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Per my comment this morning, this is from the NYT Jerusalem bureau chief

### **In Israel, Open Dissent Is Among the Gaza War Casualties**

By JODI RUDOREN

JERUSALEM — The signs are everywhere.

At a recent demonstration in Tel Aviv against Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip, counterdemonstrators chanted "Death to the left!" along with the more commonly heard "Death to Arabs!" Afterward, some of the right-wingers beat some of the leftists — using large poles that had held Israeli flags.

B'tselem, an Israeli human rights group, was blocked from broadcasting a paid advertisement in which the names of Palestinian children who had been killed in Gaza were read aloud.

Bar-Ilan University rebuked a professor who expressed empathy for all the war's victims in an email to students.

And at a recent screening at the Jerusalem Cinematheque, a fading bastion of liberalism, when some members of the audience stood for a moment of silence in memory of four Palestinian boys killed as they played soccer on a Gaza beach, others who kept their seats berated them with cries of "Shame on you — what about our boys?" and "You're raping the audience!" according to several people who were there.

In Israel, open discourse and dissent appear to be among the casualties of the monthlong war in Gaza, according to stalwarts of what is known as the Zionist left — Israelis who want the country to end its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and help create a sovereign Palestinian state.

Israeli politics have been drifting rightward for years, and many see that trend sharpening and solidifying now. Several polls find that as many as nine out of 10 Israeli Jews back the prosecution of the war by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; when that support slipped a bit last week, it seemed to be because more people wanted an even more aggressive assault on Hamas, the militant Islamist faction that dominates Gaza. Israelis who question the government or the military on Facebook, or who even share photographs of death and devastation in Gaza, find themselves defriended, often by people they thought were politically like-minded.

“One of the victims of war is any nuance,” said Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman, who emigrated from New York in 1979. “The idea of having a nuanced position that recognizes the suffering on both sides and the complications is almost impossible to maintain.”

Rabbi Weiman-Kelman is the founder of Kol Haneshama, one of Israel’s largest and best-known Reform congregations, where every service ends with an adaptation of a traditional Hebrew prayer for peace that includes a line in Arabic borrowed from a traditional Muslim prayer. (Disclosure: I have occasionally attended those services.)

When Rabbi Weiman-Kelman recently circulated a petition condemning racist comments by a right-wing rabbi, a member of the synagogue’s board whose son was fighting in Gaza said the congregation should stay out of the matter, and “focus on our boys,” he recalled. And during services Friday night, another leader of the congregation with lengthy leftist credentials stood up and said he no longer felt comfortable with a different prayer, which included a wish for “shalom” — “peace” — for “all who dwell on earth.” “The man said, ‘There really are bad people out there who I don’t wish shalom,’ ” the rabbi recounted. “It was a devastating moment.”

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Some politicians, like the Labor Party chief, Isaac Herzog, have invoked an ethos of “Quiet, we’re shooting”: When sons and brothers are on the front line, the thinking goes, unity is more important than robust debate.

But the left-leaning newspaper Haaretz ran an editorial last week that referred to “McCarthyism spreading in Israel,” citing the Bar-Ilan University case.

“Less and less tolerance exists for such a multiplicity of voices,” wrote Naomi Chazan, an activist, academic and former leftist member of Parliament, in a recent column in the paper. “The cohesion of Israeli society is being torn asunder, as anti-Arab sentiments have gained traction and intolerance runs rampant.”

Daria Carmon, 33, who attended the Tel Aviv protest, said that slogans and viewpoints that used to be seen as extremist have now become mainstream. She blamed the invective that Israeli leaders use toward Hamas, and the Israeli news outlets that cover every soldier’s funeral but rarely show video from Gaza. (Paula Weiman-Kelman, the rabbi’s wife, has taken to watching Al Jazeera.)

“It’s hard to fight against such a collectivist society, when all the messages are that everybody’s out to get us,” Ms. Carmon said. “It takes a lot to really resist that. It’s exhausting.”