

# Jerusalem Post Targets MintPress After Exposé on Israeli Spies in US Media

By Alan MacLeod / MintPress News, 2025

**In December, The Jerusalem Post published an investigation from Nicholas Potter, a “counter-extremism expert,” who falsely accused MintPress News of being part of a network of far-left, foreign government-funded outlets that push conspiracy theories and anti-Semitic extremism. The claims are untrue and are particularly ironic, considering the calls for the extermination and expulsion of Palestinians and Arab peoples the newspaper has published and because Potter is a German national whose job at the Post is directly funded by the German government.**

## “Flimsy” Research

The Jerusalem Post article attacked a series of Mint Press investigations published late last year exploring the deep connections between U.S. media, the pro-Israel lobby, and the Israeli intelligence services. In this series, MintPress revealed that hundreds of former Israel lobbyists now work in top jobs in American corporate media, including for MSNBC, Fox News, CNN, and The New York Times. We also showed how former employees of an Israeli spying agency, Unit 8200, are trusted to write America’s news, including about Israel/Palestine – an enormous conflict of interest.

The virality of the two investigations, which were widely cited and read by hundreds of thousands of people across the world, seems to have upset many of Israel’s most ardent backers, including individuals at the Jerusalem Post, who warned about our influence.

“In both cases,” the Post wrote, “the evidence was flimsy at best,” adding:

In the former, a brief internship at AIPAC during college was all it took to be a part of an ominous conspiracy to control the media. In the latter, a previous stint as a reservist in Unit 8200 of the IDF’s Intelligence Corps was more than sufficient to brand a journalistic security analysis as a clandestine psychological operation.”

This is a disingenuous description of the information presented. Firstly, the evidence provided was far from flimsy. We noted dozens of high-profile instances of the hundreds of ex-Israel lobbyists we found working in American media. The nearly 6000-word article went into almost tedious detail, cataloging example after example, and, for brevity’s sake, had to be cut back from a much larger article.

Nevertheless, the Post suggests that the best evidence of Israel lobby/U.S. media overlap is a “brief internship” at AIPAC. This is deeply misleading. In fact, that is one of the least substantial cases of the phenomenon we noted. The dozens of examples included the executive producer of MSNBC, who was an

Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) intelligence commander; a CNBC lead reporter who was previously an officer in the IDF's public relations department before working for the Friends of the IDF in the U.S.; and a Fox News producer who was Benjamin Netanyahu's aide at Israel's Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

Potter seemed to take particular umbrage at our use of the word "spy" to describe Unit 8200 agents. This is surprising, given that most of the world's top journalistic outlets regularly describe the organization as a spy agency, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, CNN, CNBC, The Financial Times, The Guardian, and the Times of London. It is also commonly referred to as such in Israeli media, including the Jerusalem Post itself, which recently described Unit 8200's function as "spying on the West Bank." Thus, it is entirely reasonable to describe someone such as Axios political reporter Barak Ravid, who was, until at least 2023, a Unit 8200 analyst, as an "Israeli spy."

Unfortunately, instead of critically engaging with the evidence MintPress provided, Potter's article accuses us of peddling a "cocktail of disinformation, conspiracy theories and antisemitic narratives," including suggesting we claimed that there is a gigantic Israeli "clandestine psychological operation" in the same vein as the "Jews control the media" conspiracy.

At no point did we claim this. In fact, the articles explicitly argued against this tired trope, noting:

*This investigation does not accuse any of those noted above [of being part of a conspiracy] or claim they are unworthy of holding those positions and should be fired. But it does highlight the extent to which pro-Israel sentiment is considered so normal in elite circles, so much so that former Israel lobbyists, spies, and soldiers can be charged with producing supposedly objective and unbiased reporting, even on Middle Eastern issues.*

A second key piece of evidence the article points to as supposed proof of MintPress' inherent antisemitism is cartoons from Carlos Latuff showing the Star of David printed on bombs being dropped on Gaza. The argument appears to be that the Star refers to the Jewish religion as a whole rather than a very obvious stand-in for the State of Israel. In fact, MintPress explicitly uses only the Israeli flag in cartoons, and not just the Star of David, precisely because we wish to distinguish between the religion of Judaism and the settler colonial project of Israel.

This would be patently clear to any reader viewing these cartoons, perhaps why Potter's article does not link to or feature any of them. Otherwise, cartoons very obviously satirizing Israeli policy – from an outlet employing many Israeli and Jewish staff/contributors – would be extremely difficult to transmogrify into racist attacks on Judaism.

Another serious (and false) allegation made is that MintPress News is funded by foreign governments, be they Russia, Iran, Syria, or whomever the current target of the U.S. attack is today. Throughout the article, the author implies that

MintPress' "murky" funding sources trace back to the government of Bashar al-Assad. And yet, the Post also concedes that MintPress has been highly critical of the Assad government in recent reporting. Thus, we were apparently Assadists until the very moment he was gone (and it was, therefore, ineffective to use as a slur against us). In reality, all our fundraising and membership drives are public, which the article concedes. Yet, it still attempts to insinuate otherwise.

Using the vagaries of the English language, the article strongly implies that we are agents of a foreign power without directly saying so—something that could be legally actionable. Therefore, after the Syrian government's fall, it concludes, "MintPress News may be left with one backer fewer."

This allegation is entirely untrue. But as an anti-war, anti-imperialist outlet, MintPress is regularly labeled as a mouthpiece of Russia, Iran, Syria, Hamas, China, Venezuela, Cuba, and whatever other country is currently drawing the ire of the U.S.

