

# Media reinvents neo-Nazism as post-7 October phenomenon

By Tom Tanuki

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***If the media can be of any use in the fight against neo-Nazis, it must use clear analysis. Nazis aren't tools journalists can use to score points against Palestinian peace activists. [Tom Tanuki](#) reports.***

I WRITE A FORTNIGHTLY column where I regularly grapple with Australian media and politician ignorance and repressive tendencies towards grassroots politics or minority groups. It could be a daily column at the moment. I don't know where to begin.

Antisemitism is currently a notional concept that politicians and lobbyists use as a tool. It's not something you need to table any real-world examples of bigotry or discrimination to substantiate, nor encourage any kind of community response.

It's the establishment's "anti-racist" equivalent

of reading tea leaves. People mind-read anti-genocide activists, decode their legitimate concerns and slogans to locate whatever latent bigotry it suits them to suggest is underneath, and finally, they declare their reading as a definitive basis for more anti-democratic legislation.

We now have an "antisemitism envoy" for some reason. She is a deeply compromised, deeply biased [ideologue](#).

Palestinian organiser [Hasheem Tayeh](#) was first subject to outrageous [propaganda](#) in Zionist-friendly media, which compared him to neo-Nazi [Blair Cottrell](#)— now, apparently, he's being investigated for [hate crimes](#).

Some of the "hate speech" in question, apparently, is Tayeh saying "Zionists are terrorists" at a rally. Line me up behind Tayeh if you'd like. In my opinion, Zionists are terrorists. (Most terrorists, however, will never have as terrible a body count to defend as that of the post-7 October Gaza bloodbath.)

*The Age* chief reporter [Chip Le Grand](#) is [accusing](#) his betters in this arena, such as author [Randa Abdel-Fattah](#), of being [October 7 deniers](#) for questioning mass-rape conspiracies. Conspiracies of coordinated mass rape, spread by the state of [Israel and The New York Times](#), have been [substantially debunked](#). But Chip doesn't even get corrected for his ignorance, let alone lose his job.

Are any Jewish people in actual danger at the moment? It seems many are too preoccupied with running cover for genocide to fret about actual discrimination.

Western Sydney Muslims are now an "outright danger" to the electoral system, just for standing for election. Dutton [says so](#) – but he's often earned headlines through unveiled [Muslim-bashing](#), so there's nothing new there. Joining him now, however, are Labor and the Prime Minister.

The only Muslim MP in Labor who could boast both a spine and a conscience just made Labor look silly by [walking out](#) after the Party left her with no choice. So, now there's talk about dangers to "[social cohesion](#)" if those pesky Muslims keep having political opinions. PM Albanese is reduced to prettying up former Senator [Fraser Anning](#)'s talking points for centre-Lefties. If being a Muslim is what it takes to give a shit about hundreds of thousands of dead Gazans, I hope more of us become Muslim.

So, I am spoiled for choice with all of the above. Where to begin in picking apart the multi-pronged attacks on Muslims, activists, the truth and our rights?

I must start with perhaps the worst article I've ever read on neo-Nazism in Australia because the far Right has been my speciality for many years.

While I have come to expect that neo-Nazis will be used as a tool for mainstream politicians to achieve pre-determined legislative ends, never did I expect to see what [Alexi Demetriadi](#) dared attempt for *The Australian* in '[Inside the rise of Australia's far-Right](#)' — reinventing the local white supremacist far Right as a post-7 October phenomenon.

Demetriadi starts by giving a [CliffsNote](#) on the National Socialist Network ([NSN](#)), focusing on leaders like [Thomas Sewell](#), [Joel Davis](#) and

Blair Cottrell.

He talks about stuff like the annual birthday parties for Adolf Hitler, which they hold on 20 April, attaching pictures of the cakes they make. He quotes some of the very racist and antisemitic things they say in their podcasts and makes mention of their rallies, their Holocaust denial, and their active club model.

These are things that anybody familiar with local neo-Nazis already knows. It's obvious that Demetriadi is writing an introduction to neo-Nazism because this is his introduction to neo-Nazism. Demetriadi – *The Australian's* writer on matters Israel-Palestine – has been its go-to for pro-Israeli, anti-protest material since October. He's never looked at the far Right before.

National socialists in Australia aren't particularly of interest to Demetriadi. They're useful for what they help him imply about post-7 October antisemitism. When discussing Joel Davis, the first detail we learn is not strictly that he has a sizeable following, but that it has reportedly grown a lot since 7 October. "As", suggests Demetriadi, "*has his antisemitism*".

This is galling enough. A reporter reframing the absolutely pivotal hatred towards Jewish people in the neo-Nazi worldview as being given a shot in the arm post-7 October. But that's what Demetriadi is paid to do.

