

I grew up in a Zionist household, and that's probably an understatement. When I was ten years old, my father founded The David Project, a non-profit organization that worked to help college and high school students combat the rampant anti-Israelism and increasingly hostile environments on their campuses. I was only a child but I would attend the educational programs myself well through my teens, and became something of a poster-child for the organization's summer programs.

When I entered New York University as a freshman, I assumed that the massive Jewish population would insulate me from the kinds of horrible events I'd heard about on other campuses. It wasn't until I became Hillel President as a sophomore that I realized just how entrenched anti-Zionism was on a seemingly friendly campus. I watched as my compatriots were often at a loss for words passing by a rally hosted by Students for Justice in Palestine, or during a particularly heated class on Middle Eastern Policy. And somehow it seemed like all of the tools I'd learned were never enough to fight against the cultural forces that incubate the worst kinds of anti-Semitism.

After I graduated NYU, I got a job at the Wall Street Journal as an editor and occasional writer. I learned from the best and brightest journalists of the day from within the news outlet probably the friendliest to Israel. After two years I decided to go back to school, so I moved to Dublin to study Irish literature, and it was only there that my own sense of Zionism crystallized.

Ireland is the most anti-Israel country in the entire European Union. It's newspapers, social media, general public opinion and university campuses are dead-set against the Jewish state. Having a discussion about Israel would ignite cries of "fuck the Zionists" in just about any pub in the city, and often I couldn't get past the name-calling in order to have real discussions about the Middle East. It took tremendous patience and several creative conversation tools to force people to listen to what I had to say. Sometimes I saw some success, other times people turned away from me in disgust, but I did figure out the best ways to engage with my ideological counterparts and make progress towards a new understanding.

My time in Dublin has opened my eyes to the future that faces Europe's Jewish populations if we cannot figure out a way to reverse the anti-Israel tide. That is why I want with the European Jewish communities as well as the Israeli ones, to find new solutions to a problem I've been aware of since birth.