

child survivors of the holocaust

CONNECTIONS

VOLUME 15 NO 3

MAY 2026



Dear Child Survivors,
We trust this email
finds you and yours
well.
We decided
to create a
special edition



of *Connections* to share with CSH, **Dr Paul Valent's** submission to the **Royal Commission on Anti semitism and Social Cohesion** as well as CSH, **Dr. Louis Roller's** submission.

Paul's daughter **Dani Valent** also made a submission that

was published in **The Age** newspaper last week. Dani has provided a link to share her contribution:

<https://vimeo.com/1190373191/a267914730>

We feel honoured to be represented by two of our own Child Survivors of the Holocaust.

If any other CSH members have written a submission to the Royal Commission on Antisemitism we will be very pleased to include these important statements in the next edition of *Connections*.

Viv Parry & Lena Fiszman
Co-Presidents

CSH Coffee club

Our new CSH Coffee Club is going well.

After our third meet up we are pleased to report that the CSH members are supporting this new initiative, with great enthusiasm. Each week the numbers are increasing and we are ever grateful for your support.

On **Wednesday May 6** our CSH guests were:

Dita Gould, Judy Kolt, Kathy Blecher, Bernadette Polak, Alex Saffron, Andre Dubrowin, Paul and Sarah Grinwald, Henry Buch, Peter Schnall, Suzi Vati; First timers: Louis Roller, Bernadette Gore and Peter Gaspar were warmly welcomed.

We also welcomed our new CSH Coffee club volunteer:

Anne Josefsberg.

Anne is an experienced guide at *The Shrine* as well as many other community roles. We sit together in Shul at *the Ark*. Anne is very interested in the CSH story and recently helped out at Dr Paul Valent's book launch at the MHM as well as attending the CSH anthology launch last September.

Our next CSH Coffee Club meet up is the first Wednesday of the month:

Wednesday June 3rd.

We hope you will join us for tea, coffee and a shmooze (this is a free event).



Some of the CSH who attended including Paul Grinwald (next to Bernadette Gore).



Bernadette Polak (left) with Bernadette Gore.



Peter Gaspar with Sarah Grinwald.



Bernadette Gore chats with Henry Buch.



Louis Roller speaks with Suzi Vati and Dita Gould.



Andre Dubrowin with Judy Kolt.



Kathy Blecher with the important book her late partner George Szego wrote.



CSH volunteer Anne Josefsberg.

Submission to Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion by Dr Paul Valent



Dear Royal Commission,
Please accept my submission on antisemitism in the hope that it will help to eradicate this evil. As a Holocaust survivor and medical and psychiatric professional, I have given this matter much personal and professional thought.

Definition of antisemitism

The term Antisemitism was introduced by the German journalist Wilhelm Marr in 1879. He wanted to replace

the crude term Juden-hass (Jew-hatred) with scientific respectability. So he claimed that Jews were a Semitic race inferior to European Aryans. However, his change of words did not change his underlying Juden-hass.

Different Types of Antisemitism

Religious antisemitism.

Jews have been accused of cohering with, or actually being the devil. In their rituals they were accused of eating the blood of killed Christian children. That Jews killed God/Jesus was Catholic dogma till the 1960s.

These accusations were purported reasons for extortion, robbery, rape, displacements, and killing of Jews. Muslims, too, could not forgive Jews for not accepting Mohammed and Islam.

They were punished by being dhimmis throughout the Muslim world, meaning existing at the lowest rung of society.

Hundreds of thousands of Jews were expelled from Muslim countries after their defeat in war against the new state of Israel.

Economic antisemitism

Excluded from farming and trades, Jews resorted to banking and money lending. Then they were accused of being incapable of honest labour, and of forming a financial cabal seeking world domination.

In reality aristocracies diverted blame from economic and national turmoils they had themselves caused. They initiated pogroms and exclusions as ways to avoid paying debts and seizing Jewish property.

