

# לוייתן LEVIATHAN

LEVIATHAN'S OOPS! ALL ISRAEL

SPRING 2026

## The Life and Times of America's Favorite Jewish Wide Receiver

by Jakob Ball

Julian Edelman has long been one of my favorite athletes to watch. His agile, underdog vibe is very appealing to frail, unathletic Jews like me. I like to imagine if I played football, I'd be just like Edelman: dodging the bigger guys, making those crucial receptions, and going the distance for my team. The Patriots' legendary Brady-Belichick dynasty of 2000-2019 featured many stars, with Edelman among the most memorable. Serving narratively as the stout, bearded sidekick to the older, 'John Football'-looking quarterback Tom Brady, Edelman scurried his way into the hearts of Patriots fans across the nation, Jew and Goy alike.

Julian was born in Redwood City, California, to Angie and Frank Edelman. His father is a mechanic who owns an A-1 auto shop in the area, but coached Pop Warner (little league) football on the weekends. Julian describes his father as being hard on him, with "no snivelin'" being a sort of unofficial Edelman household motto. Edelman recalls fond memories of butting heads with his father, referring to his childhood self as a "little punk" in interviews. Though Julian was a smaller boy growing up, he always had a passion for the hard knocks of American football, starting early and taking the sport very seriously from the young age of 5. He eventually bulked up to an impressive 5'10 and 200 pounds, but was never a big guy by football standards.[1]

While Edelman played quarterback in college, he knew his QB skills weren't quite impressive enough



to take him to the league in that role. However, his impeccable short-area quickness was a skill in high demand, leading the New England Patriots to draft him in 2009. Edelman's speed and agility led Belichick to place him in the role of "slot receiver," running complex and relatively short routes to great effect.

For his first few years in the NFL, Julian struggled; he expected to be cut several times early on, but as he honed his skills and found his footing, he earned the hard-won respect of the legendary quarterback-coach duo of Bill Belichick and Tom Brady, the latter of whom he would come to see as a "big brother" figure. His incredible ability to turn on a dime and trip up the enemy defense earned him the nickname "dizzy" among teammates, and his hard work and talent led him to win MVP in the 2019 Super Bowl, making him the first Jew to do so.[2] and still the only one at the time of writing. Edelman retired from the NFL in 2021, and after an accomplished career, the 3-time Superbowl champion was inducted into the ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

## NETANYAHU'S NEGLECTED NORTH

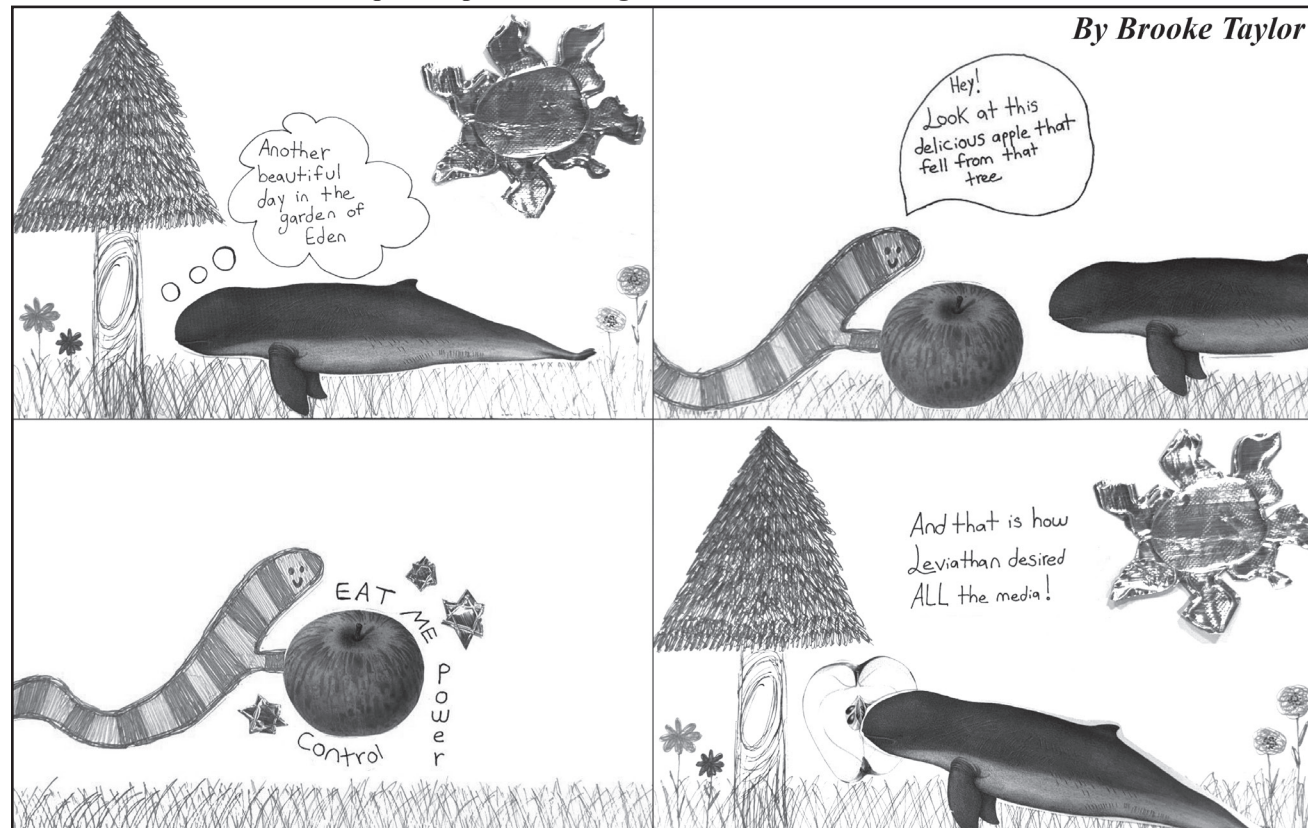
by Noam Vardi



"I ask you to do everything possible to prevent [residents] leaving the [northern] communities", Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the mayors of communities across Israel's Northern District as his government simultaneously voted to abandon the members of those very same communities [1][10]. As Israel's war with Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon rages on, Israelis living in the north face pressure to risk their lives from their own government. Concurrently, that same government votes to starve them of vital funds and resources to protect themselves. Hezbollah largely exerts control in the southernmost part of Lebanon, where it fires rockets that cross the border and strike with dangerous speed, often leaving civilians with little time to seek shelter. When sirens sound to warn of rocket launches in many of these communities in northern Israel, residents have 15-30 seconds to find shelter before the expected impact [2]. In Israel's 2023-24 conflict with Hezbollah, over 80,000 of these northern residents were relocated to safer places across the country further from the border, commonly Tel Aviv [3].

Around 14 months after the conflict began, I traveled to Israel on a volunteering trip, designed to help farmers in the south of Israel who relied on foreign labor that had slowed to a halt during wartime. For part of my time in Israel, I stayed in the Abraham Hostel in Tel Aviv, where I met a group of four women who were playing music in the second-floor lobby. They asked me to sit and play music with them, and I agreed. Upon realizing that I spoke Hebrew and was Israeli myself, they opened up to me about how they ended up playing music every Friday at the hostel. They informed me that the hostel we were staying in had been holding hundreds of 'internal refugees'- people who had fled their homes in the north looking for safety. These four women would come to the hostel every Friday to play music for them and lift their spirits. They described to me how heartbroken the northerners were, having to leave their entire lives behind, not sure

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## Torture and Human Rights in the Israeli Prison System

by Hannah Benveniste

For decades, Israel has faced allegations of torture and human rights abuses against incarcerated Palestinians (Devi 2013). Since the war began, these allegations have increased as Israel receives more international attention, the prison population has grown, and the rights of incarcerated Palestinians have been reduced (Saul 2025). Despite this attention, very few sources dive deep into the frequency of these allegations and the patterns of abuse found. These allegations are incredibly hard to confirm because the Israeli government keeps court cases closed to the public, does not allow journalists or researchers into their prison facilities, and denies unannounced visits from oversight agencies (Adalah 2024, Addameer 2023). Despite the difficulty, UN investigations, a growing body of journalism, and academic research have shed light on the way Palestinians and other prisoners are treated as they move through the Israel Prison Service (IPS). The testimonies reveal similar examples of physical and psychological abuses systematically reported at a variety of sites from a diverse population. This conveys a reality in which violence and cruelty occur routinely and are ingrained in the daily lives of incarcerated Palestinians, serving as a tool of collective punishment

and intimidation.

Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza go through a separate detention system from Israeli citizens. Roughly 3,577 individuals, mostly from the West Bank, are held in Administrative Detention, which allows indefinite imprisonment without revealing the charge to the individual (PCATI). While Israelis and internationals can be held under Administrative detention, in 2023, only 15 non-Palestinians were Administrative Detainees (Addameer 2017, PCATI 2023). 2,662 Palestinians from Gaza, as of September 2025, are held as Unlawful Combatants; a category created in 2002, following the Supreme Court's ruling that Lebanese detainees could not be held solely for political bargaining. The category applies to individuals with ties to "hostilities" or who are affiliated with a force that has ties to hostilities, but who Israel does not believe fit the definition of a prisoner of war (POW) created by the Geneva Conventions. (Saul, 2025). Unlawful Combatants are allowed to be held without legal counsel for 75 days, and because they are not classified as either POW or civilians, it is debated what legal protections they have (Saul, 2025).

### Beatings

A study conducted by Addameer that collected 917 testimonials found that the overwhelming majority of people reported "torture and ill treatment." 500 out of the 628 testimonies (79%) collected in 2024 and 184 out of 198 (92%) collected in 2025 reported "torture and ill treatment."

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# NETANYAHU'S NEGLECTED NORTH

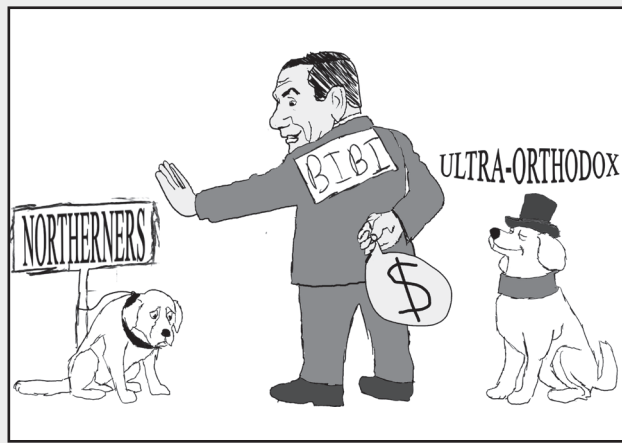
by Noam Vardi

...if their communities and homes would still be standing when they returned. They did not want to leave their lives behind; they felt genuine fear and lack of protection, just as they do now.

So then why now, in the north's current dangerous proximity to active warfare, would the Prime Minister urge these innocent civilians to stay in areas where rockets and missiles threats are intensified? In June 2025, reporting about the 2023-24 war, Israel's State Comptroller stated that it found 54% of northern evacuees believed there was a high chance that they would not return to living in the north, fearing future escalations along the border [4]. The comptroller wrote that the Prime Minister's Office failed at formulating a long-term plan for the rehabilitation of communities in the north and preparing for the return of evacuated residents to their homes...", as well as that the responsibility for this 'difficult' outcome lies first and foremost with the Prime Minister's Office [4]. These types of scandalous failures and blotches which Netanyahu seems to deflect with masterful skill are regardless, dangerous to his legacy and popularity. Evacuees also generally require help from the government financially. Finding thousands of people housing for potentially months on end in one of the most expensive cities on Earth, Tel Aviv, is easier said than done; making them pay for their own emergency living spaces may cause further political fallback for the government [5]. But this political chess becomes irrelevant when you remember the real cost at stake in these situations.

And it's not just the deadly physical impact of these attacks. These rocket barrages often occur in the middle of the night, forcing residents to wake up and in seconds having to flee to shelter with little time to spare, causing intense psychological trauma [12]. In an interview with the Times of Israel, Moshe Davidovich, head of the Mateh Asher Regional Council, said, "People who are in their homes pray. That's what they do" [1].

Netanyahu's government's negligence of the north continues: On March 30th, 2026, the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) voted to pass a new budget, the failure of which could have resulted in the collapse of the government and triggered early elections [7]. The budget, the largest in Israel's history, was under filibuster from opposition MKs (Members of the Knesset) for 13 hours, after which a vote was held from a sheltered compound in Jerusalem in the midst of missile and rocket attacks.



In Israel, MKs often place reservations on a proposed bill, which causes a separate vote on a specific part of the bill. This feature of the Knesset is used mainly by the opposition to slow down and create further debate on every part of the proposal, ultimately delaying passage of the bill. However, in this budget vote, the governing coalition added a reservation for diverting a whopping \$255 million to yeshivas and other ultra-orthodox communities [7]. The opposition assumed this reservation was from their own ranks to hurt the bill's passage, and without reading into it, massively voted to approve the resolution and unwittingly caused the bill to pass in an overwhelming 107-4 majority vote [7]. Simultaneously, as this budget passed, \$50 million was cut from northern Israel rehabilitation efforts, adding

even further to the humiliation of both the opposition and northern citizens themselves [8].

