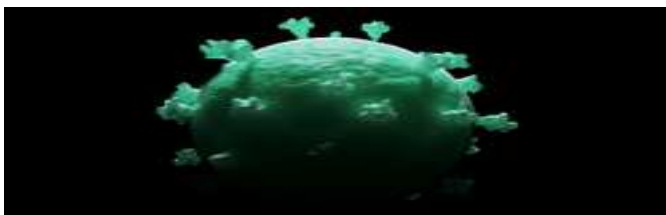




TRENDING TOPICS



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#IsraelGate

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2020 Election

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WORLD (/WORLD.HTML) :: ASIA & PACIFIC (/WORLD/ASIA-PACIFIC.HTML)
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DECEMBER 22, 2020

BY TIM ANDERSON (/AUTHOR.HTML?
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1667 Views

The Israel Lobby at the University of Sydney



Documents released under freedom of information law (GIPA) show that an Israeli organisation has, over many years, privately contributed millions of dollars to the University of Sydney's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS). A sub-branch of the Israeli World Zionist Organization (the Fund for Jewish Higher Education) contributes around half a million dollars to FASS each year, with contributions peaking at \$819,000 in 2019 (see Graphic 2). The WZO is committed to the Israeli colony in Palestine, where more than half the population is denied full citizenship rights (see Graphic 3).

These amounts are way out of proportion to the nominal beneficiaries at the University: Hebrew, Biblical, Jewish and Holocaust Studies, and give the Israeli lobby influence with University of Sydney management. This Israeli funding is sustained while federal 'foreign influence' laws are trumpeted against China, and form part of a much larger private fund pool - one billion dollar plus, announced with pride in the University's 2019 Annual Report (USyd 2019) - at the University, for which there is little public accountability. The door is wide open for corruption, alongside secret foreign influence.

2020 data on the WZO confirms documents provided to me by a whistle-blower within the administration, back in 2018, which showed that the 'Committee for Jewish Higher Education' had been the largest single donor (by far) to the University's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), with combined donations of \$571,000 (in eight separate donations) in the first five months of 2012, all tagged for the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, including its speciality in Holocaust Studies (USyd 2012). With about 10 academics staff (not all full time) that department represents less than 2% of the 700 or so academic staff in the Faculty.

Graphic 1: the major private funder for FASS in the first half of 2012 was the 'Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education', a branch of the Israeli World Zionist Organization (WZO)

USyd Arts Faculty (FASS) major funders, 1 Jan - 25 May 2012

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Advance ID	Name	Gift Receipt Number	Gift Receipt Date	New Gift Amount	Modified Gift Amount	Description
0000217872	Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education	278499	15/05/2012	\$ 288,302.52		the Department of Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies
0000376756	Estate of the late Helen Bell	272626	30/01/2012	\$ 210,000.00		the Helen Anne Bell Poetry Bequest
0000217872	Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education	278498	15/05/2012	\$ 109,566.16		the Department of Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies
0000296770	Estate of the Late William Ritchie	273390	20/02/2012	\$ 94,958.65		the W Ritchie Chair in Ancient Greece
0000217872	Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education	278514	15/05/2012	\$ 72,075.63		the Department of Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies
0000002646	Mr John F Whitehouse	277120	4/05/2012	\$ 45,000.00		the Research Group for Ancient North Africa
0000407253	Mr Colin Williamson	276922	30/04/2012	\$ 40,000.00		the Refugee Language Program at the Centre for Language Studies
0000217872	Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education	278495	15/05/2012	\$ 36,190.20		the Lectureship in Holocaust Studies
0000296770	Estate of the Late William Ritchie	278842	21/05/2012	\$ 33,778.14		the W Ritchie Chair in Ancient Greece
0000020978	Professor Terence E Smith	270861	4/01/2012	\$ 30,000.00		the Power Institute Foundation for Art and Architecture
0000345486	Roth Foundation	276984	1/05/2012	\$ 30,000.00		the Roth Foundation Lectureship for Holocaust Studies
0000345486	Roth Foundation	276985	1/05/2012	\$ 30,000.00		the Roth Foundation Lectureship for Holocaust Studies
0000368230	Estate of the Late Tom Austen Brown	278528	15/05/2012	\$ 29,244.91		the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
0000217872	Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education	278510	15/05/2012	\$ 27,391.54		the Department of Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies
0000217872	Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education	278494	15/05/2012	\$ 24,126.80		the Lectureship in Holocaust Studies
0000407764	Academy Travel Pty Ltd	274618	22/03/2012	\$ 13,452.00		Classics & Ancient History
0000250756	The Cyprus High Commission	273156	9/02/2012	\$ 11,120.00		the Department of Modern Greek
0000395032	Estate of the late Mari Ann Lewis	273155	9/02/2012	\$ 10,000.00		the Faculty of Art
0000407253	Mr Colin Williamson	276934	1/05/2012	\$ 10,000.00		the Refugee Language Program at the Centre for Language Studies
0000219472	ANZ Trustees Limited	274025	8/03/2012	\$ 9,347.04		the Department of Italian
0000217872	Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education	278497	15/05/2012	\$ 9,047.55		the Lectureship in Holocaust Studies
0000217872	Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education	278496	15/05/2012	\$ 6,031.70		the Lectureship in Holocaust Studies
0000407558	Republic of China Centenary Foundation	274417	15/03/2012	\$ 5,000.00		the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
0000292455	Greek Orthodox Community of NSW Limited	274451	16/03/2012	\$ 5,000.00		the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