Nazi antisemitism

Was the ultimate conclusion of all previous antisemitisms. Six million Jews were willfully dehumanized, robbed, and murdered.

Current antisemitisms

Right-wing antisemitism reverberates with neo-Nazi views of Jews as foreign interlopers who want to take over the world. "Jews will not replace us."

Left-wing antisemitism accuses Jews and Israel to be capitalist, oppressive and colonialist. It sympathises with the Palestinian underdog.

Holocaust denial is practiced by both streams. They turn facts on their head as they accuse Jews to be Nazis. Muslim antisemitism. Israel and Jews are often conflated, for instance Israel is said to be part of attempt at Jewish world domination.

The so-called Jewish state is construed to be an evil apartheid state ethnically cleansed of Muslims in the 1948 Nakba (catastrophe), and currently inhabited by settler colonialists committing genocide. Therefore, genocide of Jews/Israelis is desirable. Actually 1.8 million Arab Muslims live peacefully in Israel.

Post-modernism, deconstructionism, identity politics, social media. The moral calculus is crude: Israelis and Jews are powerful and successful so they are bad; Hamas is weak and people of colour, so they are good. No, it doesn't matter that most Israelis are "people of colour."

Who you are (identity politics) has replaced ideas; denunciation has replaced debate; public shaming has

replaced persuasion; disadvantage and suffering replaced hard work and accomplishments; accomplishments and wealth became unearned privilege.

The different types of antisemitisms are interchangeable ideologies but they all share antisemitism.

Though antisemitism may appear as a blind hatred, it flourishes when societies are in trouble.

Fears Underlying Antisemitism

1. Fear of annihilation.

Jews have been seen as murderous infiltrators who kill Christian babies, poison wells and cause the Black Death. According to Hitler they were germs and parasites who infected the world with diseases like syphilis.

Jews are also seen as an existential threat to the Arab world. Therefore, they must be killed (Article 7 of the [Hamas] Covenant).

2. Fear of being overtaken, squeezed out; Jews rule the world

Of the recent Hamas massacre in Israel - Why kill babies? He is a colonizer first and a baby second. That woman raped to death? Shame it had to come to that, but she is a white oppressor.

This trope has adopted the earlier Protocols of the Elders of Zion: Jews rule or are about to rule the world, at the cost of the Aryan race or currently, the Muslim world.

The hierarchy of oppression has to be reversed.

Leon Trotsky 1905 described this reversal during a pogrom in Russia: The doss-house tramp is king. A trembling slave an hour ago, hounded by police and starvation, he now feels himself an unlimited despot. Everything is allowed to him, he is capable of anything, he is the master of property and honour, of life and death. If he wants to, he can throw an old woman out of a third-floor window together with a grand piano, he can smash a chair against a baby's head, rape a little girl while the entire crowd looks on, God save the Tsar! Or Allah hu Akbar on Oct 7th.

But there is the other aspect to this story. In The Arab Spring, only a decade ago, practically every Arab nation rose up against its corrupt, exploitative, dictators. These have been put down by heavy military actions, though multiple uprisings and protest movements continued. Was the Palestinian problem a welcome diversion for Arab oppressors, such as the mullahs of Iran?

3. Fear that Jews own the world

Dispossessed of land, conquest and professions, Jews came to rely on money and what enhanced money: commerce, education, and mutual help.

Sometimes their capacities were utilised by the aristocracy, at other times their capacities were envied and stifled. Sometimes there were cycles of allowing the Jews to prosper, only to later rob and evict them. Since the Holocaust there has been a return of relative Jewish prosperity.

But as often before, as times have become tough, the have-nots of wealth, education or satisfying lives have been turning on Jews who seem to have them. Of course, they say, Jews and Israel are not victims. They are wealthy. They must have colonised and appropriated their wealth. It is fair to take it back.

It is said that antisemitism is but a canary in the mine. Behind it lie real problems, like behind the pogroms were the Tsars' oppressions; behind French antisemitism the aristocracy's lavishness while people starved.

