

TED LAPKIN

## ANTI-ZIONISM IN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIA

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THE DOMINANT political culture on Australian university campuses brings to mind a scene from the classic movie *Casablanca*. A naive young woman approaches the nightclub owner Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart) to enquire about the character of the thoroughly dissolute French police captain played by Claude Rains. "He's like any other man, only more so," quips the jaded Bogart in response.

And in paraphrased form, this witticism could easily be applied to Australian higher education, where all the pernicious norms of politicised academia have taken root with a vengeance. When it comes to Marxist dogma, queer theory—and yes, anti-Zionism—Australian campuses are like most other Western universities, only more so.

The ubiquity of left-wing politics in Australian academia means that the task of writing about campus Israel-phobia requires a solid sense of discrimination. The pool of subjects is so large, and the horror stories are so abundant, that considerable selectivity is required lest the end product be a tome the size of *War and Peace*.

I have thus employed the principles of journalistic triage, focusing solely on a handful of Australia's most egregious university anti-Zionists. And while there are many likely candidates who might be eligible for nomination, the Oscar for anti-Israel virulence undoubtedly goes to the University of Sydney's Evan Jones.

JONES' DAY JOB involves the teaching of economics. But his true passion comes to light in a weblog that is particularly venomous, even by the incendiary standards of the leftist blogosphere. Entitled "Alert and Alarmed", this blog is an obvious play on the slogan of an Australian government public awareness campaign on terrorism, "Be alert, but not alarmed".

While Evan Jones detests the Bush administration and the Australian government of John Howard, there's nothing that moves him quite like the question of Israel.

His anti-Zionist animus runs so deep that he exemplifies the argument that hostility to the Jewish state is synonymous with hostility to Jews, per se. Yet the very fervency of Jones' hostility towards Israel renders him tone deaf to the anti-Semitic overtones of his rhetoric.

Take for example, Jones' oft-expressed view that the Jews dominate press coverage on issues relating to Israel. A typical example of his belief in Jewish media omnipotence emerged in a blog posting that appeared under the title "The Wall and 'topographical considerations'":

All university programs in politics should have a compulsory unit on propaganda, and all such units should include a compulsory component on Israeli propaganda. The Israeli propaganda machine makes the Nazi apparatus under Goebbels [*sic*] look like amateur hour.

In reality the Israelis are far more Keystone Cop than smooth operator when it comes to the game of *hasbarah*, as public relations are known in Hebrew. The ineptitude demonstrated by Israel in its dealings with the media has caused much gnashing of teeth amongst Zionist advocates in Australia. The opinion pages of Australia's newspapers regularly feature leftist critics of Israel. The ABC, our premier publicly funded broadcaster, models itself on its UK big brother the BBC, with predictably dismal results in its Middle East coverage.

Yet despite this surfeit of evidence to the contrary, Professor Evan Jones remains fixated by the idea that pro-Israel Jews dominate the journalistic profession—lock, stock and barrel. He dismisses America's pre-eminent business newspaper as the "reactionary war-mongering Zionist *Wall Street Journal*". And the British writer of a pro-Israel letter to the editor of the *Independent* newspaper is nothing more than a "lobotomised Zionist".

And like *Casablanca*'s Captain Renault, Evan Jones

is constantly rounding up all the usual suspects. Case in point—the Cronulla Beach disturbances of December 2005 that garnered considerable attention from the world media. The riots were the culmination of long-standing ethnic tensions between the Anglo-Australian residents of the seaside area and Australians of Lebanese Muslim extraction from the south-western Sydney suburbs.

Concentrated some twenty kilometres to the north in the Bondi area, the Sydney Jewish community was a non-factor in the Cronulla violence. Yet this absence of any Jewish connection to the rioting didn't stop Evan Jones from trotting out his tried-and-true explanation for all the world's ills. Seizing on a handful of letters to the editor by Jewish authors that highlighted the undeniable problem of jihadist radicalism within the Australian Muslim community, Jones wrote: "The respectable press is at the centre of respectable racism. Our friends of Israel are at the centre of the raw material for the respectable press. Zionists have carte blanche to display their gut prejudices in public ..."

