

THE TAB

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ISRAEL & THE MIDDLE EAST

The Silence of the Lambs

For American Iran scholars, fighting the right is more important than criticizing the regime—or listening to Iranians

BY ARIAN KHAMENEH

Ladan Zarabadi, a gender studies scholar at UCLA, first began her academic career in the U.S. in 2010, after participating in Iran's Green Movement protests the year prior. Initially receiving a Ph.D in architecture, she proceeded to transition into women's studies with a focus on Iranian feminist movements. Her experiences in her new academic environment, however, took her by surprise. She struggled to recognize the Iran she had lived in with the Iran that was portrayed by her peers.

"I was shocked. Why is there such a gap? What's happening here?" she says.

Zarabadi is an unabashed critic of the Iranian regime and its human rights abuses—an attitude well within the mainstream of the Iranian diaspora. But on her affluent, Southern California campus, she felt that her critical stance toward the Iranian government placed her on the margins. Zarabadi found that her colleagues in U.S. academia were less interested in seeing Iran through the eyes of Iranians and more prone to positioning themselves in a dichotomous ideological battle between American progressives and conservatives—one in which excessive criticism of the regime

in Tehran can be perceived as "right-wing" and even "imperialist."

"It is not just about interpreting reality, it's about interpreting reality in a certain way to fulfill a specific ideology or a specific discourse," she tells me. While Zarabadi found that she was ostensibly welcomed as a woman of color, her colleagues tended to dismiss her actual lived experience and perspectives as an Iranian woman. Instead, she was told to "read the books."

Over the last decade, progressive opinion on Iran has tended to be defined by a belief in gradualism and the stability of the Iranian regime. Wary of the potentially destructive effects of regime change in Iran, many American progressives have instead put their trust in "moderate" and "reformist" elements of the Iranian government, represented by individuals like former Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and former President Hassan Rouhani, to form a bulwark against so-called "hardline" elements of the Iranian state. Central to this reading of Iran have been an acute concern with "militarization" of the U.S.-Iranian rivalry, a tendency to blame U.S. foreign policy for the excesses of the regime, and an aversion to criticism of Iran's mandatory hijab policy, which

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BY FLORA TSAPOVSKY



American progressives see as Islamophobic—and overly reminiscent of the rhetoric of Republicans like Mike Pompeo and John Bolton.

The progressive understanding of Iran, however, has increasingly come into tension with the realities on the ground—tension exacerbated by the recent “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement, which featured Iranians calling for regime overthrow, burning hijabs, attacking “reformists” as part of the same rotten system as the “hardliners,” and chanting “Our enemy is here, they lie to us when they say it’s America.”

According to Zarabadi, these tensions

have largely been ignored by Western academics, who have continued to repeat the same convenient narratives or retreated into deafening silence. During the National Women’s Studies Association’s conference in November 2022, which took place at the peak of the anti-regime protests, Zarabadi says, certain Iran scholars at the conference almost exclusively focused their talks on American sanctions while criticizing Iranian diaspora opposition. She took to Twitter and denounced her colleagues for “spreading misinformation,” “manipulating reality,” and putting academic freedom at risk to fulfill dogmas of anti-Americanism and anti-Islamophobia.

Read more on Iran

Progressive scholarship on Iran has also been significantly influenced by a so-called “humanization narrative,” which seeks to demonstrate how normal life goes on for the average Iranian. The aim, in the eyes of these scholars, is to counteract a “neoconservative agenda” that “demonizes” Iran in order to cultivate support for regime change. Often, however, this requires academics to pull their punches in order to preserve career-building sources within the country. For example, Laudan Nooshin, an ethnomusicologist at City University London, claims to have threatened legal action against the publisher of a book she contributed to, *Rough Guide to World Music*, after they edited her section to include words that might offend the clerics, which imperiled her access to fieldwork in Iran.

In recent years, some of the most revered activist voices in Iran have taken aim at this Western progressive impulse to “humanize,” on the grounds that it whitewashes the regime’s crimes. Take the sarcastic lyrics of the rapper-activist Toomaj Salehi:

Yes sir! Life is normal, we don't say otherwise lest we get in trouble.

[...]

For the deeply corrupt regime apologists in the US

Those who compensate for their inferiority by debauchery

There is no Left and Right here, they are all the same

We say we are trapped in a swamp, they say they hope to reform it.

Leading activist Hossein Ronaghi has devoted outside energy to hounding American scholars and experts in between regular stints as a political prisoner. His frequent complaints have included a dismissal of the Johns Hopkins University’s Rethinking Iran project as “false Islamic Republic propaganda” and accusing Iran experts in the West of misleading the international community by “undermining the severity” of their situation. Most notably, the longtime activist and current prisoner of conscience Bahareh Hedayat sent a letter from Evin prison in December 2022, in which she lampooned progressive intellectuals in the West for their aversion to being critical of Islam and the hijab:

This current [in the West], which occasionally sees itself as anti-imperialist, in a precisely imperialist process, covers its ears when confronted with the voices of a Middle Eastern, Muslim-born woman, and from outside of these conditions accuses us, who are living within these conditions, of Islamophobia; meaning I, as a Middle Eastern woman have no right to cry out against a subservient fate that I’ve been subjected to due to [compulsory] hijab, because according to the ‘progressive’ rules that have been issued by and exported from the intellectual circles of the West, this act of lamenting under the pressure of historical oppression that hijab has enforced upon me signifies fear of Islam, and no one has a right to fear Islam.

While Iranian activists are increasingly disinterested in the perspectives of progressive American academia, the Iranian regime frequently co-opts academic anti-colonial discourse to deflect from international scrutiny. When a Swedish MP demanded answers regarding the regime’s violence against its citizens, Iran’s envoy to Sweden, Ahmad Masoumifar, responded that she needs to familiarize herself with “the unethical implications

of orientalist, imperialistic, and chauvinist attitudes”.

According to Saeid Golkar, a senior fellow at the Tony Blair Institute and associate professor at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga, there are rapidly growing secular, pro-American and even in some cases, pro-Israeli, sentiments in Iran, due to a strong desire to oppose the regime’s talking points. He says this tendency does not sit well with many Middle East departments in the United States, as they are dominated by what he calls “leftist liberational studies,” marked by “anti-colonial” perspectives. “They see what is happening and they cannot handle it. Their ideas are very different and they have their own ideological view. That’s why they either ignore it, or they change [the reality],” he says. “There is a sunk cost fallacy, where you invest a lot in a theory and your identity is based on that. If you undermine that, you’re undermining your entire life.”

Perhaps the most infamous case of altering reality occurred in the aftermath of the assassination of Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp’s Quds Force, who was killed in 2020 on the orders of Donald Trump. At the time, many Iranians were either indifferent to or pleased by his death, considering Soleimani to be a butcher and war criminal. But prominent scholars such as Johns Hopkins’ Narges Bajoghli produced chest-thumping, defiant narratives claiming that Soleimani was very popular and that his assassination would cause Iranians to rally around the flag. Pouya Alimagham, an Iran historian at MIT, applauded the heroics of Soleimani for being on the frontlines, “unlike US generals,” and asserted that his “death will only make his legend grow akin to [Che] Guevara’s.” In reality, Soleimani was regularly burned in effigy by protesters over the last year, and Iranian netizens developed a “Qassem check” meme, in which they assessed the credibility of Western Iran experts by checking to see whether they described Soleimani as a national hero at the time of his killing.

Indeed, progressive aversion to staunchly criticizing the Islamic Republic can occasionally reach comical heights. For instance, in a UC Berkeley

panel discussion devoted to the Woman, Life, Freedom movement in October last year, Sima Shakhsari, a University of Minnesota scholar, avoided talking about the movement almost entirely by throwing out a kitchen sink of leftist talking points on indigenous sovereignty, settler colonialism, Black Lives Matter, Israeli violence against Palestinians, racist cops, American imperialism, and how the pre-revolutionary bourgeoisie in Iran stole from the working class. Finally, she concluded by criticizing the homophobic nature of protest chants against Ayatollah Khamenei, who she claimed has become a “queered enemy.”

“We impose our own context on a discussion about supposedly what’s happening in Iran, but it’s not really about what’s happening in Iran. It’s really about us. Iran just becomes an object. A reference point for us to position ourselves within our own politics, our own cultural wars and our own debates,” said one Iran scholar, who spoke to me on condition of anonymity. “There’s a real lack of courage to take a principled position because of the fear of the consequences that it’ll have within the generally left-wing academic world.” The scholar argues that political positioning has taken precedence over Iran expertise, highlighting the appointment of Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi, whom he described as having “very modest academic credentials,” to a senior role at Princeton. “If you’re very au fait with the politics, they will look the other way on your lack of knowledge, as far as Iran is concerned,” he said. “It’s very cynical. It’s all about getting jobs and positions and tenure and fellowships. There’s no intellectual substance to it. It’s a game that people are playing, and they want to win the game.”

Maral Karimi, a Canadian Iran scholar, has experienced what it’s like to be on the wrong side of the politics in Middle East academia. Her 2018 book on Iran’s Green Movement protests argued that gradual change is unlikely to lead to democracy in Iran, that the “reformist” wing of the government is not democratic, and that cyclical protests will continue until a genuine democratic alternative arises. Today, Karimi’s conclusions are the consensus

in mainstream political discourse on Iran. Yet Karimi says that when her book came out, she was marginalized, frozen out of panels, and ignored by her fellow Iran scholars, due to the uncomfortable political implications of her book. She says that her colleagues accused her of “being brainwashed by U.S. narratives and policies” and called her a “warmonger.” While many have shifted their positions after the recent uprising, Karimi has little sympathy for what she calls “overnighters.”

