

In the Name of “la ética judeocristiana”: On Latin America’s New Right Populists and their Support of Israel during the Gaza War¹

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Abstract

Since October 7, 2023, Latin America’s so-called “New Right” politicians have been avidly supporting the Israeli government during its war in the Gaza Strip, to the extent of traveling to Jerusalem and paying tribute to the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. This article explores how and why this avid pro-Israeli activism came about, and how it differs from the attitudes of contemporary right-wing European leaders as well as from the anti-Semitic worldviews of Latin America’s rightists before the 1980s. In turn, the article delves into the history of Israel’s military support of the Latin American counterrevolution throughout the Cold War, and suggests how this nexus impacted the attitudes of both rightists and leftists towards Israel and Zionism in the third millennium. Lastly, the article addresses the damage caused to the Israeli-Palestinian peace movement and international law by the Latin American New Right’s unwavering support of Israel’s war in Gaza and occupation of the West Bank.

Keywords: the Gaza War; the Latin American New Right; Javier Milei; anti-Semitism; philo-Semitism

Resumen

Desde el 7 de octubre de 2023, la “Nueva Derecha” latinoamericana ha apoyado fervientemente al gobierno israelí durante su guerra en la Franja de Gaza, llegando incluso a viajar a Jerusalén para rendir homenaje al primer ministro israelí, Benjamín Netanyahu. El artículo explora cómo y por qué surgió este activismo proisraelí y cómo se diferencia de las actitudes

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de los derechistas europeos, así como de las actitudes antisemitas de la derecha latinoamericana antes de la década de 1980. A su vez, el artículo profundiza en la historia del apoyo militar de Israel a la contrarrevolución latinoamericana durante la Guerra Fría y plantea que este nexo influyó en las actitudes tanto de la derecha como de la izquierda hacia Israel y el sionismo en el tercer milenio. Finalmente, el artículo aborda el daño causado al movimiento israelí-palestino por la paz y al derecho internacional por el apoyo inquebrantable de la Nueva Derecha latinoamericana a la guerra de Israel en Gaza y la ocupación de Cisjordania.

Palabras clave: Guerra de Gaza; nueva derecha latinoamericana; Javier Milei; antisemitismo; filosemitismo

As any professional actor would attest, “crying on command” is a testament to one’s utmost dramatic skill. One cannot suspect Javier Milei of being an actor when, on February 6, 2024, he burst into tears—into uncontrollable howling, in fact—at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem (better known as “the Western Wall”), the place that, judging by its name, is best suited for this type of activity. Indeed, the Argentine president was acting out years of pro-Israeli and pro-Jewish rhetoric. Only a few months before this hysterical performance, Milei, upon taking office, appointed as solicitor general (and then withdrew) a man named Rodolfo Barra – a former member of the neo-fascist militia Tacuara, which, in the 1960s, had been responsible for brutally attacking Argentine Jews.² If this seems a paradox to you, then you have yet to learn the ways of philo-Semitism. Not only has Milei repeated his pilgrimage to Jerusalem since then, but he was followed by other savvy rightists, of different temperaments and ideological hues, the most prominent of which were former presidents Iván Duque (Colombia) and Julio María Sanguinetti (Uruguay), and Ecuadorian president Daniel Noboa, who likewise paid a celebratory visit to the Wailing Wall in May 2025.³