How can northern residents feel anything but abandoned, as the government takes money they needed to rebuild their communities, torn apart in war, and gives five times the amount to ultra-orthodox communities, who hold a near-zero army enlistment rate at just 1.7%, while the rest of the nation stands at 88% [9]. Meanwhile, only 23% of Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) men pay income tax, meaning 80% of Haredi households receive more fiscal government support than they pay in taxes [11]. This results in northern citizens paying more taxes and receiving less government support, despite having much more physical need. Additionally, in 2018, the Home Front Command, the Israeli institution designed to command and 'protect' civilians during wartime, launched a 'Northern Shield' program, allocated \$960 million to address bomb shelter shortages in the north and prepare civilians for emergency situations [10]. However, in January, the State Comptroller found that only 52% of the allocated funds had actually been transferred, and the project was unofficially frozen [10].

Netanyahu's government has shown disregard for its citizens again and again. It is clear that Netanyahu and his government only act for their own political benefit. Any and all places or regions where they have little to gain politically will be ignored. Northern Israelis living in the North are under consistent threat to their lives, and their safety or wellbeing has not just been forgotten about; it has been knowingly neglected. Ultra-orthodox communities are receiving more money than ever before, and extremist parties are being welcomed into the government so that Netanyahu can keep his head above water. It is a basic feature of any functioning and decent government to care for their own citizens' lives. However, it seems that Netanyahu's government is much more interested in treading water than improving the quality of their people's lives.

## Letter From the Editors

Hello *Leviathan* Reader,

At 54 years old, *Leviathan* is the longest-running Jewish student publication in the United States. Our journal has been through many phases. For this old-school edition, we started asking ourselves—what is *Leviathan's* history, on a basic level? If you read our old issues (many of which are online, check them out on our website [leviathanjewishjournal.com](http://leviathanjewishjournal.com)!) one of the first things you'll notice is how much lively debate there is. So many perspectives are present, with passionate disagreement and intense analysis of issues ranging from Zionism to intermarriage to Black-Jewish relations. *Leviathan* has gone through many phases throughout the decades, but one crucial aspect of our philosophy as a publication has not changed. Our 2013 editors put it best as "We stay in the room," putting a spin on the old "Put 2 Jews in a room, get 3 opinions" joke. By staying in the room, we commit ourselves to listening to and wrestling with the perspectives of others, and figuring out our own in the process. To honor our journalistic ancestors, we decided to use the older newspaper format, bringing the doodly black-and-white charm of early 70s *Leviathan* to 2026.

Jewish journalism and art doesn't fit into one box. Like Jews don't! Throughout the decades, the content of this magazine has varied massively in topics, and standards for what qualifies as "Jewish enough" have expanded and contracted. In the past, we've done a ton of themed issues. In recent years, we've shifted to being guided by student's interests, so with how many focus on Israel or Zionism this year, it's clear this topic has our attention. But *Leviathan* is not meant to be one thing; it is a platform for all of you who want to explore Jewishness or Jewish subjects in any way that feels right to you. Jews brush their teeth, too! If brushing your teeth is a Jewish thing, then ok! Send us a poem about brushing your teeth, we'd be honored to publish it.

We hope you enjoy this issue; we put a lot of love into it.

Best,

*Leviathan* Editors

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We meet at a party that's already thinning out, the kind where people have stopped pretending they'll stay late. Someone has opened a window despite the cold, and the air smells like spilled beer and damp wool. Music plays from a speaker no one is really listening to anymore, the bass reduced to a soft, internal pulse.

I'm standing near the kitchen counter, picking at a bowl of pretzels that have gone stale around the edges, when you come up beside me. Not deliberately—at least, it doesn't look that way. You hesitate first, like you're deciding whether the space is already taken.

"Are these still good?" you ask, gesturing to the bowl.

"I think so," I say. I test one to be sure, chewing thoughtfully. "Maybe."

You take one anyway. You don't make a face. I notice this. I notice a lot of things, I'm realizing.

We talk easily, which feels rare enough to comment on internally but now aloud. You ask what I know about the host. I tell you, vaguely. You tell me how you ended up here, which involves a friend of a friend and a last-minute text. I like that your presence feels accidental. It makes it easier to imagine it meaning something.

Other people drift in and out of the conversation. Someone refills their drink. Someone else says your name a little too loudly, slurring it, and you grimace but smile anyway. I store the sound of it—your name—in my head, say it silently once, just to see how it fits.

When the music cuts out entirely, no one rushes to fix it. The party exhales. Jackets appear. Someone suggests food, half-joking, half-hopeful.

"There's a diner nearby," you say, not to me specifically, but not not to me either. "If anyone's still hungry."

A few people agree. I don't remember deciding to go, only putting my coat on and ending up outside with the rest of you, the cold sharp and sobering. You walk a little ahead of me on the sidewalk. I match your pace without meaning to. We're just naturally in sync. When you glance back to say something to the group, our eyes meet briefly, and you smile like you recognize me.

The diner is brighter than it should be for the hour, all chrome and fluorescent light. We slide into a long booth—six of us, shoulder to shoulder, knees knocking occasionally under the table. I end up across from you, separated by laminated wood and plates we don't yet have.

Menus are passed around. Someone makes a joke about ordering breakfast for dinner. I laugh when

everyone else does, perhaps a second late.

You sit with one arm along the back of the booth, relaxed, taking up space without apologizing for it.

Our waitress comes. Orders overlap. Someone orders pancakes. You look up at me.

"Are you getting food?" you ask.

I hadn't been planning to, but I nod. "Yeah."

"Good," you say. "Otherwise it feels weird."

We end up with matching plates by accident—coffee and fries, nothing complicated. I tell myself it's nothing. I still feel a small, quiet satisfaction when the plates arrive.

The diner is closing soon. We finish quickly and head out, throwing cash on the table carelessly. You forget your jacket, but I didn't. I grab it and hand it to you, a gesture, a gift.

We walk in a large group to the train station, people peeling off as they hail taxis or walk their separate ways. It's just you and me. You don't look at me directly, just side glances, quick and observant. You're just like me.

We make small talk, you tell me about your brothers back home. We make it to the train station, but it turns out we are going in opposite directions. My train arrives first.

"I'll wait for you," I say.

You insist it's okay, I don't have to. I want to.

"So I was thinking, maybe we could hang out again sometime?" I ask, hands in my pockets. Your train begins to pull up.

Mind the gap. Allow passengers to exit first.

"Yeah. Maybe," you say. "I don't know if I'll see you around." You begin to back away. You don't want to miss your train.

Caution: doors closing.

"I gotta go."

The doors slide shut between us. Through the glass, your reflection overlaps mine for a second, our faces misaligned, almost sharing the same outline. You don't look back.

Your train moves first. I watch it until the red lights at the back become two small, blinking points and then nothing at all. My train pulls up behind me. The doors open and a familiar voice warns me to mind the gap. I don't get on.

Instead, I pull out my phone and open the group chat from earlier, scrolling until I find it—your name.

I type it into my notes. Again. Then again.

Just to make sure I don't forget.

# Torture and Human Rights in the Israeli Prison System

By Hannah Benveniste, Illustrated by Emily Gurzhi

...In 2025, a UN special committee investigation found similar results. Through interviews, many former and current detainees alleged frequent and unprovoked beatings. Some prisoners alleged that they would use items such as “metal detectors and batons” (United Nations, 14). Journalistic sources report similar testimonies. An Israeli whistleblower who worked in Sde Teiman prison told CNN that “[The beatings] were not done to gather intelligence. They were done out of revenge...It was punishment for what they [Palestinians] did on October 7 and punishment for behavior in the camp [prison].”

In the same CNN report, another whistleblower described watching prisoners who broke rules, such as speaking or moving, be taken outside and beaten “aggressively” and seeing prisoners with broken teeth and bones after being beaten by soldiers.

In October 2025, 2,000 Palestinian prisoners from Gaza and the West Bank were released as part of ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Hamas. In the following weeks, Al Jazeera interviewed some of the recently released detainees. One man, Abu Shanab, alleges he was beaten to the point of losing consciousness, resulting in the loss of his eyesight. Another man told Al Jazeera that he could no longer lie on his back due to the beatings.

An Adalah report found that numerous court cases have responded to complaints of severe beatings, punching, kicking, and hitting, and that violence occurs daily, often in areas without cameras. In one case, a detainee from Ofer Prison reportedly attended a hearing on November 15th, 2023, via video camera, during which the sounds of beating could be heard through the courtroom microphone; the court had to intervene to stop the beating. A hearing in November of 2023 documented the case of a detainee who was beaten four times in his fourteen-day detention by a warden, causing severe bruising.

The IPS responded to the report, stating that “behavior that is not in accordance with the provisions of the law will not be left untreated, and that any prison guard who is found to have violated these provisions will be dealt with in all seriousness.” They argued they are unable to investigate these specific claims, but that viewers should be skeptical, as “some media reports regarding violence towards detainees were later found to be false, hence the need to scrutinize each complaint. [sic]”

Most of the examples highlighted in the Adalah report involved the court ordering military officers in the prisons to investigate the cases, but Adalah did not find that any officials were disciplined. This isn’t the only report that found abuse was reported to no avail. In a report conducted by B’tselem, a man whose initials are A.H. claims that he had a hearing the day after he was beaten. “The judge claimed that the beatings had stopped. I told him: ‘They beat us today, Your Honor.’ He put his hands on his head and said nothing.” (B’tselem 2024, 35).

## Sexual Assault and Humiliation

Allegations of anal rape are made frequently across different reports. The UN investigation found multiple instances of rape, including the use of an “electrical probe to cause burns to the anus and the insertion of objects, such as sticks, broomsticks and vegetables, into the anus.” In a report by the Israeli human rights organization B’tselem, Tamer Qarmut, a 41-year-old held in Sde Teiman prison, said that:

“During the torture, one of the soldiers raped me. He shoved a wooden stick in my anus, left it there for about a minute, and pulled it out. Then he shoved it back in even harder, and I screamed at the top of my lungs. After a minute, he pulled the stick out again, told me to open my mouth, pushed the stick into my mouth, and forced [me] to lick it.” (B’tselem 2026, 8).

Across many different sources, detainees have claimed that beatings are used as a tool to cause (often sexual) humiliation and degradation. In the UN investigation, one detainee who was held in Negev prison alleges he was forced to strip naked and kiss the Israeli flag. After refusing, he said that the guards beat his genitals so severely that he started vomiting. Another detainee who served time in Sde Teiman prison alleged that he was forced to crawl on the ground and make sheep noises, “curse the Hamas leadership and the prophet Muhammad, and say, ‘I am a whore,’” and was beaten if he did not comply. Another prisoner from the Adalah report, who served time in Gilboa Prison in November of 2023, testified that all “prisoners in his cell were forced to curse themselves and to crawl while carrying an Israeli flag on their back and were threatened with

beatings if they failed to do so.”

Adding to an environment of humiliation, prisoners spend long periods of time nearly or completely naked. Testimonies and images have shown that the IDF strips detainees to their underwear during initial arrest, transportation, and throughout detention. The IDF argues that it does this to ensure security. “It is often necessary for terror suspects to hand over their clothes so that their clothes can be searched and to ensure that they are not concealing explosive vests or other weaponry,” an IDF official told CNN in response to an investigation of Jabalya, an urban-developed refugee camp in Northern Gaza, in which images of groups of Palestinian refugees were forced to strip to their underwear as they waited to evacuate the area went viral in December of 2024.

The UN investigation found other forms of sexual humiliation, including interrogations while nude, nude images and videos of detainees filmed and posted online, the use of sexual slurs and insults such as “whore,” “bitch,” and threats of rape (General Assembly, 15). One woman alleged that she lost access to visits with her lawyer after she informed him of threats of rape she received from prison guards (General Assembly, 15).

Sleep deprivation is one of the most common kinds of psychological abuse alleged in the reports. Sami Khalili, a 41-year-old held in Negev prison, alleged that “To stop us from sleeping, they played things on loudspeakers for hours: shouting, cursing, all kinds of whistles and other disturbing noises, and the Israeli national anthem.” (B’tselem 2024 54). Another former detainee, A.H., alleged, “In this wing, they played loud music all night. Rap songs, and most of the time, the song ‘Am Yisrael Chai’...On 6 December 2023, ...I turned off the light in the cell because we couldn’t sleep. ... the officer asked who turned off the light, and then he and other guards beat the other prisoners and me on the head, and then they left.” (B’tselem, 54).

Abuse commonly occurs during nightly cell searches, adding to the sleep deprivation, as prisoners are kept up throughout the night. Guards wake prisoners up with sound grenades, beatings, and other aggressive tactics. The former detainee Al-Ran explained to CNN that guards would frequently use dogs to intimidate and harass prisoners during searches. “While we were cabled, they unleashed the dogs that would move between us, and trample over us, You’d be lying on your belly, your face pressed against the ground. You can’t move, and they’re moving above you.” (Gallagher, 2024)

The B’tselem report found that cell searches became progressively more frequent, eventually happening 3-5 times a day, resulting in increasingly violent instances. In one testimony, a man claimed that during a cell search, he was punished for pouring water on the ground. “Two of [the guards] stripped me like the other prisoners, and then threw me on top of the other prisoners. One of them brought a carrot and tried to shove it in my anus. While he was trying to shove the carrot in, some of the others filmed me on their cell phones. I screamed in pain and terror. It went on like that for about three minutes.” A.H. claimed.