With all senior managers eligible for performance bonuses, at least in part based on their fund raising, these large undisclosed sums indicate a great potential for corruption, all the more so now that the Federal Court of Australia (in the case brought by the NTEU and myself) has rubber stamped management gag orders, even when they concern public academic work.

Graphic 2: a 2020 Freedom of Information (GIPA) request showed that the 'Fund for Jewish Higher Education' (a branch of the WZO) remains a major funder of FASS

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

NOTICE OF DECISION

Applicant:	Dr Tim Anderson
File Ref:	2020/4423
Decision-maker:	Mr Alex Maitland, University Group Secretary
Date of decision:	15 December 2020

Appendix 1

Payments by the Trustee for the Fund for Jewish Higher Education

2017	2018	2019	2020
\$496,516	\$516,514	\$819,919	\$303,568

The Israel lobby, acting through the tabloid media, pressured University of Sydney managers to expel me from my academic position in 2018-2019. The final issue was my graphic linking of one of Israel's Gaza massacres with the racial massacres of Nazi Germany; and my refusal to submit to

secret gag orders, effectively made under pressure from the Israel lobby. In late 2020 the Federal Court ruled that academics must follow management orders, even when it concerns their research and teaching. I have published [some detail \(/world/asia-pacific/australia/4470-academic-cancel-culture.html\)](/world/asia-pacific/australia/4470-academic-cancel-culture.html) on this case and its implications; showing the vulnerability of the corporate university to outside pressures.

Graphic 3: the WZO is committed to “Israel education” and to the Israeli colony in Palestine, where more than half the population is denied full citizenship rights

Mission Statement

The World Zionist Organization is committed to promoting Zionism & the Zionist idea and the Zionist enterprise through Israel Education as vital and positive elements of contemporary Jewish life, in accordance with the principles articulated in the **Jerusalem Program**. This manifesto is dedicated to instilling the centrality of Israel and Jerusalem its capital deep within Jewish consciousness, encouraging the return to Zion, fashioning an exemplary society in the Jewish state, expanding Zionist education including Hebrew language instruction, settling the land, and combating Anti-Semitism.

Israel lobby influence on the wider phenomenon of academic ‘cancel culture’ deserves attention. A recent Guardian article cites several British academics on the problem of university managers trying to “silence academics on social media”. This was said to be part of a tension between the corporate university and social media, where “on the one hand unis are pushing their staff to be more active online ... but when that individual voice is in conflict with the official brand it creates a tension ... it is about brand protection” (Reidy 2020). The corporate media has discovered that it can use this tension to goad management to move against certain academics.

The Israel lobby has spent time and effort in this territory, in particular by trying to vilify as ‘racist’ public figures who criticise Israel. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) has had some success in its attempts to extend the definition of anti-Semitism “to criticism of Israel and support for Palestinian rights” (England 2017). But I am one of many who have written that there is no legitimate basis for conflating criticism of a state or government with inciting hatred against a people (Anderson 2020).

An Israel lobby group in the USA, under the guise of ‘protecting Jewish students’ branded as ‘biased’ more than 200 academics who supported the boycott against Israel (AMCHA 2014). Academics and teachers have been hounded from their positions in the USA, the UK, Australia and New Zealand because of their comments on Israel, including those who have raised legitimate academic questions about ethno-nationalist settler colonialism” and of “victims becoming perpetrators” (Flaherty 2016; Sales 2020).

Jewish writers have not been immune from these attacks. Some have hit back, saying that “unfounded allegations of anti-Semitism [are used to] cover up Israeli apartheid” (Handmaker 2019; Weiss 2019). Last year sixty Jewish and Israeli academics condemned the German parliament for its attempts to equate the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement with anti-semitism (O’Malley and Gardner 2019).

