

THE CHOICE

The Labor and Coalition teams answer our exclusive policy questions

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With compliments

CENTURY PLAZA TRADING

With compliments

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This edition of the *AIR* is our customary pre-election special – continuing a long-standing tradition of asking both major parties to answer a series of questions on key policy areas of special interest to the Jewish community before Australia goes to the polls. We invite everyone, before casting their ballot for the May 3 election, to look closely at the answers by both parties to our 11 questions on issues including: Israel and the peace process; the Gaza war; the antisemitism crisis and communal security; the Iranian nuclear issue and Australian multiculturalism.

In addition, Bren Carlill and Galit Jones document the recent descent into rank extremism by the Australian Greens party, looking at the often bizarre statements of both serving Greens parliamentarians and some of their pre-selected candidates for this election. Plus, British academic Shalom Lappin explains the strange evolution of the postmodern Left, leading many of its adherents to embrace views on Jews hard to distinguish from those of the fascist far-right.

Finally, don't miss Ilan Evyatar on Israel's dilemmas vis-à-vis the US nuclear talks with Iran, Palestinian human rights activist Bassem Eid's plea to support Gaza's brave protesters and Jonathan Spyer's report from the IDF's new Morag corridor inside Gaza.

As always, please give us your views on any aspect of this edition at editorial@aijac.org.au.

Tzvi Fleischer

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Prime Minister Anthony Albanese (left) and Opposition Leader Peter Dutton shake hands ahead of the second leaders' debate of the 2025 federal election campaign at the ABC Studios in Parramatta, Sydney, Wednesday, April 16, 2025 (Image: AAP/ ABC Pool)

THE CHOICE
The Labor and Coalition leaders answer our 11 questions

Australia/Israel Review

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EDITORIAL CHAIRMAN
COLIN RUBENSTEIN**

AFTER THREE MOMENTOUS YEARS

Given all that has happened recently – especially with regards to Israel, the Australian Jewish community and the Federal Government's policies regarding both – it's hard to believe that it has been just under three years since the last Federal election.

A surge in domestic antisemitism kicked off here barely one day after Hamas' surprise mass terror attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, with the notorious antisemitic demonstration at the Sydney Opera House. Acts of anti-Jewish hate soon soared to levels never before seen on our shores, in the streets and on our university campuses, culminating in the torching of Melbourne's Adass Israel Synagogue with some congregants inside, a horrific event that miraculously did not lead to loss of life. Then criminal gangs began paying people to carry out attacks to increase the Jewish sense of vulnerability for their own purposes.

Meanwhile Israel's seven-front defensive war against not only Hamas, but Hezbollah and all of Iran's regional proxies, as well as attacks from Iran itself, is still unresolved. We remain in the midst of history-making events with profound implications for the future.

And so, following a decades-old pre-election tradition, the *Australia/Israel Review* has once again turned to Labor and the Coalition to ask them some of the questions weighing on the minds of most members of the Australian Jewish community. Hopefully, many of these same questions will also be of interest to all Australians who both appreciate the Australia-Israel relationship and understand that the fight against antisemitism is a fight for Australian democratic values, social cohesion and national security, all of which serve every Australian.

Three years ago, I wrote that regardless of whether the parties of the Prime Minister or Opposition Leader came out ahead, a sea change in Australia's historic, mutually-beneficial and close relationship with Israel was not on the ballot.

Many would argue that this is no longer the case. The shocking events of October 7 put the Albanese Government's commitment to Israel and the Jewish community to a stress test that most members of our community would agree it has not always passed. Certainly, on these pages and in the Australian media, I and other AIJAC analysts have felt compelled to criticise the Government's judgment on a variety of issues and policies. This is a matter of record, so I will not repeat those criticisms here.

However, given this context, a comparison of the answers to AIJAC's questions before the last election and this election seems particularly important and enlightening.

While the Coalition provided detailed responses to each of our questions before both polls, this time around, the ALP chose to reply with a letter laying out the current Government's responses to only select issues raised in our questionnaire. In a sense, Labor's decision to deliver a missive instead of answering the questions directly itself raises some questions.

In any event, while there is significant bipartisan overlap on several issues, a comparison of the answers reveals a widening gulf between the positions of the major parties on both the Australia-Israel relationship and Australian Jewish affairs compared to 2022.

Both the ALP and Coalition campaigns recognise the need for government action to assist the Jewish community to protect itself against security threats and address the unprecedented levels of antisemitism and hate crimes, and both promise substantial financial support to aid the Jewish community.

Yet noticeable differences exist. The Coalition seems to be emphasising law-enforcement measures to counter the antisemitism problem, including a new police task force

and efforts to revoke the visas of immigrants involved in antisemitic acts, while Labor's messaging focuses on safety, inclusion and using the tools of government to legislate against hate.

Regarding the dire situation on Australian campuses, Labor points to the Parliamentary inquiry it initiated as a major step – saying it's the most comprehensive response yet. The Liberals compellingly say it's not enough, and pledge a full judicial inquiry into antisemitism at universities with legal powers beyond making recommendations.

Both major parties promise to increase trade and investment ties with Israel, preserve our historic relationship and continue the long-standing bipartisan support for a two-state resolution.

Yet, in some respects, the general policies can sound very similar yet be quite far apart in terms of both detail and tone.

For example, while the Coalition has promised to support Israel at the UN, the ALP says it will support resolutions that bolster a two-state solution. While that may sound reasonable, it elides the fact that most of the UN's annual slate of viciously one-sided anti-Israel resolutions pay nominal lip service to a two-state solution, even as they undermine this goal in practice.

And perhaps most glaringly, the ALP has doubled down on its wrong-headed in-principle support for recognising a Palestinian state before a peace agreement is directly negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians. This is a disastrous proposal, effectively rewarding terrorism, that would see Australia help undermine any incentive the Palestinians have to negotiate a genuine end to their conflict with Israel.

The contrast between the parties is also clear on the vital international security issue of Iran and its rapidly ripening nuclear program. The Coalition offered a strong answer to our policy question on this subject. The ALP chose not to address it at all.

An additional complexity in this election is that, continuing a long-term trend away from the major

parties, polls indicate the next government will in all likelihood have to rely on support from independents, especially the Teals who were so successful in 2022, and have a mixed record on Jewish concerns, depending on the candidate.

“It would be fair to say that, for most Australian Jews, a minority government dependent on the Greens would be a worst-case, chilling outcome to this election”

This will also be the first Federal election for the Greens Party since it abandoned the two-state peace paradigm in favour of near-blanket support for Palestinian demands and claims. This move toward extremism, which began in June

2023, only accelerated after October 7, with Foreign Minister Senator Penny Wong tellingly calling out the Greens for “collaborating” in some of the criminal activity associated with the anti-Israel protests. Plus, their major response to the antisemitism crisis has been to act as if almost all Jewish fears about antisemitism are simply a smokescreen to shield Israel from criticism (see p. 20).

It would be fair to say that, for most Australian Jews, a minority government dependent on the Greens would be a worst-case, chilling outcome to this election.

On May 3, Australia will render a verdict. We greatly hope AIJAC's questionnaire will help ensure the choice voters make is an informed one.

AIR

AIJAC MOURNS PETRO GEORGIOU AO

The Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC) mourns the passing of Petro Georgiou AO, who was a long-standing friend of both the Australian Jewish community and AIJAC in particular, and an esteemed champion of Australian multiculturalism and our nation's democratic liberal values. He passed away on April 4, aged 77.

Principled, constructive, creative and loyal, his life was one of distinction and remarkable achievement

We are proud Petro visited Israel in one of our groups in 2003 and are very grateful for all that he did for AIJAC, for the Australian Jewish community and for Australia as a nation.

To his children Dino and Alexia, his partner Roxanne and the entire family, we convey both our condolences and our sincerest wishes that memories of Petro will always be a blessing.

WORD FOR WORD

“If it requires military [force to stop Iran's nuclear program], we're going to have military. Israel will obviously be very much involved in that – it'll be the leader of that... We have a little time, but we don't have much time because we're not going to let them have a nuclear weapon. We're going to let them thrive. I want them to thrive. I want Iran to be great. The only thing they can't have is a nuclear weapon.”

US President Donald Trump (*Times of Israel*, April 10).

“Today, the dictator of Iran – Ayatollah Khamenei – posted a call to eliminate Israel. Let me be clear: Israel will not be eliminated. What must be eliminated is Iran's axis of terror.”

Israeli PM Binyamin Netanyahu (X/Twitter, April 16).

“O Hamas politicians, close the gates of hell with rationality... They are holding more than two million Palestinian residents hostage and using them as human shields to preserve their organisation.”

Official Palestinian Authority daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida* on March 20 (Palestinian Media Watch, April 3).



SCRIBBLINGS

Tzvi Fleischer

HAPPY, BUT NO ACCIDENT

Even before October 7, many people found it a bit counter-intuitive, an anomaly even, that Israel – with its frequent conflict and terrorism, vituperative politics and unusually high cost-of-living – was regularly situated near the top of the annual World Happiness Index published by the UN's Sustainable Development Solutions Network. But what is even more shocking is that the trauma of October 7 – and the constant warfare, extreme daily tensions and economic and social disruptions since then – failed to knock Israel out of the top 10. In the 2025 World Happiness Index (based on data from 2024), Israel placed eighth. That's above successful, prosperous countries with minimal violence and disorder, such as Australia and New Zealand which came in at 11 and 12, respectively.

A lot has been written about what it is that makes Israelis so happy in defiance of what seems to be common sense about the sources of happiness. But in my view, while the answer is certainly not straightforward, the essence of Israeli happiness can mainly be summed up in two words – “community” and “meaning”. Israeli society provides most of its citizens with close bonds of family and friendship they can count on, plus a life that feels suffused with meaning in a way that is lacking among many in other Western nations.

Below are quotes from two recent articles on what might be termed the “Israeli Happiness Anomaly”, illustrating these two points about Israeli society well.

Rob Eshman, a columnist with the New York Jewish Forward, wrote the following (March 20):

Dan Ariely, an Israeli-born economist... told me it is Israel's very hardship that accounts for its happiness.

In most countries people lead a somewhat comfortable life, and they have no experience where the people around them step up to really help them,” Ariely wrote in an email. “In Israel, life is for sure less comfortable, but it is also very clear that people can count on their friends and family to step up and help them in a time of need.”

Meanwhile, the former Soviet dissident turned Israeli intellectual Natan Sharansky and the historian Gil Troy wrote this in *Tablet* magazine (April 10):

On April 12, 96 percent of Israeli Jews will participate in the oldest ongoing ritual in the Western world: the Passover Seder, celebrating the exodus from Egypt three millennia ago. Few democracies, if any, match these participation rates.

...too many young Americans appear to have lost pride in their nation and its story...

In contrast, Israelis feel they are part of Israel's story and the Jewish story, that of a proud people trying to do better in the world while also bettering it. After repeatedly overcoming oppression, they've returned to their homeland to live freely – and happily. Israeli schools repeatedly assign students shorashim, “roots,” projects. These family-tree explorations, even in high school, usually culminate in evenings celebrating parents' or grandparents' differing ethnic origins, cuisines, and Zionist journeys, propelling everyone forward together.

Sharansky and Troy suggest that the “Israeli Happiness Anomaly” may actually have a lot to teach other Western societies beset with nihilism, cynicism and a crisis of confidence – with growing numbers of people feeling lost, lonely, depressed, forgotten or direction-less:

Israel's historical optimism proves that identity is built through shared stories and values, not political agendas and competing grievances. When nurtured thoughtfully, group identity doesn't compromise our freedom; it enhances our journey, filling our free, prosperous lives with the sounds of others, inspired by the ideas of our ancestors.

The West needs good tribalism: A healthy commitment to community, connectedness, and history anchors us. It motivates us to defend ourselves when necessary, while inspiring us always to build a better world. That's the essence of most Israelis' Zionism.

It's hard to disagree. The Israeli “happiness anomaly” may not actually be an anomaly at all. It's actually a positive example, suggesting ways to counter some of the destructive trends which have beset Western societies even as they have grown to achieve ever higher levels of material abundance over recent decades.

A MATTER OF FAITH

Readers familiar with the Hamas Covenant may know that among its many other extreme and frightening elements – including huge amounts of classical antisemitism – there is one provision that absolutely guarantees Hamas will never agree to Israeli-Palestinian coexistence. The provision is Article 11:

The land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf [sacred Islamic charitable endowment] consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgment Day. No one can renounce it or any part, or abandon it or any part of it.

This provision asserts that all of Palestine is a holy possession of all Muslims everywhere, so agreeing to allow Jewish sovereignty on even one inch of it is effectively heresy, and thus completely forbidden to all practising Muslims. This makes coexistence both illegal and unthinkable. From this provision flow the other key parts of the Covenant, such as the rejection of all negotiations, the demand for eternal *jihad* until Israel is destroyed and claims such as the “Liberation of Palestine is an individual duty for every Muslim” and “Leaving the circle of struggle against Zionism is high treason.”

But of course, everyone knows Hamas are terrorists, extreme Islamists and rejectionists.

Yet the supposedly moderate Palestinian Authority (PA) broadcasts the same message about all of Palestine being an Islamic “Waqf” on which no compromise is conceivable on its official, carefully controlled TV station.

Here is what a PA religious official, Islamic law (*Shari’ah*) Judge Nasser Al-Qireem, told *PA-TV* viewers on Feb. 14:

The Shari’ah legal law of this land, for anyone who doesn’t know, is that it is a waqf land (an inalienable religious endowment)...from its [Mediterranean] Sea to its [Jordan] River... The laws of this waqf determine that its status cannot be changed, not by sale and not by purchase, not by collateral and not by exchange... not by addition and not by subtraction... It is [Waqf] forever and ever, and for all eternity, until Allah inherits the earth and those on it.

If there is any substantive difference between this claim and what Hamas says in its Covenant, I can’t see it.

Is it any wonder that Palestinians in the West Bank cheered on October 7, with much increased support for Hamas according to polls following the attack, when the PA’s official outlets are teaching Palestinians that Hamas’ claims about a religious obligation to destroy Israel at any cost are correct?

AIR



Ben-Dror Yemini

EVEN HAMAS’ DATA DISPROVES GENOCIDE LIE

The Jewish people emerged from slavery into freedom. The biblical verse from Exodus “Let my people go” became a universal call long ago, one that inspired the African-American struggle in the United States for freedom, liberty and equality. It remains one of the Jewish people’s most powerful messages to humanity.

But humanity has disappointed. It seems that today, even among the so-called enlightened – the champions of “progressive values” – free thought is being trampled. Truth has become optional. Agendas reign supreme.

Just how wide is the gap between facts and agendas? Consider this: Hamas’ Health Ministry recently published its list of casualties up to the most recent ceasefire – over 50,000 names. Setting aside the fact that at least five research-based publications have contradicted these figures, let us – for argument’s sake – accept Hamas’ data, which serve as the main basis for the frequently voiced accusation of “genocide” against Israel.

Is it genocide? In previous conflicts, I used Hamas’ own figures to compare the age distribution of the general

population in Gaza to the age distribution of the dead. The results were unequivocal: the vast majority of casualties were men of combat age. Yes – according to Hamas’ own data.

This time, the task is far more complex. Analysing a list of more than 50,000 names is no simple feat. But we are living in a new era – the era of artificial intelligence. I don’t claim to be an expert in the tools or the methods. But at least two meticulous individuals have taken on this challenge – and it turns out both reached the same conclusion.

Before even discussing their findings, one must state clearly: in the case of genocide, there cannot be any meaningful gap between the age distribution of the population and that of the casualties. Genocide, by definition, entails indiscriminate killing – the mass murder of women, children, infants and the elderly, all with the goal of eradicating a population. That is what happened in Darfur. That is what happened in Rwanda. That is not what happened in Gaza.

If it were genocide, there would be no statistical difference between men and women among the dead.

In the ongoing war in Gaza, like previous ones, Hamas’ own data expose the genocide lie. A breakdown of the casualties by age and gender, based on the list published by Hamas’ Health Ministry, shows a stark pattern: across nearly all fighting-age groups, from 14 to 59, men vastly outnumber women among the dead. In most of these age brackets, the number of male casualties is double or more than double that of females.

The figures are most striking in the core combatant age range. Between ages 20 and 44, Hamas data shows 5,850 women were killed, compared to 17,000 men – nearly a threefold difference. Again, these are not figures from an Israeli source but from Hamas itself.

By contrast, among the infants killed, aged 0 to 4, the percentage of male and female deaths roughly aligns with their proportion in the general population, hovering around 50%.

