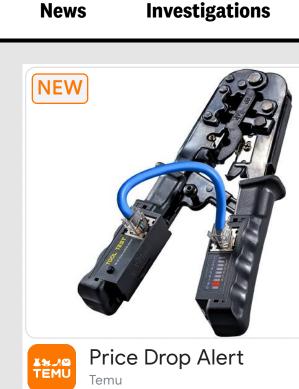
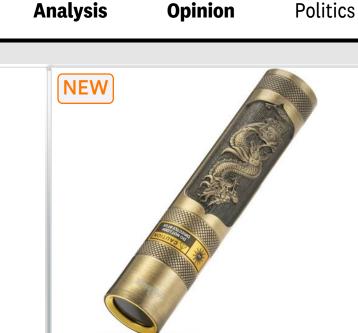
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Labor should follow Greens on Israel's apartheid treatment of Palestine

The Greens' new policy accuses Israel of 'practising the crime of apartheid' against Palestinians. Labor, meanwhile, is dragging its feet.

ANTONY LOEWENSTEIN JUN 08, 2023

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PRIME MINISTER ANTHONY ALBANESE AND GREENS LEADER ADAM BANDT (IMAGES: AAP)

The Australian Greens announced a <u>new policy</u> on Israel and Palestine this week and it's already causing conniptions in the pro-Israel lobby.

After the party released details about its revised position, stating that Israel is "practising the

crime of apartheid" against Palestinians, both the Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA) and Australia-Israel and Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC) issued statements accusing the Greens of anti-Semitism and extremism. "Their portrayal of Israel doesn't reflect reality and their suggestion that Israel is a colonialist

country is a bigoted attempt to reject Jewish indigeneity to the land," the ZFA said.

This weaponisation of anti-Semitism demeans the ZFA and AIJAC, whose influence is gradually declining, but more importantly it ignores undeniable facts on the ground in Palestine.

Apartheid and BDS

years, <u>Human Rights Watch</u> and <u>Amnesty International</u> — along with Palestinian and Israeli groups such as Al-Haq, Yesh Din and B'Tselem — have concluded that Israel is imposing an apartheid regime. Furthermore, just this week, ostensibly every major human rights group in Israel signed a document that found Israel is committing apartheid against the Palestinian people. Another

As the new Greens policy states, the use of the word "apartheid" is justified because in the past



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international NGO, Defense for Children International – Palestine, <u>issued</u> a report that savaged Israel's systematic denial of fair trials for Palestinian children arrested by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank. As the report claims, hundreds of minors are routinely tortured and interrogated without a parent present. Another major aspect of the new Greens policy, according to the full policy document seen by

Crikey, is the party's partial embrace of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, akin to the <u>successful BDS campaign</u> against apartheid South Africa. Before the 2022 federal election, AIJAC had already falsely accused the "extremist" Greens of backing BDS. However, the Greens explain that they haven't fully endorsed BDS. Instead, as the policy states,

they support the "tactics of boycotts, divestments and targeted sanctions that are strategic and

human rights aligned on government representatives, institutions and state-affiliated entities of

the state of Israel and the Israeli military" along with corporations that profit from the illegal

occupation of Palestine. The party has similarly pushed for divestment and sanctions against human rights abusers in Iran, Russia and Myanmar.

In 2011, the Greens mayor of Marrickville in Sydney's inner west, Fiona Byrne, led an ultimately unsuccessful campaign to cement a boycott campaign against Israeli human rights abuses, with then-federal Greens leader Bob Brown opposing its implementation.

The Greens' evolution on BDS reflects the extremism of Israel's current government led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The inclusion of far-right members in his cabinet is leading to a major reduction in support for the Jewish state across the Western world.

Labor's inaction The new Greens policy has occurred due to years-long activism by Palestinians, Jews and

leftists opposed to the state-sanctioned racial discrimination of <u>Jewish supremacy</u> that's become the hallmark of Israel. The Australian government, however, isn't listening. On Israel's recent 75th birthday, Foreign

Affairs Minister Penny Wong tweeted: "Australia reaffirms our close and enduring friendship with the Israeli people. Australia was one of the first countries to vote in favour of the UN resolution that led to Israel's creation." In 2021, then-opposition leader Anthony Albanese <u>rejected</u> a motion put forward by former

The federal government, despite pledging when in opposition to recognise Palestine in office, continues to drag its feet. According to The Australian, the ZFA and AIJAC are now pressuring

foreign affairs minister Bob Carr to boycott Israel over its human rights abuses.

Albanese not to recognise Palestine because, in the words of the ZFA, it "would be harmful to the prospects of peace". The idea that this simple, symbolic and long overdue act would negatively impact peace, and not the Jewish settler-led <u>pogroms</u> or <u>Jewish-only roads</u> in the West Bank, is absurd.

The Albanese government is still backing the moribund two-state "solution" to the conflict, although it did reverse the Morrison-era decision to recognise Israel's capital in Jerusalem. Israel's ongoing colonisation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem makes a two-state

arrangement an outcome impossible, a reality recognised by the Greens in its new policy. One of the more important aspects of the updated Greens position is its rejection of the contentious International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism, an attempt by pro-Israel forces in Australia and globally to frame anti-Zionism and legitimate criticism of Israeli ethno-nationalism as Jew-hatred. Pro-Israel activists claim that it's a

With this new policy in place, the Greens now must sell it to the Australian public beyond their own constituency. This should include organising public events, rallies, films, social media

The Greens rightly claim that it "conflates criticism of the state of Israel with anti-Semitism".