“There’s something quite oppressive about saying: ‘None of us knew, we all thought that way.’ No, we didn’t all think that way. Many of us stood up and voiced our concerns. Many of us were marginalized. Many of us were silenced by you people,” said Karimi. “Whether it was in the activist arena, or whether it was in academia or in the media, we were sidelined.”

Karimi argues that the gradual change and reform narrative colonized the public space in Western media and academia, leaving little room for dissenting voices who were staunchly critical of both the Islamic Republic and the hegemony of the United States. “A lot of everyday Iranians, not academics, were also against reform. They just weren’t ever heard. They were never given a voice,” she said. “What’s the point of scholarship if I gather a whole bunch of people who think the way I do and we just reiterate each other? What’s the point? What are you afraid of?” ■

This article was originally published on August 9, 2023.

COLLECTION

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The Senile State

Our politicians are not too old—but their ideas are

BY MICHAEL LIND

Does America have a gerontocracy problem? A look at the leading contenders for the White House in 2024 might suggest that it does.

When Joe Biden was inaugurated at 78 he was older than Reagan was when he left office after eight years. In 2024, Biden will be 81 and Trump 78. A Biden-Trump rematch in 2024 would be a showdown between geezer gladiators.

The problem of gerontocracy is easy to exaggerate, however, because Biden and Trump are not typical of recent presidents. At their inaugurations, Obama was 47, George W. Bush 54, and Bill Clinton 46. And the U.S. House of Representatives is getting younger. While the median age in today's Senate is higher than ever at 55.3 years, the median age of members of the current 118th Congress is 57.9 years, down from the 117th's median of 58.9.

Moreover, elderly presidents, senators, and members of the House do not have elderly staffs. In the current Congress, the average age of Senate staffers is 33 and the average age of House staffers is 32.

Elderly Supreme Court justices have clerks just out of law school to do research and draft opinions. Much of the actual work of government in Washington in every branch is done by men and women between their 20s and their 60s.

While upper age limits on government service should be considered, term limits regardless of age will always be a terrible idea. If they were enacted, the only people in Washington with institutional memories and knowledge of how government works would be lobbyists, senior staffers, and elite bureaucrats,

who could take advantage of the ignorance of newly elected novices.

Moreover, outside of the White House, a generational transition in American politics is taking place. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the oldest member of Congress at 90, has announced that she will not seek reelection. In the House, 52-year-old Hakeem Jeffries has replaced 83-year-old Nancy Pelosi as the Democratic leader and speaker of the House in waiting. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, 81, has suffered from increasing debility and was caught on video last month freezing in the midst of a press conference before being escorted away by a top deputy after staring silently at assembled reporters for 19 seconds. But even the long-serving McConnell at some point will be replaced.

Yet the major generational problem in politics does not involve the declining acuity of old politicians. It arises from the nature of political careers. If we exclude true opportunists, many if not most career politicians have formed their basic worldviews by the age of 30 or so, and for the rest of their careers they interpret events and new information using these preexisting intellectual filters. Our political system has had a hard time keeping up with events because it is led by people whose formative views were shaped before the fall of the Soviet Union.

In my personal experience of city, state, and national politics, there are two kinds of politicians: those who want to do something and those who want to be somebody. The former are idealists and the latter are opportunists.

Idealists are far more common in the political class than the caricatures of politicians as money-grubbing hypocrites that American culture would

suggest. Some politicians who were not rich when they ran for office do get rich out of public service or later lobbying or business careers that their public service made possible, and the shameless buckraking of recent ex-presidents like Clinton, Bush, Biden, and Trump—with their six-figure speaking fees and other grifts—has been a wonder to behold. But it is easier to make money in finance or consulting or real estate or movies and television than it is to make a fortune by serving multiple two-year terms in the House or dashing from hearing to hearing in the Senate between phone calls to arrogant rich donors.

In the hearts of many of the most seemingly corrupt middle-aged or elderly politicians burns residual sparks of idealism that motivated them in their youth, like magma deep beneath a dormant volcano. Over the years they learned to sacrifice their principles for success as they worked their way up the ladder. They justify this by telling themselves that they are sacrificing lesser principles to gain the power to accomplish more basic goals. Inside the leathery 70-year-old Democrat who schemes to appropriate campaign money for personal use is the young campus activist who dreamed of a utopian new order founded on social justice. Inside the Republican dinosaur who stumbles from fundraising dinner to fundraising dinner is the ardent libertarian who was inspired at the age of 13 by reading Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*.

Successful politicians simply do not have as much time to read widely and consider alternate viewpoints as they did when they were college students or young activists. The day-to-day work of campaigning and governing takes up most of their time and energy, and there is little time to reflect on whether they should modify their basic assumptions—something few people do in any walk of life.

The problem, then, is that in the normal course of politics those whose political worldview froze when they were 26 or 30 finally ascend to a significant position of power only at the age of 50 or 60 or 70. Now that they are in a position to actually influence policy, they naturally tend to try to carry out a program that they were committed to in their youth,

despite the fact that rapid technological or economic or social change may have already rendered many of their assumptions obsolete.

The sunny vision of the future shared in different ways by John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Ronald Reagan, was typical of their own generational cohort. The optimistic worldviews of Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan were shaped by the experience of recovery from the Great Depression, the battle against totalitarianism, both fascist and communist, and the promise of technology. The New Frontier and the Great Society were attempts to finish and extend the New Deal. Cold War liberals and Cold War conservatives alike tended to equate the cautious, opportunistic Soviet Union with recklessly aggressive Nazi Germany and Japan, and feared to repeat “the lesson of Munich” that appeasement could lead to world war.

In the 1960s, Reagan sounded at times as gloomy as his fellow conservatives. But once in the White House, Reagan reverted to the New Deal era rhetoric of his younger self, who had voted four times for FDR, had campaigned for Truman, and had been a co-founder of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) alongside liberal eminences like Eleanor Roosevelt and Arthur Schlesinger and John Kenneth Galbraith. To the horror of “paleoconservatives” who worried about the decline of Western civilization, Reagan offered voters—many of them, like him, from the Depression and World War II cohort—a modified version of the same optimistic vision of Kennedy and Johnson, with more market and less government. Indeed, the most frequent historical precedent held up by Reaganite supply-siders in the 1980s was Kennedy’s “supply-side” tax cut. For Reagan, the 1980s were the late 1940s and early 1950s all over again—“morning in America,” not the twilight of the West.

Like any interpretation of politics, generational analysis can be taken too far. My purpose here is to emphasize the mismatch of policies suited for one era by a politician who comes to power a generation later. Reaganism’s optimism, seeing the defeat of communist totalitarianism leading to global peace

“To the horror of ‘paleoconservatives’, Reagan offered voters a modified version of the same optimistic vision of Kennedy and Johnson.”

and free trade—the same vision held by liberal internationalists in the 1940s—may have been emotionally appealing but it was wrong. In reality, U.S. manufacturing as well as global economic and military power declined.

Today we can detect echoes of ’70s conservatism and liberalism in Washington. Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell was first elected to public office as a county judge/executive in Jefferson County, Kentucky, in 1977, after working for the Ford administration and other Republicans in Washington earlier in the decade. Until 1981 the maximum U.S. income tax rate was 70%; it was cut to 50% under President Reagan beginning in 1982 and lowered further to 38.5% in 1987. Since then, the central obsession of McConnell’s superannuated wing of the Republican Party has been tax cuts for the rich, lowering the top rate to 35% under George W. Bush and 37% under Trump, with Democrats boosting it slightly when they are in power.

Under Joe Biden, who became U.S. senator from Delaware in 1973 at the age of 30, the Democratic party is replaying another episode of *That Seventies Show*—the one about renewable energy. The Green New Deal and the rest of the Democratic Party’s energy policy is a relic of the 1970s, when two events crystallized the party’s fetishization of solar and wind energy. In 1976, the activist Amory Lovins published an article in *Foreign Affairs*, “Energy Strategy: The

Road Not Taken,” in which he called on the U.S. to abandon nuclear energy and fossil fuels in favor of a “soft path” based on solar power and other renewables. The Three Mile Island nuclear power plant accident in 1979 completed the demonization of nuclear power by the left. One result is the Inflation Reduction Act passed by the Democratic Congress under Biden, which largely consists of subsidies for solar and wind power as well as associated technologies like batteries and charging stations. The transition to a wholly renewable economy remains as much a mirage in the 2020s as it was in the 1970s. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, in 2021 only 12% of U.S. primary energy consumption came from renewables, defined broadly to include wood, biomass, and biofuels—and less than 5% came from wind and solar combined.

Donald Trump’s worldview seems to reflect a different version of the 1970s. He was 22 in 1968 and only 34 in 1980. Trump’s reference to “American carnage” in his inaugural speech brings to mind the condition of the U.S. in the 1970s, with declining industries, racial tensions, riots, a crime wave, strikes, gasoline shortages, runaway inflation, and economic stagnation—and, in New York City, garbage collector strikes, graffiti everywhere, and neon porn shop signs all over Times Square. From the 1970s to the 1990s that urban experience produced a political backlash, particularly among white working-class voters, that led to the election of a number of mayors, including the Democrat Ed Koch in New York City, who ran on promises to crack down on disorder and crime, a tradition to which Trump and his ally Rudy Giuliani belong.

