



ISRAEL NEWS
A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation

Commentary...

IDF to Stay in Philadelphi Corridor By Yaakov Lappin

The Israel Defense Forces is preparing to shift in the coming weeks from high-intensity warfare to targeted operations the Gaza Strip, a transition it calls moving from Stage B to C. The Israeli military plans, however, on continuing to hold the 8.7-mile (14-kilometer) Philadelphi Corridor, which runs along the Gaza-Egypt border.

This continued Israeli control of the border will be critical in preventing the resurgence of Hamas's smuggling operation and will help dampen the Iran-backed terror army's hopes to rebuild itself.

Richard Goldberg, senior adviser at the Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told JNS, "History would repeat itself the minute the IDF abandons the Philadelphi Corridor, with Hamas rebuilding its smuggling operations. Egypt was obviously complicit in the Hamas tunneling operation and cannot be trusted with the border. "The U.N. which is pro-Hamas, is not an option. That leaves the IDF to continue destroying all existing tunnel infrastructure and interdict future tunneling and other smuggling attempts."

The Philadelphi Corridor, which Israel seized as part of its Rafah offensive, has historically been the route for Hamas to smuggle weapons and contraband from Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. By maintaining a presence in this corridor, the IDF aims to ensure that Hamas is unable to rebuild its terror capabilities.

The Philadelphi Corridor has been a focal point for years, turning into a smuggling zone even before Israel's disengagement from Gaza in 2005, and evolving into a monstrous network of tunnels in the years that followed. The network of tunnels facilitated the flow of arms, explosives and other contraband, bolstering Hamas's massive military infrastructure throughout Gaza. The tunnels sneaking under the Philadelphi Corridor also enabled the transfer of luxury goods, cigarettes and other materials for the Gazan black market, all of which was taxed by Hamas, feeding its war chest.

Many observers have pointed to chronic corruption at the Rafah crossing, where bribes were allegedly paid to Egyptian security officials to facilitate smuggling. Additionally, high-level Egyptian figures are allegedly involved in these operations, organizing the passage of Gaza residents into Egypt for a fee. It is possible that this is why Egypt also failed to dismantle the dozens of tunnels that the IDF is now finding and destroying.

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, who visited the Rafah area on Tuesday, said that the military killed more than 900 terrorists, including commanders, during the Rafah operation. "The reason we are working here week after week is now focused on the destruction of the terrorist infrastructure and the destruction of the underground infrastructure, which takes time," Halevi continued. "Therefore, this is a long campaign, because we do not want to leave Rafah with the terrorist infrastructure intact. There are those we eliminated underground, and some that tried to emerge above ground, and we eliminated them." He added, "This ongoing effort of ours, this pursuit, is very, very important. They should feel exhausted, while we feel energized and determined. When we move to the next phase, we will adapt appropriate measures for that phase, bring new tactics, provide logistical support in a different way that fits that phase, and all these things ultimately are focused by our determination, perseverance and patience, wearing down the other side and accomplishing our missions. A lot of willpower, a lot of patience and perseverance, and the results will speak for themselves going forward."

As long as the IDF maintains control of the Gaza-Egypt border, Hamas's efforts to rebuild its terror army will be significantly hindered.

Securing the Philadelphi Corridor ensures that Hamas remains isolated from its external sources of weapons and materials, which are crucial for its military operations. It will also harm Hamas's domestic arms production ambitions, since homemade production sites also rely

on material entering the Strip. In that sense, the Philadelphi Corridor can be compared the Israel's strategic control of the Jordan Valley, which enables it to intercept and disrupt many Iranian arms smuggling efforts via Jordan into Judea and

Samaria (although some smuggling runs have gotten through). The IDF is also continually expanding a "sterile zone" around the Corridor, as part of its ongoing counter-tunnel and terror infrastructure destruction operations, Israel's Channel 12 reported on June 30.

The failure of Egypt over the years to put a stop to the tunnels means Israel must take matters into its own hands. The IDF's continued presence in the Philadelphi Corridor ensures that Israel retains control over a critical aspect of its national security, without relying on external actors. (JNS Jul 4)

Can Israel Afford to Stand Up to America? By Melanie Phillips

There's no denying the severe tensions between the Biden administration and the Israeli government over the conduct of the war being waged against Israel by Iran and its proxies.