In other words, those evil Zionist puppeteers who pull the strings of the Australian media were stoking the fires of anti-Arab racism for their own Machiavellian purposes. And in spectacularly incoherent fashion, Jones then tried to go for the jugular: "Some differences are irreconcilable. And Australian Jewry's belligerent support of the unsupportable Israel is a depravity that attracts perennial support, even admiration."

This monomaniacal quest for the chimera of conspiratorial Jewish media dominance is obnoxious enough. But the obsessively irrational flavour that taints Evan Jones' worldview is compounded by another mantra that consistently crops up in his writing: the equation of Zionism with Nazism.

In the world according to Jones, the creation of the Jewish state was accomplished through conscious collaboration with Hitlerian Germany. In support of this fatuous thesis, Jones approvingly cites a dubious assertion that emanates from an even more dubious source: radical Israeli anti-Zionist Uri Davis: "Zionist leaders who have made themselves accomplices by default, and sometimes by deliberate design, to the mass murder of Jews by the Nazi annihilation machinery."

And when Melbourne's *Age* newspaper found an editorial cartoon comparing Israel and Auschwitz too loathsome, even for its decidedly left-leaning tastes, Evan Jones protested. Jones lauded cartoonist Michael Leunig on the grounds that the artist "juxtaposed the hypocrisy erected on the degradation that was Auschwitz and its gas chambers with the hypocrisy of contemporary Israel". And the professor went on to enquire rhetorically: "are Leunig's representations anti-semitic as claimed? No. Are they anti-Israel? Yes certainly. As is appropriate."

NOT ALL of Israel's enemies in Australian academia lend themselves so crudely to caricature as Evan Jones. Some cloak their animus in a veil of pseudo-sophistication that facilitates their access to the media as opinion columnists and expert commentators. One of the slicker anti-Zionist op-ed contributors is Amin Saikal, who heads the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies (CAIS) at the Australian National University in Canberra. The CAIS exemplifies the classic economic principle that you usually get what you pay for.

Founded in 1994 as the Centre for Middle East and Central Asian Studies, the CAIS assumed its current title six years later. But this simple change in nomenclature bespoke a much more radical shift in orientation. The genesis of this relabelling stemmed from an influx of funding from various Middle East sources, some of them quite questionable.

In December 2000, the Centre announced the receipt of a A\$2.5 million donation from Sheik Hamdan bin Rashid al-Maktoum, the brother of the UAE Prime Minister and the Emir of Dubai. This sizeable sum purchased, not only the name change, but also the creation of "Chair of Arab and Islamic Studies". The government of Iran chipped in as well. The powers-that-be in Teheran indulged themselves in a minor diversion from their usual interests—promoting terrorism and the pursuit of nuclear weapons—by donating US\$350,000 to the cause. The mullahs' contribution underwrote the establishment of the Centre's perpetual foundation in Persian Language and Iranian Studies. In both cases, the ANU's "Endowment in Excellence" provided matching funds for these foreign donations, bringing the total amount generated in support of the CAIS to almost A\$6 million.

When it comes to the policies of the United States or Israel, the default Amin Saikal position is profoundly negative. If the Americans can at times be excused their folly on account of their terminal naivety, no such dispensation is granted to Zionists.

Saikal avoids the frothing-at-the-mouth style of Israel's more extreme animadvertisers. But his "less is more" approach is more pernicious because, on the surface, it seems so reasonable. At first glance he appears simply to be deploring the violence that plagues the Middle East. Yet closer examination reveals that his lamentations are selectively applied in order to satisfy the partisan dictates of his anti-Zionist agenda.

Saikal's operative rule of thumb holds that Israel can do no right—and the Palestinians can do no wrong. To promote this view, he employs a crafty polemical strategy that sins more by omission than commission. For example, he argues that Israeli military strikes against terrorist targets are to be condemned on grounds of morality and practicality—they only make things

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worse.