At the time of this article’s writing (October 2025, a week after the first stage of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire), some 67,000 people have lost their lives in Gaza since October 7, 2023, the vast majority of whom were women, children, and elderly men. For the most part, these “uninvolved” civilians died as a result of airstrikes, directed by a singular AI system unprecedented in modern warfare, as well as a result of malnutrition. Whether or not their death should be considered a genocide (or, at minimum, the result of “genocidal” policies and discourse), a war crime, or the regrettable yet unavoidable consequence of urban warfare—reluctantly waged by Israel following Hamas’s murderous October 7th attack which claimed the lives of more than 1,200 Israeli men, women, and children—has been the crux of the dispute between the supposed pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian international camps. Indeed, the past two years have witnessed

many of Israel’s supposed allies join the wave of criticism in demanding an end to the killing and collective punishment by starvation. Latin America’s New Right populists could not be suspected of ever belonging to this trend.⁴ For them, Israel is by definition ethically superior to its enemies and surrounding nations, and, as such, can do no wrong. These political leaders—who are linked through visible networks such as the Political Network for Values⁵—believe themselves to be the advocates of a so-called “Judeo-Christian ethics”; a global system of values that holds that Jews are the only truly autochthonous nation in the Middle East, or alternatively, are, like the Spaniards in the 1500s, a benevolent colonizer in the midst of a civilizing mission in a hostile, barbaric terrain.⁶

While it is tempting to add Islamophobia to the Latin America rightists’ rhetorical arsenal, it is precisely there that we notice a novelty.⁷ Unlike their European counterparts—Geert Wilders and Marine Le Pen, for example—the Latin American New Right’s love of Israel does not necessarily stem from, or go hand in hand with, Islamophobia but rather from their distinctive relationship with Israel since the 1960s. The purpose of this article is, first, to clarify just how unusual the Latin American New Right’s backing of the Israeli government has been in the past two years, and how this stance differs not only from that of right-wing European leaders and pundits but from that of Latin America’s right-wing sectors of two generations ago. Second, the text poses several hypotheses as to the motivations underpinning this sentiment, be they cosmological or outright utilitarian. Last, the analysis points to the possible damage caused to the Israeli-Palestinian peace movement by the Latin American rightists’ obliviousness to the atrocities of Israel’s war in Gaza.

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When discussing the Latin American rightists’ political imagination, it is first crucial to underline that they seldom would have identified as the proud adherents of a “Judeo-Christian” ethics before the 1980s. Sure enough, until then, the vast majority of them had characterized Judaism as incompatible with the so-called “Western Civilization” and treated Zionism with suspicion, if not utmost hostility. Traditionally identified with the creole landed elites, this social group has always identified itself as European and “white” and, as such, has been obsessed with “blood purity” (*limpieza de sangre*)—a residue of the colonial era’s caste society. Sure enough, not only were they not ashamed of their colonial heritage, but many of them disclosed a conspicuous neo-imperial imaginary (synonymous with the anti-modern neologism “Hispanidad”) which went hand in hand with a determination to “Hispanize” the Indigenous populations in their respective countries. True, unlike in Europe, Latin American rightists could never have truly alleged to have a “Jewish problem.” Even in Argentina,

a key destination for Jewish immigration from Europe in the late nineteenth century, the percentage of Jews amongst the national population never exceeded 0.42%.⁸ Still, anti-Semitism has been anything but a marginal phenomenon in Latin America's conservative quarters. Rather, it was an instrument in the hands of the anti-liberal conservatives who weaponized the trickling of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe during the early 1900s to delegitimize the fledgling democratic order. By the mid-twentieth century, Latin America was thus a fairly anti-Semitic habitat, with some of its republics having become the willing home for Nazi Germany's most infamous war criminals.⁹

