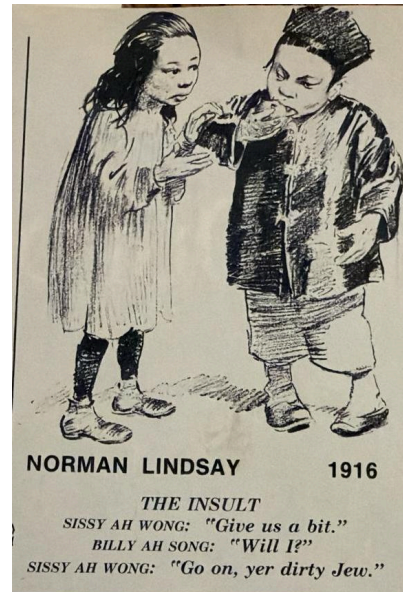
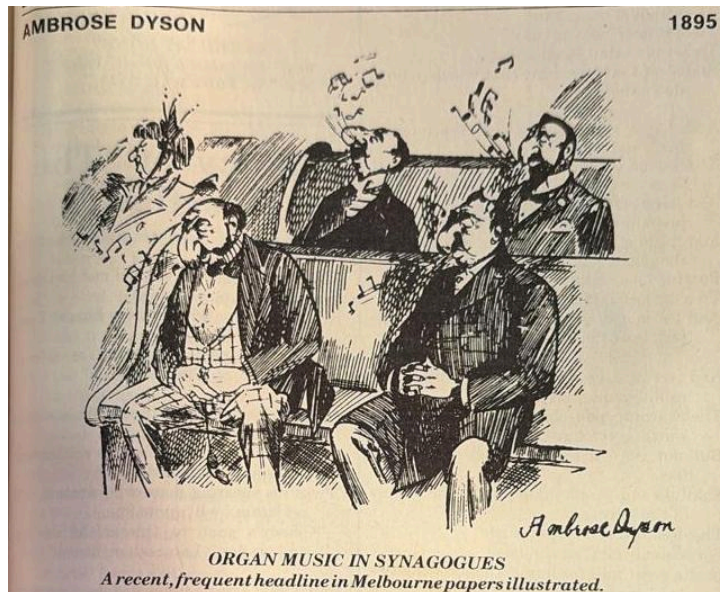


Part C. Antisemitism in Australia is Not New



1. Antisemitism has long been a classic manifestation of racial discrimination in the Christian world. Christianity is Australia's majority faith, imported from 1788 onwards, replete with all its unsightly wrinkles, including the (restrained) distaste for Jews. Inevitably, the streak of anti-Jewish sentiment has constituted a black mark against Australian society - a relatively minor one, but persistent. Three vignettes give a flavour of the perceptions of Jews:

- In the 1930s, the Melbourne establishment selected Isaac Alfred Isaacs as Governor-General. He was the first Australian-born holder of the office, and the first Jewish one (1931–1936). Buckingham Palace was decidedly not overjoyed; George V complained about not knowing him "sufficiently well", but after much to-ing and fro-ing, reluctantly made the appointment. Isaacs was also the first Jew admitted to the Melbourne Club, but he refused to use it because of its discriminatory policy. (Ironically, not long before his appointment, Isaacs had warned Australia against "contaminations and the degrading influence of inferior races". Did he ever reflect on those words when the Nazis murdered millions of Jews, citing similar reasoning?)
- As late as 1947, the *Sydney Morning Herald* cuttingly described the arrival of the *SS Misr* with some 700 displaced refugees as a bunch of "so many Jews [from Cyprus], of so many swarthy dark-skinned southern Mediterranean, un-British, un-Australian, unsuitable aliens". They were perceived as a threat to White Australia.

- By the early 1970s, racial issues were front-page news amid the White Australia and Multiculturalism debates. Antisemitism in the upper echelons of Australian society was starkly exposed in 1970 when the Melbourne Club blackballed K. B. Myer, the son of the founder of the Myers retail chain. *New immigrants, including me, realised, with some comfort and relief, that the racism we faced daily was not a question of skin colour only; prejudices against other faiths mattered too.*

2. Historian Humphrey McQueen wrote in his 1970 book, *New Britannia*, that “racism is the most important component of Australian nationalism”. Historically, this stems from a sense of fundamental insecurity as an isolated European outpost in the expanse of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Over the years, it has appeared as phobias against foreign faiths and hues of skin in various forms:

- A memorable example was ALP leader Calwell’s remark in 1947 that “two Wongs don’t make a white” to justify his opposition to allowing Asian spouses of white (warrior) Australian men to settle in Australia.
- In essence, Antisemitism is one other offshoot of Australian racialism.

3. Over the past three years, the latent character of antisemitic prejudice has resurged throughout the Western world, including Australia. How much of it overlaps with principled opposition to Zionist ideology or reflects psychopathic Jewophobia is for the Commission to determine. And why?

4. As one who has experienced public and institutional racism over the years in a white majoritarian country, I empathise with members of the Jewish minority recounting their painful subjection to physical or verbal or even silent animosity at the hands of fellow Australians. That they, indeed anyone, should be made to feel unsafe in Australia for their beliefs or cultural mores is deplorable. I hope that the Royal Commission can prescribe solutions to counter such ingrained discrimination.

5. But that said, I also find myself wrenched within myself at the lack of perspective on the part of both the victims and the observers:

- When a witness describes their children too fearful to wear their kippah in public, I feel sympathy. But then I note (with guilt) - at least they are not being starved or shot in the testicles. [Annexure F.](#)
- When a witness claims to have been degraded on a bus, I cannot help but think of the “mother of the civil rights movement” in the USA, Rosa Parks, who was arrested in 1955 in Alabama for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man. Or what First Nations peoples, on whose stolen lands we settlers and immigrants squat, have been suffering for generations at the hands of metropolitan taxi drivers. (Mistaken for an Aboriginal, I have been refused service in Canberra’s taxi ranks.)