These figures can be called many things – but genocide is not one of them. Every innocent life lost is a tragedy, and the responsibility for this war, from its outset, lies with Hamas, which initiated this cursed war. There is also no denying that irregularities occurred during the fighting, possibly including war crimes. Certainly, there was likely reckless fire. Every suspicion of a war crime – such as the incident in which 15 paramedics were reportedly shot in Rafah – must be investigated and, indeed, many investigations have already been launched. But let us repeat: even if we take Hamas’ data as accurate, they do not support any claim of genocide.

AIR

Ben-Dror Yemini is an Israeli journalist, lecturer and author of the book Industry of Lies: Media, Academia, and the Israeli-



Arab Conflict (2017). In 2021 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Israeli Journalists Union. © Yediot Ahronot (Ynetnews.com), reprinted by permission, all rights reserved.

ASIA WATCH

Michael Shannon

STRUTTING THE STAGE

Decades in Indonesia's elite military and political circles, cultivating extensive international contacts along the way, primed President Prabowo Subianto to take a more visible role in international affairs than most of his predecessors.

Having spent around one-third of his first 100 days in office on marathon trips abroad, mostly to attend summits, it's clear Prabowo relishes a role as an international statesman. To this end, he appointed his inexperienced aide and party loyalist Sugiono as Foreign Minister, rather than a seasoned diplomat – widely seen as enabling Prabowo to dictate policy to a junior protégé.

Indonesia has traditionally adhered to a “free and active” foreign policy, keeping a careful balance in its relations with rival great powers. Prabowo's first moves reflected this: visiting Beijing and then Washington in his first month.

But a flurry of visits has followed – Peru for the APEC Summit, Brazil for the G-20 Summit, the United Kingdom, the UAE and Egypt during November and December. In 2025 so far, Prabowo found himself in Malaysia (twice) and India, while also welcoming Japanese PM Shigeru Ishiba, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Russian Federation Security Council chief (and long-time Putin ally) Sergei Shoigu to Jakarta. Indonesia also formally decided to join the BRICS group, securing its credentials in the non-Western bloc dubbed the Global South.

Prabowo's latest foray was to the Middle East, where he took in the UAE, Turkey, Egypt, Qatar and Jordan. Before departing Jakarta, he foreshadowed his agenda by announcing his willingness to grant temporary shelter to Palestinians affected by the war in Gaza, subject to the approval of other countries currently rendering assistance.

“We are ready to receive wounded victims,” Prabowo said. “We are ready to send planes to transport them. We estimate the numbers may be 1,000 for the first wave,” with “traumatised, orphaned children” being a priority. He added that the victims would only be in Indonesia until they had recovered from their injuries and the situation in Gaza was safe for their return. “Indonesia's commitment in supporting the safety of Palestinians and their independence has pushed our Government to act more actively,” Prabowo said.

Prabowo's comments came after Indonesia's Foreign Ministry said it “strongly rejects any attempt to forcibly displace Palestinians” when US President Donald Trump suggested permanently moving Palestinians out of Gaza.

But the gesture was not universally welcomed at home.

Dina Yulianti Sulaeman, founder of the Jakarta-based Free Palestine Network, responded, “Evacuating wounded Palestinians appears to be a kind gesture until we recognise that it could, unintentionally, support a much darker agenda: the long-running effort by the settler-colonial Israeli regime and its allies to ethnically cleanse and depopulate Gaza.”

The Indonesia Ulema Council (MUI) also expressed scepticism, releasing a statement arguing that the initiative would benefit Israel and Trump the most.

Referring to Indonesia's 350 years under colonial rule, MUI Deputy Chairman Anwar Abbas said, “We must understand that the colonisers have a thousand and one ways and deceptions... We must not allow our country to be deceived by Israel. It would be better if Prabowo does not imitate the evacuation of Gaza residents to Indonesia. Because if that happens, don't dream that Israel will accept the return of the evacuated Gaza residents.”

“The five countries to be visited by Prabowo are those with good relations with Israel and the United States,” Anwar noted, expressing concern that Indonesia would consult with these countries and decide to open diplomatic relations with Israel.

In response, Foreign Minister Sugiono issued a statement reiterating Indonesia's rejection of any plan to relocate the 2 million residents of Gaza. “At the President's directive, the Palestinians' presence in the country will only be temporary and the plan is by no means aimed at their ‘relocation’ away from their motherland,” Sugiono said. “I would like to confirm... that any efforts to alter the demographics of Gaza would constitute a violation of international law.”

Whatever transpires on this sensitive issue for Indonesians, Prabowo is unlikely to receive much pushback from Islam-oriented political parties, at least in the near term. These parties now comprise less than a third of all seats in the Parliament (DPR), and those that remain have almost all opted to join Prabowo's vast and diverse ruling coalition, securing ministerial positions despite their rivalry with one another in pre-Prabowo years.

The general trend of parties prioritising influence and access to political power and policy making rather than standing in opposition has produced not only the largest cabinet in decades, with 48 ministers and 58 vice-ministers, but raised concerns about the weakening of democratic checks and balances and an absence of alternative policy debates and accountability.

Miriam Bell

INDIGENOUS ACTIVISTS TAKE ON THE ISRAEL HATERS

Palestinian flags and keffiyehs at Maori protests and events in New Zealand have become ubiquitous since October 7, but not all of the country's indigenous people are on board with what they imply.

The pro-Palestinian symbolism was trotted out at events like the Maori King's funeral last September and the *hikoi* protesting the now defunct ACT Party's Treaty Principles Bill.

Judging by the rhetoric which invariably accompanies social media posts on anything to do with Israel, many New Zealanders who sport these symbols have a very limited grasp either of the history of Israel and the Jewish people, or the complex geopolitics of the region.

But many Maori have been encouraged to believe that unquestioning support for the Palestinian cause – to the point where the Hamas terrorist attacks of October 7 are justified as “resistance” – is required to be “on the right side of history.”

As in many other countries, there is a contingent of activists and academics who preach hatred of Israel. Their one-sided takes on Israel and the Gaza conflict have gained a foothold with some Maori, and have contributed to the global rise in antisemitism.

At the same time, there are Maori who are strong supporters of Israel and who have been vocal about their defence of the Jewish community and opposition to antisemitism since October 7.

This situation is not unique to New Zealand. In Australia, for example, a similar voice is legendary Indigenous sportswoman and former federal politician Nova Peris, who visited New Zealand in February.

Peris took time out from her holiday to meet local Jewish community representatives, and to speak to this reporter. She discussed the connections between Indigenous and Jewish people, and how the history of her forebears has shaped her beliefs.

She emphasised that there is a lot of disinformation around, and many young kids she speaks to have jumped on the anti-Israel bandwagon. “And it's complete madness that the Jewish people are made out to be the colonisers, and the perpetrators in all this.”

Indigenous people around the world should have the highest regard for Jewish people, because they are the epitome of decolonisation, she said. “The Jewish people have returned back to their homeland stronger than ever.

They've never forgotten their traditional ways or religious practices, and they've turned the desert into what it is today.

“It's an absolute joke, all these fools chanting ‘from the river to the sea,’ because Israel isn't going anywhere.”

Despite the vocal antagonism she receives due to her stance, Peris is not deterred. She is now working with some Australian Jewish women on a documentary to showcase the reality of Israel and amplify the voices of Australians who support the Jewish community.

A New Zealand equivalent to Peris is Maori activist Dr Sheree Trotter. Working with former MP Alfred Ngaro, Trotter co-founded the country's Indigenous Coalition for Israel (ICFI).

Recently, Trotter and Ngaro were amongst the driving forces behind the establishment of an Indigenous Embassy in Jerusalem. Both were subsequently included in the *Algemeiner's* list of the top 100 individuals who positively influenced Jewish life in 2024.

Trotter said she recognises that Jews are the Indigenous people of the land of Israel and have been maligned by a false narrative that paints them as foreign colonisers. Ngaro said ICFI was set up to provide a platform for Indigenous peoples to publicly show their support for Israel.

“When Green MP [now party co-leader] Marama Davidson joined a flotilla protest to Gaza in 2017 ‘as an Indigenous woman,’ I became concerned with the way our people were being aligned with an anti-Israel cause. This was a motivation to provide an alternative voice,” Trotter said.

It is disturbing to see Maori activists taking a one-sided position and mindlessly repeating Hamas slogans, she lamented. “They automatically believe Hamas propaganda and dismiss Israel's side of the story. They come from a place of ignorance about the geo-politics of the region and yet shout their message with such conviction.”

People need to know there are other opinions, and the monolithic voice of the activists does not represent all Indigenous people, Trotter continued. “We hope that those with open minds will be persuaded of the truth. When a lie is unchallenged, it becomes received dogma.

“Having done a lot of work on the Holocaust, we recognise that in the 1930s too many chose a path of silence and acquiescence. When the lies come from our own Indigenous people, we are the ones that need to speak up.”

Like Peris, she gets backlash, which she finds isolating, but she keeps going, she said.

“We are working hard to build our organisation, establish our Jerusalem office and extend our networks. We see the need to address the false narrative within academia, as it is from there that it flows out to the rest of society.

“Therefore, we are planning another academic symposium in Jerusalem, as well as other events.”

BEHIND THE NEWS

ROCKET AND TERROR REPORT

At least 17 rockets were launched from Gaza between March 26 and April 22, including ten on April 6. Most were intercepted. Israel has killed dozens of Hamas commanders and hundreds of operatives in air-strikes and ground fighting in Gaza. One Israeli soldier was killed in Gaza on April 19.

Sweeping IDF counter-terrorism operations continue across the West Bank, killing and capturing dozens of suspected terrorist operatives and destroying their military infrastructure.

IDF TAKES SECOND CORRIDOR IN GAZA

The IDF has captured and is expanding a new 12 km corridor, dubbed the Morag corridor, to separate Rafah from Khan Yunis in southern Gaza, as it attempts to isolate Hamas and renew military pressure on it to release hostages (See page 25 for more details).

The IDF has also reportedly expanded the buffer zone between Gaza and Israeli territory significantly, in some areas by as much as 1-2 km.

HAMAS REQUESTED \$500 MILLION FROM IRAN TO DESTROY ISRAEL

On April 7, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz made public documents uncovered by the IDF in Gaza, recording correspondence between Hamas and Iran prior to the October 7 mass terror attack. The documents show that in 2021 Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar and Muhammad Deif requested Iran's Quds Force contribute US\$500 million for a plan to "destroy Israel" within two years. The head of the Palestine department within the

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Hassan Izadi, replied positively, but did not supply as much money as Hamas requested.

Meanwhile, at the end of March, Hamas reportedly responded to mass demonstrations in Gaza against its rule there by killing at least six protest leaders, including Odai al-Rubai, 22, who was tortured for four hours and then returned to his family shortly before he died. Gazans also reported that Hamas is shooting and beating protesters in the streets, and cracking down on journalists to prevent the media from reporting the protests.

ISRAEL AND TURKEY DISCUSS POSSIBLE DE-ESCALATION IN SYRIA

Turkey – now the major foreign power dominating Syria – and Israel held talks in early April to create an official deconfliction line, a communication channel to reduce the risk of potential clashes between the two sides there. The US reportedly supports the move. It follows a series of IDF airstrikes against military sites in Syria, including Tiyas Airbase, which Turkey had allegedly been planning to use.

The IDF undertook several other targeted airstrikes in Syria to destroy military capabilities amassed by the former regime's army and prevent them being used by jihadists.

100 CHEMICAL WEAPONS SITES IN SYRIA

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) estimated on April 4 that at least 100 chemical weapons sites remain in Syria after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime last December, according to the *New York Times*. The OPCW is seeking to send inspectors to Syria to

search for and secure these sites. The Assad regime used chemical weapons against the Syrian people during the civil war, despite a Russian-brokered 2013 agreement in which Syria ostensibly agreed to give up all chemical weapons capabilities.

HOUTHIS CONTINUE TO ATTACK ISRAEL

In the month following the March 18 resumption of the war in Gaza, Yemen's Houthis launched 20 missiles and several drones at Israel. Israel said half the missiles failed in flight, and the rest were intercepted. Two missiles fired at Israel landed in Saudi Arabia.

On April 17, the US struck a Houthi-controlled fuel port at Ras Isa in Yemen. The Houthis claimed 80 people were killed. On April 19, the US launched 13 strikes against the Yemeni capital Sanaa and port city of Hodeida, including targeting an airport in Hodeida.

Meanwhile, a senior Iranian official claimed in early April that Iran had ordered its military personnel to leave Yemen in the face of the intensifying US attacks there.

IRAN-BACKED IRAQI MILITIAS OFFER TO DISARM

Several powerful Iran-backed militias in Iraq, including Kataib Hezbollah and Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, were reportedly considering agreeing to disarmament in early April to avoid conflict with the US, according to unnamed commanders of the groups and Iraqi officials. Following warnings from US officials, reports say talks between Iraqi PM Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani and militia leaders have advanced. The move apparently reflects a weakened Iranian "Axis of Resistance" amid in-

tensified regional conflict and Western military responses.

LEBANON UPDATE

Iran has reportedly made several attempts to smuggle weapons to Hezbollah via the Port of Beirut since December, when the fall of Syria's Assad regime cut off more direct smuggling routes.

Meanwhile, the IDF is continuing its work to prevent Hezbollah from rebuilding its pre-war military capabilities, including carrying out a March 28 strike on a drone storage facility in Beirut's Dahieh district, following rockets being fired at northern Israel. On April 1, an IDF strike in Beirut eliminated a Hezbollah operative and Iranian Quds Force member who was assisting Hamas in planning attacks against Israelis.

IRAN TARGETING ISRAELIS AND JEWS ABROAD

In early April, Sweden's security service (SAPO) revealed that Iranian operatives had been using local crime gangs to recruit minors to attempt attacks against Jewish and Israeli targets. At least four attacks in 2023-24, including a shooting and attempted bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Stockholm, have been linked to these gangs. Meanwhile, on April 5, the *Washington Post* reported a foiled Iranian plot in Azerbaijan in January, in which the Quds Force allegedly offered US\$200,000 to a Georgian drug trafficker to assassinate a local rabbi.

QATAR-BACKED SCHOLARS ISSUE JIHAD CALL AGAINST ISRAEL

On March 31, the Qatar-based International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) – an association of extremist Sunni Islamic theologians linked to the Muslim Brotherhood – issued a *fatwa* (religious edict) calling for *jihād*

(holy war) against Israel. The *fatwa* urges all Muslim governments to support Hamas "militarily, economically, and politically," and to besiege Israel by "land, air, and sea." Egypt's Grand Mufti swiftly condemned the *fatwa*, but Qatar itself has remained silent – a stance interpreted as tacit support for it. Israel has called Qatar's silence "disappointing", and said it undermines Doha's credibility as a mediator.

HAMAS QUIETLY REDUCES GAZA CASUALTY FIGURES

Hamas has reportedly quietly removed thousands of names from its list of claimed casualties of the Gaza war. As Britain's *Telegraph* reported, researchers comparing Hamas' March 2025 casualty list with those from October and August 2024 found that 3,400 claimed deaths had been removed, including 1,080 children. Andrew Fox, a former British para-

trooper who has done research on Hamas' misreporting of casualties, added that a careful analysis of the names on Hamas' latest list shows that about 72% of the fatalities aged 13-55, Hamas' fighting ages, are male, proving Israel is targeting fighters, not civilians.

ARGENTINIAN PROSECUTOR SEEKS WARRANT FOR IRAN'S LEADER

On April 9, Sebastian Basso, the Argentinian prosecutor investigating the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires, which killed 85 people, applied to Argentina's Federal Court for an arrest warrant for Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Basso said Khamenei, who was already Iran's Supreme Leader at the time, "led the decision to carry out a bomb attack in Buenos Aires in July 1994 and issued [an] executive order... to carry it out."



STRANGER THAN FICTION

DEADLY LIES

February 4 was the 50th anniversary of the death of the legendary Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum, revered throughout the Arab world. Well-known Egyptian journalist and TV presenter Ahmed Moussa said in a television tribute that "the Zionist entity" [Israel] had sentenced Umm Kulthum to death because it supposedly saw her as a threat given how she inspired the people through her patriotic songs. There is absolutely no truth to this story, which seems to have been recycled from a 1949 newspaper article with no source. She was actually quite popular in Israel, which even has streets named after her. For the record, she died of kidney failure (*Translations from Elder of Zion*).

Meanwhile, even dying doesn't spare people from Turkish arrest warrants if they're enemies of the increasingly despotic President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The *Nordic Monitor* reported that, earlier this year, a Turkish high court issued an arrest warrant against Fethullah Gulen, a Muslim scholar who led opposition to Erdogan from his self-imposed exile in the US, but died on Oct. 20, 2024. Apparently issuing arrest warrants against dead dissidents helps the Turkish Government maintain suppression of their followers.