Last month, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu publicly accused U.S. President Joe Biden of withholding weapons and ammunition from the embattled Jewish state.

Two weeks later, Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Tex.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the U.S. was withholding from Israel no fewer than seven weapons systems.

Ever since the Oct. 7 Palestinian Arab pogrom in southern Israel, America has been giving to Israel with one hand while chaining it with the other.

The Biden administration has made Israel slow down its attempt to destroy Hamas in Gaza, repeatedly forcing the Israelis into paralyzing ceasefire negotiations that have given Hamas the upper hand and insisting on humanitarian aid supplies, most of which were stolen by Hamas to strengthen itself.

Crucially, the U.S. forced Israel not to take early preemptive action against Hezbollah in Lebanon, where the terror group has embedded among the civilian population around 150,000 rockets and missiles. As a result, there have been hundreds of missile and rocket strikes on northern Israel, with more than 60,000 Israelis displaced from their homes over the past nine months while swathes of the upper Galilee have been burned to the ground.

The Iranian regime has said that if Hezbollah is seriously attacked, Iran will "obliterate" Israel. Hezbollah's foreign relations chief, Khalil Rizk, said on Al-Manar TV last month: "Is this war now with Israel? My answer is that this is not a war with Israel. Israel is merely a tool. The main war, the real war, is with America."

Yet astoundingly, the Biden administration wants an empowered Iran to be a key pillar of the future architecture of the Middle East. It purports to believe this will produce "stability." Accordingly, the U.S. is actually protecting Iran from Israel, the nation that the genocidal Iranian regime has sworn to exterminate.

Even when Iran fired a barrage of rockets and drones at Israel in April and America and others scrambled to help knock them out, the U.S. stopped Israel from responding robustly.

Earlier this week, The New York Times reported that Netanyahu had pushed Biden hard on the need to hit Iran and avoid looking weak. "Let me be crystal clear," Biden was said have told Netanyahu in a phone call. "If you launch a big attack on Iran, you're on your own. You do this and I'm out."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has acknowledged that the evacuation of the north under daily Hezbollah rocket and missile attacks has meant Israel has shrunk. Yet he behaves as if this intolerable development emanates from Israel's actions in Gaza and that a ceasefire there would put Hezbollah back in its box.

Accordingly, the U.S. is solemnly "negotiating" with Hezbollah, just as it "negotiated" with Iran. The Bidenites really believe that genocidal fanatics can be reasoned out of their intention to murder, destroy and conquer. This is beyond grotesque.

Of course, Hezbollah would end its attacks if Israel ended its war

in Gaza now with Hamas still unconquered and the hostages still incarcerated, because that would mean Israel had surrendered and was fatally weakened.

Hezbollah could take its time before launching even more deadly Oct. 7-style attacks picking off the border communities of northern Israel. It could continue like that forever. And meanwhile, Iran will get the bomb.

Indeed, Iran may not want all-out war right now. The current situation suits it well as part of its strategy of attrition: to encircle Israel with a stranglehold of terror, subject it to never-ending attacks, cripple its economy, demoralize its people so that increasing numbers flee and eventually destroy it with the aid of a world whose minds and institutions Iran has helped poison against the Jewish people.

Hezbollah has to be neutralized. But it has now said that if Israel launches an all-out war against it, this will be a war with Iran.

The only way through this nightmare is to strike the head of the snake itself in Tehran. Israel cannot afford to wait until Haifa or Tel Aviv start sustaining massive casualties from Hezbollah's vast arsenal or Iran itself. Faced with such an enemy, a preemptive strike that gains the initiative is essential. But for that to happen, Israel needs America. And it's far from clear that the Biden administration would come to Israel's aid even in a war limited to Hezbollah but in which Iran would unleash itself along with its proxies in Iraq, Yemen and the disputed territories of Judea and Samaria.

Against this dire backdrop, Netanyahu is going to America in three weeks' time to address Congress. Among the many who loathe and distrust him, there is nervousness and criticism that he may make a bad situation even worse by criticizing Biden so close to the presidential election.