Another common allegation is the routine use of stress positions, physical positions that place prolonged pressure on specific muscles. Stress positions happen during roll call, as punishment, and during interrogations. The UN investigation found that individuals interrogated at Sde Teiman were hung from the wall, blindfolded, sometimes bound with a screw, with their hands forced above their heads, and their feet unable to touch the ground. (General Assembly, 24) A B’tselem report also found that during interrogations at Sde Teiman, detainees were forced to kneel in a prostrate position for hours. (B’tselem 70)

## Stress Positions and Shackling

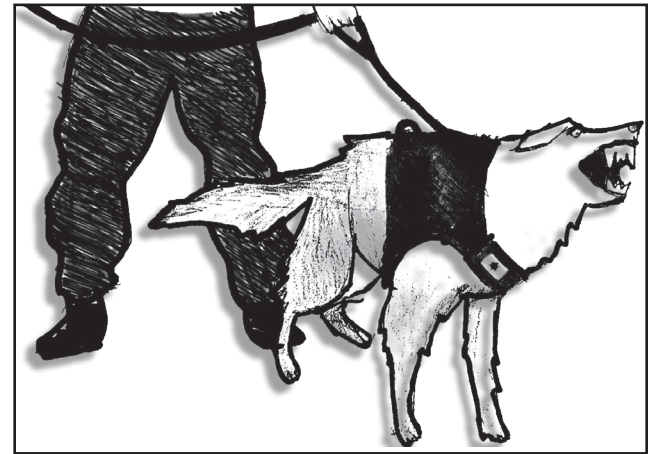
Allegations of stress positions, including positions such as “the banana” and “the frog,” predate October 7th, but since then, Israel has increasingly used harsher tactics, such as hanging individuals from the ceiling (PCATI). For example, a 38-year-old nurse, who was held in Petah Tikva prison, alleged that her wrists were shackled from the ceiling with her leg facing backward for hours during an interrogation (PCATI, 16). These positions have even been used on child detainees. In the UN investigation, a 15-year-old boy held in an adult cell alleges he had been

“repeatedly punished by being forced to stand with his hands raised for hours.” (General Assembly, 5).

IPS admitted allegations of shackling in the case of Tarek Bargout, an East Jerusalem attorney arrested in 2019 and interrogated multiple times while shackled in stress positions, once for almost 48 hours (PCATI, Efrat Shir 2025, 16). Whistleblowers within the IPS who spoke to CNN acknowledged the use of the tactic.

“A prisoner who committed an offense such as speaking to another would be ordered to raise his arms above his head for up to an hour. The prisoner’s hands would sometimes be zip-tied to a fence to ensure that he did not come out of the stress position” (CNN International Investigations, 2024).

Shackling is used daily; sometimes inmates are forced to sit still, handcuffed and blindfolded, for the majority of the day (Addameer 85). Shackling has caused severe injuries; an anonymous doctor at the field hospital at Sde Teiman prison told Haaretz that more than half of the patients he sees are there due to injuries caused by shackling, such as infections, blood clots leading to amputation, and wounds, sustained by constant handcuffing. (Shezaf, Hauser Tov 2024) Patients treated at the field hospital remain handcuffed twenty-four seven, are kept in diapers, and are fed through straws, which the IDF claims are safety procedures put in place after a doctor was attacked. (Kent 2024) “Just this week, two prisoners had their legs amputated due to handcuff injuries, which, unfortunately, is a routine event,” (Shezaf, Hauser Tov 2024) aid the doctor. Haaretz noted that the type of handcuff used at Sde Teiman has since been switched from plastic to metal in response to claims of injuries.



## Dead Bodies Report

Frequent use of shackling and other signs of torture appear on many of the hundreds of dead bodies returned to Gaza during the October 2025 ceasefire agreement (Tondo 2025). Some show signs of bruising around the arms and legs. In many of the images released of the bodies, the bodies are blindfolded, and wrists are tied together, sometimes with zip ties. In one, a rope is around the individual’s neck. Some have missing body parts, including fingertips and limbs. According to the Ministry of Gaza, a few of the bodies appeared to have been taken out of the ground after burial. Gunshot wounds are present in multiple bodies, including on individuals blindfolded and zip-tied.

Others, as civilians who walked over the border on Oct. 7th, some might have been Palestinians taken from Gaza after the start of the war. It is unknown where all these individuals died. All the bodies had tags indicating they had come from Sde Teiman prison (Tondo 2025). However, they did not disclose whether the people died in prison or if their bodies were transferred to the morgue at the Prison after death (Tondo 2025). All of the bodies have been photographed and put on a website for identification by the Gaza Ministry of Health.

Analysts in Gaza argue that the bodies show visible signs of torture and execution. However, analysis of the bodies is very difficult, as many are decomposing. Debate has grown over some of the details, such as whether tire tracks appearing on the body happened before or after death (Kottassova). Some of the bodies have been identified as individuals involved in the Oct 7th attack (Kottassova 2025). Spokespeople at Khan Younis hospital in Nassar Gaza, where the bodies were taken to be examined and identified, told the Guardian that “[the bodies?] clearly indicate that Israel carried out acts of murder, summary executions, and systematic torture against many of the Palestinians.” In response to these allegations, an IDF spokesperson told PBS, “No bodies were tied prior to release...Spreading such unsubstantiated claims is effectively supporting Hamas’s false propaganda.” (PBS News Hour, 2025)

This article does not include every category, example, or allegation of torture and abuse found in the reports. The testimonies included in these reports are only from the few people who were brave enough to speak up and lucky enough to be heard. These allegations are not just individual instances; they reveal a pattern of specific forms of torture that large proportions of detainees face. The types of abuse brought up in these individual reports are consistent throughout many different unrelated sources and reflect not just a few bad apples or aggressive individuals, but a system that utilizes the threat of abuse as a tool for control and domination. Whether or not any of these specific allegations fit your definition of torture, I hope the stories I was able to share give depth to the statistics we read in the news and to those the Israeli government has stripped of their humanity and dignity.



# White, Roaring, Pulling.

By Lily Levine, Illustrated by Mia Gold

The waves lapsed against the shore, white, roaring, pulling. They came in like breath— drawn, held, released. The sea was never still, even when it pretended to be. It shimmered deceptively under the afternoon sun, its surface flecked with gold like something holy.

Marie had always loved that about it.

The way it called without speaking. The way it promised something just beyond reaching.

Other kids were afraid of the undertow. They stood ankle-deep and shrieked when foam touched their skin. But Marie waded further, letting the cold wrap around her ribs, her shoulders, her throat, riding the waves with her body. The water held her differently than anything else. It made her weightless. It made her feel chosen.

that was before  
now she watches from the shore.

The tide creeps forward and retreats, forward and retreats, as if it is reconsidering a confession.

At home, her bedroom lies in the attic of her house, and it smells like dust and salt. The window is always cracked open, even in the winter. Grains of sand live permanently in the corners of the hardwood floor. She tells herself she hates it. She doesn't sweep.

On her desk sits the typewriter. It is older than she is— matte black, heavy, inherited from a neighbor who claimed it had once belonged to a famous journalist relative. The keys are round and slightly uneven. When she presses them, they strike the ribbon with a decisive snap, letters blooming onto paper like bruises.

Except for the r. The r sticks. You have to press it twice— hard— sometimes even three times. Even then it prints faintly, like it isn't fully committed to existing. She never fixed it. Her mother suggested taking it in for repair once, her voice careful. The idea felt wrong. To fix it would mean smoothing something that shouldn't be smoothed. She writes anyway.

Poetry mostly. Short lines. Fractured thoughts. She likes the sound of the keys more than the words they make— the clack, the return carriage sliding with a metallic sigh. The effort of it.

Writing on a computer feels like whispering into nothing. The typewriter demands impact.

The first poem Marie wrote after the accident is only four lines long:

the ocean does not ask  
before it takes,  
it only opens its hands  
and waits.

She didn't show it to anyone. She folded the paper into quarters and tucked it into the back of a drawer, beneath socks she no longer wore.

Before the poems, there was swimming.

Her brother, Theo used to hesitate at the shoreline, toes digging into the wet sand, face pinched with doubt. Theo was smaller than her, but not by much. Close enough that strangers asked if they were twins.

"Come on," she would say, already knee-deep, "It's not that bad! Just stay close to me."

He always did.

He hated the first shock of the cold, hated the way the ground disappeared beneath him. The one thing stronger than his hate of these things was his love for his sister. No one but Marie could convince him to voyage into the unknown waters.

i taught you how to swim  
but not how to leave  
the water  
when it wanted you.

Each day after school, Marie and Theo would wade out into the waters, allowing them to swallow them whole. They'd float, or splash each other, sometimes getting out of the freezing water to bury themselves in the hot smooth sand. At the end of each night, they would each make an ice cream sundae— vanilla with chocolate fudge and whatever candies they could scrounge up. They'd take turns pouring chocolate from the bottle into each other's mouths, jokingly spilling it on their faces. No matter how bad their day was, no matter how mad they were at each other, no matter the circumstances, they would finish their day with ice cream.

The day the current changed, the sky was flat and white. Not stormy— just blank. The water looked calmer than usual. Glassy. Persuasive.

He hesitated longer than usual.

"I don't like it today," he said.

"You're fine," she laughed. "Don't be dramatic."

Dramatic. That word sticks in her brain more than anything else.

She swam with him at first, holding his hand, then eventually going ahead on her own, turning to make sure he followed. He did— arms clumsy, mouth tight. She felt a flicker of pride at having convinced him.

Then the sea shifted. It wasn't loud. It wasn't cinematic. Just a sudden tug at her calves, stronger than expected. She regained her footing. She was used to that feeling. He wasn't.

When she turned back, he was farther out than he should have been. The water around him looked darker somehow, folding in on itself.

"Swim!" she shouted, as if that were instruction enough.

He tried. She saw it— panic, uneven thrashing. A wave rose between them, white and roaring, pulling. And then he wasn't where she thought he was.

People say memory distorts trauma. That it protects you by blurring the edges. Her memory is cruelly clear. The empty patch of water. The scream that tore out of her before she knew it was hers. The way the sea resumed its rhythm immediately after, indifferent.

The waves lapsed once more, white, roaring, pulling.

the sea does not  
scream  
when it drowns you  
it whispers  
and lets you follow.

She swam for as long as she could, pleading for Theo to come back, like it was some sick joke. She couldn't bear to face her mother without him. What kind of big sister was she?

At night she types with the window open, even when the air burns

her lungs. She writes until her fingers ache, until the r key leaves a faint dent in her skin.

Marie thinks of the broken letter often. It makes her words feel incomplete.

The first time the key jammed completely, she almost cried. The metal arm stuck halfway, suspended in air like a limb reaching for something it would never touch. She pressed it back down gently.

"I'm sorry," she whispered, though she wasn't sure to whom.

She has written dozens of poems about the sea. In some, it is a thief. In others, a mouth. In one, it is a cradle that rocks too hard.

She never writes about the moment itself. Only the edges. The before. The after.

Her mother does not go to the beach anymore. The towels remain folded neatly in a linen closet that smells faintly of mildew. The house has grown quieter in a way that feels permanent, like a piece of furniture removed and never replaced. Each night, Marie makes two bowls of ice cream. She scarves down one bowl, then the other. At least she keeps up with some routine.

Sometimes she walks to the shore alone and stands where the water can almost reach her feet. She never lets it. It looks so harmless from here.

She considers walking into the water, joining Theo that one time, never leaving him. This time she wouldn't let go. She knows her mother wouldn't be able to bear it. Instead, she writes.

and as the wave returns to the sea,  
will you someday return to me?

## MEDIA RECS FROM THE LEVIATHAN COMMUNITY :)

### Noam:

*Erev Shel Yom Bair - Efraim Shamir*

I discovered Efraim Shamir through the band Kaveret, and then found this song, which I completely fell in love with. It captures the feeling of knowing that your soulmate is somewhere out there waiting for you. The writing is beautiful, and the vocals make it even more emotional.

### Sunny:

*Just For Us - Alex Edelman*

Tony award winning special on HBO max. Jewish comedian relates his experience going undercover at a white nationalist meetup.

### Mia:

*A-WA by Hana Mash Hu Al Yaman*

Is a favorite of mine and of many. It is a Yemeni Jewish band in Israel that creates music in Judeo-Arabic.

### Gabriel:

*"Exilio" (Exile) by Pablo Neruda.*

It's a Spanish poem with Alastair Read providing an excellent English translation. It is personally relatable to me as an immigrant.

### Brooke:

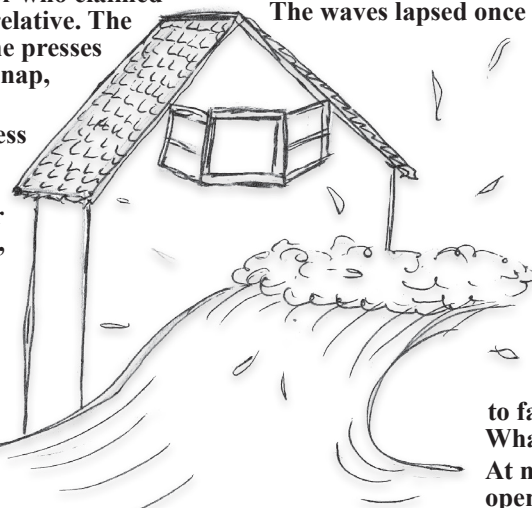
*Milk Fed by Melissa Broder*

Rachel is twenty-four, a lapsed Jew who has made calorie restriction her religion. By day, she maintains an illusion of existential control. At night, she pedals nowhere on the elliptical bicycle. Rachel's self-restricting lifestyle is interrupted when she is suddenly and powerfully entranced by Miriam, a Zaftig Orthodox woman who insists on feeding her. Rachel is suddenly and powerfully entranced by Miriam—by her sundaes and her body, her faith and her family.

