

FLASHPOINTS: ISRAEL, ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE HOLOCAUST

*Dvir Abramovich**Hybrid Publishers, Melbourne, 2014, xi + 292 pp.*

Dvir Abramovich is Director of the Program in Jewish Culture and Society at The University of Melbourne and Israel Kipen Senior Lecturer in Hebrew and Jewish Studies there. As well, he is Chairman of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission and a regular columnist for the *Australian Jewish News*. He is thus a well-known figure in the Melbourne Jewish community and his views reflect those of most Melbourne Jews today. As an academic, I must also say that it is refreshing to find a fellow academic who is not a knee-jerk hater of Israel; in today's academic circles, unfortunately Israel haters are as numerous as bedbugs in a cheap hotel. This work is an interesting collection of about one hundred columns and short essays which first appeared between about 2003 and 2013 in the *Australian Jewish News* and in a range of mainstream Australian newspapers.

Most readers will not be surprised at his targets – anti-Semites internationally and in Australia; anti-Zionists and BDS advocates; champions of terrorism; and Holocaust deniers and distorters. The essays are packed with pithy good sense and, personally, I do not disagree with any of them. In his brief Introduction, Dr Abramovich notes that readers should not ‘bother trying to work out whether I am left, right, centre or whatever label you tag me with. If you try, you’ll be left dazed and confused because I don’t fit neatly into any category’; he also admits that he has ‘at times ... [a] confrontational’ style, but is ‘never personal’. This valuable work offers an accurate insight into the chief concerns, during the past dozen years or so, of the Melbourne Jewish community, and, for that reason, will be an important source for future historians.

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