A 2017 letter signed by more than 200 British academics complained of the Israel lobby’s repeated attempts to link academic criticism of Israel, and support for the Palestinian people, with anti-semitism. These moves were “outrageous interferences with free expression” and “direct attacks on

academic freedom”. The group said “we wish to express our dismay at this attempt to silence campus discussion about Israel, including its violation of the rights of Palestinians for more than 50 years. It is with disbelief that we witness explicit political interference in university affairs in the interests of Israel under the thin disguise of concern about anti-semitism” (Rosenhead 2017; England 2017)

In the USA President Donald Trump in 2019 signed an executive order to withhold funds from universities which did not do enough to stop “anti-Semitic practices”, which includes criticism of Israel (Basken 2019). Defence of the Israeli colony in Palestine is taken seriously.

Israel and academic freedom became an issue at the University of Sydney in March 2015, after students shut down a talk by former British Army Colonel Richard Kemp, who had been invited on campus to defend the Israeli military’s slaughter of more 2,000 Palestinian civilians in Gaza in 2014. According to the Times of Israel, Kemp was to give a lecture about “ethical dilemmas of military tactics and dealing with non-state armed groups”. The Israel lobby claimed the protest and student behaviour was an attempt to intimidate Jews (AJN 2015). A wider debate over the intellectual freedom afforded to visitors like Richard Kemp ensued.

At around this time I looked into the reporting of the slaughter in Gaza, preparing a graphic which showed - from relatively independent sources - that Israelis forces had slaughtered more than 1,000 Palestinians (the final count was more than 2,000) of whom, according to UN sources, more than 75% were civilians. On the other side, the Palestinian resistance had killed 51 people, 3 of whom were civilians. I was curious about the relative ‘collateral damage’ because even some supporters of the Palestinian people were suggesting a ‘moral equivalence’ between the violence of the Israeli military and retaliation by the resistance. This was the origins of my ‘Gaza Casualties’ graphic, which was later used to expel me from the university.

The person who invited Colonel Kemp was former University of Sydney academic Dr Suzanne Rutland. At her retirement a few months later Provost Stephen Garton praised Suzanne as a person of “moral courage” who had made “an effort to bridge the cultural and political divide, to promote tolerance and understanding ... [and] we owe her a debt of gratitude”. Stephen used the occasion to backhand the students who had confronted Kemp, saying that some on campus “confuse academic freedom with the right to disrupt” (Benjamin 2015).

Graphic 4: Provost Stephen Garton at the farewell for Dr Suzanne Rutland, 2015; he gave an elegy on her contributions to “tolerance and understanding”



Dr Rutland had a high profile from her academic and community work. In 2008 she received the Order of Australia for her services to Higher Jewish Education and “interfaith dialogue”. She was also active in campaigns against anti-semitism and Holocaust Denial. However her response to the students who confronted Colonel Kemp was not so tolerant. She denounced them as vicious racists, saying “when they stand there chanting, ‘free Palestine’ what they mean is the dismantling of the Zionist entity which means genocide against Israel’s Jewish population” (Brull 2015). This is an extreme view.

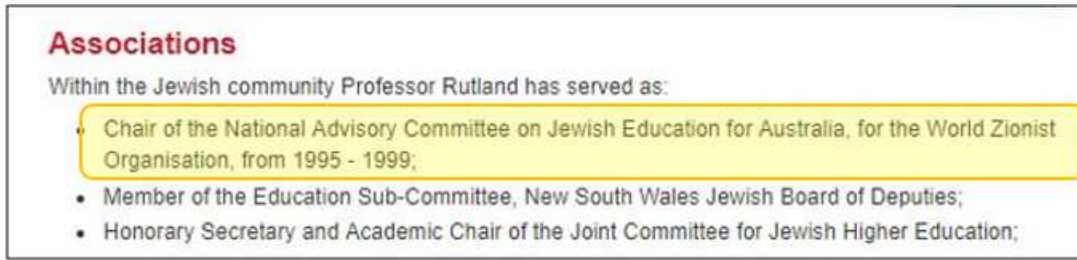
In fact, the better view is that Israel, by its repeated massacres and ethnic cleansing, is engaged in a form of genocide. The US Centre for Constitutional Rights, noting a controversy over this question, wrote that:

“prominent scholars of the international law [on the] crime of genocide and human rights authorities take the position that Israel’s policies towards the Palestinian people could constitute a form of genocide. Those policies range from the 1948 mass killing and displacement of Palestinians to a half century of military occupation and, correspondingly, the discriminatory legal regime governing Palestinians, repeated military assaults on Gaza, and official Israeli statements expressly favouring the elimination of Palestinians” (CCR 2016).

Attacks on the critics of Israel are often aimed at deflecting attention from this.