### Jakob:

*Homage to Catalonia by George Orwell*

A telling of a man's experience fighting in the Spanish civil war that is very personal and matter-of-fact. Orwell clearly believes in the revolution and hates the fascists, but he is not grandiose about his own role or idealistic about his own side. It made me hopeful but also sad, especially towards the end (spoilers: the fascists won). It's a bitter-sweet reminder that people will always find the courage to resist fascism, but victory is never guaranteed.



Rav Kahana entered and lay beneath Rav's bed.



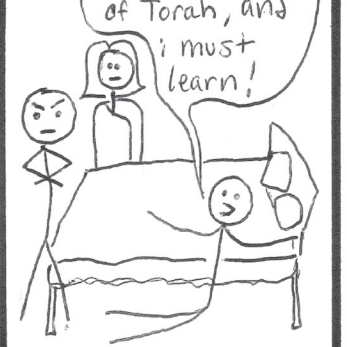
He heard Rav chatting and laughing with his wife and seeing to his needs.



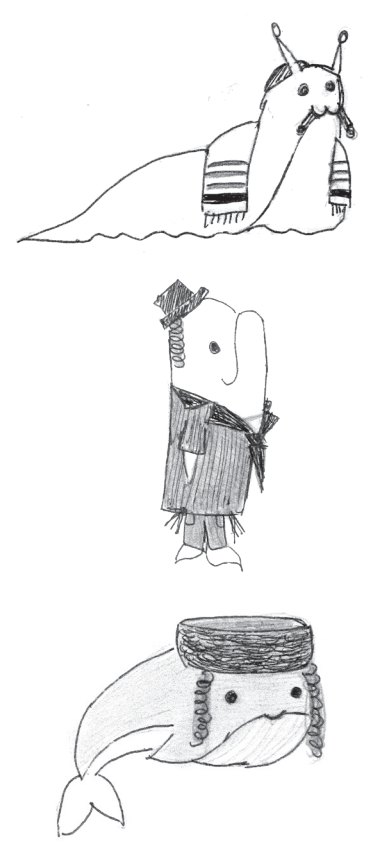
Kahana! Why are you here? Leave! This is an undesirable mode of behavior.



But, this, too, is a matter of Torah, and I must learn!



This is a story from the Gemara, the student Rav Kahana sneaks into his Rabbi's bedroom to learn proper Jewish intimacy by Mia Gold



# PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE DIASPORA



Protest for Palestine with the Jewish Bloc (2) in Brussels, Belgium. Shot on Holga. September 7th, 2025.



Mural in Krakow, Poland. Shot on 35mm Pentax. September 16, 2025.



A Chasidic man walks by the train station in Antwerp, Belgium. Shot on 35mm Pentax. September 3, 2025.



David Bernstein in his studio. Brussels, Belgium. Shot on 35mm Pentax. September 2025.



Soccer Ball in Moroccan Cemetery. Shot on Holga. December, 2025.

This photo was taken in Morocco, at a Jewish cemetery. The cemetery is now managed by a local muslim family. Before entering, Cody and I were asked if we were Jewish. When we said yes, we were allowed in. When I entered the cemetery, children were running around with their dogs and goats. The man who let us in and I had a conversation over Google Translate, where he told me that he and his family maintain the cemetery and live on the property. He told me he has Jewish friends from all over the world and told me about some of them.

This photograph shows a soccer ball, a sign of play, youth, and life, in front of a tombstone. It was strange to see a place that holds the dead so full of life. The cemetery is home to many Moroccan Jews, and now also a home to these children, who live, play, and laugh in between the graves.

This photo highlights the beauty of film; in many ways, this photo doesn't feel like my own. This photo is a collaboration between life, death, my camera, and me. I didn't create this moment; I was just lucky enough to be around to witness it and capture it with my Holga. The Holga has an eye of her own, and it's the Holga who captured this photo. I pressed the shutter button, but other than that, this image was not created by me.

I move between projects, where I manipulate models and scenes to create an idea that lives in my head - and work like this, which documents a story that isn't my own. I didn't need to set up a scene or theorize about symbolism. It was just there.

## The Life and Times of America's Favorite Jewish Wide Receiver

By Jakob Ball, Illustrated by Emily Gurzhi  
... Patriots Hall of Fame.

As much as I would like to embrace all of Julian Edelman's accomplishments as a win for the Jewish people, his Jewish identity is not as clean-cut as I had initially assumed. In fact, Edelman was not raised Jewish. His parents were both raised Catholic, but were never particularly religious. Earlier in his career, Edelman tended to playfully brush off questions about his identity, calling himself "Jew-ish." However, it seems the star started to become more comfortable identifying with the faith around the early to mid-2010s.

Edelman describes having a "Jewish Awakening" later in life. In "A Football Life," —a docuseries that has covered various football stars and their careers— Edelman describes how he didn't grow up with a strong Jewish identity, but always knew his last name carried Jewish roots by way of his paternal great-grandfather. As he learned his own family history and



became more interested in Jewish history in general, Edelman found "parallels to the story of the Jews to just my journey of life. The underdog, y'know, always having to overcome some sort of adverse situation." Though Edelman's Jewish origins are unconventional, his Jewish identity clearly informs his public image.

Edelman has been an outspoken voice against antisemitism. Shortly after the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting of 2018, he wore specialized cleats with one shoe featuring the Tree of Life synagogue logo and the other a Star of David paired with the hashtag #StrongerThanHate.[3] On multiple occasions, Edelman has reached out to players who made antisemitic comments. After NBA player Meyers Leonard was fined and suspended for saying an antisemitic slur on a livestream, Edelman typed an open letter to Leonard on Instagram, warning of the dangers of ignorance and inviting the athlete to Shabbat dinner.[4] Edelman

has consistently used his platform as one of the few Jewish athletes in the American public eye to combat antisemitism with grace.

Edelman has also been a longtime supporter of the state of Israel. During the 2014 NFL season, Edelman met the Israeli ambassador to the United States at the time, Ron Dermer. Edelman describes the diplomat putting a US-Israel pin on the young player's hat, which he took to be a good luck charm for the rest of the season.[5] Why was the Israeli ambassador hanging out in the New England Patriots locker room? In fact, Dermer was there as a guest of Robert Kraft. Kraft, owner of the Patriots and an outspoken Zionist, took Edelman with him on a tour of Israel in 2019 to accept the Genesis Prize.[6] Described on the Genesis Prize Foundation's website as a \$1M award for prominent Jews who use their platform to defend Israel and the Jewish people,[7] the award must have come as a relief to Kraft's PR team as the billionaire battled charges of soliciting prostitution at a Florida massage parlor. Edelman was certainly not the first nor the last to receive this treatment, as Kraft has taken several NFL players to the country to date as a part of his Touchdown In Israel initiative. In fact, sending people to Israel is

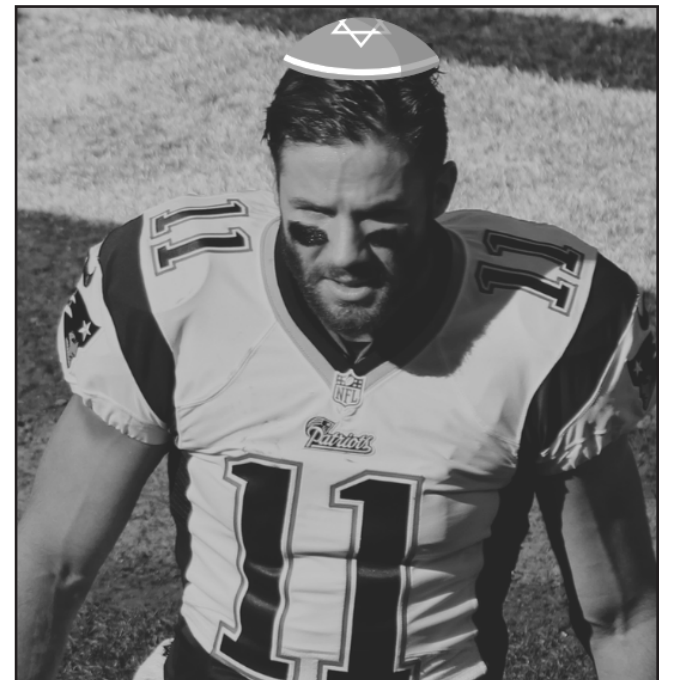
**"These students cannot be pardoned for what they have done. They need to be held accountable in order to send a message to future generations"**

seemingly one of Robert Kraft's favorite activities, even sending local Boston politicians to the country, with a goal of building "a robust economic relationship between Boston and Israel." [8]

Beyond trips, Kraft has donated millions to organizations dedicated to supporting Israel. While accepting the Genesis Prize, Kraft pledged \$20 million to fighting antisemitism, notably calling out BDS (boycotting, divestment, and sanctioning of Israel) campaigns as a primary target. During the eruption of campus protests against Israel's campaign in Gaza in 2024, Kraft bought a full-page ad in multiple newspapers calling for a harsher crackdown on the students. "When this ends, these students cannot be pardoned for what they have done. They need to be held accountable in order to send a message to future generations of students".

Julian Edelman has found himself, consciously or unconsciously, turned into an arm of Kraft's propaganda wing, increasingly voicing his concerns about antisemitism through defense of the Israeli state. In a conversation with Rabbi Bill Hamilton which took place a month or so after the October 7th attacks, Edelman discussed retaliation "People have to pay, or it's gonna keep on happening," echoing a call for extreme action against Hamas in Gaza in the hopes of preventing similar attacks in the future.

I didn't intend for this article to be about Robert Kraft, or Israel, or Robert Kraft's billionaire pro-Israel initiative. Julian Edelman is an athlete whom I have long admired. I never found myself curious about his opinions on foreign policy; however, like many American Jews, I've been forced to reckon with the ever-presence of Israel in our media, politics, and life in general. This is especially true for Jews, but increasingly, this issue seems to be permeating American life in general. Our politicians, businessmen, cultural figures, and even athletes all seem to be wrapped up in this Israeli ouroboros.



Throughout my research, Julian Edelman has come across as an empathetic and goodhearted person, not to mention an incredible wide receiver. Despite my disagreements with Edelman's politics, I don't think his advocacy for Israel is ill-intentioned. However, it seems that he has become a part of a network that ultimately exists to play cover for the Israeli government and its actions. There are all sorts of powerful people—from Robert Kraft to our current president—whose primary goal seems to be preserving America's unconditional, unending support for Israel, rabidly defending the country from any criticism in the process. Ultimately, I want Edelman to be remembered for his greatness as an athlete and his consistent message of empathy in the face of hate, but I wonder how future generations will look at how celebrities used their influence during this time in history. Ultimately, as Jews and as Americans, we are at a critical juncture. How do we want to relate to Israel? Does Israel define us? Julian Edelman has made his position clear, but I'm not as sure. The only thing I can be sure of is that legendary game-winning catch against the Seahawks, definitely a moment I'll never forget.



Settler in Ras al Ein records activists. Shot by Noah Grose.

## My Eyewitness Account of The Displacement of Ras al Ein

In the winter of 2025, I spent three weeks going in and out of the West Bank to engage in ‘protective presence,’ a kind of on-the-ground activism where international and Israeli citizens live in Palestinian villages and use their bodies as a barrier between the Palestinians residents and violent Israeli settlers. I spent the weekend of December 26th in the Bedouin village of Ras al Ein in the Jordan Valley, the largest shepherding community in the West Bank, which had been subjected to ongoing heavy settler violence. I joined activists from three different organizations, and we slept in a compound a few minutes’ walk away from the village, on call to join them at any moment at the sight of settlers. In the early morning of Saturday, December 27th, we got a call that a settler had trespassed onto Palestinian property with his flock and was harassing the residents. Activists responded to the call and began recording the settler upon arrival. In the past, settlers often left at the sight of the phone, in fear of their illegal activity being exposed to the world. Today, after countless videos of settlers’ violence have been released to the public, with little to no consequences for those featured in the recordings, they mock us by recording us back. Police came, chatted with the settler, and left.



Settler in Ras al Ein throws a large rock at an activist. Shot by Noah Grose.

Around noon, we got another call. A few activists went down the hill to observe a few settlers. After an hour, more settlers arrived, and more activists joined. After another hour, more settlers arrived, and more activists joined. We stood and recorded the settlers for over four hours. Settlers called their own pseudo-army, and a man arrived with a large gun and joined them in harassing us. A child no older than 15 punched an activist and spat in the faces of multiple others. They shoved us and groped at least one activist. The police were called three times (at the request of the locals) to no avail. When the police finally did show up, they had a cigarette with the settlers and then left. The settlers left around 4 pm, only when they noticed their own flock of goats had left while they were busy harassing the Palestinian’s animals. Behind us, children from the village played soccer throughout the ordeal.

Three days later, Settlers set up an outpost in the village. Life in Ras Al Ein went from difficult to impossible. Settlers destroyed the main road and cut the electricity cables. They prevented children from going to school and water from reaching the village. They gathered outside of families’ homes at night, keeping residents awake and terrifying the children.

I remember hoping to return to Ras al Ein. As an activist, if needed, but in the best-case scenario, next time my presence wouldn’t need to be protective; I would come as a friend. I don’t need to be present in Ras al Ein anymore. There’s no one left to be present for.