There are fears that he may repeat what such people believe was the harmful result he achieved when he addressed Congress in 2015 in an attempt to head off President Barack Obama's nuclear deal with Iran.

Obama outfoxed him by some fancy Beltway footwork and the deal was duly done. Netanyahu's critics say that he therefore achieved nothing but bad blood with Obama. The same fears are being expressed over the likely effect on Biden of this month's visit.

But this is to get things back to front. In both cases, Netanyahu decided to address Congress because an already virulently hostile administration posed such a danger to Israel that he could not remain silent.

In 2015, he had a moral duty to lay out for Congress and the American people the dire consequences of Obama's Iran deal. That warning has been amply borne out. In 2024, Netanyahu has a moral duty to explain to Congress and the American people the dire consequences of the Biden administration's appeasement of Iran, why Israel is fighting a war for its survival unlike any other since its foundation and that the seven-front war against it is merely the opening shot in Iran's war against America and the West.

What Netanyahu's critics fail to acknowledge is that he is a supremely cautious politician. He rarely airs his grievances with the U.S. in public. When he does so, it signifies desperation. It's because he feels he has no other option. That's why he addressed Congress in 2015. It's why he outed the Biden administration for holding up the delivery of weapons essential to the war effort. And it's why he's beating a lonely path back to Congress once again.

His intended audience isn't just U.S. lawmakers. It isn't just the American people. It's also the Arab and Muslim world, which is watching carefully and where the stakes for Israel are very high.

For what inspires aggression and war in the Middle East is above all the perception of weakness. If Israel is seen to be bullied into surrender by the Biden administration, the Arab and Muslim world will smell that weakness. The Arabs may accordingly retreat from their recent historic overtures of friendship or Iran will move in for the kill. It is therefore essential that Israel is seen to be standing up to America.

As the former Israeli diplomat Yoram Ettinger has observed, the State Department has systematically pressured Israel to act against its own security requirements ever since 1948.

And it never learns from experience. The Obama-Biden strategy of appeasement empowered Iran, created the conditions for the Oct. 7 pogrom and is leading the free world to catastrophe.

As Ettinger has said, the question is not how Israel can afford to stand up to America. It's how can Israel afford not to. (JNS July 4)

The Pointlessness of Pursuing a Two-State Solution

By Lawrence Solomon

Apart from its own 780,000-strong armed forces, Iran has assembled a score of armed groups in countries neighboring Israel; all of which, like Iran, are committed to the eradication of the Jewish state.

The United States, the European Union and others in the West who are fixated on a two-state solution continually exhort Israel and the Palestinians to negotiate a peace agreement. This exhortation confuses a sideshow with the main act, because Iran and its proxies, not Israel and the Palestinians, call the shots.

Iran, which directs most of Israel's enemies, will never permit a two-state solution. To ensure one doesn't emerge, Iran has created its "Axis of Resistance," which "aims to annihilate and wipe out Israel from existence," said Abdul Majeed Awad of Hamas, an Axis member.

Iran's Axis doesn't seek a Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace with Israel, as two-state proponents fantasize. Iran seeks no Israeli state and has laid the groundwork to realize its goals.

"I have assembled for you six armies outside of Iran's territory, and I have created a corridor 1,500 km long and 1,000 km wide, all the way to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea," stated the late commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Qassem Soleimani in a 2019 speech to the Iranian joint military command. Soleimani was Iran's most powerful general until a U.S. drone assassinated him in 2020.

"In this corridor, there are six religiously devout and popular divisions," he said. "One army is in Lebanon. It is called Hezbollah. Another army is in Palestine, and it is called Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. One army is in Syria. Another army is in Iraq and is called the PMU, and another army is in Yemen and is called Ansar Allah."

Iran's ability to nullify prospects for a two-state solution was in evidence on Oct. 7 when it unleashed Hamas, its chief Gazan proxy, in the first large-scale implementation of its Axis doctrine. The attack successfully derailed Saudi Arabia's anticipated decision to join the Abraham Accords, a defining event that would have advanced prospects for the two-state solution by formally establishing peace between Israel and its most prestigious Arab neighbor.

