

Australian police say wave of “antisemitic attacks” was a hoax

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At a press conference yesterday, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) announced that a purported wave of “antisemitic attacks” in Sydney between November and January had nothing to do with racial or religious hatred, but was perpetrated by a group of criminals seeking to barter with the police and to divert attention from other illegal activities.

The revelation is a damning indictment of the entire political and media establishment. The supposed attacks were invoked by politicians and the press to whip up an atmosphere of hysteria, fear and repression of a wartime character. This was an unprecedented “national crisis,” they all asserted, requiring extraordinary measures.

The concocted wave was directly invoked to justify the passage of “hate speech” laws federally and in New South Wales (NSW), which potentially criminalise a broad range of political speech. It was utilised to step-up the political attack on opponents of the Israeli genocide in Gaza, who have nothing to do with antisemitism, including respected Macquarie University academic Dr Randa Abdel-Fattah and anti-Zionist Jewish leader Sarah Schwartz.

The AFP officials confirmed what had already been floated in the press regarding the discovery of a caravan filled with explosives in the outer Sydney suburb of Dural on January 19.

The existence of the caravan was leaked to the *Daily Telegraph*, which on January 29 published an article presenting it as the preparation for a terrorism incident targeting the Jewish community. That was based on the presence with the explosives of a list, including Sydney’s largest synagogue and the Holocaust museum.

But yesterday, AFP Deputy Commissioner Krissy Barrett stated that “within hours” of discovering the caravan, police had determined that there was no threat, deeming it to be a “criminal con job.”

The explosives were decades old, there was no serious attempt to hide them and no detonators were present. Why would terrorists leave their weaponry together with a target list unattended and easily discoverable? Criminals had also reportedly sought to barter with police for sentence reductions, with offers to reveal the location of the explosives.

Barrett’s confirmation that the Dural caravan was a “fabricated terror plot” raises major questions about the statements of NSW Labor Premier Chris Minns and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese after the existence of the caravan was made public.

In a radio interview on January 30, Minns stated: “This is the discovery of a potential mass casualty event. There’s only one way of calling it out and that is terrorism.” Albanese immediately concurred, also labelling the unattended caravan as “terrorism.”

There remain unclariities as to when Albanese was briefed on the police discovery of the caravan. But Minns has repeatedly stated that he received police briefings about it prior to the *Daily Telegraph* story.

If the police had determined “within hours” that the caravan had nothing to do with terrorism, presumably that is what they told the NSW premier. Why then, more than a week later, did he tell the public that this was clearly a terrorism incident? Either the police misled Minns, or he was

misleading the population, deliberately stoking fear and anxiety over what should have been a non-event.

That is only the most glaring example of the way in which politicians have sought to inflame the situation, presenting the murky “antisemitic” attacks as a dire threat legitimising a police-state crackdown and attacks on opponents of the Gaza genocide.

Labor’s record only underscores the fraudulent character of the federal government’s response to yesterday’s press conference. Albanese and other federal ministers have accused opposition Liberal-National leader Peter Dutton of “politicising” national security issues.

There is no question that Dutton sought to wedge the Albanese government, with claims that it was “weak” on terror. But the record demonstrates that Labor, no less than Dutton, inflated a criminal incident into a “terrorism” event when they knew that not to be the case.

The AFP and the NSW Police yesterday indicated that as many as 14 of the supposed attacks also had nothing to do with genuine antisemitism. They did not specify which incidents they were referring to, but that would comprise virtually the entirety of the “wave” that occurred in Sydney, involving graffiti and in some instances minor arson.

Like the Dural caravan, those incidents had always appeared suspicious. Anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish graffiti was plastered around the eastern suburbs of Sydney, with each incident given massive media coverage. The graffiti was crude and sometimes misspelled. The targets were frequently random; parked cars on the street, the restaurant of a celebrity chef with no connection to Israel or Judaism, a secular childcare centre. The graffiti did not promote any cause or publicise any organisation. Incidents appeared to be performed mostly for the media.

When arrests over the graffiti began in January, those picked up were small-time criminals with no apparent connection to, or interest in, the Middle East. Another 14 arrests were made yesterday, with police flagging as many as 49 charges against them.

The AFP stated that the caravan and the “antisemitic graffiti” attacks could all be traced back to the same criminal network, and to a criminal figure operating outside of Australia. The small-time criminals had carried out the attacks for money, not ideological reasons.

The AFP explanation of the Dural caravan has some plausibility. High-level criminals reportedly frequently offer to reveal illegal stashes, in exchange for sentence reductions. In this instance, they would have utilised the phony hysteria over antisemitism to try to get a better deal by claiming to be helping to thwart a terrorist incident.

The police explanation of the graffiti incidents, however, simply makes no sense. NSW deputy police commissioner David Hudson stated that the aim of the criminals was “causing chaos” and “diverting police resources” to facilitate other illegal activities.

But orchestrating and perpetrating highly public antisemitic attacks, in the current climate, was the surest way for the criminals to attract police attention, which is precisely what has occurred. Why, moreover, would they choose such a specific and highly political means of advancing ends

which the police cannot coherently explain?

