresponsible [act of complicity](#). In attempting to import this war into Australia by fighting on the side of Israel in their explicitly declared “[PR war](#),” the ABC and the Murdoch media are in fact participating in Israel's tactics of escalation, alienating Australians of Palestinian, Lebanese, Turkish, Iranian, Syrian, Iraqi and Egyptian descent, (whose numbers far outweigh the Zionist minority of Australia), promoting discord and division amongst the Australian public, while [attempting to silence dissent through legal action](#). Can you imagine if Hezbollah had conducted this terrorist attack, and had gotten booby-trapped electronic devices into the homes of Australian Defence Force personnel, which were then maiming and killing the Australian children of military personnel? The moral outrage would be unprecedented, the condemnation absolute, and the demand for retribution overwhelming. And rightly so.

The lack of such outrage on behalf of the Lebanese, and in fact the prevalence of its opposite, is such shameless and unmitigated hypocrisy that any western pose of moral superiority is now laughable. Israel's actions are not just “state-sponsored terrorism,” but simply state terrorism. The state of Israel is now openly engaged in terrorist activity. It has thereby capitulated its right to be considered a valid member of any international community. The justification adduced – that Hezbollah have been firing rockets at Israel – ignores the fact that these attacks have been a direct and unambiguous response to Israel's actions in Gaza, and would have ceased immediately if Israel had agreed to a ceasefire in Gaza. But instead of agreeing to a ceasefire, Israel has attacked Lebanon as well. Clearly, Israel wants war, and is deliberately instigating and escalating its aggressions against not only the Palestinians but now the Lebanese as well. This legitimates terrorism as a valid tactic of war. In praising these terrorist tactics as [innovative, ingenious and sophisticated](#), such tactics are in effect held up as a standard to emulate. Those who have cried long and hard in the condemnation of terrorism are now openly admiring it, thereby making [their own hypocrisy](#) fully explicit. This is actually taken to be a virtue. But the virtue of proud and shameless hypocrisy is not a stable virtue. It is a virtue which will undermine and eventually topple itself: as the good book puts it, those who live by the sword shall die by the sword. Those who praise terrorism proliferate terrorism.

The ABC's hypocrisy is contaminating not only the content but also the form of their reportage. I watch their reports not on broadcast TV, but on the ABC YouTube channel, where videos are monetized and comments are turned off, in clear and flagrant breach of the ABCs charter to run no advertising, and to promote discussion and debate among Australians. Becoming more and more like any other capitalist corporation every day, the ABC are now flagrantly betraying the ideals on which it is supposed to be founded – an unbiased source of information outside of the space of the commercialism which dominates the media.

Never before has Australia been so strongly polarized. The dispossessed majority, and the rich and powerful minority (as represented by the Murdoch executives and the “Corporate Ten” at the top of the ABC hierarchy) are so utterly at odds, and the tension is building without relief. The breaking point may come with the complete collapse of Israel, or it may come with the outbreak of nuclear war. But it now seems naïve to deny that an inflection point of discontinuity looms on our horizon just as inexorably as the natural disaster of truly chaotic climate change. That both are rooted in human *philarguria* and *hubris* is no mere coincidence, but is a sign that our deepest contradictions are working their way up to the surface.