The real problem, then, is not superannuated politicians, but politicians with superannuated preconceptions. We need fewer idealists of all ages who go into politics to do something, and later mistakenly try to do it after the world has changed, and more flexible opportunists of all ages who don’t want to do anything in particular but just want to be somebody important. ■

This article was originally published on August 8, 2023

THE REST

→ In a wide-ranging 20-minute interview with Bloomberg's Francine Lacqua on Sunday, **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed many of the hottest topics concerning the Jewish State and his leadership. Normalization with Saudi Arabia is still a real possibility, Netanyahu said, rebuffing Lacqua's suggestion that the issue of a Palestinian state would get in the way.** "I think the Palestinian thing is brought in all the time, and it's sort of a checkbox." Behind closed doors, Netanyahu said, the Palestinian issue comes up "a lot less than you think." Bibi also said that at this point in time, a Palestinian state would be an "Iranian-controlled state"; outlined his view that the judicial reforms he is pursuing through the Knesset are aimed at restoring balance to Israel's system of checks and balances, rather than destroying it; and said he wants to make Israel one of the world's top three AI powers. He also pushed back against claims that his reforms are bad for Israeli business. "Israel right now is undervalued. You should invest in Israel. Smart money is coming into Israel now, because they understand that we're going to a good place," Netanyahu said.

→ The **Obama Presidential Center has taken in \$1.1 billion since it began accepting funding in 2014, but last year was its best year yet, as it hauled in more than \$311 million in grants and contributions**, with major checks from Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky (\$125 million) and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos (\$100 million). The big-ticket gifts from some of the United States' wealthiest business owners are being used in part to increase compensation for Valerie Jarrett, the chief executive who previously served in Obama's White House: She earned a \$161,000 salary bump to more than \$750,000 last year. The foundation oversees the operation and expansion of the presidential center celebrating Obama's administration, as well as an educational scholarship program.

→ **X, the social platform formerly known as Twitter, failed to turn over data and records related to Donald Trump's Twitter account to Special Counsel Jack Smith after he'd obtained a search warrant.** Smith had also obtained a nondisclosure order that said X could not notify Trump or anyone else about the warrant, an order that X unsuccessfully challenged in court, saying it violated its First Amendment rights. In a 3-0 decision unsealed on Wednesday, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals **upheld a lower court's decision that found X in contempt of court and liable for a \$350,000 fine** for missing by three days the deadline to turn over the records Smith sought as part of his probe into the former president's involvement in the effort to undo his election loss to Joe Biden.

→ **China's largest property developer, Country Garden, missed interest payments on two large American bonds, signaling that the slump for China's housing market could get a lot worse before it gets better.** While Country Garden has 30 days to make the \$22.5 million interest payment, its shares listed on the Hong Kong stock market already plummeted 14% on Tuesday while investors in other housing companies quickly unloaded their holdings. "The fact that the company is struggling to address an interest payment, rather than a full bond principal repayment, perhaps underscores its very tight liquidity," Sandra Chow, co-head of Asia-Pacific Research at CreditSights, told The Wall Street Journal. The financial trouble for Country Garden comes after a campaign of supportive efforts last year by Chinese authorities to shore up the real estate industry.

THE BIG STORY

Video communications giant Zoom Inc., which saw its profits and market share skyrocket when COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns drove the remote-work boom, recently added a clause to its terms of service stating that anyone who uses the service is agreeing to have some of their data fed into machine learning and artificial intelligence systems. The relevant lines in the company's new terms of service state, "You consent to Zoom's access, use, collection, creation, modification, distribution, processing, sharing, maintenance, and storage of Service Generated Data for ... machine learning or artificial intelligence (including for the purposes of training and tuning of algorithms and models) ..."

Online tech watchdogs are calling attention to the change, as they initially feared that Zoom could use private calls and messages to help train its AI models. Though the ultimate purpose of those AI models remains unknown, the recent explosive growth of large language models like ChatGPT suggests one possible use. Many tech platforms, including the supposedly secure online search engine Brave Search, have been leveraging user data to train AI programs, a practice that appears to be widespread. Brave also sells access to data to third parties who want to train their AI.

—Sean Cooper

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Blurring Political Lines

A dispute over school curricula in Maryland shows how American Muslims defy binary partisan thinking

BY MAGGIE PHILLIPS

The U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland will hear arguments on Aug. 9 from a multifaith group of parents—Muslim, Catholic, and Ukrainian Orthodox—who contend that the Montgomery County Board of Education in the state is infringing on their religious liberty. At issue is the introduction into the curricula of a suite of children’s books intended to increase LGBTQ inclusion and representation, and the school board’s refusal to allow parents to opt their children out of reading them in school as part of language arts instruction.

While the plaintiffs in the upcoming suit are from different faith backgrounds, Muslim parents have been particularly vocal at recent county school board protests over the issue this summer. Although Muslim Americans have been traditionally viewed as political allies of the Democrats after the anti-Muslim animus that followed the attacks of September 11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a new kind of conflict has some breaking with the progressive wing of the party, primarily in reaction to issues touching on culture and belief. In Montgomery County and elsewhere, it is not conservatives, but progressives who are framing certain adherents to Islam as the opponent in a clash of civilizations. Even on this polarizing issue, however, some Muslims are rejecting the binary of party politics.

When Montgomery County’s Board of Education initially announced the selection of texts in October 2022, parents could and sometimes did arrange to have their children pulled out of class for these books (Maryland state law requires parents be given an opportunity to review curriculum materials related to family life and human sexuality,

as well as the ability to opt their children out of these lessons for substituted “appropriate alternative learning activities”). On March 23, 2023, the school board reversed this policy, saying schools would cease notifying parents, and requiring students to remain in class for instruction that included the selected books. The parents suing the school board are being represented by religious freedom legal defense firm Becket Law, which contends that this move by the school board constitutes a violation of not only state law but also school board policy, which includes a commitment “to accommodate requests from students, or requests from parents/guardians on behalf of their students, to be excused from specific classroom discussions or activities that they believe would impose a substantial burden on their religious beliefs.” The Muslim parents leading the charge have been characterized as siding with white supremacist ideology by some Montgomery County officials (one, Montgomery County Council member Kristin Mink, later apologized). But neither Islam nor Muslims—who number roughly 3.45 million in the United States, and account for 3% of the population in Montgomery County (one of the highest concentrations of Muslims in the country among counties with a population over 10,000)—map neatly onto the American political spectrum.

These parents’ opposition to the inclusion of LGBTQ books may seem surprising in light of recent polling data. According to Pew Research, two-thirds of U.S. Muslims said they identified with Democrats, and overall acceptance of homosexuality increased over 25 percentage points between 2007 and 2017, with just over half of U.S. Muslims

saying homosexuality should be accepted by society. Increased acceptance was even the case among those for whom religion was “very important” (47% in 2017, up from 19% in 2007) and foreign-born Muslims (49% in 2017, up from 26% a decade earlier). But this acceptance comes with parameters. “If you’re saying it’s OK to openly engage in gay sexual actions and gay marriage and that’s *halal*—you’ll find a few, not many, to endorse that position,” wrote Muslim author Wajahat Ali, who cautioned he was not himself a scholar, in an email. “I do think you can find a lot of people and most scholars who say, ‘Yes, perfectly fine to be Muslim and gay, but certain sexual actions and behaviors are still *haram*.’”

The Council on American-Islamic Relations has been praised by Democratic politicians for its social justice work, addressing discrimination and civil rights abuses against Muslim Americans. Yet even CAIR’s “Educators’ Guide to Islamic Religious Practices” states, with regard to family life and sex education, that “contact with local Islamic centers is essential to encourage input from the Muslim community. Class materials should be available for review and parents should have the option to remove their children from all or part of the program.”

The white supremacy remark from a county official was “deeply disturbing” and created a “sense of betrayal” among Muslim parents, said director of CAIR’s Maryland office Zainab Chaudry in a phone interview. She explained that parental opposition to the books in question, which include accompanying discussions of social gender transition in early grades, are not coming from a place of intolerance. The content goes “beyond just representation,” Chaudry said.

However, Chaudry said, this is “not just a Muslim issue.” She said that CAIR and the Montgomery County Muslim Council were told in a closed-door meeting with Montgomery County Public Schools that the elimination of the opt-out policy came because “too many families were asking to opt their children out.” Chaudry noted that while she has heard of parents pulling their

children out of schools in the area in the last several months, not everyone has the resources to do this, especially the refugee families who have been housed in the area (local media report there are around 900 Afghan refugees living in Montgomery County since the U.S. withdrawal from that country in 2021). She said that CAIR had reached out to the Maryland State Board of Education about the prospect of cultural competency training for educating its Muslim population, something she said is left up to the localities to decide. The Montgomery County Board of Education's Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency Policy specifies the need for training to attain system-wide cultural proficiency, and the school system's Equity Initiatives Unit offers a resource for culturally responsive parent engagement. (Neither the county Board of Education nor Montgomery County Public Schools responded to emails from Tablet about the nature of the cultural proficiency training educators receive.)

Ismail Royer is the director of the Islam team at the Religious Freedom Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based multifaith nonprofit dedicated to religious liberty in the U.S. and abroad. He does not see a contradiction between traditional Muslim belief and heterodox politics. In fact, in his estimation as a Muslim himself, the two are often complementary. "We have to judge our position on various issues of public importance on the basis of what our criterion is as Muslims," he said, rather than by "aligning ourselves morally, theologically, with a particular place on the American political spectrum." That means "neither the left, nor the right, nor their many factions."