Instead of focusing on deceased people, the Palestinian Authority, which seemingly never met an antisemitic libel it didn't like, resuscitated one of the most notorious. Commenting on *PA TV* on March 9 on an incident where Israeli soldiers helped settlers retrieve sheep stolen by Palestinians, PA official Ayed Morrar accused the settlers of stealing the sheep, and added, "Moreover, they poisoned the water to kill the Palestinians' livestock."

This echoes claims from the dark days of the Middle Ages when people trying to explain the source of plagues and other diseases accused Jews of poisoning the wells. Mass murders of Jews often followed. (*Translation from Palestinian Media Watch*)

COVER STORY

THE CHOICE 2025

AIJAC'S FEDERAL ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

In keeping with a pre-election tradition going back more than two decades, AIJAC submitted a series of 11 policy questions to the campaigns of both Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, leading the Australian Labor Party (ALP), and Opposition Leader Peter Dutton, from the Liberal-National Coalition, to help our readers and supporters make an informed decision as they go to the polls.

These questions – designed to focus on political issues of special concern to the Australian Jewish community – dealt with the following matters:

- Ties with Israel
- Policy toward the Gaza War and future Israeli-Palestinian peace-making
- Principles guiding Australia's votes on Mideast issues at the United Nations
- Australian funding for UNRWA
- Australian aid funding for the Palestinians
- Policy responses to the unprecedented wave of anti-semitism Jewish Australians have experienced since October 7, 2023
- Implementing the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism – plus any proposed changes to section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act*
- The Iranian nuclear and terrorist threat
- Counterterrorism
- Policies toward Australian Multiculturalism
- Accountability and complaints handling for our public broadcasters

While the Coalition provided detailed answers to each of our questions, the ALP, unlike during previous elections, replied with a letter laying out the current Government's responses to most of the concerns and issues raised in the



Dutton and Albanese face-off: In parliament, and in the questions and answers canvassed in this edition of the AIR (Image: X)

questionnaire. We reproduce both the ALP's letter and the full questions and Coalition responses below. AIJAC's analysis of the key points of similarity and difference in these answers – and their implications for the Australian Jewish Community – can be found in Colin Rubenstein's editorial, pp. 4-5.

THE ALP LETTER

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your inquiries regarding our policies and actions.

The Albanese Government recognises that this is an extremely difficult time for the Jewish community. While this conflict might be far away, it has been close to many in Australia.

Some have lost family – or have loved ones directly impacted.

An Albanese Labor Government will build on Australia's close and longstanding relationship with Israel. The bilateral economic relationship has grown under our government, and we will continue to work to support the deepening and broadening of our trade and investment links.

The Albanese Labor Government continues to call for all parties to return to the ceasefire and hostage deal in Gaza, and for the deal to be implemented in full. We have long been part of the international call for a ceasefire, the unconditional and immediate release of hostages, the protection of civilians, and safe and unimpeded humanitarian access. We are unequivocal in our condemnation of Hamas for its atrocities on 7 October 2023, and its ongoing acts of terror. A two-state solution is essential to long-term peace and security in the region. We will continue to work with the international community and vote in the United Nations in support of a two-state solution – the State of Israel and a Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security within internationally recognised borders.

We have been clear that we will be guided by whether recognition of a Palestinian state will advance the cause of a just and enduring peace. Like many in the international community, Australia has been frustrated by the lack of progress towards a two-state solution. And like Canada, Germany, the UK and other partners, we no longer see recognition as only occurring at the end of the process. It could occur as part of a peace process. We have made clear that we see no role for Hamas in any future Palestinian state.

The Albanese Labor Government is committed to providing effective and transparent aid to the Palestinians, which we believe can help build the institutions for statehood and address urgent development and humanitarian needs. It is critically important, however, that aid and program delivery goes directly to benefit those who are most in need. That is why Australian funding is only

“The Albanese Government has acted to condemn words and acts of hate directed at Jewish people. We have enacted the toughest laws Australia has ever had against hate crimes. These laws target the most serious forms of harmful hate speech”

condemn words and acts of hate directed at Jewish people. We have enacted the toughest laws Australia has ever had against hate crimes. These laws target the most serious forms of harmful hate speech, including advocating or threatening the use of force or violence against a group or member of a group, or against a place of worship. We are

provided under stringent controls and safeguards to ensure it is used only for humanitarian purposes and complies with Australian law.

There is no place in Australia for antisemitism. Every Australian deserves to feel safe and supported in our community, no matter who they are or what they believe. The Albanese Government has acted to



PM Anthony Albanese and local Labor MP Josh Burns visiting the Adass Israel Synagogue destroyed in an arson attack on Dec. 6 (Image: PMO)

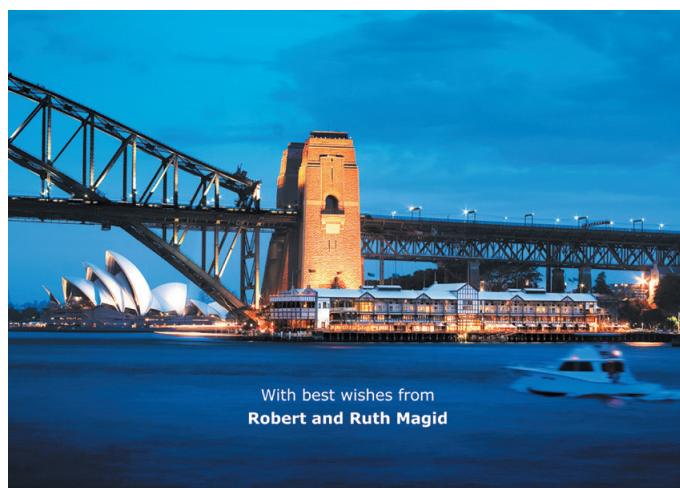
sending a clear and unambiguous message that advocating or threatening violence is not acceptable. We have committed over \$78 million to improve safety and security at Australian Jewish community sites. We established a parliamentary joint committee inquiry into antisemitism

on university campuses which has conducted a timely and comprehensive inquiry and just tabled its report. We have committed over \$14 million to Holocaust remembrance, education and outreach to ensure the Holocaust can never be

forgotten. We also appointed Australia's first Special Envoy for Antisemitism, Jillian Segal. The Albanese Government is acting to keep the community safe and ensure that people are free to live their lives safely and freely.

Modern Australia has been built through our multiculturalism. The Albanese Labor Government is committed to ensuring that Australians of all cultural and religious backgrounds can contribute and enjoy the benefits of a multicultural society. This requires political leadership supporting multiculturalism, greater engagement with the full diversity of culturally, religiously, and linguistically diverse Australians, and a commitment to secure inclusive institutions to ensure no one is left behind.

The Government continues to deliver on its commitment to a modern multicultural Australia, including through consideration of the Multicultural Framework



With best wishes from
Robert and Ruth Magid



Review. The Government welcomed the release of the Review's report, *Towards Fairness: A multicultural Australia for all*, on 24 July 2024 and released its Government response the same day. The Albanese Labor Government has made significant funding investments to support its response and deliver initiatives that support multicultural celebrations and to strengthen Australia's multicultural capacity.

The ABC and SBS are government funded but have operational and editorial independence so that their programs are free of political and commercial influence. Reporting by the ABC and SBS is governed by editorial policies that outline how they meet the requirements of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983 and Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991 to provide news and information that is accurate, impartial and balanced over time and across the schedule of programs broadcast as may be necessary. Both the ABC and SBS have complaints processes that include review avenues to independent Ombudsman, and complaints about TV or radio programs broadcast by the ABC or SBS may also be escalated to the Australian Communications and Media Authority if the response from the ABC is not considered to be satisfactory. Public broadcasters are otherwise publicly accountable through their annual reports, government audits and inquiries, and appearances before Parliament, including Senate Estimates.

Yours sincerely,
ALP Campaign 2025

THE COALITION ANSWERS BY QUESTION

If you win Government at the upcoming election, what action will your party take to encourage the strengthening of bilateral ties between Australia and Israel?

A Dutton Government will be a strong partner of Israel in bilateral relations and internationally through multilateral fora.

Israel has been a close friend that has shared critical intelligence with Australia that has helped thwart terrorist attacks against ADF personnel in the Middle East and save Australian lives at home.

Peter Dutton has made clear that, if elected, one of his first orders of business will be to call Prime Minister Ne-

tanyahu to help rebuild the relationship Labor has trashed.

Israel will be able to count on our support again in the United Nations.

A Dutton Coalition Government will revitalise discussions on a Free Trade Agreement with Israel – building on a strong economic relationship and looking to harness Israel's strengths in technology and R&D.

When last in government, the Coalition recognised West Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel, recognising that it is the seat of the Israeli Parliament and many other institutions of government.

It was a Coalition Government which opened a Trade and Defence office in West Jerusalem, building stronger trade, investment and other ties with industry in Israel.

In contrast the Albanese Labor Government has abandoned Israel, despite promising before the last election there was no difference between the government and Opposition on our major ally and democratic partner.

Labor Ministers use diplomatic double-speak to obscure the Government's bankruptcy on the Albanese Government's position on the Middle east.

They say that the Government now supports Palestinian recognition without any negotiation with Israel and then obfuscates by suggesting a two-state solution will come at some later time.

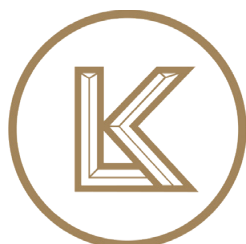
A Dutton Coalition Government will again put the national interest front-and-centre of our foreign policy.

If you win Government, what concrete measures will your party take to promote peace between Israel and the Palestinians? What do you see as an acceptable conclusion to the Gaza war, and what steps, if any, would your government take to contribute to that? Under what circumstances do you believe the Australian Government should recognise a Palestinian state?

A Dutton Government will continue to support Aus-



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tralia's longstanding and previously bipartisan position for a negotiated two-state solution in which Israel and a future Palestinian state exist in peace and security within internationally-recognised borders.

This is a stark contrast to the Albanese Government, which now says it supports unilateral Palestinian recognition without any negotiation with Israel, and voted for UN membership for a "state of Palestine".

The Coalition opposes Labor's shift from Australia's longstanding position in support of a negotiated solution sought to resolve matters of borders, security guarantees, rights of return first and foremost, rather than a potential early arbitrary recognition of a Palestinian state that leaves the difficult questions unresolved.

A Dutton Coalition Government will continue to call for Hamas to release hostages, to lay down arms, and to stop using Palestinian civilians as human shields. We will continue to stand steadfast with Israel's right to self-defence, and for the removal of the terrorist threat that undermines peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

The Abraham Accords demonstrate that progress can be made in the Middle East, and reinforce the need to prevent terrorists from derailing such progress. Australia should use our influence to support progress towards an enduring peace.

Despite promising no change before the election, Labor in Government has been overt and public in its abandonment of Israel, driven by domestic politics as it seeks to fend off the threat of Greens candidates in inner city seats.

What principles should underlie Australia's decisions with regard to voting on Israeli-Palestinian issues at the United Nations General Assembly and UN Human Rights Council? If you win Government, do you anticipate any changes to the way Australia currently votes on these issues at the UN?

If elected, a Dutton Coalition Government will revert to Australia's previously long standing positions on UN votes relating to Israel, rejecting Labor's recent unilateral changes which have been made for purely domestic political reasons.

When last in government, the Coalition strongly supported Israel's right to exist within secure and internationally-recognised borders, and the right to self-defence as guaranteed in the UN Charter and this was reflected in our approach to UN votes.

Like the last Coalition Government, Australia's votes at the UN under a Dutton government will demonstrate support for Israel, not by abstaining from votes which cloak anti-Israel sentiment in one-sided language, but by voting

"If elected, a Dutton Coalition Government will revert to Australia's previously long standing positions on UN votes relating to Israel, rejecting Labor's recent unilateral changes which have been made for purely domestic political reasons"



Opposition Leader Peter Dutton with other Liberal party politicians at the destroyed Addas Israel Synagogue (Image: Instagram)

against anti-Israel bias.

The Coalition is the only major party of government in this election which has maintained a consistent approach to the Australia-Israel relationship in this election and, unlike Labor which made – and then broke – specific commitments to the Australia's Jewish community at the last election, our commitment to Israel is not one which should be sacrificed for domestic political purposes.

Whether it be supporting a one-sided ceasefire that failed to hold Hamas to account, endorsing 'the state of Palestine's' membership of the UN, changing years of previously consistent positions, Labor has completely undermined its own pre-election promises and Australia's reputation for consistency.

Unlike Labor the Coalition will continue to stand by our democratic friend and partner Israel, their right to self-defence, and against terrorists who no country could tolerate living alongside.

Given the strong evidence that UNRWA has been cooperating with and is thoroughly infiltrated by Hamas, do you believe Australia should continue to fund it?

The people of Gaza need humanitarian aid, and the Coalition strongly supports the provision of funding for this purpose. But it should be provided to trusted organisations – not UNRWA.

During the Albanese Government's term, credible evidence has emerged that UNRWA employees were involved in the atrocities of 7 October, which led to the biggest loss of Jewish life since the holocaust.

UNRWA sacked nine employees, but incredibly there has been no other consequence against these people and no demand from the Albanese Government that action be taken against them – even as it resumed funding this disgraced organisation with \$20 million of Australian taxpayer dollars every year and just recently in the 2025-26 Budget confirmed it would continue doing so. A Dutton government will cease funding UNRWA and direct that funding through trusted international partners.

In past years, Australia has raised concerns that aid and development funding to the Palestinians in the disputed Territories may be used to pay stipends to terrorists, distribute textbooks that spread hate or otherwise undermine a future two-state peace. What would your party do to ensure any development aid provided to the Palestinian people, especially funds designed to rebuild Gaza, advances the cause of peace?

Further to the Coalition's public commitment to cease Australian taxpayer funding to UNRWA, a Dutton Government will adopt the lead set by the last Coalition Government in suspending aid wherever there were concerns that Australian humanitarian aid was being misdirected or used



The Coalition is promising greater law enforcement scrutiny of those inciting hatred and violence or displaying terrorist symbols as part of the pro-Palestinian protest movement (Image: Alamy)

in ways that have unacceptable and unintended consequences, including in ways which undermine the peace processes.

The Australian Jewish community has been suffering an unprecedented wave of antisemitism since October 7, 2023. If you win Government, what measures will you take to address this ongoing crisis? What contribution would you make to the security costs imposed on the Jewish community by the need to physically protect Jewish community institutions and schools? What would you do about the antisemitism on university campuses, where many Jewish students and staff now feel unsafe?

A Dutton Government will:

- Bring total moral clarity to the evil of antisemitism, and provide the political leadership which makes it abundantly clear that we expect the law to be enforced readily – not reluctantly – against those inciting hatred and violence.
- Create a new, dedicated antisemitism taskforce led by the AFP and bringing together Commonwealth agencies and state and territory police.
- Direct the AFP to prioritise addressing antisemitism, including any unsolved crimes against the Jewish community such as doxxing, displaying terrorist symbols, incitement, harassment, and other offences.
- Direct the Antisemitism Taskforce to refer any visa holders involved in acts of anti-Semitism for immediate cancellation and deportation.
- Amend the section 501 character provisions of the Migration Act to ensure antisemitic conduct is captured by the law, and applies retrospectively for all acts of hatred towards the Jewish community since the 7 October 2023 terrorist attacks against Israel.
- Establish a judicial inquiry into antisemitism at Australian universities.

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- Provide \$35 million to assist with the rebuilding of the Adass Israel Synagogue following the horrific arson attack in December 2024.
- Commit \$8.5 million to see the Centre of Jewish Life and Tolerance become a reality.
- Deliver the \$32.5 million security funding package requested by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry without any strings attached, including funding armed guards at schools and synagogues – unlike the Albanese Government who have restricted funding to unarmed guards only.
- Provide \$7.5 million over three years in additional funding to Crime Stoppers to enable Crime Stoppers to expand its operations and protect more Australians from the devastating impact of crime in local communities and helping address the antisemitism and extremism crisis.
- Provide \$6 million funding for the Jewish Community Centre Hakoah at White City in Sydney.
- Provide \$10 million to upgrade security at Moriah College.
- Provide funding through a revitalised Safer Communities Fund to protect Jewish community institutions and schools.

Both Labor and the Coalition have embraced the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s Working Definition of Antisemitism. Can you detail how a government you lead would implement this definition across government? Also, is your party considering any changes to section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act?

A Dutton Coalition Government will take a proactive approach to combatting antisemitism, in stark contrast to the Albanese Government who have failed to show leadership on the antisemitism crisis in Australia since the Hamas terrorist attacks on 7 October 2023.

Peter Dutton has made it clear that, if elected, he will declare a national emergency on antisemitism and give responsibility to a single minister to coordinate and mobilise all relevant agencies in the fight against antisemitic terror.

The Coalition was proud to lead Australia to join the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) as a member in 2019. IHRA member states noted the importance of Australia sharing its unique perspective on Holocaust education and remembrance. Australia’s IHRA membership demonstrates our continuing commitment to combating antisemitism and protecting freedom of religion.

