

FIRST READING: The Canadian Jews being purged from civic life

Regular contributor Geoffrey Clarfield recommends this recent article by Tristin Hopper from the [National Post](#) as of interest to our readers.

On Thursday, as many as 12,000 demonstrators massed in the Swedish port city of Malmo for the sole purpose of protesting the involvement of an Israeli singer in the Eurovision Song Contest.



Israel has participated in the event since 1973, and has won it four times. But mobs – which included Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg – wanted 20-year-old Israeli singer Eden Golan banned from the competition due to her country's war against Hamas. Golan was ultimately forced to move around Malmo with a security detail befitting a foreign head of state; a motorcade comprising 100 Swedish police officers with a police helicopter providing escort. (She finished fifth overall in the jury vote late Saturday night but received the second-highest tally in the popular vote.)

It's only the most extreme example of a trend that's been happening in Canada for months. Multiple Canadian venues, events and festivals have openly purged Jewish artists and athletes from their lineups over the most tenuous of Israeli connections – if any connections even existed at all.

Below, a roundup from just the last five months of Jews and Jewish symbols being ousted from Canadian public life due to anti-Israel sentiments or pressure.

Photographer pulled from a Vancouver toy art exhibition over Israeli birthplace

Vancouver photographer Dina Goldstein's famed "In the Dollhouse" photo series could not have anything less to do with Israel. In 2012, Goldstein staged a series of whimsical tableaux of domestic scenes involving actors representing a Barbie and Ken-esque couple...

But Goldstein was born in Tel Aviv. And for this reason alone, Goldstein [told the Vancouver arts magazine Stir](#) that she had been informed by organizers that they feared vandalism. . . curator Viahsta Yuan who mentioned that the exhibition had "got a complaint from a group of Vancouver artists who didn't think I should be showing because of the war in Israel and Gaza.

The Star of David purged from Ontario school materials

In the official multifaith calendar for the York Region District School Board, Jewish holidays are denoted with a small menorah, while the holidays of other religions are denoted with their usual representative symbols (a cross for Christians, the star and crescent for Muslims, etc.). The decision might have gone unnoticed if not for a leaked email revealing that administrators deliberately avoided using the Star of David – the traditional symbol of Judaism – lest it remind students of Israel.

“For judaism, the Menorah was chosen over the Star of David due to its purely religious significance, while the Star of David carries political connotations with the State of Israel,” [reads the email](#).

Anti-Israel pressure forces cancellation of Jewish-Canadian play

The Runner, written and performed by playwright Christopher Morris, surrounds an Israeli volunteer paramedic who attends the aftermath of a terrorist attack and decides to treat the suspected Palestinian perpetrator rather than her Israeli victim. Morris [isn't Israeli](#) and has little personal connection to the current Gaza conflict. And his play is anything but a jingoistic celebration of the State of Israel.
. . .

In January, Victoria, B.C.'s The Belfry Theatre capitulated to anti-Israel demonstrators in [cancelling a scheduled performance of The Runner](#). Protesters – some of whom had vandalized the venue with “Free Palestine” stickers and graffiti – sought to enforce a “cultural boycott” in which any art with even a peripheral connection to Israel be targeted for cancellation.

The Canadian Jewish Film Festival evicted from its venue at the last minute

In December 2023, Hamilton, Ont.'s Playhouse Cinema agreed to be the venue for the three-day Hamilton Jewish Film Festival in early April. But with only three weeks to go, the Playhouse Cinema abruptly told the festival they were no longer welcome due to “safety and security concerns at this particularly sensitive time.”

Jewish cyclist disinvited from an Ontario International Women's Day event

Cyclist Leah Goldstein had been invited to address a March 8

International Women's Day event in Peterborough, Ont...

But in February, Goldstein (who now lives in Vernon, B.C.) was [abruptly pulled from the program](#) because – as a Canadian-born woman raised in Israel by Israeli parents – she had completed military service with the Israel Defense Forces starting in the late 1980s.

Israeli hockey players barred from international competition (and then reinstated conditionally)

The controversy in this case surrounded a U20 hockey tournament in Bulgaria...

The International Ice Hockey Federation... IIHF has a Canadian on its executive, Team Canada was set to be a major contender at the Bulgarian tournament, and the Israeli team at the centre of the case has three Canadian players. Just two weeks prior to the tournament, the IIHF told the Israeli national team not to show up because their safety couldn't be guaranteed. The Bulgarian arena hosting the tournament was located near a "large student population from the affected areas in the Middle East," they explained.

Israel swept the tournament and [won gold](#), by the way.

Read it all [here](#) photograph from the [Belfast Telegraph](#)