He recalls being especially disturbed then, after 9/11, to see Muslim Americans "entering into a bargain," he said, "where we would agree to be silent on particularly moral issues, moral stands that our religion would take, when they conflicted with progressive ideology, in exchange for a sort of friendship that was almost—it was a very transactional relationship." The benefit, Royer said, was "a sort of protection from what were perceived to be within the right,

"We're for the environment, we're for immigration, but we also take positions that would make us look conservative."

you know, sort of anti-Muslim policies, statements."

Royer likens the theological position of Muslims in the American political landscape to that of Catholics, whose official doctrine is often more in line with Democrats and even progressives on issues like the death penalty and immigration, but appear more amenable to conservative Republicans on issues like abortion and sexuality. "This is very confusing to a lot of people who are captured by a paradigm of the right-left, but for us, that's what we need to be. We need to be like, we're for the environment, we're for immigration," he said, "but we also take positions that would make us look conservative."

Royer said Montgomery County is "a perfect example" of the fault lines that were present from the beginning of the post-9/11 bargain he described, which he said was becoming "increasingly at odds with the ordinary Muslim family." A cultural reckoning between traditional Muslims and their political champions on the left was inevitable, in Royer's view. "We're not Amish," he said. "It's going to affect us, it's going to enter our families, our homes."

The Muslims willing to defend what he calls "this bargain with the left" are becoming fewer, he said, and they tend to be more secular and academic in their

outlook than typical Muslim Americans. At the same time, Royer is keen to stress that "there is and will always be" areas of cooperation with the left for Muslims that align with Islamic values: criminal justice reform, environmental concerns, immigration.

While a pragmatic political alternative for traditional, practicing Muslims has yet to present itself, Royer said, "our natural allies are other religious denominations." Catholics, Orthodox Jews, and Latter Day Saints, in particular, he said, and their political advocacy arms, "are our natural inner circle; not Republicans, not Democrats, not political manifestations of those things, but denominations." Movement conservatism and liberalism, in his view, are arbitrary accidents of history and circumstance that "have nothing to do with universal truths."

Royer said the Montgomery County protests are easily categorized as "culture war stuff." But, he said, "if you look carefully, what you'll see is that we are actually trying to forge a relationship across the aisle to eliminate culture war stuff." By casting their objection to the opt-out elimination in religious terms, joining forces with other denominations, he said, Muslim parents are circumnavigating the poles of the political map.

The materials being inserted into the language arts curriculum are not as graphic in nature as in some school districts where parents object to their inclusion. However, Royer argues that the content goes beyond being inclusive. The book *Pride Puppy*, in which a little girl's dog runs away during a Pride celebration, is recommended for pre-kindergarten and Head Start students. It features an alphabetical seek-and-find section in the back; items children are encouraged to look for include "leather" and "intersex (flag)."

"These materials are not merely depicting the existence of families," he said, and those who express opposition to the concepts introduced are made to feel they are wrong.

He cites *Born Ready*, a book about a little girl named Penelope who tells her parents she wants to be a boy, recommended for fifth grade. In the book,

Penelope's brother expresses disagreement with this assertion, and he is corrected by his mother, who says, "Not everything needs to make sense." The brother, whose views, Royer notes, reflect traditional views on gender and biological sex, is made to accept his sibling's way of thinking. "Stories are means by which human societies have always conveyed values and morals to the next generation," said Roy. "They have said they don't want kids to be able to avoid this instruction."

Royer cites the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (known as *hadiths*) as the basis of the Muslim sexual ethic, as well as the commentary by both contemporary and classical Islamic religious scholars. The Quran depicts the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham's nephew Lot, who escapes the divine wrath poured out on the cities, is upheld as a prophet in Islam. Lot is recorded in the Quran excoriating men "who approach men with desire, instead of women," a verse that has provided justification for condemnation of homosexuality in traditional Islam.

Royer concedes that liberal Muslim theologians are attempting, as Muslim author Mustafa Akyol does in a 2015 *New York Times* op-ed, to reconcile traditional Islamic attitudes toward sexuality and gender with contemporary mores. While Royer is critical of such attempts, there is a little less daylight between his views and Akyol's when it comes to the issue of tolerance.

Akyol points out that these and other verses that appear to condemn homosexuality in particular need not support temporal punishments: There is, he writes, no prescribed punishment for homosexuality in the Quran. And the *hadiths*, the putative sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, were written two

centuries after his death. Moreover, Akyol notes, there is no record of Muhammad ever commanding punishment for homosexuality.

Ramish Nadeem is the program manager for Muslim & International Youth at the sexual health advocacy nonprofit Advocates for Youth. "If you look at the original Quran and *hadiths* itself, the situation of queer Muslims is pretty ambiguous, it can be read several different ways," he said in a Zoom interview. He also gives the example of Lot, and a popular progressive Christian interpretation of the story that is focused on the serious crimes of the people of Sodom: rape, and the violation of hospitality customs, "rather than a crime of, like, consensual homosexual relationships," saying there are "similar readings and scholarly work done in Muslim traditions."

In 2018, the Muslim Youth Leadership Council, an initiative of the nonprofit Advocates for Youth, put out a brochure called "I'm Muslim and I Might Not Be Straight: A Resource for LGBTQ+ Muslim Youth," addressing various topics, including coming out to family (and whether doing so is necessary in the first place), consent and emotional readiness, and whether it is possible to be queer and Muslim at the same time. It also contains numerous quotes from LGBTQ Muslim young people sharing their stories. "As a 20-year-old queer, nonbinary, hijabi Muslim," writes Fatimah, age 20, "my identity is complex. My parents often say that there aren't any LGBTQ people in our community. My mosque often says that you cannot be LGBTQ and a Muslim. The government often says that me and my family aren't welcome in this country in the first place. What I've come to understand is that queer Muslims have existed since the beginning of Islam. We exist. And Allah made us just the way we are."

Telling the reader that there is no contradiction between their faith and their sexual identity, and that they were made just the way they were by Allah, the brochure quotes this verse from the Quran: "He Who created the seven heavens one above another: no want of proportion wilt thou see in the Creation of the Most Gracious. So turn thy

vision again: seest thou any flaw?" (al-Mulk 67:3-4)

Explaining that Islam lacks a central, unifying faith leader or authority, Nadeem said that the opinions and interpretations of scholars carry a lot of weight. "But there's no sense in which they have an ultimate or final say," he said. "And so that allows for a lot of diversity within Muslim spaces and traditions. So there's like a thousand and one Islams being practiced in the United States coming from different traditions, all across the globe."

If Royer's understanding of Islam does not condone outright acceptance, it does mandate tolerance.

What if a Muslim family has gay neighbors? "A family that lives next door to us," Royer said, "they have rights." Rights, he said, that were spelled out by the Prophet Muhammad and in the Quran: "We are required to be good to those who are close to us and those who are far away from us," he said, which is interpreted to mean close neighbors.

Muslims, he said, "have a very important principle, which is that every human being was created in God's image, that's actually the words of the Prophet." Every human being has inherent dignity in this framework, which in turn places duties on Muslims to treat everyone with kindness, respect, and neighborliness.

Wajahat Ali shares Royer's belief that Muslims can stay true to their faith and love their LGBTQ neighbors, but arrives at a different conclusion. Ali writes in a June *New York Times* op-ed titled "We Muslims Used to be the Culture War Scapegoats. Why Are Some of Us Joining the LGBTQ Pile-On?": "Let's take a DeLorean back to the post-9/11 years, during which Islam, especially the specter of Shariah, was frequently made the villain." He characterizes the rhetoric from many prominent conservatives at that time, predicting the infiltration of Shariah law into American systems, and sees a parallel with contemporary Muslim concerns over an LGBTQ agenda in public schools. Eight years ago, Ali points out, Laura Ingraham was worried about Muslim immigration to the U.S. Today, she is hosting Muslims on her

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show to discuss shared concerns over religious liberty protections.

He is familiar with the arguments advanced by Royer and others, that the desire of many Muslims is simply for a policy of tolerance that allows LGBTQ people and observant Muslims to peacefully coexist. “But,” Ali writes in his op-ed, “is it truly inclusive and tolerant to signal to LGBTQ kids or LGBTQ parents that simply reading a book or learning about their existence might be so threatening and offensive that it requires an opt-out option in schools? How would Muslim parents feel if this was applied to children’s books about Ramadan or Hajj?” Because American Muslims know what it is to be a persecuted minority, he maintains, they have a reciprocal obligation to the LGBTQ community, “even if we occasionally make one another uncomfortable.”

Nadeem said the release of a document called Navigating Differences in May by a group of Muslim scholars, theologians, and leaders was “a pretty shocking moment” for him. The document, which asserts the rights of Muslim parents to be able to educate their children on values and sexual ethics against those of schools, said it was the signatories’ “collective, non-partisan articulation of Islam’s position on sexual and gender ethics.” Navigating Differences “reduced this really, really broad set of traditions, broad set of values and opinions into one voice for Muslims in the United States,” he said. “It also conveniently ended up aligning with some parents-rights talking points that have been circulating in these community spaces for a while.”

Navigating Differences was released on May 23. On June 6, hundreds of parents gathered outside of a Montgomery County school board meeting to protest the inability to opt their children out of LGBTQ reading materials in their English and language arts courses. “When I see the protests that happen, I see them in a continuous line with that statement that came out,” Nadeem said.