Thus when an Israeli air strike decapitated the Hamas command structure by killing arch-terrorist Sheik Ahmed Yassin, Saikal responded with tidings of gloom and foreboding in the Brisbane *Courier-Mail*. Israel's action, declared the professor, "will most likely drive more Muslims to identify with the positions of extremists such as Osama bin Laden". He went on to warn: "Israel and its international backers may find this assassination returns to haunt them." Of course, Saikal had nothing to say about the nightmares inflicted on Israeli civilians through the suicide bombings inspired and orchestrated by Ahmed Yassin.

This reticence to condemn Palestinian violence against Jewish civilians is so deeply ingrained in Amin Saikal's worldview that it even infuses his vocabulary. Writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Saikal accused Israel of using disproportionate force "to contain what it calls terrorism, including suicide bombing". One would think that any objective definition of the term *terrorism* would encompass such acts as the deliberate bombing of commuter buses, cafes and nightclubs. But not in Amin Saikal's lexicon. To him, one man's terrorist seems to be another man's freedom fighter.

Despite the *ex cathedra* tones that pervade his commentary, Saikal demonstrates an embarrassing ignorance of simple geo-strategic matters. One of the more glaring of these factual errors appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, where he asserted that the Israeli navy has deployed "nuclear-powered submarines" to launch pre-emptive strikes against Iran. But anyone with a modicum of Middle East military knowledge knows the Israeli submarine fleet consists of three German-built Dolphin-class diesel boats. While the Germans make world-class diesel submarines, their own navy doesn't possess nuclear vessels.

Saikal also finds heroes in the strangest places. He lauds the Islamic Republic of Iran as a buttress against the evils of American imperialist designs in the Middle East. In fact, he views American meddling in the region as so pernicious that he is even willing to defend the Iranian quest for nuclear weapons.

Of course, Iran doth protest too much that its uranium enrichment facilities are intended solely for research and energy generation purposes. "So despite insisting on the peaceful nature of its nuclear program," Saikal tells us, "ultimately Teheran may not be averse to the idea of acquiring a nuclear deterrent."

But even if those wily mullahs are pulling the wool over the world's eyes, Saikal argues this is entirely

understandable given the circumstances that Iran faces. After all, he asserts, "Teheran lives under a perceived serious US and Israeli threat."

Yet these days the only policy-maker making credible threats to wipe other nations off the face of the earth is Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In the world according to Amin Saikal, acts in self-defence by Israel are unwise and unjustified. The only acceptable mode of Zionist behaviour is supine passivity.

Saikal's view in this regard is reminiscent of the Mahatma's attitude, as cited by George Orwell in his essay "Reflections on Gandhi". Orwell wrote of correspondence between the Mahatma and his biographer, Louis Fisher, in which Gandhi advised European Jews during the Second World War to commit collective suicide in order to arouse the world's conscience. After the war, wrote Orwell, Gandhi justified his stance in the following terms: "The Jews had been killed anyway, and might as well have died significantly."

Amin Saikal's myopia towards the Islamic Republic is not limited solely to its foreign policy and nuclear weapons program. The ANU professor's opinion pieces also display an obliviousness to the heinous human rights record of the Iranian "mullocracy". Iran, he informs us:

has developed a sort of democracy which may not accord with Western ideals, but provides for a degree of mass participation, political pluralism and assurance of certain human rights and freedoms which do not exist in most of the Middle East.

In Saikal's newspaper opinion writing there is nary a mention of Iran's savage repression of the Baha'i faith and other religious minorities. He has nothing to say about the reign of terror that is inflicted upon political opponents of the regime by Basiji paramilitary thugs. And he is mute on the lethal persecution of gays and lesbians in Teheran and other cities.

But Saikal won't shut up about the malign influence of a Jewish neo-conservative cabal that he believes holds sway over American foreign policy. In the *Sydney Morning Herald* he explicitly placed the true onus for the war in Iraq on: "a small group of neo-conservatives in the Bush administration who wanted to reshape the Muslim Middle East and radical political Islam according to their vision and geopolitical preferences".

Of course, the term "neo-conservative" has engendered substantial controversy of late. Some argue that this term has become a politically correct euphemism

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used by critics of Zionism as shorthand for *Jew*. And this is arguably the case with Amin Saikal. In a column for the *International Herald Tribune*, he explained what he thought this neo-con vision entailed: "The efforts of the neo-conservatives dovetail all too effectively with the aims of the radical Zionists who push for more and more Jewish settlements on Palestinian land."