As of January 24th, 2026, Ras al Ein no longer exists. All of its 800 residents were violently displaced. For Passover, the Jewish holiday celebrating the Israelites’ freedom from slavery in Egypt, settlers partied

by the stream that once served as a water source for the residents of Ras al Ein. They set up a waterslide and a barbecue, and erected flags with an image of the Third Temple. “Do you know thanks to whom this wonderful thing happened?” one man announced in a video from the celebration. “Thanks to a few youth – 16 years old! That are going around this area with their flocks. I saw them stubbornly redeeming the land for us.”

Haitham, who was among those recently displaced from Ras al Ein, responded to the video. He said, “It’s not just one incident. It’s all systematic. It’s tied to the expansion of annexation in the West Bank.”

Ras al Ein’s story is not unique.

According to a humanitarian situation report published by the United Nations’ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) this April, in the first three months of 2026, 1,727 Palestinians from 36 communities in the West Bank were displaced as a result of settler violence and access restrictions.

## What is Protective Presence?

These attacks are recorded and shared with the public by international activists on social media and spread through news sources. Activists also show videos of the illegal actions of settlers to the Israeli police, who usually take no action. Even with a constant activist presence in Ras al Ein and video proof of the violent, illegal settler activity, Ras al Ein’s residents were still displaced.

Despite the recent objective failures of international presence in actually preventing violence and displacement, the most common answer to “How can we help?” from West Bank Palestinians in my time there was: “Come to Palestine.”

By engaging in protective presence, international activists are playing a role in the Palestinian-led struggle against displacement in the West Bank today. Activists stay anywhere from half a day to months on end in Palestinian communities, usually in Area C. Activists engaged in protective presence respond to calls from Palestinians requesting our presence. Activists are present when settler violence occurs to record and try to de-escalate. Activists usually stay at a family’s home in communities that are regularly targeted by settler violence. Activists may also accompany children to school, help out during the olive harvest, and play games and make art with the children. One of the most important parts of this experience is that activists take these stories home with them and share them with their friends, family, and public media. Eyewitness accounts are incredibly important.

But what we call “protective presence” is clearly failing to protect Palestinians from violence and displacement.

Activist and journalist in Palestine, Andrey Khrzhanovskiy, wrote a piece for Vashti Media titled “Protective presence isn’t working anymore.” The presence of Israeli and international citizens is supposed to be able to protect Palestinians from settler and state violence, at least to some degree. Protective presence has had many successes in the past. In 2002, residents of Yanun were actually able to return to their village after initial displacement with the help of activists. Andrey describes an incident in June 2024, where settlers refrained from attacking Palestinians in Ras al Ein when Andrey and other activists accompanied them. An international civilian presence used to provide protection, but “that was a different time,” Andrey says.

A year after activists were able to deter settler violence in Ras al Ein, on July 28, 2025, Awdah Hathaleen, a Palestinian nonviolent activist, was murdered in Massafer Yatta by Yinon Levi (a settler who was sanctioned by the US until Trump’s January 2025 decision to repeal all sanctions on settlers in the West Bank) “in front of a dozen international and Israeli activists filming from every direction.” Levi faces no consequences. “They no longer care that we are there,” Andrey writes. Somewhere in the past year, “the settlers stopped flinching at the sight of a phone.”

This new reality leaves many people asking: How did we get here, and what do we do now? To understand the escalating and unpunished settler violence in the West Bank, one must have basic knowledge of the way the occupation functions, and how it serves to privilege Jews, punish Palestinians, and promote violence.

## Occupation: How It Works

The apartheid system present in the West Bank places Palestinians under a different system of law than

all other people. International and Israeli citizens are subjected to Israeli civil law, while Palestinians are subjected to Israeli military law.

Israeli citizens in the West Bank can vote in Israeli elections from the occupied territories, the only exception to Israel’s law that citizens must vote inside the country. Israeli settlers living in the West Bank can vote for representatives and on policies that have control over elements of their lives. Palestinians, however, who reside in the same territory and are subjected to the control of the same government, cannot vote and have no influence on the policies that shape their lives.

## A. Military Law:

Military law is not really a set of laws—it’s a series of military orders, supposedly impermanent, that legally categorize Palestinian residents of the West Bank as a constant, imminent threat, and allows the state to treat them as such. These orders are issued by the Israeli military commander, who has legislative, judicial, and executive control over the

Occupied Territories.

According to B’tselem, this allows Israel to “control the occupied Palestinian territory through the criminalization and punishment of all forms of Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation, regardless of its gravity and violent or non-violent nature.” Military orders allow the army to shut down non-violent demonstrations in the West Bank. Freedom of speech is considered a basic right under international human rights law. But, under military occupation, the occupying force can restrict freedom of expression when it deems those expressions a safety risk. For Palestinians, an “incitement offense” can be given after “any incident in which a person attempts to influence public opinion in a manner that could harm public safety or public order.” This ambiguously worded offense is penalized with ten years of imprisonment, and has been used “by the military courts to adjudicate Palestinians in offenses that concern...hanging posters or writing slogans against the occupation.” However, under Israeli law, an incitement offense can only be given in relation to “incidents in which a person published something intended to incite to violence or terrorism, and under the condition that there is a concrete possibility that this publication will lead to the committing of the act of violence or terrorism.” For Israelis who commit this offense, the prison sentence is 5 years.

Palestinians in the West Bank have functionally no freedom of expression; even weddings and funerals can be defined as illegal assemblies, which allows the military to respond to these gatherings with force, often using violence and sometimes resulting in deaths. The funeral of Awdah Hathaleen was stopped by the Israeli military when they declared the area a closed military zone and ordered all activists, journalists, and mourners who did not live in the area to leave. When asked why the area had been closed, the military did not reply.

Military orders are used to silence Palestinian voices, limit freedom of movement, and aid settlers in their

# “Come To Occupation and Solidarity Activism”

Written by Mia Gold and photographed by Noah Grose



Settler and activist record each other.

# Palestine”

## ism in the West Bank, Palestine

hoped by Mia Gold and Noah Grose



each other. Shot by Mia Gold.

efforts to displace Palestinian villages, which can be demonstrated clearly in the military’s use of closed military zone orders.

### B. Closed Military Zone Orders:

One of many military orders used by the Israeli military to aid settlers in displacing Palestinians villages is a closed military zone order, also sometimes called a firing zone. Once an area is declared closed, everyone who is not a resident is required to leave. On paper, “a military commander will declare a closed military zone when security needs or the need to maintain public order require the closing of the area.” In practice, these orders are regularly used to remove activists from villages targeted by settler violence. After activists are gone, Israeli settlers often enter (in some cases, settlers are already present and trespassing at the time activists are removed) and raid the area; stealing, damaging property, and attacking Palestinians are not uncommon occurrences. On May 3rd, 2026, the settlers responsible for the displacement of the residents of Ras Al Ein, including Neriya Ben Pazi and Avishai Horowitz, set up an outpost 5 meters away from the village of Taybeh, in East Ramallah. On-the-ground activists and journalists Andrey Khrzhanovskiy and Adele Shoko posted videos of their interactions with settlers and the army to Instagram. When activists called the police, the police came, shook hands with the settlers, and left. The army returned at night after the settlers began throwing stones at the activists. The army then declared the area a closed military zone and removed activists. Settlers lingered behind. Activists left and slept in the car a short drive away, ready to return if called upon.

presence of all three conditions...evidence to prove guilt, grounds for arrest, and lack of a relevant alternative to detention which could achieve the purpose of detention in a manner that is less injurious to the defendant.” But military judges interpret these conditions, and the evidence, as they please, “[rendering] them meaningless and [nullifying] their effectiveness.” Often, the time the defendant is held in remand is longer than the sentence they would receive for a plea bargain. As a direct outcome of this policy, the vast majority of Palestinians take a plea bargain to avoid an extremely lengthy trial. “The prosecution is seldom required to go through a full evidentiary trial in which it must present evidence to prove a person guilty,” B’Tselem said in a 2026 report on the military courts. “Instead, the outcome of the case is decided at the time remand is granted, rather than on the basis of evidence against the defendant.”

This all demonstrates how the Israeli military and settlers are part of the same system of control that seeks to achieve the displacement and domination of the Palestinian people. This system privileges Israelis and international citizens, leading activists to take advantage of their privilege to record settler violence and to stand between settlers and Palestinians in an attempt to deter violence.

### Why Do We Still Show Up?

While there is still deep systemic racism in Israeli policy, on paper, Israel categorizes the violent actions of settlers—trespassing, harassing, attacking, and killing—as illegal. On paper, in Israeli law, you cannot kill Palestinians, steal their land, and get away with it unpunished. Although Israel’s legal system discriminates against Palestinians, on paper, it doesn’t legalize the settlers’ violence. According to their own laws, on paper, the police should respond to calls of settler violence and arrest perpetrators, and then the court systems, on paper, should punish them.

The legal system discriminates, but the occupation we see on paper still does not capture the extent of the violence that occurs. Israel has control over the region and makes decisions as it pleases that benefit itself as a state and its citizens, who are complicit in its ethnic cleansing project.

Because of our legal protections, settlers used to leave solidarity activists alone. But in the past year, settlers have begun attacking activists too, even while cameras roll. Settlers have realized they can get away with this violence, too, as Israel abandons not only Palestinians but Israeli citizens, too. Israel will not protect even its own citizens if they do not protect the state’s ethnic cleansing project.

“The question we ask ourselves over and over is what can we do in this new reality?” Andrey writes for Vashi Media. “What difference can we make when we’re no longer recognized as a barrier to violence, but just another target?” Andrey proposes two things. The first is record-keeping. Continuing to document the ethnic cleansing in Palestine may one day lead to “a faint sense of justice” if “perhaps one day there will be Nuremberg trials of the Israeli occupation.” Given that evidence collected by activists has been used to enact sanctions in the International Court of Justice, perhaps there is some value in these recordings.

But Andrey offers an answer for his continued presence, despite how much protection it can ever provide: solidarity. “We can’t offer protection anymore,” Andrey writes. “The residents of Palestinian communities want us to be there nevertheless... We don’t know whether liberation will ever come, but we need to fight for it anyway.”

Even as the ethnic cleansing has only sped up in recent months in the West Bank, and efforts of activists are increasingly less effective, activists aren’t retreating from the work they are being called on by Palestinians to do. “Even if all our efforts are doomed,” Andrey writes, “we will continue to be there for our friends, for as long as we physically can.”

We aren’t just present for our friends to protect them. We are present because they want us to be. And we want to be present for them too.

### A Letter From Hana

I will conclude with a letter written by Hana, my friend and incredible poet, to my cohort after our stay in Farsia. Hanna expresses the deep love these relationships build, and her gratitude for our presence, even if that presence

### AREA A

Administered by Palestinian Authority

### AREA B

Administered by Palestinian Authority; shared security control with Israel

### AREA C

Administered by Israel



could not protect:

“Welcome to all hearts that arrive before names, and to all souls that traverse distances without carrying their maps. I don’t see homelands as borders drawn on paper, but as living faces, as friends whose features are shaped by different places, yet whose hearts meet at one point: humanity. Here, we gather from the North, where snow teaches patience, from the South, where the sun knows the meaning of warmth, from the East, which dreams despite everything, and from the West, where the horizon expands as the soul expands. We don’t speak the same language, we don’t share the same skin color, and our cultures are not alike, but we resemble the world when it becomes more compassionate. We laugh in different languages, and hearts understand us before ears do. We cry with diverse experiences, and tears unite without the need for translation. Among us are friends from the East, from Africa, from Europe, from the Gulf, from distant lands, and from cities that know the sea well. We meet like a caravan of peace, carrying nothing but hearts that know that true belonging lies in what unites us, not in what divides us. With them, I now understand that home is not a place, but a hand reaching out to you when you’re weary, a voice that reassures you even across distances, and a soul that, when you sit near it, makes you feel you’ve arrived, no matter how far you’ve gone. We come from rain and sand, from cold and heat, from every direction, but our hearts meet at a single point, as if the world is being redrawn in the shape of friendship.”



Woman carries basket in Farsiya. Shot by Noah Grose.

### C. Military Court and Remand in Custody:

Since 1967, when the occupation began, military courts have been operating in the West Bank. In the early 1980s, “the Attorney General decided that Israeli citizens would be tried in the Israeli civilian court system according to Israeli penal laws.” Meaning that Israeli settlers who live in or commit crimes in the Occupied Territories are tried in civilian courts under civilian law, and Palestinians who reside in the same place are tried in military courts under military law.

Palestinians tried in military court are usually remanded in custody until the end of court proceedings, something not allowed in Israeli civil court. Without trial and without sentencing, these individuals are kept in custody until proceedings are over. The prosecution can ask for remand in custody, and almost always these requests are granted. In order to issue a remand in custody, the prosecution is supposed to “prove the

# Letter from Jews Against White Supremacy

Dear Leviathan Readers,

This is a letter from the members of JAWS, otherwise known as Jews Against White Supremacy at UCSC. When *Leviathan's* editorial staff reached out and asked us to make a contribution, we hesitated; we find some of the material *Leviathan* publishes concerning, and do not believe that uncritically platforming ethnocentric ideology is necessary to the pursuit of Jewish cultural life.