Iran provides Hamas with military training and \$100 million a year, without which Oct. 7 wouldn't have happened and future Oct. 7s wouldn't threaten to reoccur "again and again," as Hamas has vowed. Yet Hamas, which represents Israel's main threat on its southern border, pales in comparison to Hezbollah, Israel's main threat on its northern border. Hezbollah, which receives \$700 million annually from Iran, has 150,000 rockets and missiles aimed at Israel.

The Palestinian state that the West envisions will primarily consist of Gaza, Judea and Samaria. With Gaza firmly in its grasp, Iran in 2018 began to extend its reach by arming proxies in Judea and Samaria. "The West Bank must be armed, just as Gaza," tweeted Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, in 2020.

His orders have been followed. "Recently 15 to 30 attacks are carried out daily in the West Bank by the resistance forces against the Zionist regime," Ismail Qani, the commander of Iran's terrorist Quds Force, reported in 2023. Because of the increasing number of threats emanating from Judea and Samaria, Israel has repeatedly deployed the IDF to the territory. Israel's Minister of Defense now characterizes Judea and Samaria as the seventh front in Israel's existential war.

Hamas has become the most popular party in Judea and Samaria, where 73% of the Palestinian population endorses the Oct. 7 massacre. If an election were held today, Hamas would win handily against Fatah, the party that controls the Palestinian Authority, which ruled Gaza until Hamas overthrew it in a violent coup. Only 32% of Palestinians support a two-state solution—not that their opinion counts for much.

Iran and its proxies, including the proxies that would rule Judea and Samaria if they became a sovereign nation, all oppose the two-state solution because they oppose the existence of Israel. In effect, they have a veto over the West's ambition for Middle East peace. Urging Israel and the P.A., who are captive bystanders to the two-state issue, to make peace is a futile endeavor that only deflects attention from the one state—Iran—that actually stymies peace. (JNS Jul 2)

In 21st-Century Europe, Jews Need New Allies

By Jonathan S. Tobin

The shock and dismay about the results of the first round of the French parliamentary elections held last weekend on the part of most liberal observers of European politics is palpable. The victory of the right-wing National Rally Party led The New York Times to publish a number of dirge-like analyses declaring that the French were on the verge of catastrophe. That echoed the pronouncements of the country's own liberal establishment about the vote. The possibility that the party led by Marine Le Pen would win a majority of the National Assembly after the second round to be held next Sunday is viewed by the leaders of the traditional mainstream parties of the center and left as nothing short of a disaster. For them, the likes of National Rally, Le Pen and even her 28-year-old protégé Jordan Bardella, who is in line to be France's next prime minister if his party controls parliament, are no better than fascists.

One of the most curious elements of National Rally's triumph is the fact that what may well be a significant percentage of the demographic slice of the French public that had hitherto been most deeply opposed to the party is now backing it. As a panicked article in Foreign Policy magazine plaintively asked this week, "Why are French Jews supporting the far right?"

Figures like famed Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld, as well as leading intellectual and author Alain Finkelkraut, have said that voting for National Rally is now an acceptable and even perhaps necessary action on the part of French Jews. As much as its steady progress towards electoral success in the last two decades, this is also a measure of both the sea change in opinion about the party and the increasingly desperate position of the French Jewish community as antisemitic invective and violence have become commonplace.

While historian Robert Zaretsky, the author of the Foreign Policy article, thinks that there is no excuse for this shift in opinion, the reality of contemporary France and the efforts of the National Rally party to move beyond its origins have made it inevitable. And the circumstances of the elections may have even made it necessary.

A huge immigrant population of Muslims—estimated to make up anywhere from 8% to 10% of the population—brought with them their contempt and hatred for Jews and Israel from their countries of origin. Suburban neighborhoods known as banlieues, where Muslims predominate on the outskirts of cities like Marseilles have been referred to as "no-go" zones for non-Muslims, as well as a source of violence against Jews. At the same time, the parties of the French left have largely embraced the same spirit of intolerance for Jews and Zionism that has been so apparent on American college campuses since the Oct. 7 Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel. Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the founder of France Unbowed—the coalition of Socialists, Communists, Greens and others on the left, and its candidate for president in the last three elections—is a virulent opponent of Israel.