A Dutton Coalition Government will build on this by ensuring that all Government Departments and agencies are working together to promote a culture which recognises and opposes antisemitism and promptly addresses any issues. This is especially important for security, intelligence and law enforcement agencies, given several

violent antisemitic attacks across Australia, as well as the Health and Education sectors, where there have been some extremely concerning examples of antisemitism in those institutions.

The Coalition does not propose to amend section 18C. The Coalition is committed to ensuring that freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom from discrimination, including on the basis of race or religion, are all protected and promoted.

If you win Government, what action will your party take to assist the international community in preventing Iran from continuing to pose a threat to regional and global security, including via its nuclear weapons programs, its dangerous cyber capabilities and its support for terrorist groups?

Over the past three years, the Coalition has consistently stood with the Iranian-Australian community and continued to call for action against the oppression of women, girls, protesters and critics of the Islamic Republic regime in Iran (IRI).

The death of Masha Jina Amini was a clarion call to the world, including Australia, that it needed to do more against the IRI.

But the Albanese Government has been slow to take action against Iran – and way behind the actions of our major ally, the US, and has refused to list the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation, despite Canada and US doing so and as was recommended by the Senate inquiry.

The Albanese Government has refused to accept most of the recommendations of a Senate inquiry, led by then Shadow Assistant Foreign Minister, Claire Chandler, which reported in early 2023.

There is significant evidence that the IRGC is engaged in terrorist activity, and Australia’s laws should reflect this reality. Failing to do so can only further diminish Australia’s standing and demonstrates the Albanese Government’s ongoing failure to adequately support international action such as the multi-nation operation against Iran-backed Houthi terrorism in the Red Sea.

The Coalition has repeatedly made clear that we offer

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our bipartisan support for any actions required to enable the listing of the IRGC.

When last in government, the Coalition applied sanctions required under UN Security Council Resolution 2231 on nuclear and ballistic-missile related materials. We also applied Australian autonomous sanctions on the export of arms and related materials.

In our last Budget, the Coalition funded the establishment of the REDSPICE (Resilience-Effects-Defence-Space-Intelligence-Cyber-Enablers) program to give Australian agencies new offensive cyber capabilities to protect Australians.

Terrorism remains an ever-present threat in Australia and around the world emanating from Islamist, far right and other ideologically extremist sources. If you win Government, what will your party do to improve Australia's counter-terrorism capability, counter violent extremism and enhance deradicalisation initiatives? Do you believe that there are any additional groups that need to be considered for listing as terrorist organisations in Australia?

Peter Dutton and the Coalition have led the way in passing legislation through the Parliament in response to the antisemitism crisis in Australia, with the Albanese Government being forced to agree to our measures to legislate mandatory minimum sentences for terrorism offences despite Labor having a long history of opposition to mandatory minimums.

The measures passed by the Coalition are an important step in combatting the antisemitism crisis, and send a strong signal to the people responsible for this campaign of terror. But the lack of proactive leadership from the Albanese Government in addressing the antisemitism crisis remains an ongoing concern.

A Dutton Coalition Government will work with local Australian communities to prevent terrorism, counter radicalisation and violent extremism.

A Dutton Coalition Government will not hesitate to take decisive action against terrorist organisations who threaten Australia's values and interests.

We will immediately seek advice from our security departments and agencies about the potential listing of organisations including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the IRGC. We will ensure there are real and immediate consequences for individuals who publicly celebrate listed terrorist groups.

There is bipartisan agreement that Australian Multiculturalism – which balances rights with overriding responsibilities to uphold core Australian national and democratic values – is the policy framework that anchors our harmonious, ethnically diverse democracy. Is Australian multiculturalism tracking along well, or does it need greater policy intervention? What policy proposals and leadership will your party deliver and implement to preserve and enhance Australian Multiculturalism?

Australia is the most successful multicultural nation in the world. The Coalition Government will keep it that way with a plan for a strong economy that ensures a stronger future for all who call Australia home.

Australia has benefited enormously from the strong economic contribution of migrants over generations, and our plan will see this continue. Our success is also built on the strong social cohesion that helped keep Australians together during the pandemic.

The Coalition Government will continue to invest in protecting, and further strengthening, social cohesion.

We will keep Australians strong and united by ensuring all who arrive on our shores continue to feel heard, and are supported to participate in every aspect of national life.

In this way, every Australian is given the opportunity to buy in and draw strength from our shared values – such as mutual respect and individual responsibility.

A Dutton Government will:

- Support multicultural communities to showcase their rich culture, traditions, arts, music, and food and to connect and share cross-cultural understandings with the wider local community.
- Revitalise the Safer Communities Fund to foster social cohesion, address youth crime, and keep public places and places of worship safe for our communities.
- Continue deep community engagement to ensure all Australians are heard.
- Recognise the exceptional contribution of our multicultural communities.
- Support and strengthen youth, community, multicultural and volunteer groups and charities, acknowledging the critical role they play in society.
- Support the arts and Australian cultural, sporting and recreational pursuits to foster and enhance community wellbeing.

The ABC is an important national institution but many are concerned about its ability to meet its statutory charter obligations of balance and fairness. What steps, if any, will a government led by your party take to strengthen accountability at the ABC and fellow public broadcaster SBS?

The ABC has legislated independence for all operational and content matters, but it is critical that it operates with integrity, balance and fairness in accordance with its charter and editorial policies.

The Coalition expects the ABC to uphold those standards, and consistent with the expectations of all public bodies, that they spend taxpayer funds responsibly and efficiently.

This will be our expectation in government, complemented by ensuring there is a robust complaints process, which is a critical foundation to the ABC meeting its legislative obligations to be accurate and impartial.

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Green Extremes

The troubling transformation of Australia's fourth largest party

Bren Carlill & Galit Jones

The Greens party's recent approach to Israel and other priorities of the Australian Jewish community, including the unprecedented upsurge in antisemitism, has appalled the vast majority of Jews in Australia.

The Greens used to be an environmental party, but over the past couple of decades that focus has become an aside, as it has drifted ever further left. Over the most recent parliamentary term, it has paired hard-left ideology with a set of populist policies – think rent and supermarket price controls, cancelling all student debt – designed to maximise votes among young, progressive and naive Australians. But supporting “Palestine” and condemning Israel has been little short of an obsession – the subject of dozens and dozens of motions and speeches.

Greens candidates have claimed that Israel poisons wells, steals organs and conducts field executions of Palestinian civilians. Meanwhile, statements that Hamas raped women on October 7 or uses human shields were described as “racist”, while Israel is said to have not only lied about the extent of the October 7 attacks, but killed many of its own civilians in order to inflate the number of dead and justify attacking Gaza. At least one candidate openly expressed support for Hamas' October 7 attacks.

Below, we look at Greens party policy, and what Greens sitting members and senators – and pre-selected candidates for the 2025 federal election – have said recently about issues of importance to the Australian Jewish community.

THE GAZA WAR

The Greens have an election platform it dubbed ‘End the Occupation of Palestine’, which is largely focused on the ongoing Hamas-Israel war. It condemns the killing of civilians in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon and Israel. It states that no civilian should be targeted, and that peace requires “an end to the State of Israel's illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories and it's [sic] ongoing genocide in Gaza.” The policy calls for Australia to sanction all

members of Israel's war cabinet and end military exports to Israel, and for Hamas to release the hostages. It makes no reference to the future of Gaza, beyond it being free of Israel, with no call for Hamas to disarm or give up its governance. The nature of Palestinian statehood is not mentioned in this policy, nor are there any calls for the Palestinian Authority to negotiate with Israel.

Meanwhile, individual Greens have gone much further.

Omar Sakr, the Greens candidate for the Sydney seat of Blaxland, celebrated the October 7 attack on his blog. He wrote on Oct. 8, “Hamas launched an assault out of occupied Gaza, bulldozing through the border wall, sending thousands of rockets toward Israel, and retaking at least one illegal settlement. It's their most ambitious and successful resistance action in decades, and has led, as per the horrible norm, to indiscriminate shelling from the Israeli airforce [sic].”

He repeated the sentiment in December 2023, when he wrote, “Hamas did not ‘invade’ Israel. They *did* break out of the enforced siege on Gaza, and into the illegal Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestine.”

This idea that towns and villages in Israel are ‘illegal settlements’ in ‘Occupied Palestine’ is a common theme. Given that he also writes that ‘armed resistance’ is justified to fight occupation, this provides an indication of his thoughts on a two-state outcome.

Still on October 7, Sakr said the Hamas attacks were “the desperate actions of an imprisoned people breaking out of an illegal 16-year-long siege” and that “I grieve for [Hamas], for what... they have been forced to resort to in

order to escape the hell that's been made of their lives.”

As for what happened on that day, Sakr writes that the death toll “was due in part to the Israeli army indiscriminately murdering its own people.”

He adds, “stories of Hamas soldiers engaging in mass rape” is “hysterically racist”.

Sakr has also commented on Hamas tactics. For instance, he wrote that “there's no evidence whatsoever” that Hamas uses human shields. That claim, he writes in a different post, is a “racist lie”. After Israeli hostages were released in early 2025, Sakr praised Hamas' “restraint” for not killing them for 470 days.

Remah Naji is the Greens candidate for the Brisbane seat of Moreton. She also provided her thoughts about the extent of casualties on October 7. “The lies that the Israeli Offense Forces spread to justify the mass killing of Palestinians under the guise of ‘self-defence’ were taken as facts and were broadcasted [sic] unchallenged by most media outlets worldwide,” she wrote. This allegation was in a post



Greens candidate for Blaxland Omar Sakr (right) with Senator Mehreen Faruqi (Image: Instagram)



Moreton candidate Remah Naji (centre) with Queensland-based Federal Greens MPs (left to right) Max Chandler-Mather, Senator Larissa Waters, Stephen Bates and Elizabeth Watson-Brown (Image: Instagram)

discussing the Dural caravan plot being a criminal hoax, implying that Zionists lie to justify killing.

Naji is a prolific Instagram user, and many of her posts are about the Palestinian cause. Although she has used the term “genocide” dozens of times, she hasn’t mentioned “Hamas” even once.

Greens already in Parliament were a bit more careful with what they posted after October 7, but still very extreme. In every condemnation of the Hamas attacks (many of which didn’t actually mention “Hamas”), the Greens twinned the attacks with denunciations of Israeli occupation, thereby strongly implying the attacks were because of (or justified by) Israeli control of the West Bank, or a fictitious “occupation” of Gaza. Greens Leader Adam Bandt, silent for the first three days after the attacks, finally wrote on X, “We condemn the horrific attack on civilians. We condemn the occupation.”

The Greens took this approach to Parliament. When a bipartisan motion of condolence was introduced shortly after the October 7 attacks, the Greens refused to support it because it affirmed Israel’s right to self-defence.

More recently, in March 2025, in the face of a weakened Hamas and the ongoing war, thousands of Palestinians took to the streets of Gaza demanding Hamas’ expulsion. In response, Hamas killed at least six protest leaders, including one who they tortured (he was left with broken fingers and 170 stab wounds), dragged through the streets and ultimately dumped on his parents’ doorstep shortly before he died with a note stating, “This is the price for all who criticise Hamas.” Yet, Bandt deflected blame when asked about these Hamas murders of Palestinian human rights activists, saying, “The killing of civilians is devastating... For all killings to finally stop, and for Palestinians and Israelis to have a just and lasting peace, the occupation of Palestine and the invasion of Gaza need to end.”

“GENOCIDE” EVERYWHERE

Whereas most Greens waited until at least Oct. 10, 2023, to describe Israel’s actions in Gaza as a genocide, MP Max Chandler-Mather was already there in May 2021 (before his election to Parliament).

Meanwhile, Chandler-Mather constantly claims that Israel has “murdered” civilians, with Senators Nick McKim and Penny Allman-Payne dipping into that rhetoric on at least one occasion. Samantha Ratnam, Greens candidate for the Melbourne seat of Wills and former Greens leader in Victoria, said that Israel is “intentionally targeting civilians”.

For his part, Sakr claims that Israel has also conducted “field executions of Palestinian civilians” and “torture and murder of Palestinians in Israeli camps.” He also claims that Israel is “using its most devastating wide-ranging bombs to kill as many as possible.”

Not to be outdone, Chandler-Mather said, “It’s the expressed and desired outcome of Israel that Gazan civilians die,” that “Israel intends to obliterate the Palestinian people” and that Israel is carrying out an “extermination” in Gaza and Lebanon. Senator David Shoebridge also said that Israel is attempting to wipe the Palestinian people out.

Chandler-Mather, among other Greens, has also claimed highly inflated numbers of people killed in Gaza – much higher than those claimed by Hamas. He claimed that the daily death rate in Gaza is the highest of any 21st century conflict. Perhaps he doesn’t know about Syria, where 500,000 people were killed in four years, or the 300,000 killed in Darfur between 2003 and 2008. Meanwhile, Sakr claimed in June 2024 that up to half a million Gazans (i.e. a quarter of Gaza’s population) had been killed and, six months later, that 1.17 million Palestinians had been killed “in a single year.” That’s half the Gazan population.

Naji was slightly more conservative, citing “experts” back in February 2024, just five months after the war began, to allege the death toll was 300,000.

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ON ISRAEL

Outside of Gaza, Greens accuse Israel of a myriad of crimes. Israel, Sakr claims, poisons Palestinian wells and steals the organs of murdered Palestinians. “The overwhelming majority of Israelis,” Sakr writes, “are genocidal racist scum who approve of the mass starvation of 2 million people.”

Meanwhile, Naji claims that “Israel is a rogue genocidal occupying power that kills, rapes, maims [sic] and tortures with impunity.” Sakr likewise accuses Israel of “470 days of torture and rape and murder in concentration camps.”

When Israel detonated the pagers worn by mid- and senior-ranking Hezbollah fighters, Naji wrote, “My heart goes out to the victims of this tragedy.” She also called the Hezbollah pagers “civilian devices”.

Despite the Greens ostensibly claiming to be committed to a two-state outcome, many have displayed emblems that show either Palestine replacing Israel, or lines that cross through the flag of Israel. The former include Greens candidates Tara Burnett and Huong Truong and Shoebridge, as well as Bandt. As for crossing out the flag of Israel, Deputy Leader Senator Mehreen Faruqi got in trouble because she stood next to a sign with someone suggesting Israel should be put into a rubbish bin, but Senators Dorinda Cox and Shoebridge have both displayed similar themes on their social media.

Meanwhile, Sakr, in particular, really doesn’t like “Zionists”. He cites the “Zionist zeal for genocide,” adding in a different post that “Zionism [is] an overtly racist, colonial ideology that is rooted in the dispossession and destruction of Palestinians.” “To a Zionist”, he writes, somewhat bizarrely, “nobody can love Palestinians.” “It is an absolute necessity that we... refuse and reject Zionism at every point,” he concludes.

The Greens’ obsession with Israel is remarkable not just in its intensity but in its exclusivity. Over a third of the 71 foreign policy-related statements the Greens issued since the 2022 election are about Israel. In June 2023, well before the current war, a Greens motion suggested Israel was responsible for impeding progress on climate change.

Chandler-Mather has linked Australia’s support for Israel to our cost-of-living crisis.

Interestingly, of those 71 foreign policy statements, none are about Ukraine. Yemen was mentioned only because the Greens condemned international efforts to stop the Houthis from forcibly blockading the Red Sea. Not mentioned anywhere were Pakistan’s forcible deportation of more than a million Afghan refugees, the bloody massacres in Sudan, China’s oppression against religious and ethnic minorities – characterised by some countries as actual genocide – or Azerbaijan’s conquest of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

ON THE HOLOCAUST

Three years ago, a Greens candidate likened Israeli policies to the Nazis. Bandt distanced himself from the comment, noting that the Holocaust was “without modern comparison”. He’s right, but that sentiment apparently hasn’t filtered down the ranks. Sakr describes what is happening in Gaza as “a holocaust”. He also accuses Israel of creating “concentration camps”, “death-marching” Palestinians, and of turning Gaza into “an extermination camp”. He adds, “Zionism is on the side of Nazis.” McKim claims Israel is forcing Palestinians into “concentration camps”. And although she didn’t cite the Holocaust, Greens MP Elizabeth Watson-Brown claimed way back in November 2023 that Israeli actions in Gaza are “the worst war crimes in history.”

ON ANTISEMITISM

The Greens like to condemn antisemitism, but refuse to understand its contemporary manifestations or engage with the mainstream Jewish community. Time and again, Greens act as if Jewish fears about antisemitism are a smokescreen to shield Israel from criticism, and that the real victims are those being accused of it. This inversion of victimhood has become a hallmark of the party’s rhetoric.

