

Despite lack of evidence, dubious incidents exploited to escalate “antisemitism” witch hunt in Australia

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From what the police have reported, recent arrests over apparent antisemitic attacks in Sydney and Melbourne have produced no evidence of any connection to the mass opposition and protests against the Australian government-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza.

The federal and state governments, led by the Labor Party, along with the political and media establishment as a whole, are nevertheless stepping up their offensive to exploit dubious graffiti and arson incidents to demonise opponents of the genocide in Gaza and deepen the assault on political dissent and basic democratic rights.

Since late November, there have been eight murky attacks at synagogues or other sites identified with Jewish people in Sydney and one in Melbourne, five involving arson. The evidence released by the state and federal police so far has pointed to the possible involvement of criminal gangs, with no links to the anti-genocide protest movement.

This has not stopped the corporate media, the Albanese Labor government and the New South Wales (NSW) and Victorian state Labor governments from demanding the suppression of pro-Palestinian protests and unveiling new laws to criminalise opposition to Israel’s ongoing US-backed atrocities, under the fraudulent banner of outlawing “hate speech.”

On Thursday, NSW police announced the 10th arrest over the events in Sydney by its now expanded Strike Force Pearl. The police said a 37-year-old man was tasered before being taken to a central Sydney police station to be charged with “destroy/damage property in company, destroy property in company use fire, and knowingly display by public act Nazi symbol without excuse.”

He was the second man arrested this week over an alleged attempt to set a synagogue on fire in Sydney’s inner west on January 11, during which red swastikas were graffitied along the synagogue’s front fence.

On Wednesday, 33-year-old Sydney man Adam Moule was charged over the same incident. According to court

documents, Moule is also accused of cultivating cannabis plants and possessing five debit cards, with different financial institutions and in different names, which police alleged “may be reasonably suspected of being stolen or otherwise unlawfully obtained.”

Among the earlier eight arrests by Strike Force Pearl is Adam Hawi, the son of murdered bikie boss Mick Hawi. He is charged with refusing to tell police who was behind the wheel of his car, which was allegedly used in an apparent anti-Jewish attack in Sydney’s eastern suburbs in November.

Earlier this week, Australian Federal Police (AFP) Commissioner Reece Kershaw vaguely said “criminals for hire” could be behind some recent attacks on Jewish sites. He said the police inquiries “include who is paying those criminals, where those people are, whether they are in Australia or offshore, and what their motivation is.”

A Sydney court was also told that Guy Finnegan, one of the men arrested earlier by police, told officers he torched a Sydney brewery, possibly mistaken for a nearby Kosher deli, because he owed drug money and threats were made to his life.

NSW Police Commissioner Karen Webb said police investigating these attacks are operating on a theory that criminals may have been hired by an underworld network to commit the attacks in exchange for payment. “It’s like Airtasker for criminals,” Commissioner Webb told Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio.

This week, police also raided the home of a western Sydney woman for her alleged involvement in a December 11 act in which three buildings were graffitied with misspelt slogans such as “death 2 Israel” and a stolen car was set alight. Again, police produced no evidence of any connection to anti-genocide demonstrations.

Premier Chris Minn’s NSW state Labor government established Strike Force Pearl last month amid a media-fuelled propaganda campaign, to investigate “hate crimes

with an antisemitic focus across Sydney.”

Before this week’s two arrests, four men—aged 31, 37, 40 and 26—have been charged following fires at two businesses in Bondi, a Sydney eastern suburb, in October 2024. Three men—aged 20, 19 and 21—have been charged after 10 vehicles and buildings were allegedly deliberately damaged in nearby Woollahra in November 2024. A woman—aged 34—has been charged after vehicles and buildings were allegedly deliberately damaged in Woollahra in December 2024.

In none of these cases have the police reported any evidence of connection to the anti-genocide protests.

Without waiting for any clarification of the true nature or motivations for these attacks, Premier Minns congratulated the police for their arrests, poisoning any prospect of fair trials in the process. “The NSW Police Force has deployed dozens of officers determined to catch the bastards responsible for these sickening, racist crimes,” he said.

Earlier in the week, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese likewise branded the attacks as “unacceptable antisemitic hate crimes” and declared: “My government will support NSW Police to hunt down the offenders and ensure they face the full force of the law through Operation Avalite.”

The AFP’s Operation Avalite was established last month to investigate “threats, violence and hatred towards the Australian Jewish community and parliamentarians.” As of January 9, the AFP said it had investigated at least 102 reports and 15 serious allegations and charged one person. Again, no evidence of anti-genocide protest connections was offered.

The AFP said it was in communication with “our Five Eyes and trusted international partners about these issues.” That indicates coordination with such police and intelligence agencies, particularly in the US and UK, where similar witch hunts and sweeping crackdowns on free speech are also escalating.

One of the anti-genocide protest organisers, the Palestine Action Group Sydney, issued a statement on January 22 condemning “the recent spate of racist graffiti and other attacks that we have seen in Australia.”

The statement said the same politicians who have continued to support and sign arms deals with Israel as it carried out a brutal slaughter in Gaza, were using “deplorable acts of antisemitism” to justify further attacks on the right to protest and to criticise the state of Israel.

It drew attention, as has the *World Socialist Web Site*, to the silence or denial by the media and governments of billionaire Elon Musk’s twice repeated Nazi salutes during Donald Trump’s inauguration ceremony in the US.

Fascists are now in power in the US and are being promoted throughout Europe and internationally. That is never mentioned in the media coverage of Australia’s

incidents. On the contrary, Albanese has hailed Trump’s election and pledged to work with him.

No one in the political and police-intelligence apparatus has raised the possibility of neo-Nazi involvement in the Australian attacks. The leaders of the National Socialist Network (NSN) have often stated publicly their hostility to both Jews and Palestinians, in line with their white supremacist racism, and the NSN is known to engage in clandestine graffiti.

Australia’s Labor governments are vying with each other, and their Liberal-National counterparts, to prove themselves to be the most draconian and repressive in outlawing dissent and free speech.

Minns confirmed this week that his NSW government would be drafting changes to “hate speech” laws, alongside the Victorian state Labor government, including to make “vilification” a criminal offence. He said he wanted to have the “toughest laws” in Australia.

Minns was matched by federal Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, who returned this week from a six-day mission to Israel, where he reiterated the Albanese government’s support for the Zionist regime’s ongoing genocidal assault on the populations of Gaza, the occupied West Bank and southern Lebanon. Dreyfus said he made clear “Australia’s support for Israel’s security, support for Israel’s right to defend itself against terrorism.”

Dreyfus said introducing criminal penalties for “hate speech” would be a major priority for Albanese’s government when parliament resumed next month. That legislation sets prison sentences of up to seven years for designated “hate speech” that threatens “the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth.”

This bill is part of Labor’s four-pronged attack on the basic democratic right of free speech. This includes bans to access social media for teenagers up to the age of 16 and the Combating Misinformation and Disinformation Bill, which gives a government agency unprecedented powers to order social media platforms to shut down “harmful” material.

Together with the Murdoch media and various Zionist leaders, federal Liberal-National leader Peter Dutton has denounced Albanese as “weak” on antisemitism. In reality, Labor has backed Israel politically, diplomatically and materially throughout the genocide, and has vehemently attacked domestic opposition, issuing growing threats to ban pro-Palestinian protests.



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