Nadeem said that since the release of the Navigating Differences statement, “young Muslims that I work with have seen an increase in the homophobia that they face in Muslim spaces,” everything

“We’re avoiding partisanship right now to the greatest extent that we can.”

from comments they heard, to the disappearance of opportunities for them in Muslim spaces, like DEI initiatives to talk about queer Muslims.

But one group of young Muslims whose feelings are being overlooked, said Chaudry, are those who attend Montgomery County schools. “Children have been part of this campaign from the start,” she said. Their families no longer feel they can trust the school system, she said, and their children are saying they no longer feel safe in living their faith identity publicly in school. Students, she said, are submitting anonymous testimony to the school board on the issue.

Although Royer said it is a matter of Muslims believing that what they see as immorality should not be taught in public schools, he also contends that presenting the desired material on sexuality and gender to students is a simple matter of housing it under family life and sex education courses, rather than language arts instruction, where both the parameters of instruction and the guidelines over opting out are clear. Chaudry said, “It’s important to note that there is no move to ban books.”

Nadeem said that his reading of the Montgomery County school board protests is one of long-simmering tensions

boiling over. The Navigating Differences statement “emboldened a lot of actors who were otherwise a little bit more silent, or like tacitly accepting, this sort of political coalition that had been built in the past several years between LGBTQ groups and Muslim groups.”

Part of what he observes in contexts like the Montgomery County protests is “backlash to progress that has been made in the past five to 10 years,” he said. In places where Muslim institutions have grown in size and influence, “disenfranchised and marginalized folks have been increasingly organizing for their own spaces,” he said. “Stepping up a little bit more, demanding more rights, et cetera. College campuses have been a particular site of this happening, of feminist Muslims, progressive Muslims saying no, we belong in these Muslim spaces as well, and they should be structured in a way that’s open, tolerant of diverse opinions.”

He sees them as victims of their own recent success. “You see this increased backlash in the past couple years,” he said. “These progressive movements and spaces had been increasingly a part of Muslim life in the United States, particularly in the past five, six, seven years, and that sort of feminist, progressive Islam, even if it’s one that has deep roots in Muslim tradition, still may not be the Islam that folks in these communities are accustomed to or legitimate as a real or authentic Islam.”

To some extent, Nadeem sees Navigating Differences as an attempt by a group of American Muslims to help frame their worldview in a way that is palatable to America’s traditional understanding of religion. “Part of it also is, what do we see as religious in the United States?” he said. “That question often has the answer of, whatever is current in Protestant spaces,” noting that Muslims are not prominent in protests against other societal ills, like predatory interest rates or exploitative capitalism.

“There’s a Protestant-shaped gap that we can fill up with religion in the United States,” said Nadeem. For a recent denomination in the U.S. looking for respectability, “it’s expedient particularly in, like, Texas suburbs to fill in that particular gap,” he said, mentioning masjids

(mosques) that are similar to mega-churches, and that offer “Sunday school.”

In the context of his description of American Islam as an amalgam of diverse practices and interpretations, he said that “it felt like there’s this like, big broad set of Islamic traditions, and then here in the United States, there’s a set of actors who are leveraging the fact that we’re not as literate in that religious tradition, to then speak for that tradition in a singular voice,” to become “something that was expedient in a current political moment.” He said while some scholars will acknowledge privately that the Islamic tradition is more nuanced on sex and gender than the statement portrays, the perceived challenges posed by sex-ed changes in schools require them to condense and synthesize their position on sexuality and gender in response.

On a number of issues, American Muslims still line up with traditionally Democratic policy positions. According to a March 2022 poll by the research nonprofit Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, majorities of the American Muslims surveyed said they believed in stricter gun laws, that climate change was attributable to human activity, and in legalized abortion in all (25%) or most cases (32%). However, the survey also found a strong “independent” contingent among American Muslims, particularly among those between the ages of 18-29; 49% described themselves as politically independent, compared to 33% of Muslims aged 30-49. “The large politically independent segment among Muslims suggests that many in this community make voting decisions based more on changing policy issues,” the poll’s key finding report says, “and less along fixed partisan lines, opening an opportunity for both parties to win Muslim support.”

“It’s not a surprise,” Royer said, that the progressives elected to the Montgomery County Board of Education and County Council are governing like progressives. “The question is now that Muslims are starting to see the real-world implications of these kind of folks in public office and what it means for their families, then they have to vote accordingly.”

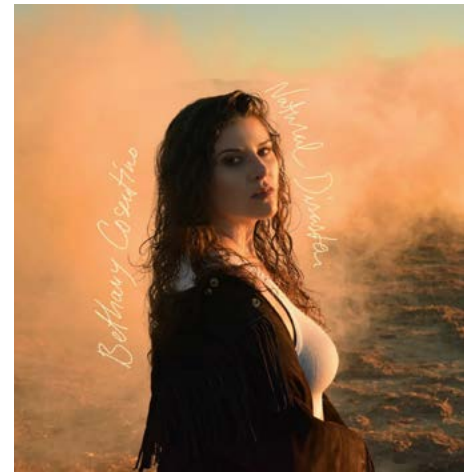
Progressives, he said, say a lot of things that genuinely appeal to Muslims, including advocating for their acceptance in American public life. This emphasis on inclusion, he believes, especially in the era since the Trump administration’s “Muslim ban,” has sometimes obscured what this means in practice for the moral values many Muslims hold.

An ideal candidate for Muslims, he said, would be someone who supports religious conscience rights and Muslim inclusion, while also opposing Muslim bans and forever wars in Muslim countries. “We haven’t seen that perfect candidate yet,” said Royer. “But I will tell you people are looking for that candidate right now, actively looking for people to run against Kristin Mink, to run against these board members. That’s happening and that’s what’s coming down the pike.”

Royer is unsure whether these people, who are not just Muslims, but Hispanics, and Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, will be organized in time for the next election. But in his capacity as a policy adviser for the Coalition of Virtue, a Muslim 501(c)(4), he is helping to locate candidates in Montgomery County for the school board. The groundwork, he said, is centered around denominational, rather than political, affiliation. The preference is to run them independently, but electability, rather than political loyalties, will take precedence as to whether they run as independents, Republicans, or Democrats. “We’re avoiding partisanship right now,” he said, “to the greatest extent that we can.”

Chaudry said in an email to Tablet today that CAIR and the Montgomery County Muslim Council were told in a closed-door meeting with Montgomery County Public Schools that the elimination of the opt-out policy came “because of hurt feelings.” She said the school system later gave the rationale that opting out was revoked because “too many families were asking to opt their children out.” ■

This article was originally published on August 8, 2023.



Album of the Week

Bethany Cosentino, *Natural Disaster*

Bethany Cosentino set the pace for millennials when she opened up about getting sober on 2020’s *Always Tomorrow*. That album had the misfortune of being released a month before the start of the pandemic, but now she’s released her first solo album, *Natural Disaster*.

Cosentino’s sound has evolved alongside her mindset: Her music is faster now, her voice is lighter, and background vocals fill the empty space. She sounds determined to make the best of things, which would be a lot easier if the world could stop falling apart.

“This is the hottest summer I can ever remember / ‘Cause the world is on fire,” she sings on the opening title track, “And, hey, if we’re all dying, then what does it matter?” Later on she says, “this is the summer of our discontent,” in the happiest way someone can announce such a thing. Cosentino is able to capture the feeling of joy amid helplessness, even as the temperatures rise.

Cosentino offers a millennial redemption story on *Natural Disaster*: She got famous, found she wasn’t happy, and has been able to rebuild her creative life on her own terms. Every victory on *Natural Disaster* feels hard-earned, which is probably why the music sounds so good.

—David Meir Grossman

The Holocaust Museums Down Under

With government backing, Australia is opening and renovating museums about the Shoah in every state and territory

BY NOMI KALTMANN

Australia's newly refurbished Melbourne Holocaust Museum has already won a prestigious award for its architectural excellence in the public architecture category—and it hasn't even opened yet.

Scheduled to reopen this month after a two-year renovation, the museum is set to become a hub for education. It will feature a multisensory experience for visitors, including a high-tech virtual reality experience, the stories of child survivors, a library, and new classrooms for students.

"We hope that those who visit to the museum will help have their minds opened and ask questions: How on earth did this happen in full view of other people?" said Melbourne Holocaust Museum CEO Jayne Josem. "We have deliberately selected photos that really illustrate this. We want to be a site of really good conversations, which is a safe space for difficult conversations around the Holocaust and challenging topics."

The extensive renovations to the museum were part of an extraordinary funding promise in 2019 by the right-wing Liberal-National coalition government in power at the time. The policy was championed by Josh Frydenberg, Australia's former treasurer and a descendant of Holocaust survivors. During his time in office, the administration he was part of promised millions of dollars to help fund Holocaust museums in every Australian state and territory, as well as building upgrades for existing museums.

As a result, Australia may soon be one

of the only places in the world that has Holocaust museums in every state and territory, no matter how small or large the local Jewish community is. This includes new museums in Tasmania (Jewish population: 376) and the Northern Territory (estimated Jewish population: under 100), as well as funding for upgrades to existing museums in larger cities such as Melbourne, Adelaide, and Sydney. In June, Queensland opened its first Holocaust museum, and planning for upgrades to the Western Australian museum is ongoing. While construction on the museums in Tasmania and the Northern Territory have not yet begun, government funding has been allocated with hopes that they should be built in the next few years.

In an interview with a local Jewish newspaper, Frydenberg remarked, "I don't think you can overestimate what a significant development this will be for Holocaust education in Australia—for continuity of memory, to honor the victims, and to ensure that we uphold our collective duty to say 'Never Again.'"