- When the witnesses describe other forms of humiliation or insults they have suffered, I think of the Conclusion of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry that Israel has committed four of five genocidal acts under the 1948 Genocide Convention: killing group members, inflicting serious bodily/mental harm, deliberately creating conditions for physical destruction, and imposing measures to prevent [Palestinian] births.

6. I then realise that the humiliation of a white Jewish skin is certainly more abhorrent than that suffered by a tainted skin - including even Palestinians, who are often of wheatish hues. This explains why the Western historical norms for condemning mass murders will spare Ashkenazi Benjamin Netanyahu's killing fields in Gaza and Lebanon as they did King Leopold's in Congo, but do not spare Hitler for the Shoah.



7. Such historic aside, I am genuinely glad that those affected by antisemitism have a platform to voice their hurt and fear. I have watched the proceedings of other Commissions and Inquiries before - from Child Abuse to Stolen Generations - and such accounts - minus falsities - should become a permanent and recognised record in our history as we seek to nurture social cohesion.

8. In contrast to the several causes that readily explain racism, stark evidence suggests that the primary cause for the rise in antisemitism is fodder fed to it by the Zionist ideology and bloody wars instigated by it in the name of the security of the Promised Land. My conversations with Anglo, Jewish and Muslim interlocutors, from Australia and Europe to Southeast Asia and America, suggest that anti-Zionism, with no hint of antisemitism or Jewophobia from them, is markedly on the rise, fuelled by:

- Israel's Gaza genocide, mindless bombing in Southern Lebanon, the horrifying treatment of Palestinian prisoners, and the attack on peaceful flotillas in international waters;
- Increasing awareness of credible evidence that Israel has been instrumental in entangling the United States and other Western countries in forever wars in the Middle East for over forty years — Iran being only the latest — primarily to sow political instability throughout the region in service of its regional hegemony.
- Statements by senior Israeli Zionists about their goals in Gaza transparently underline the objective of orchestrating a methodical genocide there. [A selection of verified statements is reproduced in Annexure D](#). It is to the credit of the speakers that they are frank about their intentions in no uncertain terms, but this is precisely what also sparks antisemitism.

9. Notably, young Jews living in communes here in the Himalayas, many avoiding the IDF draft, are pretty vocal about their opposition to “Netanyahu’s killings” in Gaza. (Ironically enough, many also oppose Netanyahu and Modi’s friendship, which is often highlighted in Indian media!)

10. The castigation of people who have openly participated in public protests against Israel has also sparked antisemitism. It is the democratic right of Australians to march for this or that cause, including peace, human rights, and the protection of innocent lives. It has been disconcerting that recent marches, such as the one in August 2025, in which as many as 300,000 people crossed the Harbour Bridge, have elicited harsh condemnation. One senior-level pronouncement described their voices as helping to “tip people into hatred”. Envoy Jillian Segal accused marchers of threatening “social cohesion” and cited “terrorist flags [Palestinian] and glorifying extremist leaders”. She later conceded that “I am not saying it is antisemitic.”

- [Those of us who protested the Vietnam War also faced criticism](#) - the worst was NSW Premier Robert Askin’s instruction to “run the bastards over” - but we were never accused of disloyalty to the nation or of sabotaging social cohesion.
- It is beyond the pale to assume that all thousands of marchers were antisemitic. They were ordinary Australians — parents, teachers, workers, students, and those who simply value every single life. They did not march because they hate Jews; they marched because they cared, as Australians are prone to do, and because silence can be complicity.
- I would hope that we in Australia never feel frightened to protest for moral causes, irrespective of the claimed “hurt sentiments” by a minority of a minority, such as the Zionist lobby.

11. On a personal note, the Israeli bombing of the Commonwealth War Graves in Gaza, specifically destroying a section where Australian soldiers are buried, is an affront to my soul and no doubt to many other Australians. During several of my diplomatic postings, I was responsible for ensuring that graves of Australian military personnel in Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries, including in Gaza, were funded and well maintained by caretakers. Often, they had been tending the graves since WWII.

12. In 238 years of Settlement, antisemitism in Australia has always been real but rarely central - a persistent blemish rather than a defining feature of national life. 7 October 2023 and the subsequent destruction of Gaza and now South Lebanon is almost certainly marking a shift in Australian perceptions - not against the Jewish community but at what is being done in Israel’s name. To erase that distinction - to recast principled opposition to a state’s conduct as hatred of a people - is not only

inaccurate; it is corrosive to the very social cohesion this Commission has been convened to defend.

13. Antisemitism must be confronted in good faith wherever it festers, but it must not be wielded as a cudgel against those protesting the murders and sufferings of the Palestinians. Both truths are opposite faces of the same coin. Only by holding them at once, without favouring one over the other, can Australia recharge social cohesion within its national soul.

14. **I have one question of the Commission.** It is obvious that some evidence of antisemitism rendered at its hearings, under oath, is patently false. I would expect the Commission not to allow falsity to stand. That it would record, for the record, that these claims are false - and that it would refer the matter for prosecution for giving false evidence under oath. Every inquisitorial process exists to find the truth, not to shelter falsehood, still less to invite its repetition on oath

- To let falsity under oath stand unchallenged is to devalue genuine antisemitism and encourage its deniers to underplay its existence as an exaggeration.