In 2021, the Greens released a position paper on antisemitism, but in the process of developing it, refused to consult mainstream Jewish organisations. Instead, the only Jews cited were tiny fringe groups already ideologically aligned to the party. In parliamentary debates about antisemitism on campus, Greens senators suggest that the real issue is not antisemitism at all, but rather efforts to “weaponise” the charge.

Meanwhile, Sakr writes of “the usual strategy of smearing any criticism [of Israel] as anti-Semitism” and insists that “claiming that Israeli violence is like Nazi violence is not antisemitic.”

ON AUSTRALIA

Greens views on Australian politics are also alarming. Naji appears to be the most extreme. She’s called the Prime Minister a “traitor” and the Opposition Leader a “fascist”. “So-called Australia”, she says, is a “pseudo

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democracy”. And, she says, “The Australian government and the capitalist elite are profiting off the killing of innocent men, women and children in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.”

Meanwhile, she, as well as Chandler-Mather and Senators McKim, Allman-Payne, Shoebridge and Faruqi all claim that the Labor Government is complicit in genocide. Naji adds that the ABC and Universities Australia are also complicit in genocide and “covering up genocide”, respectively.

AIR

TRUMP’S IRAN GAMBIT CATCHES ISRAEL OFF GUARD

Ilan Evyatar

Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu travelled to Washington on April 7 to try to mitigate the blow from US President Donald Trump’s newly announced ‘Liberation Day’ tariffs – a sweeping 17% duty slapped on Israeli goods and products. Netanyahu found no satisfaction in Washington on that count, but worse was yet to come. Sitting beside Netanyahu at a joint press conference, Trump dropped a diplomatic bombshell by announcing that the United States would begin direct nuclear talks with Iran within the week.

Netanyahu was visibly startled, and Israeli officials later admitted the timing of the move had caught Jerusalem off guard, although it knew that talks were a possibility. Moreover, as the *New York Times* reported on April 17, Trump in fact blocked an Israeli plan to attack Iran in May – a scenario that could only succeed with US assistance during the attack and to help defend Israel from Iranian retaliation afterwards.

After meeting Trump, Netanyahu appeared to acknowledge the diplomatic option in the press conference when he said: “If it can be done diplomatically in a full way, the way that it was done in Libya, I think that would be a good thing. But whatever happens, we have to make sure that Iran does not have nuclear weapons.”

Trump then interjected with the announcement that talks were forthcoming.

Those talks began on April 12 in Oman, led by US envoy Steve Witkoff – who is also juggling the Gaza hos-

tage negotiations and attempts to end the war between Russia and Ukraine – and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

Witkoff told *Fox News* after the Oman talks that negotiations would revolve around verification mechanisms for uranium enrichment and missile capabilities, including “the trigger for a bomb.”

In that interview, he emphasised caps to uranium enrichment – potentially around 3.67%, the level of enrichment typically used in civilian nuclear power – rather than the complete dismantling of Iran’s program, as was done in Libya in 2003. But the following day, he reversed course, declaring that any deal would only be acceptable if it included the total elimination of Iran’s enrichment and weaponisation capabilities. “A deal with Iran will only be completed if it is a Trump deal,” he wrote on X. “Any final arrangement must set a framework for peace, stability, and prosperity in the Middle East.”

Iran has currently stockpiled enough uranium enriched to 60% – technically a very short distance from military grade enriched uranium, typically 93% – to produce the fissile material for several nuclear weapons within as little as ten days if and when it decides to take such a step. However, it would still need to master weaponisation and



Trump, Netanyahu and their teams at their last-minute summit on April 7, which Netanyahu had expected to be focused upon tariffs, but ended up being about Iran (Image: Whitehouse.gov/ Flickr)

delivery vehicles to launch a nuclear-armed missile. It is unclear how much progress Iran has made on these technical tasks – which are easy to conceal from international inspectors – but most experts estimate they would take between six months to a year after the decision to build nuclear weapons was taken.

Shortly after the talks in Oman, Trump held a call with that country’s Sultan and thanked him for hosting them. The White House emphasised that the President remains committed to preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear



weapon, but did not clarify whether this meant zero enrichment or a willingness to accept a controlled, monitored enrichment program, as Witkoff implied in his initial post-talks comments.

The ambiguity has unnerved Israeli officials. “The main concern is that we don’t know what his red lines are,” one said. “Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu himself doesn’t really know.”

Indeed, there are reportedly competing voices in the White House on these questions: One camp, unofficially led by Vice President JD Vance, sees diplomacy, including a US willingness to compromise on enrichment, as both viable and desirable. *Axios* quoted a US official involved in the process as saying that Vance has taken an active role in Iran policy discussions, advocating compromise to push a deal through. He is reportedly backed by Witkoff, as well as Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth. This camp argues that the only alternative, a strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities, would endanger American troops in the region and likely send oil prices soaring.

But a more hawkish camp – spearheaded by National Security Adviser Mike Waltz and Secretary of State Marco Rubio – is reported to view any deal short of total dismantlement as naïve. Senators close to Trump, including Lindsey Graham and Tom Cotton, are also vocal advocates of this view, arguing that Iran’s regime is at its weakest in years and should be forced to capitulate, not offered compromises.

They’re joined by outside influencers such as Mark Dubowitz, the Iran nuclear expert at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. “The president once called the 2015 Obama deal fatally flawed,” Dubowitz told *Axios*. “The question now is whether he still believes it.” For this camp, the only acceptable outcomes are either an Ameri-

can-led military strike, a green light for Israel to act with US support or a deal that completely prohibits Iran undertaking any uranium enrichment or plutonium production domestically.

Other than extolling the benefits of such a Libya-style deal, Israeli officials have remained relatively muted regarding the talks.

Netanyahu has avoided directly referencing them publicly, instead replying to a statement posted by Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei titled ‘Why the Zionist regime must be eliminated from the region,’ noting that this was happening while Iran was “supposedly negotiating peace with the United

States.”

“Well, Israel will NOT be eliminated,” Netanyahu said in a video posted to X. “What must be eliminated is Iran’s axis of terror and its nuclear weapons program. Not only for the sake of Israel, but for the sake of our entire region, and for the sake of peace in our world,” he concluded.

Former PM Naftali Bennett, who recently registered a new political party and is possibly seeking a comeback, was more vocal. “The only deal worth making with Iran is one that: 1. Fully and permanently dismantles its nuclear program. 2. Ends all export of Iranian terrorism. 3. Fully stops ballistic missile development,” Bennett wrote on X.

Meanwhile, Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) President David Albright, a former senior International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) nuclear inspector, told the *Jerusalem Post* that unless Iranian concessions go substantially beyond the 2015 JCPOA agreement – which Trump withdrew from in 2018, during his first term, calling it a “horrible” deal – the US should ramp up its maximum pressure campaign.

“If the regime refuses to make these concessions, then it makes sense to carry out targeted destruction of key nuclear assets and capabilities, and perhaps certain leaders – with a threat to destroy far more, such as economic targets and leadership – if the regime moves to rebuild its nuclear sites or starts to build a nuclear weapon,” Albright said.

That sentiment was music to Israeli ears.

Iran, meanwhile, has rejected outright any talk of ending uranium enrichment. “The principle of enrichment is not subject to negotiation,” Araghchi said, calling on Washington to adopt a “more constructive approach” and warning that if it continues with “contradictory and conflicting positions, we will face difficulties.”

A further round of talks took place between Witkoff and Araghchi in Rome on April 19. Araghchi claimed of the meeting, “It was agreed that negotiations will continue and

“The worst-case scenario for Israel is plain to see: the prospect of a diplomatic agreement that does not restrain Iran much more than the JCPOA did, but is framed by Trump as a better deal. That outcome would leave Israel in a difficult position”



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move into the next phase, in which expert-level meetings will begin... in Oman. The experts will have the opportunity to start designing a framework for an agreement.” The Iranians also claimed that the Americans had not raised non-nuclear issues, such as missiles or support for terrorist proxies, during the talks, as Israeli leaders would have hoped they would.

While the US did not confirm these Iranian claims, the worst-case scenario for Israel is plain to see: the prospect of a diplomatic agreement that does not restrain Iran much more than the JCPOA did, but is framed by Trump as a better deal. That outcome would leave Israel in a difficult position, unsatisfied with a deal and most likely unwilling to anger the Trump Administration by going on its own militarily, and possibly even having its hands tied with regard to covert actions against the nuclear program.

Israel’s other fear is that the Iranians can successfully spin out the talks to play for time, as they have in past negotiations with the US – with long talks on a “framework” before proceeding to detailed discussions on the specific wording of an actual agreement – and thus reverse the setbacks they have suffered over the past year in terms of both regional allies and national air defences, making any potential military strike much more difficult and costly.

Meanwhile, Albright’s ISIS warned on April 8 that Iran’s nuclear threat has reached a level of “Extreme Danger”, citing its accelerated weaponisation capabilities and refusal to cooperate with international inspectors. And while the Institute didn’t explicitly say so, other experts have noted that more and more senior figures within the Iranian regime have recently been publicly arguing that now is the time to build nuclear weapons to protect the regime from external threats.

Without either a rapid diplomatic breakthrough or a US or Israeli-led military strike, the risk of a sudden Iranian dash toward nuclear weapons is alarmingly real. What’s more, given the very limited access of IAEA inspectors to Iranian facilities, there is no guarantee the world could detect such a dash in time to do anything about it.

AIR

INSIDE ISRAEL’S NEW “MORAG CORRIDOR” IN GAZA

Jonathan Spyer

Along the newly established Morag corridor, in the southern Gaza Strip, the IDF is continuing the daily, Sisyphean work of rooting out Hamas fighters and destroying the organisation’s infrastructure.

The corridor, named after a dismantled Jewish community in the area, is intended to drive a wedge between the Rafah and Khan Yunis brigades of Hamas, and then to destroy these formations.

Visiting the eastern part of the corridor, the impression was that the Israeli forces have succeeded in carving out a secure area, from which they are now operating southwards in the direction of Rafah city, where, according to IDF sources, dozens of fighters of Hamas’ Rafah Brigade remain.

Whether these actions will contribute to the final collapse of Hamas resistance in Gaza, or place sufficient pressure on the Palestinian Islamist group to induce a more flexible stance on the remaining hostages (the two goals of the operation, according to the IDF) is less clear.



The IDF’s 36th Armoured Division operating inside Gaza (Image: IDF spokesperson)

The force tasked with establishing and consolidating the Morag corridor is the 36th Armoured Division, a regular formation of the IDF. With a long and storied history, the Division has been in action since the start of the current war in October 2023.

It took part in the first ground manoeuvre in Gaza in late 2023, spearheading the IDF’s entry into the Strip, alongside the 162nd Division (which is now operating further south, close to the Egyptian border.) The 36th then participated in the fighting in Lebanon, operating in the Maroun a Ras area.

Now it is back in Gaza. One of its armoured brigades, the 7th, has remained on duty in the north. The other component parts of the division, the Golani Infantry Brigade, the 188th Armoured and the 282nd Artillery Regiment, have been engaged for the last three weeks in carving out the corridor.

Golani began the push from the east, and the 188th from the west, according to the IDF. They linked up after a week, and are now engaged in consolidating and broadening the 12 km corridor, the intention of which is to seal in and then destroy the remnants of Hamas’ Rafah Brigade. In places, according to the IDF, the corridor is already 2 km wide.

Inside the corridor, the by now familiar wartime Gaza combination of destroyed buildings, rubble, and a near

complete absence of civilians prevails. To the south, exploding ordnance can be heard, and palls of white smoke can be seen every few minutes. This is Battalion 12 of Golan, and Battalion 53 of the 188th, conducting operations into one of the three areas designated for the attention of the forces in the corridor in the coming days.

The Hamas fighters, according to IDF sources, made their way to Muwasi to the west, a designated humanitar-

ian area, during the period of the ceasefire, but returned when it collapsed. Now, the hope is to trap them between two lines of IDF presence to the north and south of the city.

The IDF says the Rafah Brigade no longer has any discernible missile capacity. Even a hierarchical structure beyond the lowest levels may no longer be fully functioning. Still, Hamas is trying to build itself up

PLEASE HEED THE CALL OF GAZANS

Bassem Eid

The people of Gaza have finally turned on Hamas publicly. As a Palestinian human-rights activist, I can't say I'm shocked. Those of us who long for Palestinian governance free of violence and corruption have certainly waited long enough.

The massive protests in recent weeks against the terror organisation that oppresses Gaza with an iron fist have created visuals that were stunning.

Large crowds of perhaps thousands of people marched through the streets of Beit Lahia in northern Gaza, chanting slogans like "For god's sake, Hamas out" and "Hamas terrorists", and even calling to free the hostages that Hamas abducted during its horrific invasion of Israel on October 7, 2023.



"The protests represent Gaza's population expressing how they too are being held hostage by Hamas thugs." (Image: X)

How did Hamas come to power in Gaza? Through a brutal act of military conquest in 2007 that involved throwing supporters of the Fatah opposition party off tall buildings, causing a complete political split with the Palestinian Authority (PA) Government in the West Bank, a split that has now lasted 18 years.

Hamas was never elected to lead Gaza, and while it did win an election for the PA legislature in 2006, the PA suspended the legislature in 2007 and formally dissolved it in 2018. The PA's leader, Mahmoud Abbas, 89, is currently serving the 21st year of the four-year term he was elected to in 2005.

So much for Palestinian democracy.

What kind of government has Hamas given Gazans instead? In a word, theocracy.

Hamas' repression, inspired by a harsh interpretation of

Islamic Sharia law, is brutal. Women require the presence of a male guardian to travel outside their homes. LGBTQ+ individuals face torture and execution. Children under Hamas rule are brainwashed into believing that Israelis and Jews, including civilians, are evil and must be destroyed – even at the cost of "martyrdom".

Hamas is turning the Gazan people into cannon fodder for its endless wars.

Hamas uses its own people as human shields, using residents to disguise military activities, including by launching attacks from civilian sites like schools, hospitals, mosques and churches. As for the lifesaving aid that the world, and Israel, delivered for the benefit of the civilian population in Gaza, even at the height of the military action, Hamas stole and repurposed it to benefit itself. Hamas has even used civilian water pipes to make rockets to attack Israel.

Palestinian polling consistently shows that Hamas is much less popular in Gaza than in the West Bank. The Gazan people, having actually suffered the reality of Hamas' rule, are opposed to its hateful ideology – similar to the Europeans who fled the Eastern Bloc after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Hamas consistently attempts to present a falsely moderate face to the West. America's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff recently said that Hamas "duped" him into thinking it was interested in a deal to release the hostages and end the fighting. No such luck, sadly – the diehards of Hamas are true believers. Their core interest is controlling the Palestinian population, accumulating wealth

and armed support from terror states like Iran and Qatar, and waging an endless war on Israel against the wishes of the Gazans themselves.

It's time to listen to the people of Gaza, not the terrorists who control their lives. The ongoing protests against Hamas by the Gazan people are just the beginning. The people of Gaza are well aware that it's not only the captive Israelis but the whole Gazan population who are being used as hostages by these thugs. It's time to listen to the authentic voice of Gaza and set its people free by dismantling Hamas for good.

AIR

Bassem Eid is a Palestinian human-rights activist. He lives in the West Bank. © Jewish News Syndicate (JNS.org), reprinted by permission, all rights reserved.

again as quickly as possible.

Younger people, some only 15 years old, are being brought in. These youths are rapidly deployed and display the “professional capacities that would be expected of them,” as one IDF source put it.

IDF Spokesman Brigadier-General Effi Deffrin, speaking to reporters inside Gaza, reiterated the familiar goals of the war: increasing the pressure on Hamas to ensure the release of the remaining hostages, and toppling the movement militarily and politically. The question of whether these goals can be achieved simultaneously is a matter, of course, for the politicians, not the soldiers. Deffrin said the army will continue to put pressure on Hamas, which is what this formula requires.

As to whether this pressure is working, a senior IDF source in Gaza discerned signs of what he described as growing popular discontent against Hamas.

A year ago, he suggested, residents of Gaza wouldn’t have dared to raise a finger against representatives of the Islamist authority. Six months ago, masked men killed a Hamas policeman. More recently, policemen were attacked by Gazans who no longer made any attempt to hide their identity.

These, the source suggested, were encouraging signs. Victory would come, he said, when the last of Hamas’ leaders were dragged through the streets by their own people.

Whether the current IDF pressure will prove sufficient to increase and proliferate such scenes across Gaza remains very much to be seen.

Hamas has demonstrated that it is not yet broken, and still has the ability to recruit new personnel and deploy them. The troops now operating from the Morag corridor are engaged in the latest engagement in the battle of wills underway since October 7, 2023. Who will break first remains the question. “All my years of service, I was involved in ‘rounds’ of fighting,” an IDF source in Gaza told the *Jerusalem Post*.