Today's increasing antisemitism may similarly hide on the one hand increasing Arab societies' dissatisfactions (remember the recent Arab Spring), and in the West increasing individual and social insecurity for the majority while coterie of billionaires suck up nations' wealth. Exceptionalism. "Why the Jews?" Why are Jews and Israel canaries in the mines and scapegoats?

Jews and Israelis concede imperfections (see major demonstrations in Israel recently), but, they ask, why are other peoples, with greater sins not chastised? Among many examples, why not blame Jordan, also a new state, for killing 20,000 Palestinians during Black September in 1970? What about the brutal suppression of the Arab Spring (2010-2012)? What about the Islamic Republic of Iran killing 30,000 thousand demonstrators within a few days recently?

Antisemitism in Australia

Till recently, antisemitism in Australia has been low grade and attitudes to Jews have been variably tolerant.

For instance, following the Holocaust the government considered the idea of a homeland for Jews in Western Australia. On the other hand, postwar immigration of Jews was limited, to ensure that Jews would not comprise more than 0.5% of the population. European immigrants included members of the Croatian Ustashe and the Hungarian Arrow Cross, who brought antisemitism with them. Pockets of local antisemitism flourished too.

For instance, Eric Butler and his League of Rights provided a local anti-Semitic movement and promoted visits by Holocaust denier David Irving.

In the 1970s, the [Australian Union of Students](#) was under [Trotskyist](#) and [Maoist](#) influences and proposed anti-Israel resolutions and Jewish students who opposed these resolutions were physically attacked.[11] In 1982, the

[Sydney Israeli Consulate and Hakoah Club were bombed.](#)

Attacks on Jews in newspapers and on Jewish property and institutions simmered over the years.

In recent times, with Muslim immigration, a small number of preachers and activists spread, under the guise of being anti-Israel, their version of antisemitism.

Then came the [October 7 2023 attack on Israel](#).

Something strange happened. After a brief silence, people took to the streets, not in sympathy of the Israeli victims. Instead, crowds waved Palestinian flags and [campuses](#) from coast to coast cheered on the Hamas terrorists, calling for the elimination of the Jewish state. Anti-Semitic crimes surged in many countries. In Australia, 37 anti-Jewish incidents [were reported](#) the week after the Hamas attacks, compared to one the previous week.

Crowds expressed outrage that Israel should want to do what the U.S., France, Britain, and other countries did when faced with a terrorist organization dedicated to killing its people—that is, eliminate the threat.

In September 2024, [Jillian Segal](#), the government's special envoy to combat antisemitism, stated that antisemitism at universities has become 'systemic'. [118] Jewish synagogues and schools had to be protected by fences and armed guards.

Many non-Jews turned away from their Jewish friends. Consciously or unconsciously, they did not want to be identified with and attacked alongside them.

The government seemed to be oblivious too, until the Bondi Beach massacre of 15 human beings on 14th December 2025.

Some state leaders were vocal. "Enough is enough." People came out of their stupor and regained their voice. How had we reached this state of affairs? What are we going to do about it?

Hence this Royal Commission.

Understanding antisemitism

Fear, contempt, and hatred to the point of genocide is a known phenomenon. It occurred with the Armenians, Cambodians, Rwandans, as well as American Indians, and Australian Aborigines.

But Jews have endured it for 2000 years, culminating in the Holocaust.

Why the Jews? Perhaps because Jews were the most salient minority group living among Christians for the bulk of European history. They were suitable scapegoats when those societies suffered disasters, or more commonly hardships caused by those societies' rulers. The same dynamic spread to the Middle East and other parts of the world.

But why now? Why in Europe? Why here? It is not just

Gaza. It is some kind of boil that is bursting.

In the past antisemitism followed uncertainty, disasters and poverty. What about currently?

The world is uncertain. We are hovering between climate change and nuclear warfare.