The explanation of the graffiti smacks of a cover-up. These were political acts, aimed at pursuing political ends. A serious investigation would include not only an examination of the forensics of the incidents, but the political motivations and the political forces that benefited from them. That would inevitably pose the following question.

Was the Israeli state involved in the attacks?

There is no smoking gun. However, it is indisputable that the graffiti incidents ran parallel with an aggressive campaign by the Israeli regime, demanding that the Australian state pursue an even more pro-Zionist line than it had previously. Senior members of the Israeli government followed the relatively minor incidents in Sydney with a strangely intense and active interest. They directly invoked the odd “attacks” to demand policy changes from Australian governments.

Throughout the genocide, the federal Labor government has stood full square behind the Israeli onslaught, supporting it diplomatically, politically and materially, including through weapons export permits. Albanese and the state Labor governments have aggressively targeted the mass opposition to the genocide, with venomous denunciations and police attacks.

But, two issues have rankled Israel and its local proxies in a small but influential Zionist lobby. Firstly, while continuing to back Israel fully, Labor has shifted its rhetoric slightly, bemoaning civilian deaths and making vague calls for “peace.” At the same time, the graffiti incidents occurred as the Labor governments were baulking at passing far-reaching “hate speech” laws, which could outlaw strident denunciations of Zionists and Israel.

In late November, an expert panel convened by the NSW government recommended that it not introduce such laws, partly because they could violate enshrined civil liberties. Within the federal Labor government, there were also reportedly fears that such laws at a Commonwealth level would be deemed unconstitutional.

On November 16, Australia voted in favour of a UN resolution recognising permanent Palestinian sovereignty over the occupied territories. That is clearly meaningless, given that Gaza has been reduced to rubble and the onslaught is being extended to the West Bank. But the vote provoked intense anger from Israel, under conditions in which it was anticipating and preparing for the final stages of its ethnic-cleansing operation. Trump, who has since pledged to remove all Palestinians from Gaza, had been elected less than a fortnight earlier.

On November 21, the first of the large-scale graffiti attacks occurred, with several cars in the eastern suburbs daubed with anti-Israeli graffiti. The Israeli embassy issued a statement, declaring that it was “appalled by the anti-Semitic attack in Sydney last night.” Unusually, for a seemingly isolated incident targeting random cars, the embassy also issued demands. “Words are no longer enough—it’s time for action,” it stated, insisting on “immediate measures to protect and uphold the rights and safety of all citizens.”

On December 6, a synagogue was firebombed in Melbourne. The incident is not covered by yesterday’s AFP statement and continues to be investigated as an act of terrorism. It is something of an outlier, in that it occurred in Melbourne, not Sydney, and involved a degree of violence that could have claimed the lives of worshippers inside.

The synagogue was associated with the Addass Israel congregation. Its adherents are ultra-Orthodox, and largely eschew politics. The congregation was also for many years locked in a conflict with the Israeli government, which blocked the extradition of a school principal accused of molesting pupils. This was, in other words, a congregation that did not vocally support the Israeli war on Gaza and had recent antagonistic relations with the Netanyahu regime.

Netanyahu himself took to X/Twitter, denouncing the arson. But his post was a highly political intervention, including the following unhinged

statement: “Unfortunately, it is impossible to separate this reprehensible act from the extreme anti-Israeli position of the Labor government in Australia, including the scandalous decision to support the UN resolution calling on Israel ‘to bring an end to its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as rapidly as possible’...”

Over December and January, the hoax “antisemitic” incidents continued in Sydney. Israel’s Deputy Foreign Minister Sharren Haskel bizarrely responded to the daubing of antisemitic graffiti on a childcare facility in Sydney, with no connection to Judaism. Continuing the line of Netanyahu, she stated: “[T]he attitude of the current Australian government towards Israel is inflaming a lot of these emotions and giving, I guess, some acceptance.” “Words are not enough, we’ve passed that a long time ago,” she declared.

Other senior Israeli leaders made near identical comments in January, including Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar and President Isaac Herzog.

This was, in other words, a political campaign, and one whose only real foundation were the “antisemitic attacks” which have since been exposed as fraudulent.

In mid-January, Labor’s Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus travelled to Israel. The press openly stated that the aim was to “mend relations” amid Israeli fury over the hoax attacks. It was unusual for Dreyfus, the first law officer to visit Israel, as opposed to representatives of the foreign or defence ministries. There is little public information about what Dreyfus discussed in his meetings with senior Israeli leaders.

Shortly after his return, in the first week of February, Labor rushed the “hate speech” laws through parliament. As the WSWs analysed in detail, they include sweeping attacks on democratic rights, which could be used to prosecute strident critics of Zionists and others using far-reaching and vague provisions. The laws include mandatory jail time.

Also in the opening weeks of February, the NSW Labor government introduced its own similar “hate speech” legislation, directly invoking the fake attacks in Sydney. State governments are also strengthening anti-protest laws, in a clear bid to shutdown demonstrations against the genocide.

Around this time, the wave of antisemitic graffiti attacks seemed to conclude as abruptly as they had begun, almost as though their purpose had been served.



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