These two forces have combined not merely to mainstream antisemitic attitudes and positions, but to be seen as incitement to the string of antisemitic hate crimes that have rocked France in recent years.

French President Emmanuel Macron has opposed National Rally and the parties on the left. But in the current circumstances, he is allying himself with the left to stop Le Pen's party from winning a majority. That feels like a betrayal to many French Jews, who rightly see the alliance of Marxists and Islamists—and not the right—as the main threat to their precarious existence.

Yet if they are now voting for National Rally, it's not so much a case of them taking leave of their senses as it is one in which they are rationally assessing the situation and choosing new allies rather than allowing the past to dictate their actions.

In the late 19th and throughout much of the 20th century, there was no doubt about which end of the French political spectrum was fundamentally antisemitic. The treason accusations against French Jewish Army officer Alfred Dreyfus in the 1890s helped galvanize a right-wing movement that coalesced behind the toxic myth that French Jews were a foreign and traitorous presence in the country. The anti-Dreyfusards were a manifestation of the same argument that had raged in France since 1789 about the legitimacy of the French Revolution. But it was only in the white heat of that controversy that old religious prejudices against Jews merged with modern notions of racism that had recently created the term "antisemitism."

Jew-hatred was a feature of the French right throughout the decades that followed and became a core tenet after the collapse of the Third Republic after France was defeated by Nazi Germany in June 1940. The collaborationist Vichy regime that ruled part of the country under the leadership of Marshal Philippe Pétain and Pierre Laval actively assisted the Nazis in the roundup of Jews, dooming approximately 21% of them to death.

While the open antisemitism of Vichy was suppressed in French political culture in the decades after the war, and especially on the right by the dominance of Charles De Gaulle (who is remembered for his hostility to Israel in his last years in power, though embodied the resistance to Vichy and was opposed to antisemitism in France), it lingered on the margins of society. It seemed to come back to life in the waning years of the 20th century, and then at the start of the 21st, with the emergence of Jean Marie Le Pen and his National Front Party.

Le Pen was open about his antisemitism and even Holocaust revisionist beliefs. He represented not just traditional antisemitic rightists but the spirit of resentment felt by those who regarded France's loss of Algeria and the subsequent ouster of about a million French citizens from that country (known as Pied-noirs) as an unforgivable defeat. As the surge of immigration from North Africa and former French colonies boosted the Muslim population, that resentment grew and led to limited electoral success for Le Pen. France was shocked when he made it into the second round of the French presidential election in 2002. Still, Le Pen only garnered 17.8% of the vote as the forces of the center, traditional Gaullist right and the left united in revulsion at even the theoretical prospect of his attaining power to support President Jacques Chirac.

Le Pen was replaced as the head of his party in 2011 by his daughter, Marine, who is now 55. She set about the long and difficult task of rebranding and remaking it into something that could appeal to more than just the extreme right. French intellectual Bernard-Henri Lévy has referred to her as "the far-right with a human face," but there is no denying that she has worked hard to transcend her father's legacy. She even went as far as expelling him from the party she renamed National Rally for comments he made in 2015 dismissing the gas chambers used by the Nazis in the Holocaust as a "detail of history." She forbade all mention of such Vichyite beliefs as well as any talk about France's colonial wars.

While there's little doubt that there are still some in its ranks who are more than comfortable with the prejudices articulated by the elder Le Pen, the party she currently heads is not the same as the one her father founded. And, to the chagrin of other parties, it has steadily gained support because of the growing influence of the Muslim population and the refusal of the parties of the mainstream right to do anything about it. Marine Le Pen made the presidential runoff in 2022 and won 33.9% of the vote, even though President Emmanuel Macron easily won re-election.

But as Macron's failures have grown, it is Marine Le Pen and National Rally that have now eclipsed his Renaissance Party, as well as what is left of the old Gaullist conservatives that the French president helped destroy as the main alternative to the parties of the left. And while her strong opposition to Islamism and support for the State of Israel, especially in the aftermath of the Oct. 7 attacks, are dismissed by mainstream media and the French liberal establishment as merely an attempt to cover up her party's past, her positions stand in strong contrast to those of the left and even Macron. Both still regard her raising the issue of immigration as a threat to the essential nature of the French Republic.