Thus the gist of Saikal's argument seems to be that the Iraq war was fought at the behest of the Zionist neo-cons so that Israel could enhance Jewish settlement growth on the West Bank. His views largely echo the thesis of a recent article written by American academics John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt for the *London Review of Books*. In fact, during a telephone conversation with me, Saikal explicitly praised the Mearsheimer-Walt essay.

But Eliot Cohen of Johns Hopkins University responded to Mearsheimer and Walt (and by extension Amin Saikal) with an opinion piece in the *Washington Post* entitled "Yes, It's Anti-Semitic". The thesis that US foreign policy towards the Middle East was run by Jews for Jews was "a wretched piece of scholarship". Not only was this "kooky academic work", said Cohen, but it is "merely, and unforgivably, bigotry".

And during the telephone conversation that I held with Professor Saikal, he steadfastly denied having an ideological agenda. He defended his glowing description of Iranian democracy with the argument that the Teheran regime was "pluralistic within an Islamic context". I guess that means if you are a Baha'i, Christian or Jew, you're simply out of luck. And towards the end of our telephonic colloquy, Saikal told me that he would never lower himself to my level by "labelling people". Shortly afterwards he proceeded to accuse me and my AIJAC colleagues of being "nitpickers" who "have no ethics" and "live in a cuckoo's nest". I am extremely grateful to the professor that no labels were hurled.

**D**OWN IN MELBOURNE, as in other branches of Australian academia, there is no shortage of anti-Zionist academics. But one of the more notable representatives of this ideological species is found at Deakin University, where Scott Burchill teaches international relations theory. Burchill is vehemently anti-American. And as these things go, hostility towards the United States is a reasonably reliable indicator of anti-Israel sentiment as well.

Burchill's views on the United States are redolent of the "Yankee go home" hostility that pervades doctrinaire leftist dogma. In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, he argued in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that any American military response to this assault on its soil would constitute a "myopic and undemocratic" exercise in extrajudicial injustice. More than

this, he claimed in the *Australian Financial Review* that the terrorist assaults on Washington and New York were "not irrational, cowardly or [sic] random attacks". Rather, Burchill opined, "the rational logic of cause and effect" transformed these acts into an understandable response to "US aggression".

In October 2003, Melbourne's *Age* published Burchill's thoughts on the first anniversary of the Bali bombing, where eighty-eight Australian tourists were slaughtered. This bloody act of mass murder, the Deakin University lecturer wrote, was the inevitable reaction to: "Washington's support for Israel's brutal occupation of Palestine", and a "Western collective of terror whose leaders had bombed Islamic states such as Afghanistan and Iraq".

Scott Burchill elaborated further on this theme in an abortive attempt at satire that appeared in the December 27, 2003, edition of the *Age*. Presenting a fictitious memo from the CIA's "Office of Villains, Department of Wayward Clients and Unsavoury Friends", Burchill painted American foreign policy in a monochrome black hue of cynicism and evil.

Many of Scott Burchill's assertions are simply factually unsupportable. He recycles the Chomskyite canard that the Maoist fanatics of the Khmer Rouge and the communist Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu were protégés of the United States. But even when he manages to avoid factual error, Burchill's sense of moral indignation is so selectively applied that it debases his writing to the level of tendentious agitprop.

It cannot be denied that, in the past, the United States has forged alliances of convenience with non-democratic regimes that were quite unsavoury. In fact, perhaps the most compelling example of such cynical American behaviour took place during the Second World War.

During that conflict, the Western democracies made common cause with Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union, one of the most viciously repressive regimes ever to mar the annals of humanity. With over 15 million victims to his discredit, Stalin was the silver medallist in the twentieth-century mass murder stakes, surpassed in homicidal endeavour only by Mao Tse-Tung.

Yet, despite Stalin's gulags, show trials and the crop seizures at bayonet point that caused millions to die needlessly of hunger, the pressing need to defeat the greater danger posed by Nazi Germany mandated a coalition with Moscow. Even the more ardent contemporary America-basher should concede that, in this particular circumstance, the end justified the means.