In the aftermath of WWII, Australia was a popular destination for Holocaust survivors whose families had been murdered and were seeking to get as far away as possible from the atrocities in Europe.

Although the Melbourne Holocaust Museum was already slated for renovations prior to the funding promise, the additional government-promised funding allowed the museum to plan for a larger scope of renovations than originally imagined. "We had an urgent need [to renovate]. In 2016 and 2017 we were already at capacity and turning schools

away," Josem said. Now, with the new building, the museum expects to increase the number of students who visit each year from an estimated 23,000 to 35,000. "I want the kids to go home and say, 'I had an amazing excursion,' and we want the parents and the families to come and have a really powerful experience," she said.

However, government funding for Holocaust museums in even Australia's tiniest states and territories is not without some criticism. "The government seemed to have this idea to fund museums, and when you've got an idea, you should speak to the main people involved in the space. Or do a feasibility study. But that didn't happen," said someone involved with Holocaust museums in Australia who asked not to be named. "As an institution, it takes a lot of energy to run a museum. You need people on the ground with the skills. There are ways to do something really powerful that doesn't involve people having to show up every day. And who is going to come to volunteer at these museums [in smaller states]?"

Despite the criticism, the plan is moving at full steam ahead, with Holocaust museums currently being renovated or planned in every state and territory across Australia.

Preserving the memory of the Shoah is entrenched in the Australian Jewish community's consciousness. Many synagogues were built in the aftermath of

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the war by survivors, and include permanent memorials of the deceased on the walls. Annual Yom Hashoah ceremonies in major Australian cities can easily attract more than 1,000 attendees. With the Jewish community numbering an estimated 120,000 people, among a population of 25 million, much effort is focused on how to transmit memory of those who were murdered.

In addition to Australia's government, instrumental in providing funding for Holocaust museums is one of Australia's wealthiest families: the Gandels, who have a formidable reputation for philanthropic and charitable giving. Holocaust museums in Australia have received significant funding from the family's foundation.

"Gandel Foundation and Gandel family are in this for the long haul, and we know that having a Holocaust museum in each capital city in Australia is only the start," said Nicole Brittain, the grant manager of Gandel Philanthropy. "Importantly, while the physical structures are vital to strengthening Holocaust education of the general public ... school engagement is the most important and critical way in which people learn about the Holocaust."

In 2021, Gandel Philanthropy funded a survey that set out to understand Holocaust literacy in Australia. The survey, the largest of its kind in Australia, asked over 3,500 Australians across all states and territories to answer 70 individual questions about their thoughts, experiences, and understanding on everything from Australia's connections to the Holocaust to the importance of Holocaust museums and memorials.

Professor Steven Cooke was the lead researcher on the survey. "The levels of Holocaust literacy were comparable to other countries where similar research has been undertaken," he said. "What was perhaps surprising was the lower levels of knowledge of Australia's connections to the Holocaust. For example, the protest by Indigenous leader and human rights activist William Cooper against the Nazis' Kristallnacht in Germany in 1938 as well as Australia's stand at the Evian Conference—a pre-war meeting to decide what to do about Jews displaced by the Nazis—where

"We have a collective duty to ensure we live up to the call of 'Never Again.'"

Australia was one of several countries that refused to offer refuge."

Cooke also found that one thing in particular correlated with increased levels of literacy around the Holocaust: "The survey found that on average, people who have received specific Holocaust education in schools or visited a Holocaust museum have a comparatively higher level of Holocaust awareness and also have warmer feelings toward religious and cultural minorities or disadvantaged groups, as well as asylum seekers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."

Currently, there are Holocaust museums in Victoria (where Melbourne is located), New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland, and Western Australia. Over time, in addition to state and federal governments, Gandel Foundation has provided support to some of the existing or new museums for their development, such as the museums in Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia, and continue to actively talk to many of the remaining Holocaust museums about their future needs.

"A very troubling recent trend in a steep increase in the number of antisemitic and extremist activity, both overseas as well as in Australia, highlights the urgent need to expand the education of our young people, and the whole community, about the Holocaust and ensure this important part of history is

never forgotten," said Brittain. "We have a collective duty to ensure we live up to the call of 'Never Again.'"

In smaller Jewish communities like Adelaide, South Australia, having a place to offer Holocaust education has been groundbreaking for the community. "The foundations for Holocaust education [in Adelaide] were laid by survivors such as Fred Steiner [and] Regina Zelinski, who visited schools and shared their stories with school students in South Australia, and the community in the past had also held two exhibitions to educate the public," said Kathy Baykitch, the CEO of the Adelaide Holocaust Museum.

"In 2019, the Adelaide Holocaust Museum secured funding to develop a pilot Holocaust education program for school students which has informed the current in-museum program," she said. "The museum now offers an in-museum program to school students and also facilitates a range of public programs for the wider community."

In 2023, the Adelaide Holocaust Museum expects to engage with 8,000 to 10,000 non-Jewish people as they expand their operations to educate the wider community about the Holocaust.

Baykitch has no doubt that funding received from Australia's government is important to the success of the museum. "The announcement of capital federal government funding was made one month prior to the scheduled launch and opening of the Adelaide Holocaust Museum. The museum would not be in a position to undertake the current capital expansion without [this] funding," she said. "The museum provides a public presence for the community, and it plays an important role in educating the wider community. Our museum and its educating program play an important part in educating the wider community, given that you can't really educate about the Holocaust without educating about Jewish people and Jewish life. Given that a number of our volunteers are Jewish community members, [the museum] provides opportunities to engage and be connected." ■

This article was originally published on August 10, 2023.

Lorrie Moore Laughs Wild Amid Severest Woe

A new novel from the master of wit and death
offers solace for the massacre ahead

BY DAVID YAFFE

I never had to learn how to love Lorrie Moore. She was always unrequired reading. I went to college in the '90s, the decade of peak Moore—of her second and third collections, *Like Life* (1990) and *Birds of America* (1998)—when there were fewer distractions, when noncurricular reading greased the wheels to the real thing. A Lorrie Moore story was a tryst, a trip to Pleasure Town, something to imbibe not because it was good for you but because it was *good*. You were not going to be quizzed on this, or have a theory, for God's sake—and this was a moment when you were supposed to have one. During the heady late '90s, in *Salon*, Moore was asked by Dwight Garner—now a *New York Times* critic who reviews her books—if, while at Cornell for her MFA, she had any interest in literary theory. Her response:

I never got really completely immersed. I was at Cornell where Jonathan Culler is, and where Derrida was a visiting professor for a bit, and so it was really very much, you know, in the corridors and in the conversation at Cornell ... We hung out with all the other graduate students who were clearly immersed in theory. I did take a couple of courses and read the books and I did find it interesting initially. Although the complete removal of the author from every single text was always a little alarming to me.

You know, going back home and trying to write your own.

She read but did not convert; she needed no hermeneutical interventions. Alison Lurie was her mentor, but it was obvious to her that Lorrie Moore was Lorrie Moore right away: no guru, no method, no teacher.

Moore had a voice that, like Philip Roth's, announced itself immediately. Voice is this amorphous category that most writers cling to. Everyone has one, but they are not created equal. Bad writers have bad voices, and the successful ones use them to reinforce their badness. Or, if it's an algorithm-driven imitation of a voice, it checks all the boxes, it seeks the corporate embrace. This badness chatters everywhere. You wish you could drown it out, but you can't. The industry tells writers they must be some version of this, because this is what people like.

But good writers have voices, too. You have never met this person, but this person knows you. Where have they been all your life? Lorrie Moore's voice was unmistakable. Her voice took you to the brink and you had to laugh. To be an MFA student in the late '90s was to write Lorrie Moore knockoffs.

Why did they want to be Lorrie Moore? Because to read a Lorrie Moore story is to be devastated. And the subject lurking in the background or brimming at the surface, beyond the screwball banter and wordplay, is the inevitable. It is inevitable to find being a professor

in the Midwest a drag when you've lived in New York, though when Moore did write about New York, it is usually in even bleaker terms. A Lorrie Moore heroine is always the smartest and most clever person in the room, so smart and clever, she knows the limitations of smartness and cleverness.

Read a Lorrie Moore story when you're young, and you gasp. *I couldn't imagine going through that*, even though you just did if you were reading correctly. Get older, moving farther, moving faster, and maybe your trauma will beat my tragedy or Lorrie Moore's ordeal. But live long enough, and it will hit you. Will you endure it like a Lorrie Moore heroine? Will you be laughing wild amid severest woe? Or will you be completely swallowed up?

"The Nun of That," a novella in *Anagrams* (1986), a short-story collection calling itself a novel, is the beginning of Moore presenting to us the way we delude ourselves just to get through our daily lives. This was already Moore's second book, even though she was only 29 and already on the tenure track at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. In "The Dead," Gabriel Conroy was a phantom of what Joyce feared he would become if he had never left Ireland; Moore's Benna Carpenter is what Moore feared she would have become without her precocious success: a teacher at a community college. In her real life, Benna has an affair with a student, gets fired from her job, and is sexually assaulted by her brother. But the story really comes alive with George, her imaginary 5-year-old daughter, and Eleanor, her imaginary friend from grad school. George spouts cute malapropisms, singing a Dylan anthem as, "The ants are my friends. They're blowing in the wind," yet another invented reality. Eleanor persuades Benna, five pages into a dissertation, to drop out, saying, "This isn't writing. This is drinking." All of the best dialogue comes from the fake people.