As is the case elsewhere in Europe, questions about the collapse of national identity are changing the political landscape of France. Leftist sentiment that despises the legacy of Western civilization and the rise of an aggressive Islamist presence in nations where there are large numbers of immigrants has fueled a response from populist rightist parties. Like National Rally, such political factions are despised by the political establishments in Europe. Some of them also have legacies from a fascist or antisemitic past that are worrisome. In the cases of Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy party and Netherlands political leader Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom, such problems have been successfully eclipsed. In Germany, the AfD Party seems unable to do the same.

During the recent European Union elections where populist parties won big, the National Rally was particularly successful.

Worried about the implications of that victory for his government in Paris, Macron called a snap parliamentary election, hoping that he could duplicate past votes when, faced with the possibility of Le Pen's party actually gaining power, French voters recoiled from the prospect. But he miscalculated. The anger in France about the failures of Macron's technocratic government to deal with the economy or the immigration issue led to the public more or less duplicating the results of the E.U. election last weekend, essentially eviscerating Macron's party.

In response, Macron is trying to pull together a joint effort with the left to prevent National Rally from gaining a parliamentary majority. That would stop Bardella from becoming prime minister. Such a victory for Le Pen's party would not only be unprecedented but also set her up for what might well be a successful run for the presidency of France in 2027 after Macron finishes his second term in office.

That leaves French Jews with an interesting dilemma. If they follow the lead of Macron, they will be empowering a left-wing faction that is not merely hostile to Israel but allied to forces that make it impossible for them to continue to live in the country due to justified fears of prejudice and violence. And that is why a great many of them have decided that throwing in with Le Pen is the only rational alternative.

Doing so requires not just disregarding the history of the French right. It also involves embracing the pushback against Islamism that can be branded as illiberal. Le Pen wants to ban the wearing of Muslim headscarves in public—an item of apparel that is considered a symbol of a dangerous shift in the culture of hyper-secular France and a threat to French national identity. In the past, Le Pen has also asked Jews to renounce their right to wear kippahs in public as a necessary sacrifice in order to defeat the threat of Islamism. That's something the Jewish community can never accept.

We don't know what a France led by Le Pen or Bardella will look like. Perhaps it will be like Hungary, where the populist right led by Viktor Orbán has proved to be both philo-semitic and pro-Israel despite Hungary's troubled past. Perhaps not. But with French Jewish life more precarious than at any time since the Holocaust, supporting a party that is intent on rolling back Muslim political influence can be defended as a reasonable choice rather than a betrayal.

It's easy for liberal Jews, especially those not currently living in Europe, to rule out alliances with groups that are opposed to intolerant Islamist and Marxist parties that present a clear and present threat to Jewish life. But to take such a stand is not so much a defense of liberal values as a refusal to live in the present. European Jewry must deal with the challenges of living in the 21st century rather than the past. Those who condemn French Jews for seeing Le Pen and National Rally as a lifeline are prioritizing the political interests of the left and European political establishments, not those of an embattled Jewish community. (JNS Jul 2)

Down and Out in Paris and London By Ben Cohen

I recently wrote about the rape of a 12-year-old Jewish girl in Paris at the hands of three boys just one year older than her, who showered her with antisemitic abuse as they carried out an act of violation reminiscent of the worst excesses of the Oct. 7 Hamas pogrom in southern Israel. This week, my peg is another act of violence—one less horrifying and less traumatic, but which similarly suggests that the writing may be on the wall for the Jews in much of Europe.

Last week, a group of young Jewish boys who attend London's well-regarded Hasmonean School was assaulted by a gang of antisemitic thugs. The attack occurred at Belsize Park tube station on the London Underground, in a neighborhood with a similar demographic and sensibility to New York's Upper West Side, insofar as it is home to a large, long-established Jewish population with shops, cafes and synagogues serving that community. According to the mother of one of the Jewish boys, an 11-year-old, the gang "ran ahead of my son and kicked one of his friends to the ground. They were trying to push another kid onto the tracks. They got him as far the yellow line." When the woman's son bravely tried to intervene to protect his friends, he was chased down and elbowed in the face, dislodging a tooth. "Get out of the city, Jew!" the gang told him.