Extremism researcher [Lydia Khalil](#) helps muddy the waters in Demetriadi's own article when she [tells](#) him:

*'They'll be attempting to do so [exploit the Israel-Hamas war], but it's a complicated conflict for them to navigate... They're Islamophobic and anti-Semitic, there's less clarity on what side to support, it makes their narrative muddy.'*

She's right, but that's only the half of it — 7 October has been a massive fumble for Australian neo-Nazism.

I have watched it unfold with amazement. And I have actually watched it happen, unlike Demetriadi, who doesn't seem to know much about it. Take it from me.

The pro-Palestinian peace movement and its principled, articulate distinction between legitimate anti-Zionism and racist antisemitism has educated countless new laypeople since 7 October. It's neutralised a key area in which neo-Nazis could theretofore portray themselves as "speakers of unspoken truths" about global Jewish power conspiracies.

The notion of anti-Zionism *not* being equal to antisemitism is now a very well-held public concept. Millions have surpassed the point at which they could be roped in by Nazi-led "geopolitics" as an introduction to antisemitic conspiracy.

Among the broader far-Right milieu, figures like conservative political commentator [Candace Owens](#) found a financial imperative to start pedalling Jewish power conspiracies. But any gains neo-Nazism might see from this are diminishing returns in the context of far more laypeople learning from the principled pro-Palestinian cause.

Compounding the problem: the sum total action Australian neo-Nazis have taken since 7 October in the name of this cause, which is so central to their worldview, is... next to nothing.

In the past year, apart from the usual stickering, gym sessions and [bushwalks](#), they have tried an Australia Day [rally](#) in Sydney. They tried to take photos of themselves outside an anti-fascist bar in Melbourne before getting bashed and running away. And they rocked up at a cinema earlier

this year. That's more or less it.

The cinema action was to disrupt a pride night for young queer people in Albury. It's the latest of many actions that NSN have [conducted](#) to cancel a handful of teenage queer-oriented events.

What's extraordinary is that Australian neo-Nazis have done more to cancel teen queer film nights than they have to capitalise on an apparent moment of weakness for Israel, despite their insistence that that state – and by extension all Jewish people – are at the root of blame for all the world's ills.

It's arguably an astounding failure. If they are expanding in numbers, it is due to their consistency of organising. They've simply done nothing to capitalise on 7 October.

This feels like an observation, though. Demetriadi isn't here for actual substance — he's here to make content about post-7 October "antisemitism". To that end, he taps the most information-free expert on the subject: he ropes political sociologist Dr [Josh Roose](#) in for comment.

I have often mentioned Roose's ill-advised counter-terrorist contributions on fringe politics in Australia in this column space, including recently when I reviewed [Nick McKenzie's](#) Islamophobic [coverage](#) of [Hizb ut-Tahrir's](#) "infiltration" into Sydney pro-Palestinian politics. Then, Roose let loose with the same kind of uninformed horseshoe politics and nonsense he has been pedalling since 7 October.

Here, he sleepwalks through another media spot, but now it's getting worse:

*'Dr Roose said the far-Right's aim was to build a mass movement and were "not unlike Hizb ut-Tahrir in their cheerleading of violent extremism — but yet not fully participating in*

it".'

Not unlike Hizb ut-Tahrir? What? Does he think he's speaking to Nick McKenzie again?

Of course, national socialists fully participate in violent extremism. NSN's leader [bashed](#) a security guard and [used](#) knuckle-dusters on some random person's car because they filmed him. There have been several attempted attacks this year alone in Australia from young people informed by white supremacist ideology. NSN nearly recruited Christchurch killer [Brenton Tarrant](#).

Like it or not, Hizb ut-Tahrir does not encourage its adherents toward violence. It makes no sense to bring this organisation up here.

The article finishes with another Roose brain fart:

*However, you now see anti-Semitism going full circle between the far Left and Right.*

*The conspiratorial elements of the far-Left can be seen in the same anti-Semitic tropes on the far Right. While hating each other, we've seen a closing of the circle in contempt for Jewish people and anti-Semitism between the far Left and Right.*

No. You do not 'see anti-Semitism going full circle'. Demetriadi's article quotes Joel Davis saying he opposes Israel — not because he is pro-Palestinian, but because he is against worldwide Jewry. No decoding required here. Davis is an avowed, plain-speaking antisemite. The worldwide pro-Palestinian peace movement is insisting that they believe the opposite of him. No decoding required there, either.

It's shockingly ill-advised to publish incompetent observations about neo-Nazis when their movement is an oft-demonstrated and clear threat.

If journalists can be of any use at all in the fight against them, it's with clear, sharp observation and analysis. Nazis aren't tools Alexi Demetriadi and Josh Roose can use to score points against peace activists.

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