With all her achievement, failure was Moore's muse. And as Benna's life unravels, her imaginary creations evaporate, and we must mourn for the people who never existed. Joan Didion said that we tell ourselves stories to live, and this is

what a Lorrie Moore heroine does. Daily life is unbearable, and delusion helps us through. “Sometimes,” says George in the end, “I feel like I’m right in the mist of things.”

And there were times when Lorrie Moore was right in the mist of things for me, too. When *A Gate at the Stairs* was published in 2009, I found myself swept up in nostalgia for my wild youth, but even though that voice was as present and beguiling as ever, it felt like a bad match for 9/11 and losing your brother in Afghanistan. It’s not that you couldn’t joke about it. Jon Stewart and *Team America: World Police* found a way. It just didn’t fit. One could enjoy it, but it was hard to justify it. She was missing a step in her post-*Birds of America* stories, too. I found myself commiserating with other Lorrie Moore-ites about these stories—they felt like Lorrie Moore, they had that inescapable voice, but they were somehow mid. Her essays, collected in *See What Can Be Done* (2018), still had it, and I loved this one on *Titanic*:

By the third time one sees James Cameron’s *Titanic*, believe me, its terrible writing is hardly even noticeable! The appalling dialogue no longer appalls. The irritating and obtrusive framework that surrounds the central narrative and that gives the viewer long lingering gazes at a minor actress with whom the director is having an affair tumbles away, inessentially. By this time too, one clearly no longer cares that not one adult one knows and respects doesn’t despise the film; nor does one any longer care what any of these respectable adults might think about anything. Love misunderstood—the heart societally, perhaps cosmically, rebuked—is one’s theme.

There are, in other words, reasons to be obsessed with something, to need to

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see it over and over again, but it does not necessarily have to do with its being good. Something could suck you in and you are completely absorbed. You are clinging to the mast, and it is taking you in until the lights go up.

Lorrie Moore’s take on *Titanic* becomes fate. Would she be a shimmering memory of the ’90s while the world moved on? She’d still be in *The New Yorker* and *The New York Review of Books*, she would still have a named professorship at Wisconsin, then at Vanderbilt, but would every visit to Lorrie Moore really be a tribute to a time when she was the most admired short-story writer in America? Would she get another moment?

Wit, it has been said, is cold. Death is even colder. Cultivate the former before you inevitably face the latter. This is the bargain Moore proposes to us, starting with “You’re Ugly, Too,” a story included in *The Best American Short Stories of the Century*, edited by John Updike. The title comes from a rather crude joke—the answer to a patient wanting a second opinion—but it is not a crude story. Our protagonist, the ironically named Zoë, is someone who not only enjoys jokes, but survives by them. And she’s an assistant professor of history in the numbingly sincere Midwest. After she is informed by her doctor that she has a mysterious growth on her abdomen, or ovaries, or gallbladder, she asks, “You guys practice medicine?” She visits her sister in New York, says nothing about her medical news, and ends up on the roof of her sister’s Manhattan apartment at a Halloween party. Zoë is 34 and single (“Oh my God,” she says, “I forgot to get married”), dressed as a bonehead—with a bone through her head—is getting set up with a guy dressed as a naked lady, with tacky tits and all the rest. This guy thinks he’s funny, but he’s not, plus he doesn’t get her jokes. She eventually nearly pushes him over the roof, enough to upset him, but not enough to get in trouble. The few seconds of peril are her revenge, and we, along with John Updike and everyone else along for the ride, feel a mini catharsis. First the joke, then the diagnosis, then the dangle.

But all of this seems innocent compared to the story for which she will

always be best known. The title itself—“People Like That Are the Only People Here: Canonical Babbling and Peed Onk”—juxtaposes a grim summation with wordplay. This is a story about a mother whose baby gets a cancer diagnosis, and with that, the joking doesn’t stop. The jokes are a retort, a weapon. They are all the Mother has. She had them before the news, and then she thought of them immediately.

“Healthy? I just want the kid to be rich.” A joke, for God’s sake. After he was born, she announced that her life had become a daily sequence of mind-wrecking chores, the same ones over and over again, like a novel by Mrs. Camus. These jokes will kill you!

These jokes will kill you, yet the joking doesn’t stop. There are jokes on every page, a bereavement laugh track. The story first appeared promising fiction-as-disclosure, when *New Yorker* fiction editor Bill Buford ran a fetching picture of the glamorous author who went through hell for you. Moore was furious that the picture ran without her consent, but as a branding campaign, it stuck. Moore didn’t want the photograph to run because it was fiction, not memoir. Yet Moore went through something like that experience, but she says she made most of it up. Her son is a grown man and survived whatever it was, something more mild and less dramatic.

Lorrie Moore is not a stoic. She’s in a screwball comedy, wondering how she got to this radiology lab with the actuarial odds. The Husband knows the Mother, and immediately wants her to monetize her agony:

“Take notes,” says the Husband, after coming straight home from work, midafternoon, hearing the news, and saying all the words out loud—*surgery, metastasis, dialysis, transplant*—then collapsing in a chair in tears. “Take notes. We are going to need the money.”

“Good God,” cries the Mother. Everything inside her suddenly begins to cower and shrink, a thinning of bones. Perhaps this is a soldier’s

readiness, but it has the whiff of death and defeat. It feels like a heart attack, a failure of will and courage, a power failure: a failure of everything. Her face, when she glimpses it in a mirror, is cold and bloated with shock, her eyes scarlet and shrunk. She has already started to wear sunglasses indoors, like a celebrity widow. From where will her own strength come? From some philosophy? From some frigid little philosophy? She is neither stalwart nor realistic and has trouble with basic concepts, such as the one that says events move in one direction only and do not jump up, turn around, and take themselves back.

“Take notes and the pain goes away,” said Virginia Woolf, who did until she didn’t. Whether or not the pain goes away, the Husband points out that the taking of notes could be monetized. It’s the late ’90s. Glossy magazines paid \$2 a word for this stuff, sounding even more calculating than his wife. (Lorrie Moore would be talking about her divorce in public a couple of years later, so go figure.)

The Mother is surrounded by cases way worse than her son. Many of the children will not live long. One mother tells the Mother, our mother, that she is planning an escape: “I can’t go into too much detail because—hi, honey!—the kids are in the room, but I’ll spell out the general idea: R-O-P-E.”

The Mother suffers, but she suffers the least. She makes it out without a bald child. She plans to never see any of the people that she met at the cancer ward ever again. She will take her baby with her and go back to being whatever normal life is for Lorrie Moore. But not until this famous, drop-the-mic ending:

These are the notes.
Now where is the money?

The Husband, at least the fictional one in this story, knew her a little too well. These lines could be on her tombstone.

Moore’s exchange relationship with her trauma looks pretty cold blooded on the page. But then here comes good old cold

wit, before we get to even colder death itself. Lorrie Moore has a “no hugging, no learning” approach to trauma and bereavement. This is the centerpiece of Moore’s new novel, *I Am Homeless if This Is Not My Home*

It’s been a little over 25 years since “People Like That Are the Only People Here.” She could dine out forever on it. Formally, it’s a tour de force. It starts with the horrifying news and ends with an escape, a comfort that everyone else will be so much worse off. But for those of us who hang on and see where she is going next, it is clear that if wit and death are her master themes, then her new novel takes these even further, maybe further than some readers might have liked, although Parul Sehgal, in *The New Yorker*, called her “critic proof,” which is an elegant way of saying, I have so much affection for this imperfect yet beguiling thing before me.

The Lorrie Moore heroine with her medical tests and jokes, then with the baby’s medical tests and jokes, has nowhere to go but into the thing itself. Our heroine is a party clown who keeps attempting suicide until she finally succeeds while under psychiatric observation. Finn, her ex who never got over her, gets urgent news about her while he is tending to his brother, who is dying of cancer in a hospice facility. The book’s early pages are pretty dark, unable to see beyond heavy, inconsolable grief. Finn must pick up Lily’s body and take it across the country to an organ donor facility in Tennessee. Lorrie Moore may have been thinking of Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*, a cross-country trip to honor the wishes of the dead matriarch Addie Bundren. The most famous line of the novel is “My mother is a fish.” Finn and dead Lily allude to this in their exchange.

“I am a fish,” she said.
“You are a fish. Or fishlike.”
“My mother is a fish.”
“Yup. There is that.”
“I suppose by now I have violated the three-day fish rule.”
“The fish rule does not apply to you.”
“That is the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me.”

This exchange is happening when Finn, in a hotel room, bathes his dead, great love. But in Faulkner’s novel, the dead stay dead, even if they continue to haunt. In Moore’s book, the most vital character has a lot in common with earlier Moore heroines, except that she is a rotting corpse.

Yet even as a corpse, Moore makes us fall for her, knowing that she is already in the mist of things.

When Finn is at home without her, when she has died twice, he cannot let go. He is sitting in front of his keyboard. Twitter is filled with accounts of the dearly departed. AI can keep a phantom of the dead alive, sort of. Sort of is all Finn has left.

He changed all his passwords to Lily1 with a dozen y’s—strong with a long bar of green. Memory. Passage. Nothing in the world is truly over.

A couple of years ago I moved from Syracuse to Brooklyn, and I made an extra trip to retrieve my vaccination card and anything else I might have forgotten. We who have too many books are always looking to cut them down to essentials, especially when there is a big move to a smaller space. And yet, dear reader, it took until recently for me to realize that I forgot to pack a single Lorrie Moore book with me. When my apartment burned down over 20 years ago, replenishing *Birds of America* and *Anagrams* were high priority. Did I really think I had moved beyond Lorrie Moore? Did I see my new urban life as one with more stoicism and less delusion?