Anti-Semitic how? For starters, the continent's most famous traditionalist theorists—Julio Meinvielle (Argentina), Plínio Correa de Oliveira (Brazil), and Osvaldo Lira (Chile), for instance—held that the Jews seek to impose their antichrist “King and Messiah” upon Latin America¹⁰ and, overall, carry a “deadly seed” for the Christian Civilization.¹¹ For their part, Latin America's neo-fascists—members of Brazilian Integralismo, Mexican Sinarquismo, and Argentine Nacionalismo, to name but a few infamous cliques—identified the world Jewry as the masterminds behind all modern ideology and scientific revolution (“the three horrible Jews: Marx, Freud, and Einstein,” in the words of one of their sensationalist ideologues),¹² and as an unassimilable ethnic group that, amid the birth of the State of Israel, should be forever suspected of “dual loyalty.” On top of this, Latin America also had its fair share of neo-Nazis who, backed by a network of Nazi war criminals, began spreading the most ludicrous of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. A case in point was the so-called “Plan Andinia,” a tale according to which Latin America's Jews planned to establish a second Jewish nation-state in Chile and Argentina.¹³ The point not to be missed is that, possessed by their anti-Semitic preconceptions, most Latin American rightists did not initially perceive Zionism as a positive symbol of national rebirth. Rather, the Jews' naturalization in their supposed homeland only magnified some rightists' suspicion of their alleged global aspirations.¹⁴ In brief, the Latin American rightists' shift from anti-Semitic hallucinations to pro-Zionism and avid support of Israel seems counterintuitive.

When and why did this shift occur, then? Most probably, amid Israel's ongoing involvement in Latin America's civil wars on the side of the counter-revolutionary forces, dating back to January 1959, when Fidel Castro's forces conquered Havana and discovered Israeli-produced Uzi submachine guns in dictator Fulgencio Batista's compound.¹⁵ With the USA cautious not to appear as politically supporting, let alone arming, Latin America's military dictatorships after the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, Israel had an opportunity to gradually make Latin America its foremost client, thereby indeed becoming a sort of “top proxy” for Washington by the 1970s.¹⁶ Put slightly differently, the rise of Israel's

mammoth military industrial complex, and the country’s own political turn to the right in 1977, correlated with the “Inter-American Cold War”; a condition wherein, while devoid of direct interference by the USA and USSR, the continent saw local representatives of capitalism and communism engaged in an ongoing violent conflict, which went by a different name in each national setting.¹⁷

While it is beyond the scope of this article to detail each and every arms deal between Israel and Latin America’s thirty-three republics, it is worthwhile to underline the basic patterns in this history.¹⁸ For Israel, breaking into the Latin American military market was neither a simple nor an immediate feat, even after the Six-day War—an event that, beyond its symbolism, demonstrated the superiority of Israel’s arms over the Arab armies’ Soviet weaponry. In truth, it was only in the 1970s, under Labor Party governments but even more so under Menachem Begin’s right-wing coalition of 1977-1983, that Israel signed its most prominent arms deals, primarily with South America’s far-right dictatorships of the 1970s (the “National Security” regimes, as some still call them). Indeed, Chile, Argentina, and Ecuador, were all avid buyers of Israel’s high-tech weaponry, which included air-to-air missiles (Shafrir), Kfir and refurbished French and US fighter jets (Douglas A-4 Skyhawk and Mirage), and, in the case of Argentina’s infamous last dictatorship, even “anti-Terrorism knowledge and equipment,” ahead of the 1978 World Cup.¹⁹ Israel had become August Pinochet’s “most important weapons supplier after the United Kingdom,” with no “political strings to its transfers,” as a CIA memorandum from 1988 neatly summed it up.²⁰

A less lucrative, albeit no less visible, weapons market was the Central American republics—be they democratically elected governments (El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Honduras) or brutal dictatorships (Guatemala and Nicaragua). While Israel’s surreptitious involvement in the “Iran-Contra Affair” in 1982 might be what has lingered in the memory of many contemporary commentators, in truth, there was hardly anything secretive in the ways Israel armed Central America’s armed forces. So intimate was the historical relationship between Israel and the Somoza family of Nicaragua that Israel’s Foreign Minister, Aba Eben, even paid the dictators an official visit in 1971.²¹ Still, it was ultimately the nexus with the Pentecostal believer General Efraín Ríos Montt, whose military dictatorship was responsible for the deaths of some 300,000 people (or the “Mayan holocaust”), that has brought contemporary progressive platforms to find similarities between the “violence and colonial subjugation in Guatemala and Palestine.”²²