“This mustn’t be another round. The difference between us and the enemy is that he is better at maintaining a facade than we are. But there are demonstrations and indications of a breaking point on the other side. It won’t happen tomorrow morning, but it’s coming.” In the meantime, the extension of the Morag corridor continues.

AIR

Dr Jonathan Spyer is Editor of the Middle East Quarterly, reports for Janes Intelligence Review, writes a column for the Jerusalem Post, and is a contributor to the Wall Street Journal and the Australian. He is the author of two books: The Transforming Fire: The Rise of the Israel-Islamist Conflict (2010) and Days of the Fall: A Reporter’s Journey in the Syria and Iraq Wars (2017). © Jerusalem Post (jpost.com), all rights reserved, reprinted by permission.



Hussein al-Sheikh: Being groomed as next PA President? (Image: husseinalsheikh.com)

DOES ABBAS FINALLY HAVE A SUCCESSOR?

Lt.-Col. (res.) Maurice Hirsch

The Central Council of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was set to meet on April 23 and 24 to establish, for the first time, the position of Deputy President of the PLO, who also functions as the Deputy President of the non-existent “State of Palestine”. The move is the latest step in a series of decisions adopted by Palestinian Authority (PA) Chairman Mahmoud Abbas since 2018 to ensure that his Fatah party continues to rule the PA without a hint of a democratic process. Should 89-year-old Abbas be incapable of fulfilling his function as head of the PLO, his deputy would simply step into his shoes.

While the Council and Abbas may merely create the position without filling it, there is considerable speculation that Abbas will appoint the Secretary-General of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Hussein Al-Sheikh, to the position.

For years, Abbas has been grooming Al-Sheikh as a potential successor, putting him at the forefront of discussions with Israel and even using him to set the stage for

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the cancellation of the PA general elections meant to take place in May 2021.

Since Al-Sheikh will potentially inherit such a substantial position, knowing who he is, what he has done, and some of his opinions, is important.

Al-Sheikh was born in Ramallah in 1960. He joined Fatah during his teen years, and according to his official PLO webpage, was imprisoned by Israel as a “political prisoner” – a Palestinian euphemism for convicted terrorist – “for 11 years, between 1978 and 1989.”

After being released from prison, Al-Sheikh continued his membership in Fatah, filling different positions.

On March 21, 2002, a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up in downtown Jerusalem, murdering three people – Tzipi and Gad Shemesh (who were returning home after a pregnancy exam) and Yitzchak Cohen. Dozens were injured.

The attack was planned by two Fatah terrorists – Abd El-Karim Aweis and Nasser Shawish. Aweis explained in his confession (under interrogation and in court) how the attack was carried out. He and Shawish obtained the explosives for the suicide belt from the then-head of the PA General Intelligence Service, Tawfik Tirawi.

Aweis added that on the morning of the attack, he, Shawish, and the suicide bomber went to the offices of Al-Sheikh, who was then the General Secretary of Fatah in Judea and Samaria. While the suicide belt was already prepared, Al-Sheikh handed the suicide bomber money and two hand grenades.

Al-Sheikh was never arrested for his involvement and contribution to the murders.

AL-SHEIKH “BOWS” BEFORE THE FAMILY OF TERRORIST MURDERERS

In Palestinian society, the family of Latifa Abu-Hamid enjoys a special status. The infamy is not the result of the outstanding contribution of the family to Palestinian society, but rather a result of the fact that six of the children of the family actively participated in the murder of Jews. The latest son to join the group of murderers was indicted and convicted for the 2018 murder of Israeli soldier Ronen Lyubarsky. When Israel responded to the murder by demol-

ishing the terrorist’s house, it was Al-Sheikh who conveyed Abbas’ commitment to rebuild the house. Visiting the site, Al-Sheikh added, “We bow to this family, its history of struggle, and their heroism.”

When one of the more infamous of the terrorist sons, Nasser Abu-Hamid, responsible for the murder of seven people, died in prison from cancer, Al-Sheikh was quick to join the libel that Israel mistreats Palestinian prisoners. Referring to Abu-Hamid as a “heroic prisoner”, Al-Sheikh promoted the terrorist to the rank of “Major-General”. Al-Sheikh added, “What interests us now is that we sent a direct request to hand over his body to his family, his friends, and his people, so that they will honour him as is fitting for a Martyr and fitting for his family, the fighting family... all words are dumbstruck before the greatness of this family and this mother.”


CALLS TO UNITE WITH HAMAS

Just a few months before the October 7, 2023, Hamas massacre, Al-Sheikh reiterated his call for the PA and Hamas to bridge their gaps.

In an interview on Palestinian television, Al-Sheikh called on all the Palestinian national “factions” to create a broad front against what he called “the Israeli aggression”. He added his hope that the dialogue between the PA and Hamas will succeed since “You need to fight this enemy [Israel] on all fronts, in all arenas, without exception. You need to fight it on the ground and in the international organisations and authorities.”

Even after the October 7 massacre, Al-Sheikh continued to refer to Hamas as “brothers”. When Israel eliminated Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in July 2024, Al-Sheikh made sure to publicise on his X account that he had contacted another Hamas leader, Khaled Mashaal, to convey his condolences, including saying the “martyrdom” of Haniyeh “constituted a great loss for the Palestinian people.”

AL-SHEIKH AND THE PALESTINIAN STREET

Despite having all the potential qualifications to become a Palestinian leader – as a terrorist who spent time in an Israeli prison, and as the son of a family of refugees – Al-Sheikh does not enjoy broad Palestinian popularity or support. When Abbas appointed him to the position of Secretary-General of the PLO Executive Committee, only 26% of voters supported the move. In surveys conducted by the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research in the run-up to the PA elections that were meant to take place in 2021 before Abbas cancelled them, Al-Sheikh’s name was not even mentioned as a potential leader. 

Lt.-Col. (res.) Maurice Hirsch served as Director of the Military Prosecution for Judea and Samaria, and after retiring from the military, as an advisor to the Israeli Ministry of Defence. © Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs (JCSA, jcfa.org), reprinted by permission, all rights reserved.

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Fading towards Fascism

The Jews and the Postmodernist Left

Shalom Lappin

Since the Hamas terrorist attack of October 7, 2023, Diaspora Jews have found themselves under sustained assault on a variety of fronts, from much of the radical left, and its Islamist allies. People who pose as guardians of equality and anti-racism are leading violent demonstrations praising mass murder attacks against Israelis. They are urging the exclusion of all Jews who do not endorse their views from the mainstream of the social order. How did it come to pass that such a significant portion of the contemporary radical left now resembles fascist and Nazi groups of the past?

THE OLD AND THE NEW LEFTS

In the first half of the twentieth century, much of the left regarded class struggle as the engine driving the dialectic of history. The proletariat was seen as the primary agent of progressive social change, and labour movements were the instruments through which it was harnessed. The radical left created revolutionary Communist regimes in Russia and China. These were countries with underdeveloped economies that were largely agrarian. In the industrialised West, the social democratic left achieved substantial economic reforms through labour unions and parliamentary political processes. These reforms produced welfare

states that ameliorated the poverty of wage earners, and that facilitated their social mobility.

By the 1960s, the radical left had despaired of workers in the West as the primary vehicle of change. It saw them as too heavily invested in the economic and social institutions of welfare capitalism to pursue a revolutionary political agenda. The emerging New Left turned to the national liberation movements overturning colonial rule in the third world as a substitute for the working class. The struggle of African Americans for equality, and, subsequently, of feminist and gay rights campaigns against gender exclusion, were incorporated into this movement as core elements of a redefined liberation struggle.

Marx was not particularly inter-

ested in colonialism. He devotes only a brief ten-page chapter to it at the end of Volume 1 of *Capital*. In his description of British rule in India, in an article for the *New-York Daily Tribune* (June 25, 1853), he presents British colonialism as brutal and self-serving, but progressive in its destruction of traditional social patterns.

When the New Left shifted its focus from working class politics to anti-colonialism and the rights of marginalised ethnic and gender groups, it initially saw this move as a revision of a classical Marxist view. This change was required to adapt to the new conditions of the postwar era in the West. The anti-colonialist movements pursuing national liberation in the 1950s and 1960s were, for the most part, secular, and broadly aligned with the ideological perspectives of the classical Western left. They claimed allegiance to socialism and democracy.

THE LEFT AND THE JEWS: UNREQUITED LOVE

From its beginnings in the revolutionary movements of the 18th and 19th centuries, the European left had difficulties with Jews. They were not a natural constituency for its struggle, as they could not be easily assimilated to the European categories of religion, nation, or cultural ethnicity. They clearly exhibited properties



Jewish Bundists marching in Brussels, 1935 (Image: YIVO/ Institute for Jewish Research)

of all three, without being straightforwardly reducible to any one of them. They were geographically disparate in a far-flung diaspora, and they were distributed across the full range of socio-economic roles, encompassing impoverished working-class masses, entrepreneurs, financiers, and bourgeois professionals. They were subject to millennia of persecution, expulsion, mass violence, and exclusion in Europe and the Middle East, but they were not the sort of oppressed group that could be easily harnessed to the types of liberation campaigns that constituted the agenda of the left. This agenda focussed on the freedom of nations, the liberation of workers, the abolition of slavery, segregation, and apartheid, and the empowerment of women. By the beginning of the 20th century there was a sizeable Jewish working class and Jewish labour movements of various political orientations (the Bund, Jewish Communists, Anarchists, and Socialist Zionists), in both Eastern Europe and North America. However, the traditional association of Jews with capitalism and finance rendered them suspect, and they were frequently cast as class enemies.

Jews flocked to the left as the instrument for escaping antisemitism and poverty. But the left never regarded Jewish emancipation as one of its core concerns. It was to occur as a side effect of the universal workers' revolution that would bring freedom to all people. Antisemitism itself was regarded as an epiphenomenon of backward social organisation and the superstitions that sustained it. This prejudice, along with other forms of racism and bigotry, would disappear when this structure was replaced by a genuinely egalitarian order. Both the revolutionary and large parts of the social democratic left envisaged this process as also requiring the disap-

pearance of Jews as a historical entity. The view of Jews as an unnatural and illicit collectivity is deeply embedded in European and Middle Eastern societies. It has informed much of the left's attitude toward Jews from its inception. It is a preoccupation shared with the ethno-centric European right, and it constitutes a common cultural inheritance.

When Jews insisted on highlighting antisemitism as a central concern for progressive politics, they were accused of reactionary particularism. Zionism was dismissed in this way. So was the anti-Zionist, diaspora cultural autonomism of the Bund. The popular notion that the left was a strong ally of Jews due to its anti-fascist stance is largely mythology. It did little to support Jewish refugees fleeing Nazism in the period leading up to the Second World War, preferring to focus on political victims of the regime. Dur-

"Jews flocked to the left as the instrument for escaping anti-semitism and poverty. But the left never regarded Jewish emancipation as one of its core concerns"

ing and immediately after the war, much of the left resisted attempts to present the Nazi genocide as a Jewish cataclysm. For the most part, it took no great interest in the hundreds of thousands of survivors languishing in refugee camps immediately after the war. It did not respond to the expulsion and forced emigration of Jews from Arab countries in the late 1940s through to the early 1960s. It did not see the oppression of Soviet Jewry, or the desperate flight of Ethiopian Jews, as issues of progressive concern.

A large part of the New Left adopted the secular anti-Zionism of the PLO, and they embraced its program for a 'secular democratic state' in Palestine. Many advocated a 'de-Zionised' Israel, to which all Palestinian refugees and their descendants would be permitted to return. The mode of implementation of these policies, and their implications for the Jewish majority in Israel, were left carefully un-

specified. The proposal was packaged as an equal rights for all arrangement. The New Left identified the Palestinian cause as one among many national liberation struggles, and it construed Israel as an appendage of American imperialism. Israel was not a primary focus in its revised understanding of the postwar revolutionary struggle. It never occurred to the New Left of the 1960s to target Diaspora Jewish communities, either on campus or off, as enemies of its cause, regardless of the views on Israel and Zionism that were dominant in these communities.

THE FAILURE OF SECULAR NATIONALISM AND THE RISE OF ISLAMISM

The failure of secular Arab nationalism became fully apparent by the end of the 1960s. Israel's victory in the 1967 war shattered Nasser's pan-Arabist vision. The Baathist parties in Syria and Iraq had constructed murderous regimes. The Algerian, Tunisian, and Libyan national liberation movements produced similar results. In all of these cases, independence had been achieved only to yield oppressive governments that maintained stagnant, underdeveloped economies with wide-spread poverty and sharp inequality. The rhetoric of third world socialism rang increasingly hollow in these, and in many other, post-colonial countries.

Theorists of political Islamism, such as Muhammad Rashid Rida, emerged at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, to challenge the importation of Western ideas of nationalism, liberalism, and socialism into the Middle East. Hassan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, and it became one of the major organisations for promoting Sunni political Islamism. Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of British Mandatory Palestine, and one of the leading architects of the Palestinian national movement, was closely associated with the Brotherhood. Sayyed Qutb

published *Milestones* (*Ma'alim fi'l-tareeq*) in 1964, which called for *jihād* to establish a universal caliphate.

From its beginnings, political Islamism identified the Jews as primary agents of corruption responsible for the introduction of subversive Western ideas into Muslim societies. It regards them as one of the main causes for the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, and casts them as a leading edge of Western domination of Islamic lands. This theme in Islamist thought predates the creation of Israel by decades. The Islamists adapted the antisemitism of European ethno-nationalism to fashion an Islamic version of classical anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. The Muslim Brotherhood had strong pro-fascist and pro-German sympathies in the 1930s and during the war. Qutb's *Our Battle Against the Jews* (*Ma'rakatuna ma'a al-Yahud*), written in the early 1950s, describes Jews as perfidious adversaries of Islam from the seventh century onwards. The conflict with Zionism and Israel is portrayed as the latest instance of a cosmic struggle in which Jews are assigned a demonic role much like the one that they play in traditional Christian and far right European nationalist eschatologies.

The Islamists target secular nationalist regimes in Muslim countries as tools of Western oppression. They also regard the high culture of mediaeval Islamic empires as a perversion of Islam. They seek to restore a mythic pristine era of early Islam from the age of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers. Arab and Turkish nationalists saw the Islamists as a reactionary threat to their modernising movements, and they suppressed them. After these nationalist movements failed, Islamists filled the political vacuum that they left. When the coalition of anti-government groups that supported Khomeini overthrew the Shah of Iran and he returned from exile in France to establish a Shi'ite Islamic Republic in 1979, one branch of Islamism achieved state power. One



A large part of the New Left adopted the secular anti-Zionism of the PLO, and then later absorbed the antisemitism common within political Islamism (Image: Shawn Goldberg/Shutterstock)

of the first actions of the Khomeini regime was to brutally repress the left-wing groups that had supported his revolution, particularly the Iranian Communist Tudeh Party. The victory of the Taliban in Afghanistan created a Sunni Islamist state allied with al-Qa'eda. Sunni and Shi'ite jihadi groups, in competition and in occasional opportunistic alliance, have achieved considerable political and military influence throughout the Middle East, as well as in parts of Africa and Asia. They have also become a significant presence within the sizeable immigrant Muslim communities in the West, where they have displaced much of the more moderate religious and cultural leadership of previous generations.

The radical left transferred its allegiance from secular third world national liberation movements to radical Islamists as a new and potent vehicle for anti-colonialism. This move was facilitated by a significant transformation in the New Left itself. In the past 30 years, it has morphed from a movement inspired by a revised version of Marx's vision of a revolution based on class, and on Western Enlightenment values of reason, freedom, and equality, into a postmodernist ideology defined by the identity politics of ethnicity,

gender, and indigenism. This shift moved the theoretical foundations of the radical left from political economy to critical theory, ethnic and gender studies, and postmodernist doctrines of cultural relativism. Addressing the injustices inflicted on ethnic and gender groups by White European racism and colonialism became its focus. European colonialism is regarded as the source of all racism and injustice, while non-European colonialism, such as the Ottoman Empire, and Soviet domination of central Asia, are disregarded as irrelevant.

Indigenism is fetishised as the condition of original innocence, despite the fact that it has no clear substance for many of the areas to which it is loudly applied. This is most glaringly obvious in the case of the Middle East and North Africa, which have been subject to continuing invasions, and influxes of populations, over the past four millennia. The notion of a stable cohesive native population in these territories is a historical fiction. The Muslim Arab conquest of the Middle East in the seventh century subordinated Jewish, Byzantine, and Aramaic speaking Christian communities to Arabisation and Islamic rule. It also Islamised Persia. Their conquest of North Africa and Iberia extended

forced Arabisation to Egyptian, Greek, Berber, and Visigoth peoples. Turkish speaking people moved from central Asia into Anatolia in the 11th century. The Ottomans subsequently imposed Turkish rule and settlement on large areas of the Middle East, Armenia, North Africa, Cyprus, and the Balkans, which they incorporated into a large Islamic empire. The sequence of invasions and population flows in these areas throughout ancient, mediaeval, and modern history renders the notion of an indigenous population in these regions largely without content.

