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All About Women gives voice to vile antisemitism



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In January my sister and I went to the Sydney Opera House for the first time since we were children. We walked back to the future up the cool, wide steps, past the bars we are now old enough to drink champagne at, and sat in the same seats from which we used to watch the corps de ballet.

But we were there not for the corps but the corpses. Instead of the ballerinas we used to idolise, family members of the 15 people slaughtered at Bondi Beach filed in. For my sister and me it was the very definition of bittersweet.

In the poem she wrote about it, she said: “Last night at the Opera House/I had cultural confusion, crisis, overlap, a mash-up./What a moment, what a night./Meeting all the proud Jewish Australians/and the many, many friends of our community/who care and stand up and fight/for our right to be we, not you.”

A highlight that night was the statement by NSW Premier Chris Minns that “we” – meaning the kind of Australians we were raised to be – had taken back the Opera House. Taken it back from the vile racists who stood on its steps on October 9, 2023, and screamed “F.k the Jews” and “Where’s the Jews”.

Well, here we were, my Jewish sister and I. Back in the Opera House of our childhood with a suddenly renewed hope that it would again be a home for us.

Like the ballet, All About Women used to be one of my favourite Opera House experiences. Every year I'd troop with my feminist sisters to hear the cool girls rage against the patriarchy, imagine a better world and, of course, #believeallwomen.

At AAW in 2024 I expected at least a reference to the horrific sexual violence committed against Israeli women by Hamas on October 7, 2023, five months earlier. But there was none. And none in 2025 either.

Of course there wasn't. Not when the line-up of speakers included Clementine Ford, who said, "ZioNazis, I think you're all inhuman monsters ... Suck shit, c.ts"; the global intifada advocate Grace Tame; and the ubiquitous Randa Abdel-Fattah, who said: "Zionists continue to peddle their rape atrocity propaganda ... to whip up genocide fervour ... Nobody wishes the mass rape claims were true more than Zionists."

AAW is held each March to coincide with International Women's Day. The IWD 2026 theme is Balance the Scales. But, even after Bondi, I see no balance in this year's line-up, which includes:

Chante Joseph, who called Israeli hostage posters "propaganda" and was forced to apologise after reposting pro-Hamas content, casting doubt on the scale of its October 7 atrocities, and promoting conspiracies about Jewish power.

Jess Hill, who maintains a consistent focus on gendered harm affecting Palestinians but appears to have erased the one post she says she made about Israeli women. Hill also invoked Holocaust inversion when she called Israel's response to Hamas a "final solution kind of project".

Yumi Stynes and Sivine Tabbouche, who have similarly spoken out for women from Palestine but said not a word about those from Israel. Tabbouche posted an image of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu eating a plate of Palestinian babies.

There's a session dedicated to "four Arab-Australian women reflecting on migration, community and identity". Unsurprisingly, there is none dedicated to four Jewish-Australian women reflecting on theirs, or any other hyphenated group reflecting on theirs either.

That session is moderated by Antoinette Lattouf, whose anti-Zionist activism is her calling card. Lattouf marched proudly “for humanity” under the portrait of the same Ayatollah Ali Khomeini who massacred tens of thousands of Iranians protesting against the abuse of women’s rights.

She conscientiously spread the blood libel that because of Israel “14,000 Palestinian babies may die within 48 hours”. She later acknowledged that only “the time reference” was inaccurate. One of Lattouf’s panellists, Loubna Haikal, has reposted the reworking of a classic antisemitic conspiracy theory: “There is no doubt that (Australia’s antisemitism envoy) Jillian Segal is an asset of a foreign power.” She has shared the claim that Jews were exaggerating the extent of antisemitism. I’m not sure what she calls the targeted massacre at Bondi.

In line with Abdel-Fattah’s now-infamous directive to “ensure that every space Zionists enter is culturally unsafe for them”, AAW year on year platforms speakers who vilify the 80-90 per cent of Jewish-Australian women who are Zionists and ignore or deny our experience. Speakers who deliberately or from simple or wilful ignorance spread the lies and blood libels against us that constitute undeniable vile Jew-hatred.

In his recent piece *The West is Sleepwalking into a Jewish Exodus*, academic Nachum Kaplan wrote: “The West will not lose its Jews in one dramatic moment. It will lose them through a slow drip of insult, a steady rise in fear, and a growing sense of no longer belonging.”

The Premier said we’d reclaimed the Opera House, but he obviously hadn’t read the AAW program. Opera House chief executive Louise Heron and head of talks and ideas Chip Rolley may like to consider what happens to a society when it loses its Jews. Iraq for example, was once a cultural and economic superpower of the Middle East, before it began vilifying its approximately 140,000 Jews as “Zionists” in the 1940s, then murdering them. An understandable exodus ensued and, with fewer than 10 Jewish inhabitants today, Iraq is a jagged shadow of its former self.

Surely Australians have now learned that the cynical wordplay of coding Jews as “Zionists” and pretence that hate speech against them is some kind of legitimate political discourse signposts the pathway to 15 corpses on our most iconic beachfront.

Mark Twain said history doesn't repeat but rhymes. Those rhymes continue rising to the rafters of the Sydney Opera House like "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours", to quote the Bard. It's well past time for a proper contest of voices and ideas in all Australian cultural spaces. Starting this International Women's Day, let's truly Balance the Scales.

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