While this is not the place to either confirm or refute this causality, what is beyond doubt is that, unlike dictators such as Augusto Pinochet and Rafael Videla, Ríos Montt not only praised the Jewish state but claimed to draw inspiration from its military and society. Indeed, this was merely the beginning of

a trend of right-wing Latin Americans referencing Israel as their exemplar. For example, in 1987, the Opus Dei economist Joaquín Lavín Infante nicknamed Chile's Copiapó region the "Chilean Negev" for its similarity to the "Israeli experience transforming the desert into an orchard." Sure enough, this member of Pinochet's regime would become a distinguished member of Chile's right-wing party UDI and an avid supporter of Israel in the years to come.²³ Likewise, the Colombian neo-fascist paramilitary leader Carlos Castaño, who had received military training in Israel in the 1980s, later famously wrote that he "admires the Jews" for the "surety of their Zionism," adding that he owes a significant part of his "human and military achievements" to Israel.²⁴ This is not to say that anti-Semitism simply vanished in Latin America. Particularly in Argentina, under the last dictatorship, neo-fascists of various kinds not only operated freely, but pressured the regime to persecute Jews. True to form, the neo-fascist journal *Cabildo*, for example, did not mince words when attacking the "Zionists'" supposed territorial aspirations, "from the Nile to the Great Euphrates," or asserting that the "Jewish problem is a theological and will be resolved when they accept the true Messiah."²⁵ Even so, for the most part, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Latin America's rightists transitioned from anti-Semitism to philo-Semitism, avowedly if not celebratedly.

To be sure, Israel never publicly admitted to having taken sides in Latin America's civil wars. By pretending to serve only the "Jewish, Israeli, and financial cause," in the words of Yitzhak Rabin,²⁶ or claiming that Israel does not care about its clients' "ideology," or whether they are "democratic or anti-democratic," in Begin's words,²⁷ its leaders initially believed that a transactional-sounding line of defense would do. Next, they turned to present Israel as a promoter of democracy in the region. Sure enough, in the mid-1980s, with Suazo Córdova at its helm, Honduras was framed in the Israeli public sphere as the country's paramount democratic project. In turn, when Carlos Orbin Montoya, then the head of the Honduran congress, arrived in Israel, the local newspapers avidly quoted him as saying: "Israel is granting us substantial assistance in its effort to be a model for adopting democracy over dictatorship."²⁸ While it is difficult to assess whether Israel bolstered the newborn Honduran democracy, it was undoubtedly eager to equip its armed forces with Kfir jets, which were of higher quality than the refurbished Dassault Ouragan jets it had previously sold to El Salvador, Honduras' regional adversary. In short, advancing Latin America's painstaking democratic transitions was never on the mind of Israel's leaders in the 1980s.

Regardless of the Israeli leadership's excuses, by this time, its country was becoming a conspicuous anti-communist and counterrevolutionary symbol in the eyes of most Latin Americans. The first indicator of this fact was the famous

UN Resolution 3379 of November 1975. Whereas Latin America’s nominally revolutionary regimes—Mexico and Cuba—voted in favor of defining Zionism as racism, Central America voted against it, while the rest of South America’s dictatorships abstained. From then on, the identification of Israel as a proactive ideological agent deepened, for example, when the nations of the Non-Aligned Movement assembled ceremoniously in Cuba in 1979 and in Nicaragua in January 1983, both times demanding Latin American states sever their diplomatic relationship with Israel.²⁹ The division was further enshrined when, in 1980, the Israeli government enacted the Basic Law on Jerusalem that declared the usurpation of East Jerusalem and brought in its wake the UN Security Council resolutions 465, which condemned Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and 478, which called for the withdrawal of diplomatic missions from Jerusalem. While most countries chose to comply with UN sanctions, Costa Rica and El Salvador announced they would relocate their embassies to Jerusalem. Central America would indeed continue to be a prominent player in the political theatre surrounding Israel’s capital to this very day.³⁰

