

# Anti-Israel Intruders arrested for invading IDF Presentation at Temple Israel in Westport, Connecticut



## Temple Israel, Westport, Connecticut

Before our retirement to Florida, we lived in the Fairfield-Westport, Connecticut area for over 35 years. On several occasions we attended public events at Temple Israel-an ecumenically respected reform congregation in the Westport community. I was frankly shocked to read this post of a police report and eyewitness account of what occurred at Temple Israel this afternoon at 1PM. Two 25 year old alleged students from New Haven rushed past staff at the entrance and attempted to enter the meeting room on the second floor and were physically restrained by temple staff. They were there to protest a presentation by IDF representatives, including a Brig. General, before a large audience of 80 women at a luncheon and presentation by the Friends of the IDF. The intruders were heard beating on the meeting room door by frightened audience members shouting "Justice for the Palestinians" or "Freedom for the Palestinians." Many of the women thought the intruders might have concealed weapons and dove under tables calling 911. The intruders were found to be unarmed by Westport Police who arrested them. As a precaution the Westport Police ordered lockdown of adjacent facilities in the immediate vicinity; Coleytown Middle School, Coleytown Elementary School, the pre-school at the Unitarian Church and the Temple Israel Nursery until officers

were able to clear the buildings. Police charged the pair of intruders with criminal trespass and breach of peace and released on bond to appear in Westport Court on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

The blog 06880 (Westport's zip code) editor, Dan Woog, [posted](#) the Police report and statements of an audience member and Temple Israel President. Our NER colleague Dr. Richard L. Rubenstein, who resides in neighboring Fairfield, had this comment:

Unfortunately, there will be more, much more, of this. There is no way to find a common ground with angry people who collect other people's unexamined grievances as an excuse for their own unwarranted aggression. The left sees these acts of violence of increasing intensity as a prelude to eventually taking power. We had better elect a strong, no-nonsense conservative government to take the place of what we have. If we have more of the same, the situation will only get worse until there is a full scale left-wing takeover.

From my own experience, New Haven had been rife with virulent anti-israel protest groups that would periodically organize protest events at both Yale and Southern Connecticut State University.

What follows is the 06880 blog [post](#):

**Police Report On Temple  
Israel Confrontation; Temple  
Guest Thought She Might**

# Be Killed

Posted on [May 12, 2015](#) | [1 Comment](#)

*The Westport Police Department issued this statement this afternoon:*

Today at approximately 1 p.m. the Westport Police Department received a complaint from Temple Israel about unwanted people protesting at the property. Shortly after the initial dispatch to responding units, the communications center started to receive additional calls reporting that a person had a gun. The first 2 arriving officers were able to take custody of the two individuals on the 2nd floor meeting room where staff had physically detained them.



**Daniel Fischer was 1 of the 2 men arrested in the Temple Israel incident today.**

During the initial response, Coleytown Middle School, Coleytown Elementary School, the pre-school at the Unitarian Church and the Temple Israel Nursery were put into lockdown until officers were able to clear the buildings.

No gun was located during the incident, but a witness had observed one of the men approaching with a shirt over his arm and hand which led some witnesses to believe he was carrying a gun. Westport officers were assisted by the Weston Police Department during the incident.

During the investigation it was learned that the Temple was hosting a talk with members of the Israeli Defense Force. The 2 suspects had arrived to protest the IDF. They entered the building and were confronted by staff and told

to leave.



**Gregory Williams was also arrested today.**

The two suspects refused and walked past staff, and attempted to enter the meeting place. Temple Israel staff had to physically prevent them from entering the meeting room.

As the 2 were detained outside the meeting room it was reported that they were shouting various statements regarding the IDF. The actions of the two2 protestors created enough concern to the attendees that several people had exited the premises in fear for their safety.

The 2 suspects claim to be college students protesting the IDF. A vehicle which witnesses reported as dropping them off has been located and the person has been identified. He will not be charged with any criminal charges.

The following individuals were arrested: Daniel Fisher and Gregory Williams. Both are 25 years old, and live in New Haven. Both have been charged with criminal trespass 1<sup>st</sup> Degree and breach of peace 2<sup>nd</sup> degree 53a-181(a)(3). They were issued \$1500 bonds, and will appear May 21 at Norwalk Court.

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*Meanwhile, Stephanie Bass wrote in a comment on the 1st "06880" report of the incident:*

In the middle of speeches, there was a loud disturbance. I couldn't tell how many people, but they were banging on the door to the room, yelling either "Justice for the Palestinians" or "Freedom for the Palestinians." There were 80 women in the room. People started screaming "Get

down!" and "Call 911!" Women ran to the back of the room, or ran out a back door.

The "Palestinian" ranting went on. I was waiting for the machine gun fire. First I thought, I could die today; then I thought if many people die today, I don't want to be one of them.



## Temple Israel

I'd been in Israel during the '73 war. I thought of Newtown and that movie theater in Colorado. I dove under the table. After a few minutes, the Israeli Brigadier General grabbed my hand. She said it was okay to come out; personnel at the temple had subdued the men.

This did not feel like political protest. This felt like terrorism.

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*Temple Israel president Steven Phillips added these thoughts, in an email to members:*

As some of you may have heard, an incident occurred at Temple Israel as our congregation was hosting a luncheon for Friends of the Israel Defense Forces. At no time was any one in physical danger.

Two unarmed young men appeared at the door and noisily attempted to gain entry to the luncheon and disrupt its proceedings. Their intent appears to have been to protest and create a disturbance. They were confronted by executive director Lisa Goldberg, then detained by director of member engagement Bryan Bierman, Cantor Dan Sklar and Rabbi P.J. Schwartz, and others. The Westport

Police Department was called and officers responded immediately.

The 2 men are now in police custody. A thorough search of the intruders, our building and our grounds by police found no weapons of any kind. To ensure our safety, the police will remain at Temple Israel and maintain a presence throughout the rest of today and into tomorrow.

The police have advised us that we can safely continue with our day as planned. We will therefore hold our scheduled religious school classes, TI High, Confirmation and any programming we have planned for this evening.



Of course, we will continue to follow up with the police as they look into this matter. We believe that the response of our staff and Westport Police Department was exemplary. As we learn more about this incident, we will continue to work with the Westport Police Department to ensure that our security procedures keep everyone safe. In the meantime, if you have questions, please feel free to email me or to contact the Temple office.

These incidents are always extremely disturbing. Fortunately, no one was in danger. I would like to thank the staff and the police for the poise and professionalism with which they handled the situation. We are very lucky to be served by them both.