AN IDENTITY POLITICS THAT TARGETS JEWS

In constructing an identity-driven alternative to the class-based ideology of the traditional left, the postmodernist left has devised an ethnic and gender hierarchy of virtue that is the inversion of the one invoked to support the racial politics of the ethno-centric far right. The ethnic and gender groups victimised by Western colonialism are effectively reinterpreted as noble savages, in the sense popularised by 17th- and 18th-century philosophers, who imagined them flourishing in natural environments uncorrupted by the oppressive norms of European society. This fantasy became the basis for an irrationalist stream of romantic thought in the 19th century, that celebrated primitiveness. Nazism appropriated elements of this movement in its blood and soil racial nationalism. The noble savage view of native peoples in (and from) colonised countries is, at root, the expression of a profoundly paternalist, racist view of non-Europeans, which infantilises them. It treats them as fundamentally different

from Western people, depriving them of both agency and responsibility.

Under the guise of promoting diversity and equality, the identity politics of the postmodernist left has overturned the broad coalition-building agenda of classical progressive

“Jews fare as badly in the ethnic politics of the postmodernist left as they do in those of the White supremacist right. In both systems, they are regarded as beneficiaries of illicit privilege who abuse and exploit the rightful owners of the societies that they corrupt”

movements. It has replaced it with the worship of ethnic and gender difference, based on inherited virtue conferred by a history of European colonial dispossession. The purpose of this exercise appears to be not the creation of a social order that provides fully democratic institutions and genuine equality to all its members,

but a permanent acknowledgement of original sin and past guilt by the descendants of the colonisers, and those who benefit from the privileges that they enjoy.

Jews fare as badly in the ethnic politics of the postmodernist left as they do in those of the White supremacist right. In both systems, they are regarded as beneficiaries of illicit privilege who abuse and exploit the rightful owners of the societies that they corrupt. In both systems, they are indelibly alien, at home nowhere, and native to no country or culture. In both world views, they control vast financial and political power, which they use to manipulate governments and financial institutions to dispossess native peoples, and to advance their own nefarious ends. From the White supremacist perspective, they are a vagrant Middle Eastern people preying upon the wholesome native cultures of Europe and North America. The postmodernist left casts them as particularly troublesome beneficiaries of White privilege, who have established a colonial settler state in Palestine. They have allegedly mobilised an international conspiracy

to sustain this state, and supposedly exploit vulnerable ethnic minorities throughout the countries of their diaspora, particularly in America.

CONTEMPORARY ANTISEMITISM: CONTINUITIES AND INNOVATIONS

One of the most salient features of antisemitism is its capacity to reformulate itself in distinct idioms in different historical contexts. Throughout the mediaeval period, it was expressed as a religious prejudice rooted in Christian doctrine concerning the role of Jews in the crucifixion of Jesus and their refusal to accept the Gospels. In the 19th century, it reinvented itself as a pseudo-scientific racial theory concerned with the intrinsic properties of a mythic Jewish ‘race’. Contemporary anti-Zionists claim that they are only objecting to Israel and its supporters. They have no problem with Jews, and they are opposed to antisemitism.

The postmodernist left is now using anti-Zionism as cover for anti-Jewish racism. Its target is not the government of Israel or its actions, but its people. It does not distinguish between progressive and right-wing Israelis. It seeks to annihilate Israel as a country, where half of the world’s Jewish population lives. It marks the overwhelming majority of Jews abroad, who affirm Israel’s right to exist, even within its 1967 borders, as enemies of decency, to be violently excluded from the social mainstream. It poses as a political programme for securing Palestinian rights, while it promotes hostility to Jews as a collectivity.

There is a clear precedent for this use of anti-Zionism as a vehicle for racial and political antisemitism. The Stalinist purges of the 1950s in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe featured campaigns against Jews, who were described as cosmopolitans and Zionist agents. In 1968-69, the Polish Communist Party conducted an anti-

Zionist attack on the postwar remnant of its Jewish population of 35,000, resulting in the forced emigration of approximately 25,000 of them.

But the anti-Zionist antisemitism of the postmodernist left is distinct from that of the Stalinists. The latter was formulated in classical Marxist-Leninist terms of class struggle and revolution. Those accused of being Zionists were painted as agents of capitalist and imperialist subversion of a socialist state. The former variant is increasingly understood in the context of the anti-colonialist alliance between the postmodernist left and radical political Islamism.

Since the Hamas mass terrorist attack of October 7, 2023, the more militant wing of the contemporary radical left has explicitly celebrated Hamas, Hezbollah, and other elements of the Iranian axis, as authentic expressions of resistance to Zionist occupation. It has endorsed their eliminationist program of mass murder and expulsion of the Jewish population of Israel. It has taken up their call to assault Jewish communities in the Diaspora as centres of Zionist activity. The demand for a global intifada has been translated into a policy of classifying any Jew not willing to actively support the destruction of Israel as a Zionist, and hence a legitimate target.

This component of the postmodernist left has mounted a growing movement for the delegitimisation of organised Jewish life, and the banishment of “Zionist” Jews from public spaces in education, the arts, media, and the professions. It includes boycotts of Jewish businesses with any perceived connection to Israel, and increasingly violent attacks on Jews both on and off university campuses. These developments recall the escalating exclusion of Jews from public life in Nazi and fascist countries throughout Europe in the 1930s. This part of the radical left has evolved from socialism to a variant of national socialism. The inverted ethnic and gender hierarchy that drives its activism,

and its presentation of Israel, with its Jewish supporters, as the agent of a cosmic conspiracy for colonising oppressed peoples, corresponds to the racial politics of the Nazis. In the often-violent pro-Hamas demonstrations that have been taking place this past year and a half throughout Western countries, the Hamas red triangle has become a modern swastika, and the checkered keffiyeh used to cover the faces of demonstrators is assuming the role of a latter-day brown shirt.

THE MOVE TO THE FAR RIGHT: BROKEN REEDS AND FALSE FRIENDS

While the postmodernist left now constitutes a serious threat to the survival of open and organised Jewish life in the Diaspora, it has little prospect of achieving electoral power. In fact, the large majority of the electorates in most countries have recoiled in fear and disgust at the sight of its embrace of Islamist extremism. They have sought refuge in far-right parties which are fast gaining power throughout Europe and North America. This reaction appears to have been a factor in Trump’s recent election. The trend towards these two poles of extremism is the expression of much deeper social and economic problems, in particular the sharp rise in economic inequality and the attendant dislocation that it is causing. As in past peri-

ods of serious instability, the entry of antisemitism into the mainstream of public opinion is a symptom of underlying social pathology.

Some Jews in the Diaspora, and many in Israel, see the rise of far-right governments as a source of rescue. This is a serious mistake. While these regimes might be hostile to the immigrant groups within which Islamist agitation has become entrenched, they draw their core support from nativist bases for which antisemitism is as integral to their belief systems as hostility to immigrants. These movements tend to be strongly sympathetic to Putin, who is strategically aligned with the Iranian axis. They are entirely unreliable as supporters of Israel. In no way can they be seen as guarantors of Jewish security. Jews are now caught directly in the crossfire between the extremes of the radical postmodernist left and the racist far-right, as the centre falls away into ineffectiveness. Embracing either of these extremes is as self-destructive as it is self-debasing. AIR

Shalom Lappin is the Professor of Natural Language Processing, Queen Mary University of London, and the author of The New Antisemitism: The Resurgence of an Ancient Hatred in the Modern World (Polity) which won the 2024 LCSCA Book Prize. © Fathom Journal (fathomjournal.org), reprinted by permission all rights reserved.

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NOTED AND QUOTED

THE MONTH IN MEDIA

ADAM BANDT

Highlighting Hamas' brutal crack-down on the growing numbers of brave Palestinians protesting against its rule in Gaza, the *Australian* (April 1) slammed federal Greens leader Adam Bandt for "despicably" suggesting "Israel was to blame for Hamas's latest butchery. His contemptible views reaffirm why the major parties have no moral choice but to preference the Greens last in all seats and the Senate."

The editorial also condemned Bandt's colleagues, including former Victorian Greens leader Samantha Ratnam, who is seeking to defeat Labor's special envoy for social cohesion, Peter Khalil, in the Melbourne seat of Wills by accusing him of "supporting genocide".

On April 9, the paper doubled down on its criticism of Bandt, stating that "despite Hamas's terrorist record, its brutality to Gazans and its misusing them as human shields in war, Mr Bandt... would not rule out a role for the terrorists in governing Gaza in future. That would be a matter for Palestinians, he said."

On *ABC TV* "Insiders" (April 20), Bandt displayed an inability to differentiate between a democracy defending itself and a genocidal terror group. Bandt said, "We condemned the attacks on October 7 and have called for the hostages to be released, but we also don't think children should be killed by a very sophisticated and well-armed army... The Australian Government is not putting any pressure on the extremist Netanyahu Government for this slaughter to stop. We're arguing very simply that Israelis and Palestinians both should have equal rights to live in peace and justice and have their rights to self-determination respected."

Bandt seems to have no problem with Hamas playing a role in Gaza's future, despite the terror group vowing to never make peace with Israel and its promise, if given the chance, to repeat October 7 again and again.

In his April 20 column, News Corp's Piers Akerman pointed out that "Gaza is not 'occupied' by Israel. It's occupied by Hamas – a jihadist death cult. Those masked murderers are not freedom fighters: they are enforcers of a violent theocracy whose cruelty knows no limits and as always, their first victims are their own people."

MAY DAY

Ahead of the May federal election, prominent Western Sydney Lebanese Muslim community leader Dr Jamal Rifi warned in the *Australian* (April 10) of the dangers that come with supporting sectarian parties.

Dr Rifi wrote, "It would be a tragedy for Australia, for our tolerant and multicultural future, if the Muslim Votes political party 'succeeds' in the forthcoming election. Muslim Votes is a mix of the aggressive left, of opportunists, cynics, and the naive, with some undercover Liberal support in certain electorates, and idealists unaware of the strange amalgam which is this grouping."

He accused the party of "deliberately manipulating the Palestinian cause" and noted that several of its candidates "co-signed a statement written by Hizb ut-Tahrir, the extremist Islamist organisation that praised and celebrated the October 7 terrorist attacks by Hamas on Israel and advocates the establishment of the Khilafah [i.e. the caliphate]."

Earlier, on April 2, the *Sydney Morning Herald* also editorialised on

the dangers of "the intrusion into the political sphere by identity-based tribalism," decrying the intimidation that federal Labor and Liberal MPs endured when they wanted to attend mosques to mark the end of Ramadan.

On March 31, News Corp's Joe Hildebrand said the "ugliness that has been exposed among some individuals in the wake of the October 7 terror attacks is a wake-up call in itself. It tells us not that multiculturalism has failed but that extremism cannot be tolerated or it will [fail]."

On the flipside, former *Age* newspaper writer Julie Szego in the *Australian* (March 29) noted that many Jewish Australians will be voting "in the wreckage of the belief that Australia, home to a disproportionate number of Holocaust survivors, is a safe haven from the Jew-hatred of the Old World."

STATING THE OBVIOUS

On *ABC TV* "The World" (April 10), the International Crisis Group's Tahani Mustafa seemed to express sympathy for Hamas, whose "military capabilities are slowly [being] deteriorate[ed]" by Israel.

She also implied that the stated goal of Israeli PM "Netanyahu, along with Trump... of destroying Hamas," was unreasonable.

Later that day on *SBS TV* "World News", reporter Tom Stayner explained that Israel's stated aim is to establish a broad military presence adjacent to Rafah "to guard against another October the 7th style attack."

Meanwhile, Middle East correspondent Eric Tlozek reported on *ABC TV* "7.30" (April 8) on Palestinians who are living in the ruins of a university in Gaza but who have no access to education.



One resident, Noman Ahmad Radwane, accused Israel of having “destroyed learning, they destroyed the people.” The Palestinians camping out in the university were not asked if Hamas was in any way responsible for their plight.

PALESTINIAN PERSPECTIVES

In the *Australian Financial Review* (March 28), Ahmed Fouad Alkhatib, a Palestinian-American who works for the Atlantic Council, called on Palestinians to abandon “unhelpful and

unrealistic demands” and adopt “radical pragmatism” as the only effective path forward.

This would include accepting Israel’s right to exist, abandoning “the right of return to land that has been part of Israel since 1948,” and realising that “wishing for the disappearance of 8 million Israeli Jews is not a policy.”

Alkhatib lamented that “the so-called pro-Palestine movement has no space for a Palestinian who opposes Hamas’ terrorism and promotes a future of co-existence with Israelis.”

On April 1, the same paper ran

Gazan lawyer Moumen Al-Natour’s article articulating why he and thousands of others took to the streets to protest against Hamas.

“The message of our movement is clear: the people of Gaza want to live, so Hamas must go, the hostages taken from Israel must be released, and this war must then finally come to an end...”

“Take it from someone who has lived under Hamas since age 11: to support Hamas is to be for Palestinian death, not Palestinian freedom. Hamas is killing us – through war, poverty and extortion – not liberating us.”



IN PARLIAMENT

Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese** (ALP, Grayndler) – April 14 – Passover message: “We remain steadfast in our determination to combat the scourge of antisemitism, and ensure Australia is a place of belonging, safety and respect. The Jewish community is a cherished part of our modern multicultural society, and you make Australia a better place for us all.”

Opposition Leader **Peter Dutton** (Lib., Dixon) – April 12 – Passover message: “[The Passover story] evokes the strength, resilience and fellowship that is central to the Jewish character and identity. That strength, resilience and fellowship has been exemplified by Australia’s Jewish community during the last 18 months... This unprecedented wave of antisemitism not only threatens Australians of Jewish faith. It also imperils our social cohesion and is an attack on our democratic values and way of life.”

The following five statements are from the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee Estimates hearings, March 27:

Shadow Attorney-General Senator **Michaelia Cash** (Lib., WA) – “Minister, is Prime Minister Netanyahu welcome?”

Foreign Minister Senator **Penny Wong** (ALP, SA) – responding: “We continue to call for hostages to be released... for a ceasefire and... the observance of international humanitarian law so that civilians are protected, and for aid to flow.”

Senator **Cash** – “We stand with Israel... with the democracy... Prime Minister Netanyahu is welcome here under a Dutton government.”

Shadow Assistant Minister to the Leader of the Opposition Senator **James McGrath** (Lib., Qld.) – “This government... has... allowed a situation... where Jewish businesses are vandalised, cars and businesses are torched, a synagogue is firebombed and Jewish people are targeted.”

Senator **Wong** responding – “Jewish Australians have a right to be safe and to feel safe... The rise in antisemitism and the threats and actual violence... are unacceptable.”

Senator **Nick McKim** (Greens, Tas.) – March 26 – moved: “In recognition of the National Day of Action for Palestine, and... Israel’s renewed assault on Gaza that demonstrates... blatant disregard for international law, that the Australian Government imposes sanctions on the extremist Netanyahu government... and calls for an end to the genocide... the system of apartheid and illegal occupation.”

Greens Deputy Leader Senator **Mehreen Faruqi** (NSW) – “The settler colonial state continues its attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank, seizing more land to expand its apartheid settlements... [In Gaza] There are at least 50,000 dead, likely closer to 200,000, mostly women and children... It is a well-known tactic of Israel... of murdering journalists to try and cut off the coverage of the genocide.”

Senator **Dave Sharma** (Lib., NSW) – “Ultimately, this conflict will be resolved when Hamas releases all the hostages and recognises it cannot and should not play any future role in the governance of Gaza.”

Senator **Lidia Thorpe** (Ind., Vic.) – “Israel has never had any genuine regard for any peace process with Palestinians... This colonial project has always been hell-bent on its mission of total annihilation of the Palestinian people.”

Greens Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Senator **Jordon Steele-John** (WA) – “There are countless examples of the State of Israel breaching international humanitarian law.”

Senator **McKim** – “What’s happening in Gaza... It’s not a conflict; it’s not a war... It’s a slaughter... barbaric murder spree... ethnic cleansing... genocide... war crime.”

The motion was defeated. Only the Greens and Independent Senators **Thorpe**, **Fatima Payman** (WA) and **David Pocock** (ACT) supported it.

Senator **Hollie Hughes** (Lib., NSW) – March 26 – Valedictory speech: “I... pay tribute to the strength of the Australian Jewish community... To [AIJAC’s] Joel Burnie, Colin Rubenstein and Tammy Reznik: I was always a Zionist, but you showed me Israel, and it will be an experience I will always treasure and hope to return to very, very soon.”