Israel’s clumsy sponsorship of Latin America’s counterrevolutionary armed forces diminished with the ebbing away of the Cold War and Latin America’s democratization wave of the 1980s and 1990s. Even so, the damage had been done and has remained embedded in the Latin American Left’s historical consciousness. In turn, once the Israeli-Palestinian peace process fell apart in 2000, paving the way for the election of Ariel Sharon—one of the protagonists of Israel’s Central American operation—as Israel’s prime minister, the gloves were off. Taking place amid the onset of Latin America’s so-called left-wing “Pink Tide,” these dramatic events meant that Israel rapidly became a negative emblem in the anti-imperialist rhetoric of leaders such as Hugo Chávez, Evo Morales, Rafael Correa, and Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva. In turn, once Benjamin Netanyahu was elected Prime Minister in 2009, these men’s anti-Israel critique not only blossomed but became intrinsically personalized. In effect, the bad blood between them and Netanyahu has become infamous.³¹ “Bolivia must declare the State of Israel a terrorist state,” stated Morales—now officially a “*persona non grata*” in Israel—merely three weeks after the start of the Gaza War.³²

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Which brings us to the evolving fraternity, if not mutual admiration, between Latin America’s right-wingers and Benjamin Netanyahu. Between 2009 and 2023, during the latter’s tenure as Prime Minister, Israel witnessed what could be best described as a pilgrimage of Latin American right-wing politicians and elected officials. Their performance of love to Israel and its leader ranged from Jair Bolsonaro’s sons posing in IDF and Mossad t-shirts in 2018,³³ to Iván Du-

que flattering Netanyahu by telling him that his “leadership in the fight against terrorism sets an example for the rest of Latin America.”³⁴ By the mid-2010s, for Latin American rightists, Netanyahu’s Israel has thus come to represent a bastion against counterrevolutionary terrorism, post-colonial “indigenous” ethics, progressive economic policy, and, as a sideline, a provocative destination where they would always be welcomed and from which they could comfortably poke the Pink Tide leaders in the eye.

But was their behavior different from that of European populists, such as, say, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán? I suggest that it indeed was. And nothing illustrates this more than the European Right’s lackluster backing of Israel in the past two years. In fact, the first three months of war, which claimed the lives of some 20,000 Gazans, led even right-wing politicians worldwide to express sincere concern over the crisis escalating into a war of total demolition and potential ethnic cleansing. True, standing by Israel against the global “progressive” pro-Palestinian campaign was almost their initial Pavlovian response. This notwithstanding, many of them ultimately did not shy away from demanding an immediate negotiated end to the war. Perhaps the best example of the European rightists openly criticizing Netanyahu’s government was Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who, at the UN, rebuked Israel’s “disproportionate” offensive and the “massacre of civilians.”³⁵ British right-wing candidate Nigel Farage, too, could be found joining the British Left by harshly condemning Israel for targeting children and calling upon it to “give up” the war.³⁶ Even Viktor Orbán ultimately left behind his anti-Islamist rhetoric and joined US President Donald Trump at the October 2025 Egypt Peace Summit, where he likewise called on the war to end.³⁷ Strikingly, none of these high-profile European rightists has chosen to visit Israel throughout the war.

This, as we saw, was not to be the case with Latin America’s New Right politicians. To be sure, it was almost as if the extreme anti-Israel rhetoric of Latin America’s progressive leaders left them with no choice but to support Netanyahu, with Colombian President Gustavo Petro (who severed Colombia’s relationship with Israel in 2024) stating, already in December 2023, that “the unleashing of genocide and barbarism on the Palestinian people is what awaits the peoples of the South unleashed by the exodus due to the climate crisis”³⁸ and with da Silva likening the war to the Jewish Holocaust.³⁹ By September 2025, anybody from Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum⁴⁰ to Chilean president Gabriel Boric doubled down on the message that a genocide is indeed underway in Gaza and that “those responsible” for it “should face an international court of justice,” in the words of the latter.⁴¹ Here is the moment to note that the Gaza War found the Latin American right-wing network in a state of relative disarray, following the electoral debacles of José Antonio Kast, Bolsonaro, and Duque, and following