Yet, the demise of Nazi Germany merely marked the emergence of a new threat to the free nations of the world. Throughout the zone of Soviet occupation, Stalin imposed an iron hand of political tyranny that was complemented by a policy of organised brigandage



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in which eastern European economies were systematically sucked dry. And fuelled by a toxic combination of Marxist dogma and ancient Russian imperial ambition, Stalin and his successors laboured to expand the Soviet regime of murderous repression wherever and whenever they could.

The bloody crimes of communism are now documented beyond objective dispute, and the ghosts of 50 million-plus victims will belie any argument that Marxism was any less barbaric than Nazism. Ronald Reagan was right to describe the USSR as an "evil empire", and his tough-minded policy during the 1980s hastened the liberation of millions by precipitating the collapse of the Soviet Union.

If the menace of Nazism justified the Allied coalition with the Soviets, then the Cold War threat of Marxist totalitarianism justified temporary American coalitions with petty anticommunist regimes. But Burchill appears to think that moral compromises are only legitimate when they are committed in support of dictators like Joseph Stalin.

Burchill's hostility towards the United States is both deep and broad. But he doesn't go so far as to challenge the legitimacy of America's existence. In Scott Burchill's universe, that dubious distinction is reserved for Israel.

Burchill describes the Palestinians as a "looted people" who justly refuse to "reconcile themselves to occupation and humiliation, regardless of the odds stacked against them". And what about the Israelis? Well, Scott Burchill describes Israel as a "thief" who must return the "stolen property" of Palestine to its rightful Arab owners.

This attitude, of course, gives rise to the question of whether Burchill's retrocession demand applies only to the West Bank and Gaza, or to the Jewish state entire. But the contemptuous way in which he refers to any offer of Israeli territorial concessions indicates that he has no sympathy for Zionism in any form. Burchill summarily dismissed the Clinton-Barak proposal in January 2001 that would have established a viable Palestinian state on 97 per cent of the West Bank and all of Gaza. In another of his glaring factual errors, Burchill contended that Arafat was right to reject the deal because it represented "a mere 12 per cent of the land from which the Palestinians were driven in 1948".

In point of fact, the real figure is 22 per cent, and the displacement of the Palestinians took place within a conflict that they themselves started. The Arabs marched to battle in 1948 openly declaring their war aim of exterminating every last Jewish man, woman

and child in the Holy Land. Massacres of Jews at Kfar Etzion and the Mount Scopus doctors convoy demonstrated that Arab threats were not idle rhetoric.

But this consistent Palestinian rejection of compromise does not fit neatly into Burchill's partisan narrative, so he conveniently omits any mention of Palestinian genocidal aggression. It is entirely unsurprising, continues the Deakin lecturer, that "the Palestinians have resented being told how much of their land Israel was generously prepared to return to them". Thus, in essence, Scott Burchill seems to be endorsing the view that Israel unjustly exists on what should rightly be Palestinian land.

In his writing, Burchill occasionally throws a bone to the American and Australian victims of al Qaeda terror, describing the September 11 and Bali attacks as atrocities. Yet, he makes no such concession to the Israeli victims of Palestinian suicide bombings. Burchill has little to say in the way of even a perfunctory recognition of Israeli suffering or condemnation of Palestinian terror.

Burchill's opinion articles also display a disconcerting propensity for playing fast and loose with the facts when it serves his polemical purpose. For example, he argues in the *Australian*: "UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) 'land for peace' requires a 'full Israeli withdrawal behind pre-June 1967 borders.'" Yet, despite Burchill's resort to the use of quotation marks, neither of these phrases appears anywhere in the text of that UN Resolution.

The authors of Resolution 242, including former British UN Ambassador Lord Caradon, subsequently remarked that the resolution was carefully crafted to avoid any such demand for a complete Israeli withdrawal. Even worse, Burchill's tendentious presentation of Resolution 242 also conveniently ignores the resolution's demand that the Arabs must grant Israel the "right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats or acts of force". But Scott Burchill never lets such picayune details get in the way of his agenda.