Speaking to *ABC Radio National* “Breakfast” (March 27), Washington Institute Senior Fellow and former Palestinian negotiator Ghaith al-Omari said, “While Palestinians in Gaza continue to blame Israel primarily, they’re also blaming Hamas for bringing this along and as importantly, for not doing enough to end the war.”

Al-Omari said of Hamas that “violent ideologies, and we’ve seen it all over the world, [have] to be confronted militarily. I mean, as long as Hamas maintains guns, it will be able to survive.”

But military action is “insufficient”, he said, adding, “to be able to really defeat an ideology, you have to present an alternative, compelling ideology. And that’s part of the tragedy of the Palestinians today,” he said, because the alternative to Hamas, the Palestinian Authority, is corrupt and inefficient.

HISTORIC BLUNDERS

In the *Australian* (March 27), echoing al-Omari, Walter Russell Mead wrote that both Hamas and the Palestinian Authority “have come to the end of the road.”

Hamas’ October 7 attack, he said, was the greatest strategic blunder by Palestinian leaders since the rejection of the United Nations partition resolution in 1947, exposing the “haplessness” of the Palestinian Authority which has been “essentially irrelevant” during the greatest crisis for the Palestinian movement in nearly 80 years.

In the same edition, the editorial called for the “groundswell of opposition to Hamas to be nurtured as a positive sign that change towards a peaceful future in the troubled Middle East is still possible.”

The *Australian*’s chief international correspondent Cameron Stewart (March 28) remarked that “protests of this size are unfolding among a population that once elected Hamas as their rulers says much about how

many Gazans now recognise that the terror group has jeopardised their lives and their future by its ongoing conflict with Israel.”

PROTESTS AND CONTRADICTIONS

In the *Australian*, (April 5), Middle East Forum founder Daniel Pipes analysed why the protests in Gaza erupted now, positing that “systematic Israeli incursions degraded Hamas’s internal security forces... create[d] an opening for Gazans finally to express their loathing of Hamas.”

Two days later in the *Australian*, Strategic Analysis Australia’s Anthony Bergin chided Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong for her contradictory positions on Gaza.

Bergin wrote, “Now we’re seeing a crackdown by Hamas against the protesters with six executed and some tortured. Last Monday Foreign Minister Penny Wong called the executions ‘reprehensible acts’ and said the terror group must play no role in Palestine’s future. Yet Wong also urges Israel to cease fire against Hamas. Wong can’t have her cake and eat it too. The protests are possible because Hamas is losing its grip after Israel resumed its military operations against it...”

“As Gazans finally reject the sacrificial role of unwilling martyrs that Hamas has imposed on them, Wong is in effect suggesting Hamas shouldn’t be removed from power. If the foreign minister is serious about wanting to remove Hamas from the strip, she should be supporting Israel’s current efforts to achieve this objective rather than urging Israel to stop its military campaign.”

MERCURY SINKS

Tasmanian artist Bill Handbury lambasted the “Israeli lobby both here and in the US” in the Hobart *Mercury* (April 15), describing it as “relentless” and insisting it can bamboozle “most”

politicians into seeing Israelis as “the good guys” and Palestinians as “bad”.

Inverting the chain of events, Handbury tries portraying Israel as the aggressor by falsely conflating its military response to Hamas’ invasion on October 7, 2023, with Russia’s unprovoked invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Handbury argues that both sides need the services of a Nelson Mandela to guide them to “a two-state solution”.

Of course, since 2000, Israel has elected many leaders willing to fill the role of Nelson Mandela at the negotiating table and create a Palestinian state. Sadly, the Palestinian leadership has refused all such offers in favour of perpetuating the conflict.

DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

On *ABC Radio* “The World Today” (April 8), Middle East correspondent Eric Tlozek’s report about a strike on Tel al-Sultan in Gaza included accusations that civilians were deliberately targeted by Israel. The report did include one resident admitting Israel dropped leaflets advising people to leave.

Tlozek cited an IDF statement that it allows civilian populations to evacuate from combat zones in the Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, on *ABC Radio National* (April 8), Médecins Sans Frontières’ (MSF) Dr Isabelle Defourny said her organisation’s workers “never felt that we were directly targeted by Israel.”

The only question mark impacting MSF’s operations is the “question of risk”, Dr Defourny said.

She also explained that MSF “cannot” leave Gaza because “we have 50 international staff in Gaza, but 2,000 Palestinian staff” who live there.

Disappointingly, Dr Defourny incorrectly asserted that the International Court of Justice said in January 2024 that there is a plausible risk that “genocide is happening”.

As *AIR* has pointed out many times, the Court’s former President

Joan Donoghue explained to *BBC TV* last May, “The shorthand that often appears, which is that there’s a plausible case of genocide, isn’t what the Court decided.” It decided that the argument that Palestinians were entitled to make a case asking for protection under the genocide convention was “plausible”.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

A report on *SBS TV* “World News” (April 20) mistranslated a Palestinian accusation to make it appear less antisemitic.

The report of an Israeli airstrike on Gaza’s al-Mawassi – an area designated as a humanitarian zone – included subtitles translating into English the words of an angry Palestinian man saying, “The whole world says that there are safe zones for the Israelis (not to strike). They are liars, liars like the Israelis. There are no safe zones at all.”

But in fact, the man did not use the Arabic word for “Israeli” in the above quote but the word “Yahud”. “Yahud” means Jews, not “Israelis”.

A headline in the April 8 edition of the *Canberra Times* claimed, “Israeli strikes on Gaza Strip kill 32, mostly women and children.” This was wrong. As the story’s introduction correctly noted, “more than a dozen women and children” were killed, which is not “most” of 32.

HOSTAGE DIPLOMACY

On *ABC NewsRadio* (March 31), Middle East correspondent Eric Tlozek claimed that “Israel reneged on the previous ceasefire deal which would have seen all living hostages released and demanded a less comprehensive agreement, which Hamas refused.”

This is incorrect – there was no detailed agreement to release all hostages, only a framework to negotiate a second stage of the ceasefire that would have potentially included such

a release. In the actual negotiations, Hamas proposed to release only one living American-Israeli hostage and the bodies of four others.

Speaking about a hostage-for-ceasefire deal on *Sky News*’ “The Kenny Report” (April 8), veteran Israeli analyst Ehud Yaari said he did “not see a situation in which Hamas will accept to remain without any of the live Israeli hostages. They see that as their ultimate insurance policy. So, the day after in Gaza that everybody was waiting for and talking about is not going to happen.”

Israel, he said, will “continue” to apply military pressure “until Hamas is willing to contemplate what is on the table, which is disarmament or safe passage outside.”

FOOD FIGHT

On *ABC Radio National* “Breakfast” (April 4), International Criminal Court (ICC) founding prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo said Israel’s decision to block aid into Gaza from March 1 was “a crime”.

According to Ocampo, “You cannot attack two million civilians to attack Hamas... That’s a very clear war crime and crime against humanity.”

In fact, according to Article 23 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, allowing the passage of humanitarian aid is only required during war when that aid does not provide a “definite advantage [to] the military efforts or economy of the enemy.” Aid into Gaza clearly provides an “advantage” to Hamas, which seizes aid to finance its activities.

The previous day on *ABC Radio National* “Breakfast”, UN Special Rapporteur Michael Fakhri accused Israel of “starving the people of Gaza this entire time since October 9th, 2023” and warned that the Strip was on “the brink of famine yet again.”

Claims that Gaza has been on the brink of famine have been greatly exaggerated since October 7, 2023.

Fakhri also said, “based on eyewitness accounts and direct statements

from the World Food Program and other UN agencies,” there is no evidence Hamas was stealing aid.

Ocampo had also claimed in his April 4 interview, “Israel as an occupying power in Gaza has an obligation to ensure that all civilians have access to food and the necessities of life, medicine, water, etc.”

However, in a second interview on *ABC Radio National* “Breakfast” (April 22), Ocampo essentially admitted that Hamas is responsible for the war’s outbreak and its continuation.

Ocampo explained that “for me, the biggest idea is it’s not about war crimes. It’s about stop wars.”

“Look, after one-and-a-half years, killing 50,000 people, and still Hamas is in power. That is for me a disaster. How to control Hamas? If you conduct criminal investigation in Hamas, you focus on the money. You focus on stopping the money. If you don’t stop the flow of money to Hamas, they will reconstruct again. They will rebuild again,” he said. Israel’s Gaza aid embargo is intended to do exactly this – stop the flow of money to Hamas.

While interviewing Israel’s special envoy on antisemitism Michal Cotler-Wunsh (April 4), *ABC Radio National* “Breakfast” host Sally Sara also claimed that Israel was legally bound to provide aid to Gaza.

An incensed Cotler-Wunsh insisted Hamas has stolen aid in Gaza and the proof of this was “the Gazans who are demonstrating against Hamas.”

NUMBERS GAME

The *Australian* (April 4) was one of the few mainstream media outlets to highlight the fact that Hamas’ March quarterly casualty update had dropped thousands of names previously listed as having been killed in Gaza.

The report noted that, “The lists also include people who died before the war and people who died from attacks by Hamas rather than Israel.”

MEDIA MICROSCOPE

Allon Lee

DEAL OR DILL OF THE CENTURY?

The announcement that Washington and Teheran would engage in talks about Iran's nuclear program inevitably sparked questions about President Donald Trump's motivations for doing so and how his unpredictable decision-making style might affect their outcome.

On *ABC Radio National* "Breakfast" (April 8), Foundation for Defense of Democracies Iran analyst and recent AIJAC guest speaker Behnam Ben Taleblu said the announcement of talks was not a surprise to "anyone who was paying attention to what Donald Trump was saying... Not only during the first term, but also during the campaign period prior to his first term, he tried to distinguish himself from a whole host of Republican candidates and challengers and contenders saying, 'I buy bad deals, I make them good deals'... He said that with respect to the Iranian nuclear program and the 2015-era Obama nuclear deal. And he's always been talking about fixing and renegotiating a bigger, better deal. The question is, well, what are the contents of that bigger, better deal?"

Ben Taleblu explained that Trump's goals for a deal need to be viewed in terms of his "big picture" ambitions in the region, which include "peace in the Levant, Israel-Lebanon peace, Israel-Gaza peace through a series of ceasefires... Iran not having a nuclear weapon. And... potential normalisation with Israel and more Arab states like Saudi Arabia."

The next day, the *Australian* warned that Washington must not be "suckered into another flawed deal, as Barack Obama was in 2015, which failed to impede Tehran's ominous march towards nuclear weapons."

On *ABC Radio National* "Saturday Extra" (April 12), long-standing Iranian regime apologist Trita Parsi said Trump "knows that opening up the Iranian market would be the biggest market that has opened up since the collapse of the Soviet Union" – something which was of little interest to Presidents Obama and Biden.

A report on *SBS TV* "World News" (April 20) included former Iranian diplomat Mehrdad Khonsari explaining that Trump "has to be able to tell the domestic audience in his own country, first and foremost, that I have been able to attain an agreement that is more favourable to the United States than... the previous agreement that I got out of."

On April 13, *Sky News*' Middle East correspondent Alistair Bunkall said the Trump Administration might have to offer Iran "something... so the Iranians can say that they're getting something out of the talks... there's about \$6 billion locked away in a bank in Qatar that was supposed to be transferred to the Iranians under the Biden Administration as part of a hostage deal but never was. So, you know, that is a potential carrot that Trump

could offer the Iranians, except Trump doesn't tend to offer carrots in the early stages of negotiations."

Speaking on *Sky News*' "Bolt Report" (April 15), former US Army vice chief of staff General Jack Keane acknowledged there was concern that Trump would

accept a weak deal after his Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff, who is leading the negotiations, said Iran could maintain low-level uranium enrichment for civilian purposes.

Keane pointed out that the White House walked Witkoff's comments back and that Trump knows the final deal must see Iran "give up the enrichment, destroy the deeply buried centrifuge facilities that they have, and destroy the ballistic missiles. Do that by a certain date and have it verified by independent inspectors. And then the alternative, if you're not willing to do that, is that Israel and the United States will destroy that nuclear enterprise."

Deakin academic Shahram Akbarzadeh explained the challenge of getting Iranian agreement to what the US is seeking on *SBS TV* "World News" (April 8), saying, "Issues such as Iran's foreign policy relations, proxy relations, Iran's missile technology advancements" are "red lines for the Iranian regime."

On *ABC Radio National* "Breakfast" (April 14), analyst Hussein Ibish predicted that, despite Trump's bellicose rhetoric, the US will not bomb Iran's nuclear facilities "unless and until, you know, absent any other provocation, they get definitive intelligence that the Iranians are moving towards weaponising their nuclear enriched uranium."

Claudia Farhart's report on *SBS TV* "World News" (April 19) included the International Crisis Group's Iran Project Director Ali Vaez expressing similar views, saying, "If they enrich to 90%, or if they kick out the UN inspectors and blind the international community, that could invite an attack."

THE LAST WORD

Rabbi Ralph Genende

REFLEXIVE WISDOM

The iconic Scottish poet Robert Burns reflected on the challenge of honest self-observation:

O would some Power with vision teach us

To see ourselves as others see us!

It would from many a blunder free us...

Living in an age of acute antisemitism, we are often bewildered, if not astonished, by the distorted perceptions of Jews and Judaism from our detractors. Since October 7, the depiction of Jews as evil blood suckers, vermin, baby-killers, conspiratorial manipulators and trash have resurfaced with a vengeance.

For example, the French Canadian paper *La Presse* published a cartoon of Israeli PM Netanyahu with long claws, pointed ears and wearing a long black coat – images reminiscent of the vampire from the classic 1922 silent film, “Nosferatu”.

On April 7, a speech by former Israeli PM Naftali Bennett at Princeton was disrupted by protesters who shouted at Jewish students that they were “inbred swine” who should “go back to Europe.”

In Australia, we have been treated to similar toxic depictions on social media, and on the placards and chants at pro-Palestinian protests on our streets and on our campuses.

We shouldn’t be surprised – mediaeval blood libels and ugly stereotypes are as ancient as history itself.

For instance, Hollywood may have been largely built by Jews, but its depiction of Jews has been centred on shallow stereotypes. A 2024 study from the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center’s Media Impact Project revealed how this continues even today, noting several damaging stereotypes that recur throughout television shows up until the present day: “The Nebbish Man” (nerdy, mama’s boy), “The Overbearing Jewish Mother” and “The Jewish American Princess (JAP).” In scripted television, Orthodox Jews are

often “othered”, while Jewish people at large are often painted as monolithic. It’s not necessarily so marvellous to be Mrs Maisel.

Recognising and knowing how others see us is knowing how to counter their egregious depictions.

Yet, while “Rabbie” (Robert) Burns may be right that seeing ourselves as others do can be helpful and even liberating, we should also recognise how it can lead to potential pitfalls or blunders. If the Other comes from a place of hatred, we might start to believe their negative stereotypes. If you are hated, you might come to believe you are hateful and that the flaw is in you. This is rarely so – “hate exists in the mind of the hater, not the person of the hated.”

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks posited that internalised anti-

semitism gives rise to either self-righteousness or self-hatred, and that we need to remember that Jews are the *objects* of antisemitism, not its *cause*.

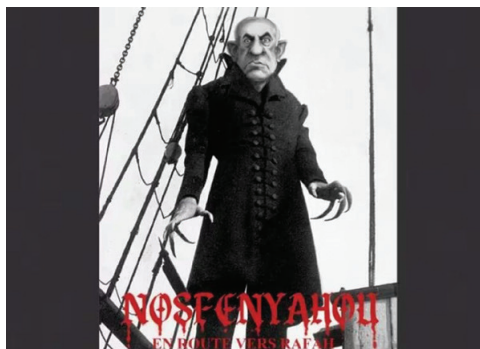
Both these trends have surfaced with a vengeance since October 7.

A good number of young Jews – especially on our campuses – have drunk the Kool-Aid of self-destructiveness proffered by those who hate us. I am not suggesting that all of those standing with the Palestinians

are self-hating, but the failure of many to also extend the compassion they have for the awful suffering of Gazans to the pain and angst of their own people surely amounts to a moral failing. The suffering of every human being should pain us, but prioritising your own kin is also a moral obligation. Rabbi Akiva famously formulated that your own life needs to always take precedence – even as we must never forget our obligations to others.

Self-righteousness can be another sickly product of internalised antisemitism, and it has sadly flourished since October 7, especially in the extremist supporters across the Jewish world of some far-right Israeli politicians.

In these critically worrying times for our people, we need to ensure we are not driven by fear, but by the values that have sustained us for centuries: love of God and love of the stranger, the sanctity of human life, justice and righteousness. If we can do that, I live in hope that someday we will be able to look into the eyes of the other and see reflected back only the best of who we truly are.



A French Canadian newspaper invokes an antisemitic trope by portraying Netanyahu as a vampire (Screenshot)



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