Sheinbaum’s landslide victory in Mexico’s 2024 general elections. Gleefully witnessing how the war damaged President Joe Biden’s reelection bid, the Latin American rightists immediately weaponized the conflict, primarily by blaming the Left for endorsing “criminals and terrorists,” and for being “worshipped” by Hamas, in Kast’s words.⁴² For Chilean right-wing candidate Johannes Kaiser, the next natural step was to allege that Boric’s government seeks to “import the Gaza War to Latin America.”⁴³ Sure enough, ushering in a local intifada—between Latin American Indigenous people and local “whites”—is what this man insinuated was behind the left-wing support of the Palestinian plight.

True, gradually, some Latin American rightists did step up, gingerly agreeing that Israel’s warfare methods in Gaza have been somewhat “disproportionate”⁴⁴ or “excessive,”⁴⁵ to the point of criticizing the “attack on a hospital” and demanding the war’s immediate end, as Colombian Álvaro Uribe Vélez did.⁴⁶ Still, even these figures would not follow their Italian counterpart and reprimand the massacre of civilians, let alone utter words such as “war crimes,” “ethnic cleansing,” or, God forbid, “genocide.” In fact, many of them chose to reiterate the Israeli government’s talking points, verbatim at times. Thus, while Salvadorian president Nayib Bukele (who had performatively visited Israel in 2018) made it clear that, to his mind, there are “no innocents in Gaza,”⁴⁷ Eduardo Bolsonaro—Jair’s son and federal deputy—stated that, to his mind, Hamas members do not qualify as “human.”⁴⁸ Similarly, Milei claimed that there is no hunger in the Gaza Strip and that it was Hamas that had deliberately been preventing the allocation of supplies to the population.⁴⁹ Blaming Hamas for the Gazan population’s hunger and misery is, indeed, a key feature of Israel’s propaganda that is seldom reiterated by European right-wing leaders.

Amidst their insipid pro-Israeli watchwords, these leaders eventually began uttering telling comments about their motivations for supporting Israel wholeheartedly. For example, Kaiser reminded his audience that Chile owes “a debt of gratitude” to Israel. After all, “in 1978/80, when we were on the verge of being attacked by our neighboring countries, Israel provided us with support that served as a deterrent, and in the end, we avoided war,” he said.⁵⁰ Others, Nayib Bukele and Daniel Noboa, for example, admitted to eyeing Israeli military technologies—Pegasus spying software, to name but one—in return for their adherence to the Israeli narrative. “Israel will provide intelligence to help our country’s war on cartels,” Noboa even stated, plain and simple.⁵¹ In other words, not only are the Cold War legacies not anything to be ashamed of but, for these men, they are the blueprint for Israel’s new phase of high-tech military collaboration. Yet one can hardly speak of a transactional aspect to the performance of support and love for Israel without mentioning how Milei—the self-proclaimed spokesman of the so-called “ética judeocristiana”—became

Trump’s “favorite president” and, as such, received a preferential US\$20,000 billion bailout.⁵² While it is better left to future historians to assess precisely why Trump granted an Argentine president this hefty sum, it is beyond doubt that Milei’s culture wars, personal loyalty to Trump, and performance of pro-Israeli zeal have played a part in the special treatment he has received from the Trump administration since January 2025. Alternatively, as da Silva can attest, treating Israel poorly might have detrimental consequences, such as the 50 % tariffs imposed by the US on goods from Brazil. That is not to say that the Trump administration necessarily punishes any world leader who dares to insult either Israel or Netanyahu. I am suggesting, however, that harshly criticizing Israel can easily make a Latin American left-wing leader a *persona non grata* in Washington—a stipulation that does not apply to European left-wing politicians such as Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez (himself a participant of the above-mentioned Egypt Peace Summit).