Our predominant objection to working with *Leviathan* is to the premise of elevating Jewish voices at the current moment. We have repeatedly seen how centering Jews in contemporary discourse has been used as a tool to enable, distract from, and exacerbate displacement, genocide, war crimes, deportation, stalking, censorship, incarceration, and untold other violence, yielding damages we are yet to fully comprehend or reckon with.

For this reason, instead of submitting yet another Jewish anti-Zionist think piece and relying on the seemingly unquestioned "right" of Jews to lead these global conversations, we would like to platform a sampling of texts written by non-Jewish anti-Zionists. They are arranged in reverse chronological order and each have a sample excerpt, as well as a link to where they can be found digitally. We ask you to read these pieces seriously and respectfully, with an open heart and mind, and to resist and self-protective or defensive impulses they may elicit.

## 1. *Poems for Palestine, 2024*

(publishersforpalestine.org/2024/02/13/poems-for-palestine-chapbook-launch)

This excerpt is "If I Must Die" by Refaat Al-Areer, who was murdered in December of 2023 by a targeted Israeli airstrike.

"If I must die,  
you must live  
to tell my story  
to sell my things  
to buy a piece of cloth  
and some strings,  
(make it white with a long tail)  
so that a child, somewhere in Gaza  
while looking heaven in the eye  
awaiting his dad who left in a blaze—  
and bid no one farewell  
not even to his flesh  
not even to himself—  
sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up above  
and thinks for a moment an angel is there  
bringing back love.  
If I must die  
let it bring hope  
let it be a tale."

## 2. *Introduction to Palestine*

(decolonizepalestine.com/introduction-to-palestine)

"It is important to stress that when we talk about Palestine, we are not talking about a Palestinian nation state... the impulse to imagine our ancestors as some closed-off, well-defined, unchanging homogeneous group having exclusive ownership over a territory that somehow corresponds to modern day borders has no basis in history... As elsewhere, over the millennia kingdoms rose and fell, religions were founded, wars both holy and unholy were waged, and peoples lived, mixed, moved and died out. In other words, history happened."

## 3. *"Standing With Palestinians" by Angela Davis, 2024*

(hammerandhope.org/article/angela-davis-palestinians-gaza)

"I invoke my own experience at Brandeis because despite its perpetuation of the claim that Palestinians embody a continuing existential threat... I do not remember any major conflicts around this issue during my time there. But I do recall many subterranean conversations about the impact of this militaristic nation-building process on the Palestinian people."

## A Response From Noam Vardi

To JAWS,

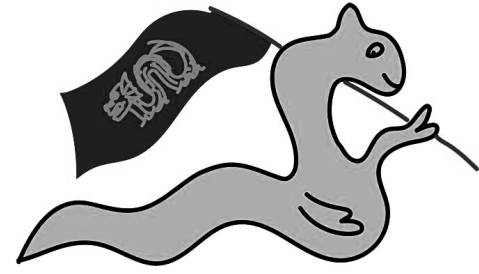
First of all, I would like to thank you for writing in to our publication. As an editor of *Leviathan*, I can say that we are always grateful to receive submissions from any source, and we always welcome critique and criticism in good faith.

However, I am quite troubled by the rhetoric and framing of your open letter. What disturbs me is not your inclusion of Palestinian voices. As an Israeli Jew who cares deeply about my country and its future, it is important to me that Palestinian voices are heard. Their suffering cannot be ignored.

Your implication, on the other hand, that Jewish voices must be muffled and diminished is deeply harmful to both Jewish existence and to general public discourse surrounding issues deeply embedded in Jewish life and culture. Justice will not emerge by demanding silence from one of the groups entangled in the conflict. Dialogue requires everyone to be heard with an open ear. Telling Jews that their participation in dialogue must end does not only make you unapproachable, but contradictory: a Jewish group that speaks publicly as Jews while demanding silence from other Jews undermines your very purpose.

There is an important distinction between engaging critically with Zionism and suggesting that any and all dialogue and speech coming from Jewish people is detrimental to peace or justice. It only further diminishes the hope we have for a better future for all. Your decision to write publicly as Jews on this issue only reinforces the importance of Jewish participation in these conversations, and I hope it inspires others to write their own responses and send them in to our next issue.

In the hope of continued discourse, Noam Vardi



## 4. *"Jewish settlers stole my house. It's not my fault they're Jewish." by Mohammed El-Kurd, 2023*

(https://tinyurl.com/jv4rjkyj)

"I have zero interest in memorizing or apologizing for centuries-old tropes created by Europeans... chiefly when millions of us confront real, tangible oppression, living behind cement walls, or under siege, or in exile, and living with woes too expansive to summarize... I'm tired of the false equivalence between semantic violence and systemic violence... There are better things to do: we have coffins to carry."

## 5. *"A Practical Appraisal of Palestinian Violence" by Steve Salaita, 2023*

(stevesalaita.com/a-practical-appraisal-of-palestinian-violence)

"The Palestinians, like all colonized people, have to measure a hunger for dignity against the agony of retribution. They cannot sit passively while the oppressor inflicts continuous misery and they refuse to accept an ethno-religious narrative in which they exist only to be vanquished. What, then, is left for them to do? They must fight. The fight might be ugly in accordance to the situation imposed by the occupying power."

## 6. *"Zionism, anti-Semitism and colonialism" by Joseph Massad, 2012*

(aljazeera.com/opinions/2012/12/24/zionism-anti-semitism-and-colonialism)

"Herzl's strategy continues to be the strategy of Zionism and the State of Israel. Whereas state-sponsored anti-Semitism has disappeared, Israel must create it and conjure it up, as this is its major line of defense against any and all international criticisms and censure of its ongoing colonisation of Palestine."

## 7. *"Open Letter to the Born Again" by James Baldwin, 1979*

(thenation.com/article/society/open-letter-born-again)

"Jews and Palestinians know of broken promises... England promised the land back and forth to the Arabs or the Jews, depending on which horse seemed to be in the lead... the state of Israel was not created for the salvation of the Jews; it was created for the salvation of the Western interests."

## 8. *"Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims" by Edward Said, 1979*

(jewishvoiceforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Edward-Said-Excerpt.pdf)

"To those Palestinian victims that Zionism displaced, it cannot have meant anything by way of sufficient cause that Jews were victims of European anti-Semitism and, given Israel's continued oppression of Palestinians, few Palestinians are able to see beyond their reality, namely, that once victims themselves, Occidental Jews in Israel have become oppressors..."

If you read this, thank you. Please continue to seek out and absorb the voices of Palestinian and Jordanian, Arab, Black, and otherwise non-white people, both Jewish and Gentile; even and especially when they are speaking about what you may consider essentially or intimately Jewish issues. Finally: if at all possible, we urgently ask you to make a donation to those still living under siege in Gaza and the West Bank, either through a mutual aid fund or an organization like the Gaza Soup Kitchen (gazasoupkitchen.org).

With our sincere wishes for solidarity and liberation,  
JAWS



# We Were Also Strangers

A Jewish Perspective On Immigration Enforcement  
by Noam Vardi

I was five years old when my parents moved our family from Israel to America. The night before we left, my entire extended family gathered at my grandmother's house for a farewell dinner. We ate her food, talked for hours, and when it was time to leave, I asked her if she would come visit us every week. I didn't understand yet that she couldn't. When I finally understood what goodbye meant, I just started crying.

My parents moved our family of five across the globe for the same reason parents do anything: for the hope of improving the lives of their children. After we landed in America, we stayed in a hotel for weeks. My brother and I would play what we understood football to be (in our attempts to be American) while my parents would go and spend every day looking for a house for us to settle down in. I started the first grade without speaking a word of English and needed constant help from my teachers, my siblings, and most of all, my incredible mother.

This is a Jewish story. For thousands of years the generational sacrifice of our ancestors allowed us to continue to exist and live the lives we are blessed with today. We live with these stories every day, using them as fuel and motivation to better ourselves and our communities. Just my father's side of the family can be traced back to their initial diaspora to Spain, from there they were exiled to Germany, Hungary, to end up in Israel and now the United States. Whether by choice or by force, Jews have existed as a migratory people for thousands of years. Thus, who better to relate to the plight of current immigrants than our communities. The stereotypical overprotective Jewish mother is known to be overbearing with often infantilizing love. But Jewish love also has a different quality: an unrelenting effort to always do whatever

it takes to improve the lives of their loved ones.

When I see the immigrants in our country today, I recognize that love. Behind every statistic is a parent who made the same calculation my parents made. On the 26th of January, 2025, days before Donald Trump retook the office of the presidency, about 6.4% of people in ICE detention had no criminal record. One year later, on January 25, 2026, according to official government data, over 43% of all ICE detentions were placed onto people with zero prior criminal record or pending charges [1]. This is not a war on dangerous criminals, this is a war on people. As the President spewed lies that immigrants were eating the dogs and cats of their neighbors, it is hard for me as a Jew to not see echoes of the blood libel of old, in which Jews were dehumanized and defamed in order to justify hate.

There is a difference between enforcing the law and building a culture of fear and militantly targeting entire groups of people. As the danger of raids and violence grows for our immigrant communities across America, we lose something deeper than political unity; a part of the grand vision that drew so many Jews to this country throughout the centuries.

Jewish history should not only teach us to improve our own selves, but to look outward and spread good and justice across our communities and beyond. We were also once strangers to this land, our identity being passed down from generation to generation through stories like my grandmother's dinner table the night before leaving everything I knew behind. Our people know what it is like to move towards something greater and hope that we are respected and allowed to exist.

# GOODBYE SUSAN!

This year the Print Advisor for Student Media, Susan Watrous, is retiring. She will be dearly missed by all here at Leviathan. When we re-started Leviathan in the fall of 2024, we had virtually no continuity with any previous signers, and our only knowledge of Leviathan was "old Jewish student paper that apparently has been around a while."

To say we had no idea what we were doing would be an understatement. From that very first hastily scheduled zoom meeting, Susan propelled us into action, leading us through the registration process to keep Leviathan from officially going defunct at the last minute.

Ever since, Susan has been there to show us how to succeed as a student publication, drawing on her years of experience to give us a sense of how to conduct ourselves in this role, and imbuing us with her deep sense of purpose, inspiring us to take pride in our work and expect nothing but the best from ourselves.

Susan has been a role model and an inspiration to Leviathan, and though we are sad to see her go, we hope Student Media's tireless worker can get at least a few moments of rest.

A fond farewell,  
The Leviathan Editors



# LAMB ARRAYES

Recipe by Noam Vardi

## FOR 3 ARRAYES:

### COMBINE:

1 lb ground lamb mince  
handful of chopped parsley  
1 half white onion diced  
2 minced garlic cloves

### ADD:

salt, black pepper, amba, & mix

### CUT:

2 pocket pitas in half. Eat one of the halves.

### STUFF:

pita halves with lamb mixture

### SEAR:

arrayes face down on a hot pan w/ oil until

### BAKE:

on a flat surface with parchment paper at 320 degrees fahrenheit until cooked inside