Since the attack, her son has had trouble sleeping. "My son is very shaken. He couldn't sleep last night. He said 'It's not fair. Why do they do this to us?'" she disclosed. "We love this country," she added,

"and we participate and we contribute, but now we're being singled out in exactly the same way as Jews were singled out in 1936 in Berlin. And for the first time in my life. I am terrified of using the tube. What's going on?"

The woman and her family may not be in London long enough to find out. According to *The Jewish Chronicle*, they are thinking of "fleeing" Britain—not a verb we'd hoped to encounter again in a Jewish context after the mass murder we experienced during the previous century. But here we are.

When I was a schoolboy in London, I had a history teacher who always told us that no two situations are exactly alike. "Comparisons are odious, boys," he would repeatedly tell the class. That was an insight I took to heart, and I still believe it to be true. There are structural reasons that explain why the 2020s are different from the 1930s in significant ways. For one thing, European societies are more affluent and better equipped to deal with social conflicts and economic strife than they were a century ago. Laws, too, are more explicit in the protections they offer to minorities, and more punishing of hate crimes and hate speech. Perhaps most importantly, there is a Jewish state barely 80 years old which all Jews can make their home if they so desire.

Therein lies the rub, however. Since 1948, Israel has allowed Jews inside and outside the Jewish state to hold their heads high and to feel as though they are a partner in the system of international relations, rather than a vulnerable, subjugated group at the mercy of the states where we lived as an often hated minority. Israel's existence is the jewel in the crown of Jewish emancipation, sealing what we believed to be our new status, in which we are treated as equals, and where the antisemitism that plagued our grandparents and great-grandparents has become taboo.

If Israel represents the greatest achievement of the Jewish people in at least 100 years, small wonder that it has become the main target of today's reconstituted antisemites. And if one thing has been clear since the atrocities by Hamas on Oct. 7, it's that Israel's existence is not something that Jews—with the exception of that small minority of anti-Zionists who do the bidding of the antisemites and who echo their ignorance and bigotry—are willing to compromise on. What's changed is that it is increasingly difficult for Jews to remain in the countries where they live and express their Zionist sympathies at the same time. We are being attacked because of these sympathies on social media, at demonstrations and increasingly in the streets by people with no moral compass, who regard our children as legitimate targets. Hence, it's hard to avoid the conclusion that while the 2020s may not be the 1930s, they certainly feel like the 1930s.

And so the age-old question returns: Should Jews, especially those in Europe, where they confront the pincer movement of burgeoning Muslim populations and a resurgent far-left in thrall to the Palestinian cause, stay where they are, or should they up sticks and move to Israel? Should we be thinking, given the surge in antisemitism of the past few months, of giving up on America as well? I used to have a clear view of all this. Aliyah is the noblest of Zionist goals and should be encouraged, but I always resisted the notion that every Jew should live in Israel—firstly, because a strong Israel needs vocal, confident Diaspora communities that can advocate for it in the corridors of power; and secondly, because moving to Israel should ideally be a positive act motivated by love, not a negative act propelled by fear.

My view these days isn't as clear as it was. I still believe that a strong Israel needs a strong Diaspora, and I think it's far too early to give up on the United States—a country where Jews have flourished as they never did elsewhere in the Diaspora. Yet the situation in Europe increasingly reminds me of the observation of the Russian Zionist Leo Pinsker in "Auto-emancipation," a doom-laden essay he wrote in 1882, during another dark period of Jewish history: "We should not persuade ourselves that humanity and enlightenment will ever be radical remedies for the malady of our people." The antisemitism we are dealing with now presents itself as "enlightened," based on boundless sympathy for an Arab nation allegedly dispossessed by Jewish colonists. When our children are victimized by it, this antisemitism ceases to be a merely intellectual challenge, and becomes a matter of life and death. As Jews and as human beings, we are obliged to choose life—which, in the final analysis, when nuance disappears and terror stalks us, means Israel. (JNS Jun 28)