But are we not prospering at the same time? Perhaps not. In the 1950s Australians owned their own homes, one or two cars, all on one wage. Now both spouses have to work, owning a home for the young is a dream, and childbirths have dropped because children have become unaffordable.

In Australia and around the world poverty has recently risen or is one personal disaster away.

Yet statistics show that wealth has been increasing. It has, but unevenly. In the US there are almost 1000 billionaires, while homelessness and food subsidies include a sixth of the population. In Australia, there are today 188 billionaires, while poverty has soared to 1 in 7 people.

It takes a long time to hone blame on the czars, greedy and decadent aristocracy, the powerful super wealthy, the employers on whom most depend, who own much of the press, and who influence governments. Easier to blame the Jews.

Like those earlier forms of antisemitism, the new kind is not ultimately about the Jews, but about the human impulse to point the finger at someone who can safely be made to carry the weight of social ills.

But it's not the canary in the mines who are at fault. It's those who spread unhealthy pervasive gases.

Treatment of antisemitism

In medicine one treats the symptoms and then the underlying problems.

Similarly, one needs to treat first the manifestations of antisemitism. Nazi dress, salutes, and anti-Semitic chants and marches need to be declared as antisocial, immoral, and ultimately dangerous to safety, livelihood, and life. Perpetrators, including social media, need to be punished by law by the usual means: declared to be wrong, fined, imprisoned, or banished.

Having dealt with symptoms of antisemitism, we must deal with the underlying problems. This requires education and recognition of actual problems, maintenance of social equity, freedom from falsehoods and intimidations, and dealing with social ills not with hatred but repair.

These factors should not be relegated to high-flying ideals. In fact, they have dominated much Australian life. Last but not least, antisemitism is a diversion from further social ills. It is not only the Jews. It is women, children, the ill, the different. They all suffer alongside antisemitism. They all prosper with tolerance.

May this Commission stimulate wider fruitful benefits.

Submission to Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion by Dr Louis Roller



I am a Holocaust survivor. I was born in Paris, France in February of 1940 to Jewish parents, some three months before the occupation of city by the Germans. My father had joined the French army at the outbreak of World War 2 on 1st September 1939. On the 14th

of June 1940, the Nazis marched into Paris and so the occupation began. My mother was left to look after three children during the occupation as well as secretly working for the French resistance.

In July 1942, the French police under instruction from the Gestapo, organised a mass arrest of the Jews of Paris. We (my mother and my older brother and I) were taken along with thousands of Jews to the Velodrome D'hiver, as a staging point for deportation to Auschwitz. Conditions were appalling, no food, little water, extreme

heat, smell and cries of despair with the occasional German soldier taking a random potshot at some unfortunate Jew.

Here, chance intervened, a French policeman who knew my parents and had served in the French army with my father, recognised my mother. At great risk to himself, he led us out to relative safety due to the pandemonium in the velodrome.

After that, my brother and I were sent to the countryside with the assistance of the French resistance and good French people and kept in hiding in different places in Nazi occupied France for the duration.

However, there were those who were only too keen to denounce us. The Germans offered extra rations or other privileges to anyone who denounced a Jew. And denounced we were on a number of occasions, but somehow, we always managed to get away.

During those years, food was scarce and there was always the constant fear of being denounced and my

brother and I suffered from fear, hunger and many illnesses. I was terrified of uniforms and harsh German voices.

In 1946, we rejoined our parents and oldest brother who had all miraculously survived. However, all four of our grandparents were murdered in the first weeks of the invasion of Poland.

These events had made me very fearful and anxious and even today, hearing German spoken evokes anxiety. We left France for Australia in 1946 on a French troop carrier with about 145 Jewish refugees. I was sent to the local primary school and because of my lack of English, I was put in a class of 5-year-olds. I was seven. Luckily, I picked up English very quickly and eventually I was placed in a class of my age peers.

My father told me that if I were to be asked what my religion was, I was to say I was Protestant. That certainly caused anxiety, not knowing what that meant.