### SERVE:

with tahini

## TAHINI:

in a food processor,

### COMBINE:

3/4 cup tahini paste  
1-2 lemon's juice  
1/4 cup cold water  
olive oil

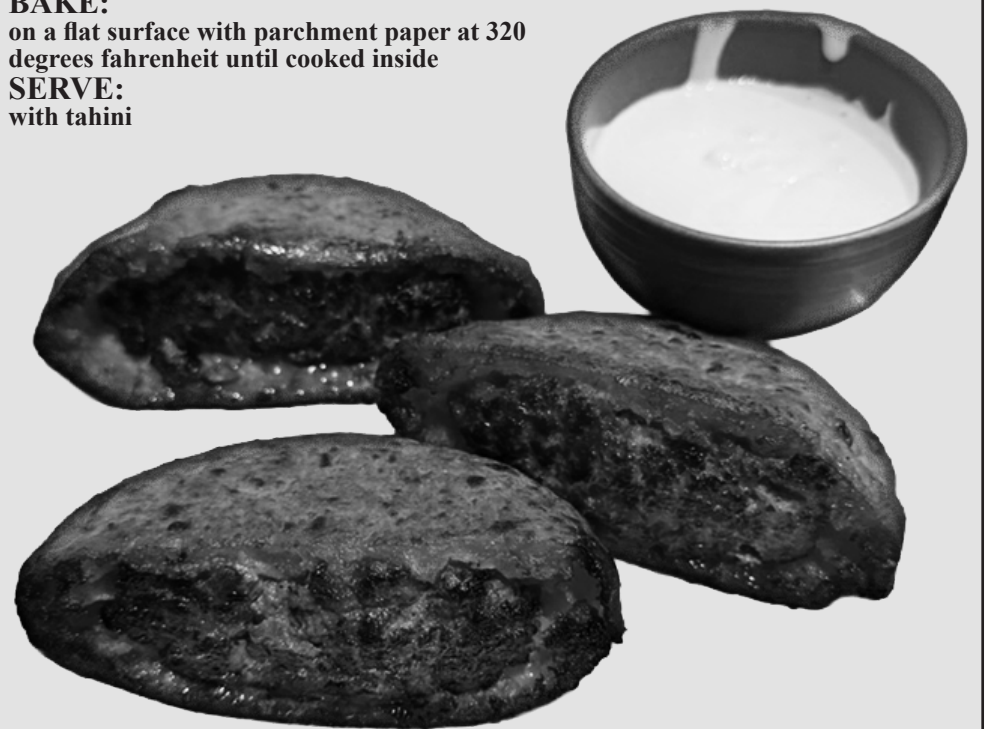
1-2 garlic cloves  
salt, black pepper

### BLEND:

and adjust to taste

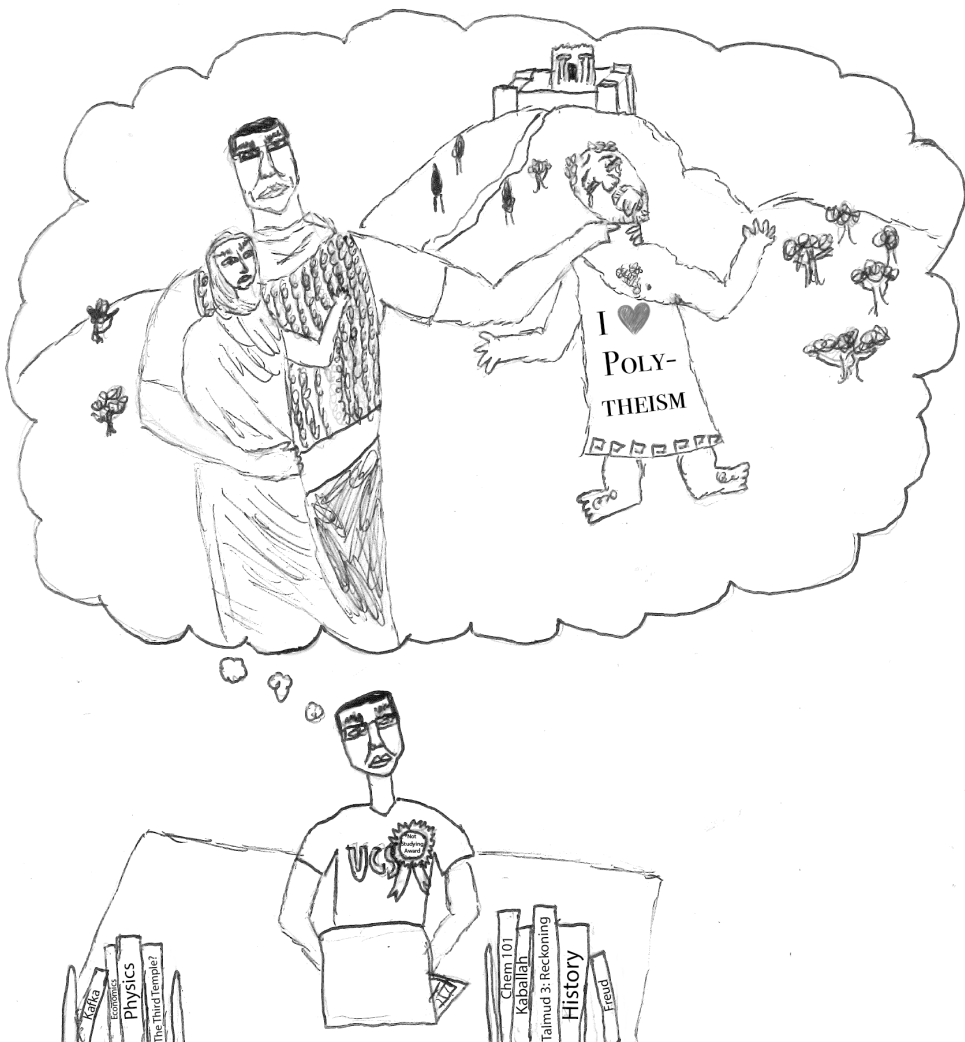
### SERVE:

in a dipplable container



# Chuddy's Maccabee Dreams

By Jakob Ball



# What The Fuck Is

# “ZIONISM”?

By Brooke Taylor

Art by Mia Gold

Let me get this straight, I am a Jewish American, not Israeli. The Israeli flag is not symbolic to me. I don't keep kosher nor speak modern Hebrew, although I do know Yiddish phrases and proverbs... But don't ask me for one because I'll butcher the dialect. The Talmud was a source of bedtime stories. I am a Jewish eighteen-year-old with Ellis Island immigrant grandparents who fled from Poland. The only connection I have with Israel is the Torah, which is old as shit! Don't get me wrong, I want to visit Jerusalem. To see the Western Wall, which I face while praying during T'filah... or I was told I should. I never really asked questions about the state of Israel during my time at religious Sunday school, nor as I studied for my Bat Mitzvah. And now I had the least amount of time to. I mean, I don't think any high school senior can. The University of California just released their decisions, and Oy! To stay in Los Angeles, but then live in Westwood. Nope! I don't think I would survive the expenses of the neighborhood and the hours of traffic to get onto the 405. But then UCSD is socially dead, and my San Diego State alumni parents would bully me every time they got the chance! Deep down, I know UC Irvine is the one for me. Close enough to L.A. where I could observe High Holy Days with my family, but far enough where I didn't have to return for a family birthday party. It is the perfect hour and a half away from my overbearing Ashkenazi family, whom I love dearly, but I need to find my own space. Even more so, when I began to question how my culture and religion impacted my political sense of the world... which is what I need to rant about today!

Let me start with when this word "Zionism" began to unravel all that I knew of Judaism, at least on a political level. I was eager to go to Hebrew High last Monday. My classmates and I are all insistent on going to a UC; I mean why would we want to leave California! I could never imagine myself attending a University on the East Coast! When the weather drops below 70 I consider it freezing! Maybe it was luck from Friday the 13th or God's will, but the decisions came out last Sunday night! The drive to Temple is always full of horrendous traffic but my nerves were on fire! I could not wait to ask Arel and Riley where they got in! Oh, I remember bouncing up and down in the driver's seat, my left hand hovering over the horn to honk at every driver that was on their phone. I am in a rush to class! But, that conversation got pushed aside as soon as I entered, ten minutes late of course. Eli's older sister, Maxine, was sitting next to the Rabbi talking to everyone. Embarrassed, I took an open seat quietly. She was talking about a program called Birthright, a free trip to Israel for ten days for those who have Jewish heritage between the ages of eighteen to twenty-six. All I know about the program is

that Talia, one of my favorite Hebrew tutors, found her Israeli hubby on her trip there a year ago. So, if I ever was desperate for a Jewish partner... I know where to go.

The presentation recapped Maxine's ten-day experience. She traveled to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, the Dead Sea, and a few other cities I can't recall. She and the other Jews from America and Europe ate, danced, and saw the places we read of. I tuned most of it out because all I was interested in was my friend's college decisions! But then I heard her bring up the word Zionism and my friends around me took a sharp breath. I've never heard them gasp so loud unless there is serious drama around us! Her exact statement was "The trip really grounded me in my Zionism, I could see no other land for us but there." I've heard this word and another form of it - Zionist, on CNN and BBC when talking about Israel and Hamas, but my mom shut off the TV before the anchors spoke of the situation. So, before she could move on with her experience I raised my hand abruptly and asked her what the word means. She said it means the right for a Jewish homeland in the land of Judea, which is Israel. Okay...but why? Why does there need to be a word for this fact? I mean the Jewish people are from Judea and we have the Western Wall and archaeological sites where burials and synagogues used to stand. But, something made me uncomfortable the way she responded too.

*The only connection I have with Israel is the Torah, which is old as shit!*

She froze, her back straightened and she took in a small breath, as if I had offended her and she was going to defend herself. I decided to not ask the questions that began to form inside my mind. Maybe my family could offer some answers, such as why Zionism is such an 'intense' word. Where did it come from? Are all Jew Zionists? I fought the urge to ask Maxime privately after she ended the presentation. We all broke for a snack, before discussing this week's parshah - don't interrupt me. I know what you're going to ask me. Why not ask my classmates about it? Well, honestly, I felt scared. I didn't want to bring that chilly awareness over my friends, besides. I wanted to know where they got their acceptances!

If I thought Maxime was awkward, nothing compared to the wave of guilt I felt from my family. The following Friday I asked at the table, where my Bubbe, Zayda, parents, siblings, cousins, aunts, and uncles sat

around. There was a pause as everyone brought soup and challah to their mouths. I took a deep breath and asked, if all Jews are Zionist and why it's important. The spoons dropped back into the bowl. My father looked over at me, his eyes narrowing on me to ask if I really want to have this conversation. I spoke up again and said that if I am going to college then I can hold political conversations at the Shabbat table. I shouldn't have said political, it immediately brought the table into chaos. Bubbe yelled at me! Zionism is our right; how could it be political? Of course, all Jews are Zionist, my mother scolded me, then rolled her eyes. My Aunt asked me who put this thought in my brain and why I wanted to talk about it. I opened my mouth to answer, but Zayda's voice boomed so powerfully that it swirled the Shabbat candle's flames, silencing us all. Under the table, I cracked my knuckles anxiously. No, he doesn't answer my questions - he begins his own spiel. First, it is important for Jews to live in their ancestral lands. The holidays of Tu B'Shevat and Sukkot are all about the vegetation and respect of the land. Bubbles chirped in, she saw what the Germans thought of us and the need for our own land after the Holocaust. Even when her parents moved to Chicago, they were discriminated against. She started rambling about how she begged them to move to Israel. My cousin Ben chimed in to say that as a lesbian, I would be put to death in Gaza. He said Israel is the only state in the Middle East where gay people are safe, and that is why the state is needed even more. At the same time, Uncle Saul began speaking about Hamas, the terrorist organization that lives in Palestine, which is also the state of Israel. In all of this intense conversation, I couldn't find the courage to ask about Palestine. If the people there are Jewish or Muslim? If they like being in this 'new country'. And did they elect Hamas as their leaders? I began to have so many questions but as I looked around the table to ask another I felt their discomfort. I don't want to burden them with my ignorance. Maybe, I could answer these questions at school, with a teacher who would feel more comfortable with this.

I know, this is a lot of information to follow. But, hold on. I am almost to the present. The following Monday I decided to ask the AP world history teacher at school, Mr. Acker. Although I had never taken his class I heard from my friends that he was kind and open to talk to any student, not just his own. By the time I arrived at his door, I just ran in and hoped for the best. Awkwardly I entered his class, took a deep breath and asked if he had time to explain the conflict between Israel and Palestine. I won't lie... when he laughed I was taken aback. I mean, I was glad he didn't get defensive but

...CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

# OLD JEWISH MEN

By Brooke Taylor

The best Jewish media I've ever witnessed was found on my instagram 'For You' page and it led me to find my new favorite clothing line: Old Jewish Men of New York.

It was a short, almost bald man with a thick mustache yelling at a Costco employee to scan the barcode on his stained white shirt instead of the plastic bag. He instantly told the employee he wanted NO LED light on his prized chicken. On the screen it pulled up the correct price of \$4.99 rotisserie chicken. I rewatched this silly video which reminded me of my own zayda. I grew up having this meat at least once a week, in matzah ball soup, part of shabbat dinners, or with couscous before soccer practice.

I was curious to know more about this Jew and stalked their Instagram to discover it was a page of Old Jewish Men from New York. There is Dave, the Costco chicken lover & soup eating fart machine, Bob the smoker, Aaron the Mamdani appointed Public Toilet reviewer, along a few other old Jewish men who make appearances wearing plain tee-shirts with niche statements such as, "Mommy's Little Matzo Ball", or "Soup Eating Fart Machine". Their comical content is to promote their clothing line.

Their collections have comical names such as spite (sprite), smoke with bob, ralph lifshitz, meats, jew balance, sauna, and my personal favorite spitball. Their spitball collections renames the major baseball league as gastros (astros), red lox (red sox), oyrholes (orioles), and meats (mets).

These punny shirts make for a great niche gift for others, especially for Chanukah!



# “ZIONISM”?

continued...

I was not expecting him to be so.. Calm. Yeah calm. He waved me over to the seat across from his desk. Chuckling, he said he wouldn't be able to cover it all within a twenty minute lunch period but would start with context. I knew a bit of the history during the Hellenistic period, when the Channuakh story 'occurred'. I also knew that Jews lived in Judea, but nothing more. But this is the quick rundown he told me; the people of the region were and still are called Palestinians, and lived in the land called Palestine which came from Ramses III. The land was ruled by Roman and Greek rulers, then the Ottomans, and then after World War One British seized control of it. It was then called the British Mandate of Palestine. He took a breath and explained that this is where it gets complicated. After the Holocaust and World War II, Britain divided the state into two, one Arab and one Jewish. Britain promised the land to Palestinians as well as the Jewish people, who began to move in swarms around World War I, and more after World War II. This tension led to a few wars. He mentioned the 1948 war,

*I just read so much hate after hate and I... just kept scrolling. Israelis this, Palestinians that. I couldn't control my thumbs*

when Israel declared independence and Palestinians were forcibly removed from their homes. The Palestinians call this event the Nakba, where over 500 villages were destroyed. 750,000-700,000 Palestinians were removed from their land. The 1967 war when Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. The school bell chimed and lunch was over. I wanted to stay and hear more but students in his fifth period began to enter. He told me that we can continue our conversation tomorrow at lunch again. I left feeling relieved, I had someone to talk to!

