



The New Intolerance

ANTISEMITISM AND RELIGIOUS HATRED IN A FRACTURING CIVIC COMPACT




CULTURE, PROSPERITY
& CIVIL SOCIETY

THE CENTRE FOR
INDEPENDENT
STUDIES

A PERSONAL NOTE TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you for standing with the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS). Your support fuels our independence, amplifies our voice, and enables us to confront Australia's most pressing civic issues.

We now invite you to join with us to address a deeply concerning threat to our national cohesion: the rising tide of antisemitism and religious hatred.

As Rabbi Dr. Benjamin Elton observed in his 2025 CIS Acton Lecture, antisemitism is a warning sign of a fracturing civic culture. It signals a breakdown in the values that hold our society together.

In response, CIS has launched a bold three-year national research initiative:

The New Intolerance: Antisemitism and Religious Hatred in a Fracturing Civic Compact.

This landmark study will:

- Track national attitudes toward antisemitism and religious hatred
- Investigate the civic, political, and moral dimensions of religious hatred
- Produce original research and policy recommendations to bolster institutional resilience
- Engage the public and media to ensure this issue is not ignored

As Rabbi Elton said,

"The resilience of antisemitism in our society will remain puzzling unless we go to its roots... this requires the deepest, most thoughtful work."

This is not an abstract policy debate. It goes to the heart of the country we want to be.

WHY CIS?

CIS is uniquely positioned to lead this work. As Australia's leading independent think tank, we operate free from political and institutional constraints. This enables us to pursue the truth wherever it may lead. And to speak it without fear or favour.

Our newly appointed Executive Director, Michael Stutchbury, recently returned from Israel, where he met with scholars, journalists, and civic leaders. His insights confirmed what we know: antisemitism is not a fringe issue. It is a test of our national moral clarity.

Reflecting on international responses to the Israel-Hamas conflict, Michael remarked that, "Recognising a Palestinian state now would reward Hamas for its terrorism and sabotage the prospects for peace. It would send a dangerous signal to liberal democracies about the cost of defending themselves."

And, as journalist and editor Bret Stephens put it at his recent CIS address:

“ *The illiberals aren't the people defending the right of an imperfect but embattled democracy to defend its territory... they are the people who want Israel wiped off the map and aren't ashamed to say so.* **”**

— **Bret Stephens**, Journalist, Editor and Columnist



OUR RESEARCH AGENDA – TIMELINE & ACTIVITIES

YEAR 1 | FOUNDATION AND INITIAL RESEARCH

- Comprehensive survey of the contemporary antisemitism landscape
- Map stakeholders across academia, community, and policy makers
- Design and pilot the first national survey on attitudes toward antisemitism and related hatred

YEAR 2 | FIELDWORK AND INTERIM OUTPUTS

- Launch a full-scale national survey on antisemitism
- Publish interim reports and conduct roundtables to shape policy recommendations

YEAR 3 | REPORTS AND DISSEMINATION

- Publish final reports and host a national conference
- Roll out public engagement strategies to sustain attention and action

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are current attitudes toward Jewish Australians and antisemitism in Australia?
2. What are the drivers of antisemitism and other forms of religious hatred, such as Islamophobia?
3. How do different groups experience and perceive antisemitism?
4. What policy responses are most effective?
5. How can awareness and education reduce prejudice?



Rabbi Dr. Benjamin Elton and CIS Culture Director, Peter Kurti, at the 2025 Acton Lecture: The Darkest Path – The puzzling resilience of antisemitism. March 2025



HOW YOUR SUPPORT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your generous donation will directly fund:

- National surveys to monitor changing attitudes
- Groundbreaking research and policy reports
- Public forums, media outreach, and civic engagement campaigns

With your support, we will:

- Acknowledge your gift (if desired) in our publications
- Provide you with regular impact updates
- Invite you to exclusive events and briefings with our research team

“ *The resilience of antisemitism in our society will remain puzzling unless we go to its roots... this requires the deepest, most thoughtful work.* ”

— Rabbi Dr. Benjamin Elton, 2025 CIS Acton Lecture



CIS Culture Director, Peter Kurti, chats with Rabbi Dr. Benjamin Elton. March 2025





CIS Executive Director, Tom Switzer, and *New York Times* columnist, Bret Stephens, at CIS event, The Greater Middle East. Sydney, June 2024

JOIN US IN STANDING AGAINST HATE

The work is already underway, thanks to an early contribution from a committed supporter. But to complete it, and to ensure it delivers the national impact it demands, we need your long-term support.

We are seeking to raise **\$250,000** to fund the next phase of this vital research. Rather than a single donation, we are asking you to please **make a three-year financial pledge**.

Your tax-deductible donations will directly fund the research, publications, and public engagement activities that will drive meaningful, lasting change.

We are asking you not just to give, but to **stand with us over time**. To walk alongside this initiative to its conclusion. To become a true partner in shining a light on hate and upholding the values that unite our society.

Please consider making a three-year pledge today.



The Daily Telegraph

We're for you

Confront the hard truths to fix shaky social cohesion

Peter Kurti



Faced with violent protests, rising anti-Semitism and growing cultural division, Australians are entitled to ask each other: What still holds us together?

For decades, we've told ourselves a story of multicultural success. We've celebrated diversity, embraced immigration and taken pride in being one of the world's most culturally-rich and socially-stable democracies.