<u>legitimate weapon</u> in the fight against anti-Semitism, while critics, including Palestinians, argue

that it would stifle academic freedom and open debate over Israel/Palestine.

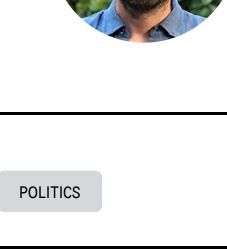
activism and active lobbying to persuade an Australian population that is already increasingly supportive of Palestine. The federal government must be pressured into acknowledging the failures of its current policy. Australia could again lead the world as it once did against apartheid South Africa.

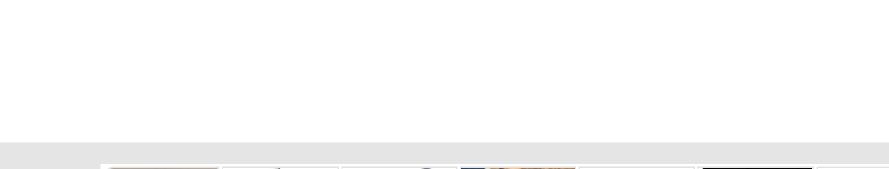
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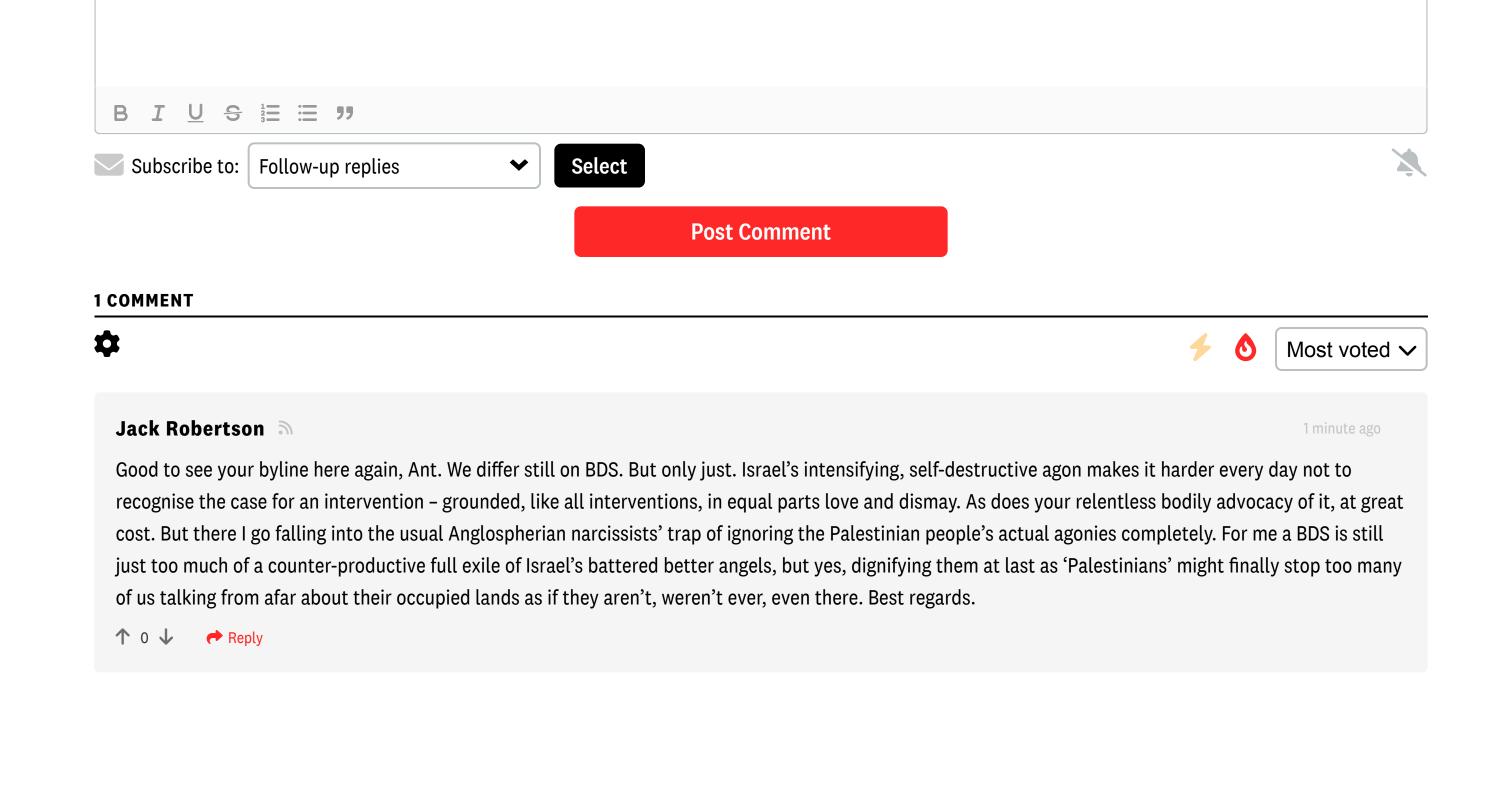
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