Examples of antisemitism I experienced or observed

- In primary school, the only antisemitism I experienced were in the bible sessions where the Jews were accused of betraying Jesus.
- No one knew I was Jewish at that time, but I felt very uncomfortable and even felt guilty.
- In secondary (years 9-12), there were a large number of Jewish boys and I felt comfortable there. I had many friends, both Jewish and not
- My father had encouraged me to apply to Duntroon Military College, which I did. I went and had lots of tests and eventually received a rejection letter with the comment that they would not be able to deal with my religious requirements. We were strongly Jewish, but not religious. This was 1957 and in those days all Commonwealth applications for virtually anything required that you put down your religion.
- On another occasion, I was in year 12 and was the senior cadet under officer. We were at a cadet camp and on the Sunday, we stood in formation on the parade ground waiting for a church service. The senior officer said, "All Jews step forward". That shocked me no end. Worse was to come. The Christians marched into the church, and I was ordered to organise the Jewish cadets to clean up the parade ground. We were not happy.
- For at least forty years, my wife and I had next door neighbours with whom we had become very friendly. The husband was a senior academic

at another university, and he was totally antisemitic (of course, "I Was different"). He would forever go on about Israel and the "bloody Jews". We kept the relationship up because, we adored his wife and because we lived in such proximity.

- One time we arrived at his place for a New Year party and I was greeted with the words, "Here is the Christ killer".
- He loved music as I do and we both joined Choirs. Mine was (is) a Jewish one and he would often comment why can't we sing in English.
- At one time I foolishly told him about an organisation I belong to, Courage to Care where we go into schools and run programs about being an upstander (standing up for people being discriminated against). He dismissed it with much hate in his voice as "bloody Jewish propaganda".
- As a university academic I encountered a number of antisemitic staff members.
- One in particular was a co-lecturer who constantly made derogatory (stereotyping) comments about Jews. I reminded him that I was Jewish and he replied, "but you are different", which, as can be imagined, annoyed me no end.
- Another example is that the then Dean of my faculty say "Gee, Louis, you're a white man' and things like, "for a Kike, you are not too bad" and many other derogatory comments made as "jokes."
- The Bondi Beach massacre, 14th December 2025. This terrible incident has affected every Jewish person in this country. It has made us all more fearful and anxious about life in this country.
- A person that I volunteer with told me that she had come to Australia from Israel to escape the constant presence of wars some 10 years ago. She is now seriously thinking of going back to Israel because she and her family do not feel safe here and she doesn't trust the government to do anything positive.
- Incessant "well meaning", but ignorant marches through the city and the constant slogans of "From the river to the sea", the meaning is to cleanse (kill) the Middle East of Jews.
- I volunteer for an organisation called, Courage to Care. We go to any school that invites us to deliver our programs about being an upstander and to stand up to discrimination of any type. It is very sad that only in Jewish schools there is a need for guards and extreme security. What an environment to live in.

INVITATION

CSH COFFEE CLUB



Dear Child Survivors,

Please join us at the monthly *CSH Coffee Club* meetup.

Date: Wednesday, 3rd June 2026

**Venue: Caulfield RSL
4 St Georges Road, Elsternwick**

Time: 10.30am – 12 noon

Tea and coffee served : Free of charge

We will be in the light refreshment area
to the left of the main doors.

Look for our banner

Calendar of Events

Book Launch: The Watchmaker's War

Date: 04 Jun 2026 6:00 pm – 7.30 pm

Cost: \$20 General Admission | \$18 Concession/
MHM volunteer

Venue: Melbourne Holocaust Museum

Enquire: bookings@mhbm.org.au | 03 9528 1985

Join us at the Melbourne Holocaust Museum for a special evening with the author of **The Watchmaker's War** — a gripping novel based on the true story of Holocaust survivors, Nazi hunters, and the pursuit of justice in post-war Australia.

The evening will feature an in-conversation Q&A with the author, **Danny Ben-Moshe**, exploring the real history behind the book, followed by book sales and signing opportunities.