When I read Lorrie Moore’s new novel and then reread everything else, I find that, as I age, I need my delusions more than ever. I’m not above communing with my imaginary friends. *I Am Homeless if This Is Not My Home* is by no means a perfect book, but I am grateful for it. There is a massacre ahead. Here is someone to help me through. Whatever life does for me or to me, I will never leave Lorrie Moore behind again. ■

This article was originally published on August 7, 2023.

The Value of Inclusion

When I went to summer camp, it wasn't a safe space to come out as a queer woman. A generation later, my daughter's camp shows how much has changed.

BY ELANA MOSCOVITCH

Before our daughter left for Camp Geshet, a Habonim Dror camp in Ontario, we received a parent handbook that included a new section on the camp's gender-inclusion policies. My brother had shared it with me because he was active on the board and felt proud of the work they had done to educate staff and parents and put these policies on paper. When I looked at the handbook, I saw that the language was similar to other gender-inclusion policies in the Reform camp movement, articulating the values of inclusivity and LGBTQ-positivity that the staff had already demonstrated. We knew that Geshet's progressive, socialist values would make it a good fit for her. We weren't disappointed. When we dropped her off at camp earlier this summer, she was given a name tag and asked to choose her pronouns from a sheet full of labels with different options. I was not surprised when she picked "she/her" without any hesitation, as her own identity as a girl has never been ambiguous.

Still, I was personally touched by this small effort to help LGBTQ+ children and staff feel like they belong at camp. After all, I identify as queer myself, and I wasn't always comfortable being out in Jewish contexts as a teenager. These issues are important to our daughter, too: She has two moms, and when she first started elementary school, she was the only one in her class with same-sex parents. She has had to explain more than once that she doesn't have a dad—not because he died, but because we used a donor. So this has been an important

issue for our whole family, long before it was time for camp.

When we introduced ourselves as her two moms to the first counselor we met at Geshet, she told us she was queer, too. This also made me happy, because I knew her counselors would be accepting of her family structure and I could see the glow on our daughter's face as well.

Before we even drove out of the parking lot, I stopped to chat with a queer couple (two women) whose son was attending camp for the first time. They looked a bit nervous, so I reassured them that he would love it. One of the other moms said that her own experience at camp when she was a child wasn't so great, "especially when girls started getting into boys and makeup." I could identify with this experience: It framed the feeling I often had as a teenager of not "fitting in" at camp in a new way, and I realized that maybe I felt this more acutely because I knew I was different, even before I was out to myself or others.

My first summer of camp, I was 9 and going into fifth grade. I loved the girls in my cabin, and the friends I made swimming and water-skiing and participating in *peulot* (activities) about Israel. But then my family spent the next summer in Israel, and when I returned for the summer before seventh grade, I had a terrible time. After a year in Israel, I was experiencing a bit of culture shock. Israeli kids were different—they cared less about clothes and appearances. In the Toronto Jewish community, having the right clothing was important and my parents were against buying me brand names, so I didn't have the "right clothes" for camp. Plus, I was in

the middle of that gawky and awkward stage of wearing glasses and braces.

But on top of that, there were also camp traditions that reinforced heteronormativity, such as weekly dances, and the "mock wedding" we had for a girl and boy in our unit. The campers talked a lot about crushes and "dating." I didn't connect with the other girls in the cabin, and they didn't really get to know me, either. When they made up a cabin song, the line about me that they chose to rhyme with "Shaulna's always snoring" was "Elana's very boring." I knew I wasn't boring (not to the friends who really knew me) but it hurt, nonetheless.

The following summer, my parents gave me permission to attend Camp Tel Yehuda, a Young Judaea camp in New York state, with my two closest friends from our year in Jerusalem. A boy two years older than me asked me to be his girlfriend, which thrilled and surprised me. His name was Jared. He was from Texas. I had someone to walk me to dinner and we stayed a couple all summer. When we made out on the back steps of our cabin, he tasted like toothpaste. The girls asked me questions about him and I got to have private chats with our counselor about "how far to go" with him. Having a boyfriend elevated my status and made me more popular. I was surprised by how little supervision there was of our activities. If my parents had known what was going on, they would never have let me attend this camp.

I didn't fully realize I was queer until

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Jonah

A poem

Lying on the floor
in the belly of the beast

black-ribbed dome
vaults vital above,

the heat cleaves
the furnace bellows

up the blow hole flue,
the only air

is already here
each breath borrows

and goes up
in currency—

Outside holds
uncertainty below,

forgiveness breathes
above, mercy flows

where bodies bow,
to the arrow of a dove.

—Jacqui Ritchie

I was a counselor, though by the time I was 16 I felt annoyed that I had to endure all the boy/girl flirting and hooking up, and felt lonelier than I would have if I'd thought there were other kids who might be gay—or that this was even an option for me. I was barely even out to myself, although I secretly wrote in my journal about my crush on our *mifakedet* (female officer), who taught me to shoot a gun. If these issues had been talked about at all, I might have realized that my lack of interest in boys or flirting was because I was gay. Perhaps there would have been other kids whose gender or sexual identity was also not

cis-heteronormative who would have come out—and I could have come out sooner than I did.

My daughter's camp has taken an intentional approach to educating their counselors and training them around issues such as consent and sexual assault. Pre-camp, the staff attended workshops by Canvas Arts Action Programs, an arts-based social justice organization that facilitates workshops for staff and campers on consent, sexual assault, gender inclusivity, and intersectionality. The Toronto-based organization was founded by two former Habonim Dror campers, Miriam Selik and Ayla Lefkowitz, who have made it their mission to make camps and schools safer and more inclusive. My daughter's camp director told me that they no longer have dances like they did when I was a camper, where boys and girls were expected to couple up. "We expect kids to have their first relationship at camp, even their first kiss," she told me, "but we don't have to sanction it or create environments that put pressure on or establish norms of heteronormativity that exclude gender-queer kids." Instead, they have weekly Israeli folk dancing and whole-camp dance parties. My daughter wrote to us from camp that she stayed up past midnight dancing. The first Shabbat had a Pride theme and the photos that were posted on the website showed kids wearing all kinds of clothing, from button-downs to skirts. Dresses were no longer mandatory for girls, as they once were. Many kids were waving or even wearing Pride flags.

At school, our daughter chose to be one of four kids on the Pride committee, and befriended the only out non-binary student in her middle school, an eighth grader. She has always been at the forefront of advocacy for queer, nonbinary, and trans kids, even correcting me with a roll of her eyes when I occasionally misgender someone. She hasn't mentioned getting to know the other kids at camp who have same-sex parents, but it must feel good to her to have counselors who identify as nonbinary, queer, or transgender, and who accept her family structure. She has often

complained that she is the only one with same-sex parents at her school. At camp, I saw several same-sex parents in the parking lot, in addition to the lesbian couple who parked beside us.

There are clearly more opportunities now as compared to when I was young for campers to be out and themselves and to engage in sexual exploration or dating whomever they are attracted to. Last summer, a 16-year-old camper at Gesher was able to come out and have her first relationship with a girl. This would never have been possible for me when I was a camper.

I love that progressive Jewish camps are being so intentional about educating their staff and creating a culture of belonging.

If it had been like this when I was younger, I wouldn't have felt like I was so different from the other kids my age. I would have explored my identity and acknowledged my romantic and sexual attractions much earlier. I wouldn't have been scared to come out to the staff at Camp Miriam, or felt I had to hide my identity at Camp Solelim, where I felt I had no one to talk to all summer. I would have had many more allies than I did, and opportunities to date women at a younger age and explore these relationships the way heterosexual teens my age were doing.

Even after I came out, I felt like I had to choose between my identities: I could be either Jewish or queer, but not both at the same time. Going out dancing at lesbian bars on Shabbat made me feel guilty; talking about my strong connection to Israel or my religious beliefs with my queer friends often felt wrong. This caused me to feel like I was never fully myself. I denied aspects of my Jewish identity in order to be out as queer, and it took me years to reclaim them. Now, Jewish queer, nonbinary, or trans kids can fully be out and themselves at camp; having a gender-inclusion policy in writing means that when parents are choosing a camp for their children, they can be reassured this is a Jewish space where the kids will feel safe—and able to be themselves. ■

This article was originally published on August 4, 2023.

Marinated Fresh Anchovies on Pepper Salad

BY DANA KESSLER

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE MARINATED FRESH ANCHOVIES

- 20 fresh anchovy filets**
- 4 tablespoons sea salt**
- 1 thyme branch**
- rind of 1 lemon**
- 1 bay leaf**
- olive oil (enough to cover the filets)**

FOR THE PEPPER SALAD

- 2 finely sliced roasted peppers**
- 1 finely sliced purple onion**
- 1 bunch of parsley**
- 3 tablespoons olive oil**
- juice from ½ a lemon**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**

PREPARATION

TO MAKE THE MARINATED FRESH ANCHOVIES

Step 1

Sprinkle sea salt over the anchovy filets.

Step 2

Wait for half an hour, then lightly rinse the filets, dry them and put them in a dish with all the other ingredients.

Step 3

It's best to eat them the next day.

TO MAKE THE MARINATED FRESH ANCHOVIES ON PEPPER SALAD

Step 1

Mix everything together and serve with the marinated anchovies.

Yield: Makes 4 servings

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