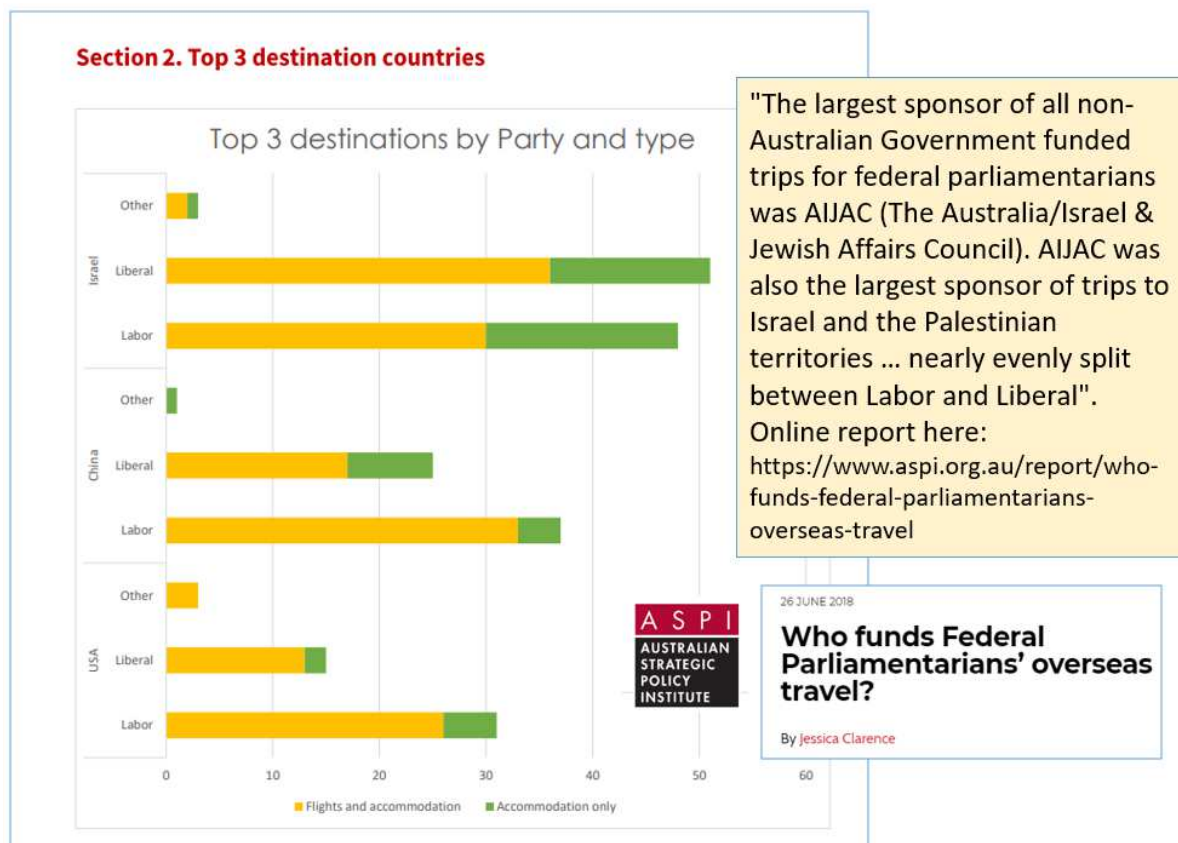
The now Emeritus Professor Suzanne Rutland was not just an academic, she was a conduit of Israeli finance to the university. Her online CV (now redacted online) listed her as ‘Chair of the National Advisory Committee on Jewish Education for Australia, for the World Zionist Organization’. The WZO was founded in 1897 with the aim of creating a Jewish state and, since the creation of Israel, it has become an umbrella group for a range of Israel lobbies (WZO 2020). The WZO declares its commitment to “Israel education”.

Graphic 5: Dr Suzanne Rutland’s online biography (now redacted) shows her role as a representative of the ‘Jewish Education’ branch of the World Zionist Organization



At the political level the Israel lobby remains influential. A 2018 study by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) found that an Israeli lobby group in Australia (AIJAC) was the biggest single foreign funder of Australian MPs’ overseas travel. MPs from both major parties were beneficiaries of these ‘study tours’. While the public focus of foreign influence in Australia has become China, with special new laws to criminalise ‘foreign influence’, the ASPI study showed that influence peddling from Israel has been greater than that from China or the USA. While Australian MPs had been funded for nearly 60 trips to China and 45 to the US, AIJAC had sponsored around 100 visits to Israel, “nearly evenly split between Labor and Liberal” (Clarence 2018).

Graphic 6: the 2018 ASPI study shows Australian MOs from both major parties get more free overseas trips from the Israeli lobby (AIJAC) than from either China or the USA



(Top image: University of Sydney Campus. Credit: Adam Jones/ Flickr)

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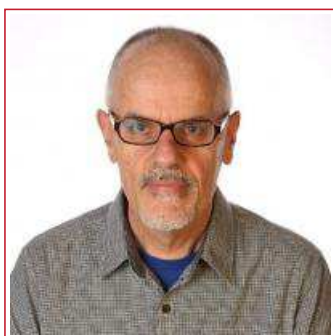
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