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But since 7 October 2023, when Hamas launched its brutal attacks on Israel, that story has come under serious strain.

When Melbourne schoolchildren chant slogans glorifying terrorism and Sydney synagogues are targeted by pro-Palestinian agitators, it's time to ask a difficult question: What does it mean to belong to the Australian nation?

The answer cannot be found in a nostalgic longing for a simpler past. There is no going back to some imagined monocultural Australia. Nor will it be found in pious appeals to "diversity" as if that were enough to sustain a country.

The blunt truth is that we are more divided – morally, culturally,

ideologically – than we've been in decades. And unless we rethink what it is that binds us together, Australia's social cohesion will continue to fray.

The hard reality is that we no longer agree on many of the values we once assumed we shared. Whether it's gender, religion, parenting or freedom of speech, moral consensus has become elusive.

But that is not a sign of failure – it's a feature of modern pluralist democracies like ours. What it means is that national identity can no longer be built on a narrow set of cultural norms.

What's needed now is not less multiculturalism, but a better kind – one that recognises difference, yes, but also one that insists on the civic

responsibilities that come with national belonging. And this means some serious policy work lies ahead.

Our citizenship test should focus less on cultural trivia and more on democratic understanding. Civics education should teach young Australians how to handle disagreement respectfully, not just how to memorise historical dates.

Community dialogue programs should move beyond feel-good slogans and confront difficult issues, such as freedom of religion, the rights of minorities and the limits of tolerance.

Above all, we need political leaders willing to speak clearly about what pluralism really means – and does not mean. It does mean protecting the

right to be different; it does not mean tolerating violence, segregation or the importing of foreign hatreds.

Pluralism does not require abandoning moral judgment. It requires a commitment to legal equality and mutual forbearance.

We also need to recover the idea of patriotism – not as mindless flag-waving but as a civic emotion.

Patriotism means caring enough about one's country to want it to work for everyone.

Peter Kurti is Director of the Culture, Prosperity & Civil Society program at the Centre for Independent Studies, and is the author of *The Ties That Bind: Reconciling value pluralism and national identity in Australia* published by the CIS

SPECTATOR | AUSTRALIA

We cannot let anti-Semitism spread here

Peter Kurti



We are facing a growing threat of left-wing anti-Semitism that we must not allow to fester and infect Australia.

Anti-Semitism — long a part of human history dating back to before Christianity — has appeared in different forms and with varying intensity.

The new toxic mutation has emerged among the postmodern left.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) 2018 antisemitism report noted the growing incidence of anti-Semitism masking itself as anti-racism.

ECAJ's report catalogued numerous anti-Semitic remarks made by those on the Australian political including the ALP and the Australian Greens. As outlined in *Toxic Mutation of an Ancient Hatred: Left-Wing Antisemitism*, the latest paper from the CIS Culture, Prosperity and Civil Society program, the left's obsession is with anti-Zionism, which can be a mask for anti-Semitism.

THE SPECTATOR

The oldest hatred is thriving in Britain

Stephen Daisley



Britain's antisemitism problem continues to grow. A **report** from the Community Security Trust (CST), a charity that monitors racist attacks and abuse against British Jews, documents 1,978 incidents in the first six months of 2024. That is the highest figure ever recorded for the first half of any year and a 105 per cent increase on the same period in 2023. It is no coincidence that this comes after the October 7 attack, in which Palestinian terrorists invaded Israel, killed 1,200 people, raped women and took 250 hostages. As the CST **noted** in a previous report, October 7 occasioned an outbreak of antisemitic activity in the UK long before any Israeli military response was under way. This latest report confirms the connection, with 52 per cent of incidents linked to Israel or its war against Hamas in Gaza.

There has been a 41 per cent increase in assaults on Jews. The most common forms were throwing projectiles, punching/kicking, spitting and stripping Jews of their religious garments. In January, four Israelis visiting central London were overheard

IN THE MEDIA

SPECTATOR AUSTRALIA

The rise of left-wing anti-Semitism

Peter Kurii



Evidence is mounting that anti-Semitism is on the rise. For a recent example, a [CNN poll](#) found that “more than a quarter of Europeans say Jews have too much influence in business and finance, while one in five said Jews have too much influence in the media and politics.”

Anti-Semitism has, in the past, frequently been associated with the political Right; but the rise of anti-Semitism on what is frequently called the ‘New Left’ is closely linked to the combined forces of identity politics, anti-colonialism, and anti-imperialism unleashed in the 1960s and 1970s.

Left-wing anti-Semitism is not new. What has made it front-page news is the manifestation of blatant, institutional anti-Semitism in the British Labour Party under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. Repeated failures to address anti-Semitism within the party has now brought Labour to the point where even its supporters believe the party to be systemically anti-Semitic.



Rabbi Dr. Benjamin Elton and
Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, Jillian Segal AO.



Rabbi Dr. Benjamin Elton delivering the 2025 Acton Lecture: The Darkest Path – The puzzling resilience of antisemitism.
Watch video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XlqMD8HqCw





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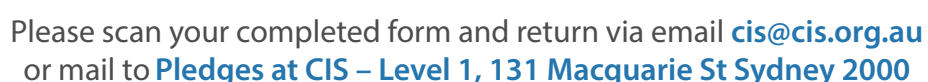
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