Even so, as Milei’s teary eyes have made patently clear, ad hoc incentives may not suffice in accounting for how Latin America’s rightists have internalized Israel’s victimhood and ethical superiority. Rather than a convoluted cosmology or an intricate Judeo-Christian ethical philosophy, these people hold—and indeed promote to their followers—an entirely simplistic division of the world into “good” and “bad” national and international players. Take, for instance, the verbal attack of Michelle Bolsonaro (Jair’s wife) on Brazilian pro-Palestinian trans women, who, by demonstrating against the war, had, to her mind, outrageously supported a “regime that persecutes and kills” gays. “Go [to Gaza] and demonstrate,” she told them.⁵³ A typical straw-man argument (nobody ever said that Hamas protects LGBTQ rights; this was never the question), this demagoguery conveys a simple truth, namely that, for Bolsonaro—a devout evangelical Christian and potential presidential candidate—nobody in Brazil may raise questions about the massive death toll in Gaza, not even (or least of all) those who are the most defenseless in Brazilian society. In other words, unlike her European counterparts, any semblance of a nuanced conception of reality—wherein one can be both pro-Israeli and be outraged for Israel’s conduct in the war—is, on a rhetorical level, outright inconceivable for people such as Milei and Bolsonaro.

Before concluding, a word is perhaps due on the ways in which the Gaza War has been weaponized during Chile’s December 2025 presidential elections. On the face of it, as could be expected by now, whereas the communist candidate Jeannette Jara promised to “suspend” Chile’s diplomatic ties with Israel if elected president,⁵⁴ José Antonio Kast—once more, the right’s presidential candidate—has indeed remained openly pro-Israeli. Famously being the son of a German Nazi Party member, seemingly, nobody appears to embody the

shift from anti-Semitism to pro-Israelism more than him. Still, stating that Kast has “adopted a rhetoric similar to the Israeli far right”—in the words of the spokesperson of Chile’s sizeable Palestinian Community—could, by now, be deemed somewhat hyperbolic.⁵⁵ Following the October 2025 ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, Kast has, in truth, tellingly refrained from mentioning the war throughout his electoral campaign, or, at a minimum, merely announced it was “over.”⁵⁶ In other words, unlike Milei, Kast appears to have reached the conclusion that, as a cultural war, the Gaza War has, by now, ceased to be a symbolic asset. Are we hence witnessing the first signs of a disengagement between Netanyahu and his Latin American New Right partners? Israel’s upcoming election year, and the presidential elections in Brazil and Argentina in 2026 and 2027 respectively, may reveal just how durable the alliance between the two parties really is.

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Now that we have established that Latin America’s rightists have made Israel their utmost moral absolute, we can turn to the cardinal question of why this phenomenon is even important. After all, notwithstanding José Antonio Kast’s landslide victory, it is still early to assess whether the Gaza War has tilted Latin American politics to the right—as it arguably had in the USA—and more concretely, whether acquiring a pro-Israel stance increases right-wing candidates’ electability.⁵⁷ It also remains to be seen whether the war will lead to the vindication of the Latin American authoritarian ideology or to the wholesale targeting and scapegoating of Indigenous and Muslim minorities. However, as regards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the damage caused by the Latin American right-wing’s blind support is already becoming clear. For example, not only has Noboa declared that “Israel and Ecuador have the same enemies,”⁵⁸ but, in September 2025, as the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution endorsing the New York Declaration, which promotes a “two-state solution” and the disarmament of Hamas, Ecuador abstained. And, true to form, Milei’s Argentina voted against it.⁵⁹ That is to say, not only did Noboa use the Gaza War to justify a violent oppression of pro-Indigenous protests in his own country, but he has actively damaged the campaign to turn the Gaza ceasefire into an internationally led peace process.⁶⁰ In other words, the more men such as Noboa and Milei are elected, the more Latin America would become an adversary to—or at a minimum, an untrustworthy mediator within—this paramount historical undertaking.