Burchill responded to my request for comment with an e-mail that proclaimed his intent to ignore the "gross characterisation [*sic*] of my position". He then proceeded to deny that he was hostile towards either the United States or Israel. Not wishing to burden the reader with an *ad nauseam* point-by-point rebuttal of his denials, I commend Burchill's opinion page *oeuvre* to those who are sufficiently interested. *Res ipsa loquitur*.

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**E**QUALLY MYOPIC is Professor Andrew Vincent, who heads the Centre for Middle East and North African Studies at Sydney's Macquarie University. Like many of his anti-Zionist fellow travellers, Vincent mines the rich ore of Israel-phobic paranoia that has become the stock-in-trade of the far Left. But last year he hit the mother lode of all modern theories of Levantine foul play in the *Macquarie University News*, when he postulated: "the Israelis quite possibly murdered Yasser Arafat". Presumably those dastardly Zionists got away with their plot because: "US foreign policy has been hijacked by a blinkered group of zealots, the neo-conservatives, whose main interest is the security of Israel and the emasculation of any Arab opposition to Israel's policies."

Here again we see the paranoid mantra of malign neo-conservative puppeteers who conspire to pull Washington's strings on behalf of the Jewish state. Vincent made a half-hearted attempt to insulate himself from criticism over the immoderation inherent in these views by positing them as the "pessimistic scenario" of the Middle East's future. But he then blew his cover at the end of the article by confessing his belief that "the pessimistic view is more likely to prevail than the optimistic one".

Andrew Vincent's wacky worldview isn't solely limited to perfervid theories of Capitol Hill kosher conspiracies. In the wake of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Vincent wrote a nauseating apologia for Iraqi aggression in Melbourne's *Herald* newspaper. Citing Iraq's small coastline and Kuwait's historic association with Baghdad, Vincent argued that Saddam Hussein had a legitimate case for his expansionist designs. During a radio interview some years later he opined that the US demand for the extradition of Libyan intelligence officers implicated in the Lockerbie bombing was totally outrageous. The Americans, said Vincent, were engaged in an unwarranted attempt to erode the sovereignty of Muammar Gaddafi's regime.

More recently Vincent demonstrated similarly blurred judgment when he invited blogger Antony Loewenstein to join the board of the Macquarie Middle East Studies Centre. Loewenstein is a far-left freelance author with a penchant for resumé-inflation and factually challenged anti-Zionist/anti-American vitriol.

Loewenstein's stance on the war in Iraq is clear and unequivocal. The blogger has long since abandoned any pretence of "peace activism", coming out squarely on the side of abu-Musab al Zarkawi. In October 2005, the blog "Antony Loewenstein" brazenly declared: "the

defeat of America and its allies in Iraq is vital to ensure similar [sic] acts [of Yankee imperialism] are not carried out again." Of course, one of those American allies is Australia. At the time of this writing, the Aussies have a battalion-sized task force of 450 troops serving in al-Mutana province in southern Iraq. Antony Loewenstein is calling for the death of his countrymen in order to achieve the humbling of the United States. Cost of doing business, I suppose.

And while Loewenstein's attitude towards Australian Jewry might be less sanguinary, his stance is just as dismissive. It was "bigotry, hatred and intolerance" that motivated Jewish opposition to Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi's receipt of the Sydney Peace Prize in 2003. Honest and honourable feelings of aversion to Ashrawi's track record are inconceivable to the dyed-in-the-wool anti-Zionist thinking of Antony Loewenstein.

In Loewenstein's firmament, Israel is a nation of "apartheid-like policies". He was similarly scathing when I published an article in Australia's national broadsheet newspaper that analysed the impact of Ariel Sharon's stroke. To the freelancer I was merely one of those "dutiful Zionists who are already lining up to praise the unindicted war criminal".

Loewenstein's superficial knowledge of the Middle East every so often manifests itself in blunders so elementary that they would make a first-year university student blush. One of the more amusing pearls of Loewenstein-ian wisdom appeared in December 2005, when he referred to a senior female Israeli cabinet minister as a man. In an article for the leftist online magazine *New Matilda*, he wrote:

Yet more evidence of Israel speaking the language of "peace" but acting entirely differently came from a senior ally of Sharon, Justice Minister Tzipi Livni. He [sic] told a legal conference in early December that, despite years of Israeli denials, Sharon himself imagines the 425-mile separation barrier as the future border between Israel and a potential Palestinian state.