Since it was softball season I didn't have a fifth period and left for practice. Hitting drills calmed my nerves, I channeled all the anger and embarrassment into each ball thrown my way. Wack! Crack! Whoosh! The two hour practice ended. I wanted to stay and continue my exercise but I knew seeing you would be beneficial. Okay, back to my story. I ran to the bus station. The big blue bus arrived seven minutes late as always and I was on my way! I decided to do some instagram scrolling and look up the word Zionism. I began to see posts saying Free Palestine I immediately felt taken aback. The hair behind my neck stood. I felt a dark shadow cast over me. Multiple posts called Zionist genociders and colonizers, that Israelis are not native to Palestine and do not have a right to reclaim the land. It also spoke of an apartheid in

the state. I wrote it down in my school notebook to look up later. Post after post, I read posts that say Isrealis support the genocide and ethincal cleansing of Palestine from the land. I saw videos of Palestinians in the West Bank being yelled at and pushed by Israeli settlers. Videos of rebels and starving children in Gaza. Claims that the Israeli Defense Government was bombing these civilians. Posts followed stating that underneath Gaza are tunnels where Hamas, the terror organization lies. They also occupy hospitals, justifying the IDF's bombing. Some posts claimed that all Palestinians are anti-semitic, that they do not like the jewish people and wanted them removed. Others called Palestinians terrorists and liars. Accusing that they had their chance at freedom, to move to Israel and instead choose to stay and support Hamas.

As I furiously scrolled farther into the algorithm, I learned there was something in common - hate for the other. I just read so much hate after hate and I... just kept scrolling. Israelis this, Palestinians that. I couldn't control my thumbs as my eyes scanned over the words. So much cruelty packed into a large platform. It went on justifying their stances and I-

“Nava, I'm sorry to interrupt you but why don't you take a moment for a breath. It seems to me that you are beginning to feel overwhelmed as you did on the bus” a sweet voice chimed.

I looked at Dr. Haider and nodded. In the heat of remembering all that I shared with her I forget I was safe in her office. She keeps the overhead light off for me. Instead the room is illuminated by the natural light of the 7:30pm sunset. She is right, I'm starting to feel overwhelmed again and now, I need advice on how to regulate my intense thoughts and emotional responses, the reason I have been seeing for over a year. I let myself sigh and reach for a fidget toy from the basket she keeps on the table for all her clients. I found my favorite, small ball shaped magnets that are cold to the couch and gently massage my hands. I took a few deep and long breaths before continuing.

“So I turned off my phone and began to play the color



game you gave me as a tool for when I feel a panic attack come on. I was passing Sepulveda and was struck by the bright cherry mustang left of my window. Next up something orange. There was an ad for a new Timothee Chalamet film. This game went through the rainbow two more times before I arrived at your office. I wanted to talk about my anxiety of choosing a college and the guilt of leaving LA but now I feel like a bad Jewish daughter and human in general.”

“Well, I'm glad you waited because it seems you feel extremely taken aback? And we can talk about college as well! Where do you want to start”

“I want to talk about Zionism and how I am supposed to feel. I feel taken aback. I feel upset, especially at my family and temple. No, I am mad at myself. I should have learned more about Israel outside of my religious and Hebrew classes. I don't like feeling ignorant.”

“I don't think anyone does”

“And now I don't know how to feel. I mean it's supposed to be a Jewish state but they are bombing civilians. We are taught to be kind to our neighbors, even if they don't feel that way back. And why did the state remove all the Palestinians during the Nakba? Why couldn't they stay? And I still haven't looked up this apartheid thing... There is a lot I don't know. But I do know this. I don't feel proud of Israel, and I feel uncomfortable that my family doesn't want to talk about it with me. But I am Jewish, I am supposed to support this state.”

“I think you should feel what is right for you. I know you like approval from your family, I do too. And especially since this opinion is important to your family culturally too. We can work on tools to help navigate these emotions and how to have a conversation with your family”

“I would like that! Right now I feel like I was put into a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. I just feel torn in the opposite way, but also stuck”

“If I can, this situation sounds like cognitive dissonance. I'm not sure if you learned of Leon Festinger in AP Psychology yet but he coined this term.”

I shake my head. “No we haven't yet. We actually just learned about the Pavlov Dog experiment! I can't believe that he trained dogs to salivate. I mean what else can you train people to do? But that's not the point, what is cognitive dissonance?”

“Well Cognitive Dissonance is a mental discomfort when an individual holds two or more contradictory beliefs, opinions, or values.”

I blinked and proceeded all of that, that's literally spot on how I felt. But... where do I go from here?

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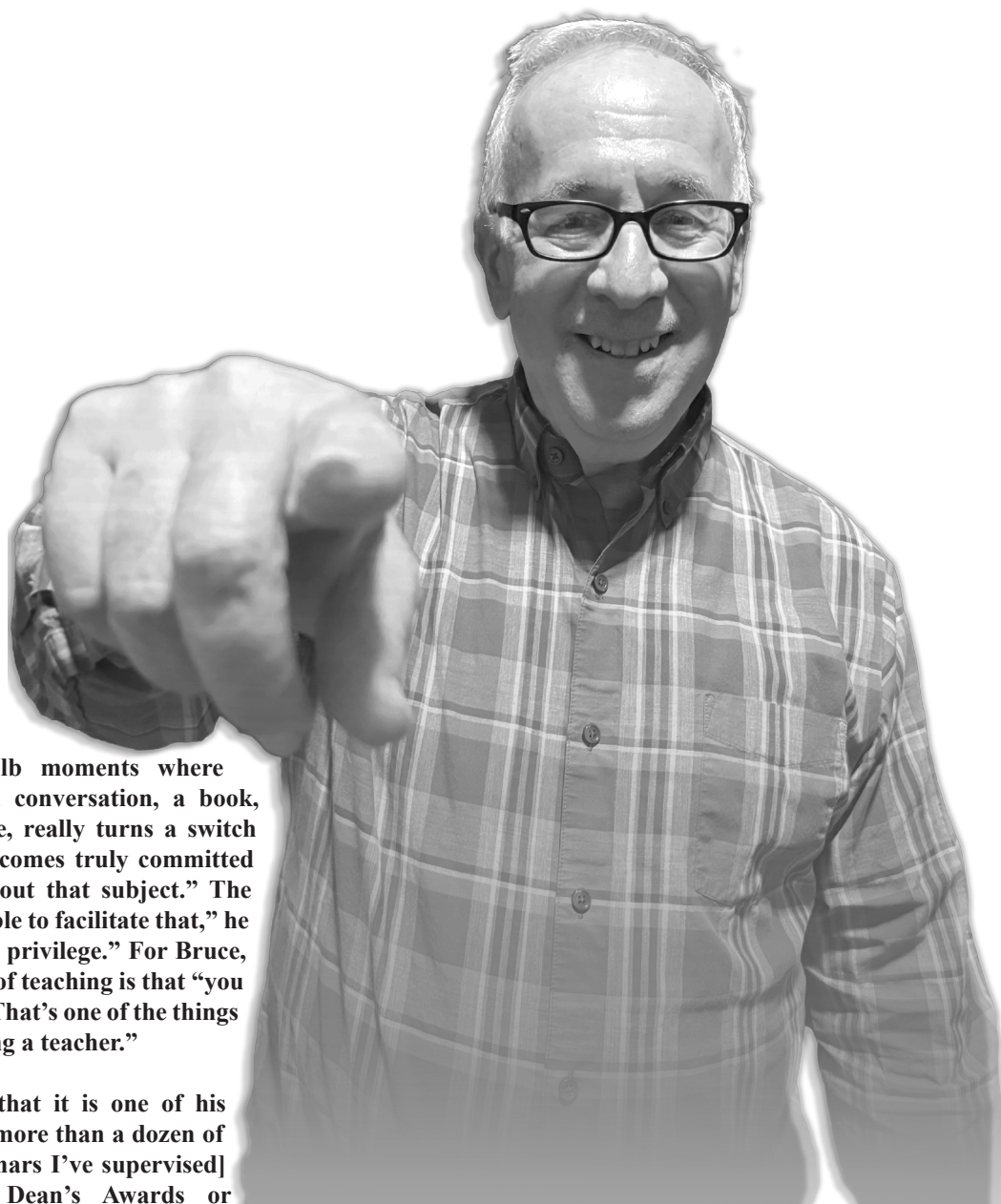
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# BRUCE THOMPSON WANTS YOU! TO JOIN LEVIATHAN JEWISH JOURNAL



## UCSC Jewish Studies Lecturer Bruce Thompson Retires After 3 Decades

For 3 decades, Bruce Thompson has been teaching courses on Jewish history and literature at UCSC. Bruce creates lectures that engage students, and he always makes us laugh with the occasional raunchy joke. My very first Jewish Studies class at UCSC was about Jewish literature from the Diaspora with Bruce. I not only learned so much in that class, I also found *Leviathan*. Bruce got me and Jakob, and our two other editors from last year, Asher and Ali (who are now alumni), interested in reviving *Leviathan*.

Without Bruce, *Leviathan* may have died completely. Bruce inspired us to start *Leviathan*, and it has served as a central community and way to learn and engage with Jewish history for us. We have fallen in love with *Leviathan*, and are so grateful that Bruce bestowed this incredible opportunity onto us.

For Bruce, retirement is not slowing down to a cozy life at home. In fact, quite the opposite—Bruce plans to travel the world! He plans to visit “all the major museum cities in the United States,” from Boston and Chicago to Los Angeles and Cleveland, and then go abroad to places he’s never seen, like Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Scotland. Film festivals are high on his list as well, including “a wonderful Silent Film Festival in Pordenone, Italy.”

I asked Bruce what he loved most about teaching. “There’s something that every teacher really cherishes,” he answered, “and that’s knowing that some students

experience light bulb moments where a class, a lecture, a conversation, a book, whatever it might be, really turns a switch on so the student becomes truly committed to learning more about that subject.” The opportunity “to be able to facilitate that,” he says, “is a very great privilege.” For Bruce, one of the best parts of teaching is that “you never stop learning. That’s one of the things that I love about being a teacher.”

Bruce says that it is one of his biggest prides that “more than a dozen of [the theses and seminars I’ve supervised] have been issued Dean’s Awards or Chancellor’s Awards. That’s been very rewarding for me... to be able to facilitate that, however small my role might be.” Bruce clearly takes joy in seeing his students succeed, and love what they are learning.


A meaningful moment that stuck out to Bruce in his career was when in 1992, a student named Carmen approached him after class to say his course was her favorite and to thank him. “That was so sweet of her to say that,” he recalled. “It came at just the right moment... when you’re not sure that you’re reaching students, to have someone just come out of the blue and say that, it’s quite a boost for one’s confidence.” Decades later, he recently reunited with Carmen in Berkeley and discovered that her enthusiasm for history had passed on to her two daughters.

There is a lot to look forward to in his retirement, but there are also many things he will miss about teaching at UCSC. “I think what I’ll miss the most would be the satisfaction of knowing that a class is well designed, and that a lecture is well received, and a discussion takes off,” he said. Bruce considers his role in students’ finding love for learning to be a great privilege, and says he will miss that the most.

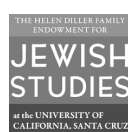
Bruce says he will miss UCSC, but retirement holds thrilling freedom and adventures ahead. We will miss you, Bruce! Send us photos from your travels!

## JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS IN SANTA CRUZ

### Leviathan Jewish Journal (Student Media Organization)

 An on-campus Jewish student journal, publishing since 1972, and providing an academic Jewish space on campus. In *Leviathan*, you can publish news, opinion pieces, creative writing, photography, art, and more!

### UCSC Center for Jewish Studies (Academic Department)



The Center for Jewish Studies at UCSC offers both a major and a minor in Jewish Studies. Class topics range from modern history to ancient history, from religious to political subject matter, and allow students to engage with Jewishness in an academic environment.

### Santa Cruz Hillel (Non-Profit and Student Organization)



Hosts biweekly Shabbat dinners, holiday festivities, cultural events, and other programs around campus and at the Hillel house.

### Michpacha מִשְׁפָּחָה (Student Club)



A Jewish space on campus that seeks to include all Jewish students, regardless of religious and political identities. They host events including Shabbat, Havdalah, and academic talks.

### J Street U UCSC (Political Organization and Student Club)



Educational and community programming on Israel/Palestine, cultural events, debate and discussion, and more.

### Jewish Student Union (Student Club)



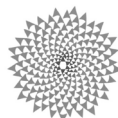
A student club at UCSC that hosts social and religious events.

### Jews Against White Supremacy (Political Student Organization)



Organizes protests, educational, and community events centered around anti-Zionism and pro-Palestinian activism.

### Adamah at UCSC (Student Club)



Hosts beach clean-ups, hikes, educational events, and other environmentalist Jewish programs and activities on and off campus.

### AEPI UCSC (Fraternity)



Jewish Fraternity at UCSC.

### The Rohr Chabad Student Center at UCSC (Religious Community and Jewish Outreach)



The family home of Devorah Leah and Rabbi Shlomie; they host weekly Shabbat dinners, as well as other religious community events.

### Tzimtzum Community (Independent Jewish Community)



Hosts monthly Shabbat services, holiday services, and other religious and cultural programming throughout Santa Cruz. They center queer and non-Zionist Jewish identities.

### Shamati יְהִעֲמֵשׁ (Listening Group)



Shama'ti\* is a Jewish-led organization who offer listening circles and skill-building workshops on dialogue across differences within and beyond the Jewish community.

\*Shama'ti (יְהִעֲמֵשׁ) translates as “I listened.”

### Temple Beth El Aptos (Reform Synagogue)



Has weekly Shabbat services, holiday services, Hebrew school, religious programming, and educational events.

### Chadeish Yameinu (Renewal Synagogue)



Hosts weekly Shabbat services, holiday services, Hebrew school, and educational events.