The Latin American rightists’ unwavering support of Benjamin Netanyahu’s government and its appalling treatment of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank also does not bode well for international bodies such as the International Criminal Court. With people like Milei already targeting this important institution, and

the rise to power of Kast in Chile, international law might, from now on, face years of upheaval. Think what you may about whether the IDF's warfare in Gaza has been criminal or not: the world would be a far less secure and just place with Latin America's republics withdrawing from the ICC (or the Rome Statute) as Hungary had done in April 2025. Lastly, the rise to prominence of Latin America's philo-Semites is anything but positive news for Latin America's Jewish communities. As Milei's nomination of Barra indicates, beneath the New Right's performance of love may linger a deep-seated animosity towards Latin America's Jews, in particular its "progressive" and "internationalist" ones. While populists may come and go, their instrumental politization of Israel and the Jews may ignite anti-Jewish sentiments from left-wing quarters for years to come. As a rule, people do not like being either hated or revered merely for their religious beliefs.

More broadly, the pilgrimage of men such as Milei to Jerusalem, as a spectacle and political theater of sorts, prompts further inquiry into the nature of Latin America's New Right and its plans for the future. For, after all, even if the leaders discussed above are devout Christians and ultra-conservatives at heart, their presence in Israel has less to do with religiosity and more with their penchant to convey a message about the end of the Western liberal order as we know it. Regardless of whether or not men such as Javier Milei and Jair Bolsonaro should be deemed the New Right, or even considered "wannabe fascists"⁶¹ and a form of "postcolonial fascism of resistance,"⁶² they all undoubtedly perceive Netanyahu's Israel as a unique ethno-nationalist society that has posed the most effective resistance to the global liberal (or "woke") order; a country that is simultaneously modern (a "Hi-Tec" powerhouse, to a degree) and an OECD member, and a de facto caste society divided according to ethnic and spiritual criteria whose leadership is obsessed with territorial expansion—even into Syria and Lebanon, if possible. Seen from this perspective, when coming from Milei's mouth, the "Judeo-Christian ethics" is synonymous with a post-Enlightenment modernity; a world order governed not according to the doctrine of universal human rights and wealth redistribution but the arbitrary rules of ethnically exclusive nation states collaborating according to a flimsy religious lingo devised by ideologues such as Steve Bannon and Olavo de Carvalho.

Notes

1. The author would like to thank the Koch History Centre at the University of Oxford for supporting the research upon which this essay is based.
2. Ministerio de Justicia, Procuración del Tesoro de la Nación (Argentina), “Rodolfo Barra: Nuevo Procurador del Tesoro,” published December 12, 2023, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/noticias/rodolfo-barra-nuevo-procurador-del-tesoro> (accessed October 31, 2025); “Barra Ciao: Top Prosecutor with Neo-Nazi Past Asked to Resign,” *Buenos Aires Herald*, published January 24, 2025, <https://buenosairesherald.com/politics/the-rosca/barra-ciao-top-prosecutor-with-neo-nazi-past-asked-to-resign> (accessed December 17, 2025).
3. Noboa also appointed his vice president as a “peace ambassador” in Jerusalem, which resulted in her “unjustified abandonment of office” and sacking, see Carolina Mella, “Verónica Abad, Vice President of Ecuador: ‘President Noboa has lost his moral compass, he is a totalitarian,’” *El País* (English), published November 17, 2024, <https://english.elpais.com/international/2024-11-17/veronica-abad-vice-president-of-ecuador-president-noboa-has-lost-his-moral-compass-he-is-a-totalitarian.html> (accessed October 31, 2025).
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