One does not have to be a genius to see that the fence will have implications for the future border, he [sic] said.

Loewenstein's gender-bender bungle bespoke both his fundamental ignorance of Israeli politics and his Hebraic illiteracy. Anyone even moderately conversant in Hebrew will know that *Tzipi* is the diminutive of *Tziporah*—an unambiguously female name. As one

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commenter on his blog pointed out: "If Loewenstein can't even get the gender of an Israeli cabinet minister right, then what does it say about the quality of his analysis of the Israeli political scene?"

When confronted with evidence of his gaffe, Loewenstein pleaded in mitigation that he was "rushed", and that "mistakes do happen". But there are mistakes and then there are mistakes. And the fact that he twice misidentified Ms Livni within the span of eighty words makes it unlikely that Loewenstein's pratfall can plausibly be written off as a typographical error.

One would think that a blooper so basic would call into question the analytical credentials of any commentator. Yet Professor Andrew Vincent still saw fit to invite Loewenstein onto the board of his Centre.

Vincent's decision was even more remarkable in the light of Loewenstein's propensity for inflating his professional credentials. Loewenstein has portrayed himself as a "former Fairfax journalist" who "left" his place of employment, presumably of his own volition.

But *Bulletin* magazine columnist and blogger Tim Blair related the story of a phone call he received from a "Sydney Morning Herald staffer" in September 2005. The *Herald* journalist, related Blair, was "annoyed that I'd described Antony Loewenstein as an 'ex-SMH employee'": "he [Loewenstein] was only a cadet at f2, the online network," the whistleblower said. "I think he wrote a few book reviews for us, but he was never on staff at the SMH. Even f2 eventually had to let him go."

So it appears that neither the facts of Loewenstein's mode of departure from Fairfax, nor of his status whilst there, comport with his self-portrayal of events. This clash of fact and fiction reveals the freelancer's penchant for writing cheques with his curriculum vitae that his real life record can't cash.

Yet neither the prospect of having a poseur on his Centre's board, nor the dilettantish nature of Loewenstein's Middle Eastern dabbings, has caused Professor Andrew Vincent to reconsider the propriety of his newest appointment. In fact, Loewenstein's position with the Macquarie Middle East Studies Centre seems to stem from a curious combination of ethnic tokenism and political conformism. Andrew Vincent explained the rationale for his selection of Loewenstein to the *Australian Jewish News* in the following terms: "We

wanted a Jewish person on the board. We didn't have any Jews on the board and it seemed to be an absence."

But in looking to fill his kosher quota, Andrew Vincent made sure to find someone whose ideology he found palatable. And as Vincent's own views place him way out in the conspiratorial netherworld of the anti-Zionist hard Left, the only acceptable candidate was another extremist. But the vast majority of Australian Jewry is solidly in the pro-Zionist camp. The only contenders who might meet Vincent's requirements came from well beyond the fringe of the Australian Jewish consensus on the Middle East. It's because the pickings were so slim that his standards had to be set so low. Heaven forfend that Macquarie University should select a representative of the Jewish community whose views are representative of the Jewish community's impassioned support for Israel.

By sad contrast, the rogues' gallery of anti-Zionists that I have assembled in this chapter is all too emblematic of Australian academia. While I chose Evan Jones, Amin Saikal, Scott Burchill and Andrew Vincent to serve as exemplars of this breed, there are many others who could have adequately performed in their stead.

The monolithic predominance of radical leftist ideology within Australian university faculties is a problem that extends well beyond the scope of this essay. But one of the core elements of far Left doctrine involves an inveterate hostility towards Jewish national self-determination.

The best and brightest of Australia's youth are exposed to virulent anti-Zionism throughout their university years. It remains to be seen what effect this indoctrination will have on the next generation of Aussie leaders.

Evan Jones and Andrew Vincent did not reply to the opportunity for comment that was offered them. For his part, Antony Loewenstein announced that he would not "deign to respond", before responding with thinly veiled threats of a defamation suit.

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