It is ironic, however, that, to give their flimsy allegations about state-sponsored disinformation a veneer of credibility, the Jerusalem Post turned to two "experts" at the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensics Lab for comment. The Atlantic Council is NATO's think tank, primarily funded by the military and its component governments. The council – whose board of directors features no fewer than seven former directors of the Central Intelligence Agency – has been responsible for much of the most egregious hysteria and fake news about foreign interference in Western media and society. For instance, it published a series of reports claiming that virtually every European party challenging the centrist establishment is secretly controlled by Vladimir Putin. From Jeremy Corbyn's Labour and UKIP in the U.K. to Syriza and Golden Dawn in Greece and PODEMOS and Vox in Spain, are all, in their words, the "Kremlin's Trojan Horses."

The current head of the Digital Forensics Lab is Graham Brookie, who, in 2017, left his job at the White House, working as the National Security Council's Advisor for Strategic Communication to join the Atlantic Council.

Potter also took aim at other radical outlets supposedly spreading "disinformation and antisemitic narratives," including The Grayzone, who, he noted, in a scandalized tone, had reported that many of the deaths on October 7, 2023, came at the hands of the Israeli military. Surprisingly, he would bring this up, as it is now widely acknowledged as a fact, including in Israeli media, that this was indeed the case.

Potter also goes after German platform Red, whom, he notes, "regularly reports from left-wing, anti-Israel demonstrations in Germany, *even interviewing Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg*" (emphasis added), as if this was home run evidence of the platform's inherent antisemitism.

## Who Cannot Be Trusted?

Together, the article concludes, “MintPress News, The Grayzone, and Red are examples of far-left websites that can’t be trusted when it comes to the Middle East.” This is quite the accusation, as the Jerusalem Post has promoted much of the most outlandish fake news out of the region.

In October 2023, it “confirmed” the infamous 40 beheaded babies hoax, claiming that their staff had personally seen the evidence of decapitated infants. This evidence-free assertion was designed to spark outrage and manufacture public support for a genocide, which, as we shall see, the Post also cheered.

A few weeks later, it published an article claiming that viral images of a Palestinian baby killed by the Israeli onslaught were actually fake and that the “child” was nothing more than a toy doll. After worldwide condemnation, the Post was forced to retract the story.

These sorts of accounts help to spread the myth that casualties of the Israeli onslaught are exaggerated or fake. Indeed, in February, the Post came out and explicitly said that there was a “fake humanitarian crisis in Gaza,” “ Hamas is attempting to ride this humanitarian wave by creating the false narrative that Gazans are starving and dying as a result” of Israeli actions, it told its readers, adding that the Palestinian resistance group was able to “send the United Nations to do its bidding.”

## Who is the Real Extremist?

Potter styles himself as an expert in counter-extremism. And yet, in the middle of a genocide, he chose to move to Israel and work for a publication that has published many of the most open calls for the extermination of groups of people in recorded history.

“Israel is at war with the Palestinians, not just Hamas,” reads the headline of one Post article that argues that collective punishment of all Palestinians for Hamas’ actions is necessary and hints that the country should engage in an all-war of annihilation against an entire people.

Another article, entitled “Why moving to the Sinai Peninsula is the solution for Gaza’s Palestinians,” argues that Israel should drive the entirety of the Gazan population into the Egyptian desert – a textbook example of genocide. Using distinctly Hitlerian language, the article states that this is the perfect “solution” for the Palestinians, who have produced nothing of value except an “intrinsic, hatred-focused, fanatic, anti-Israel Islamic culture.”

In November 2023, a Jerusalem Post article entitled “Exposed; Hamas’ Propaganda Team” created a hit list of prominent pro-Palestine journalists and influencers trapped in Gaza, claiming that they were secretly Hamas militants and that they were hiding at the Al-Shifa Hospital, a site that Israel famously later turned into rubble.

The article's purpose was twofold: first, to set up a pre-justification for Israel's continued campaign of targeting journalists, and second, to provide some sort of excuse for the destruction of the hospital. As of the time of writing, every hospital in Gaza has been attacked, and fewer than half are at all operational. Meanwhile, Israel has killed well over 200 journalists since October 7, 2023.

The Post has also led the calls for Israel to conquer as much territory as possible. "Southern Lebanon is actually northern Israel," ran the headline of one article not-so-subtly demanding that Israel take much of Lebanon permanently. Another piece, published only last week, demands that Israel should annex southern Syria, including the strategic summit of Mount Hermon. Both articles suggest that the State of Israel is biblically obligated to conquer its neighbors.

The Post's editors are clearly in lock-step with the Netanyahu administration on the issue. Indeed, earlier this month, they printed a sycophantic paean to him entitled "Chosen to lead: Netanyahu will be remembered as one of the greatest leaders of all time." The article presented the prime minister as a frugal, saint-like figure, attacked from all sides by people who want to "bring him down because he is too good, too charming, too powerful, and does the right thing." Netanyahu is wanted by the International Criminal Court for his involvement in war crimes.

This extremist position clearly goes right to the top of the outlet. In 2023, the Jerusalem Post's then-editor-in-chief, Avi Mayer, wrote an article entitled "No Longer Part of Us," where he said that "pro-Hamas Jews" – i.e., Jews who do not support Israel's genocide – were "wicked" "un-Jews" spreading "bile" and must be shunned and ex-communicated.

### **State-Backed Disinformation**

Potter, however, despite being a counter-extremism expert, appears unable to see any pro-Israel extremism. One of the things that seems to most alarm or anger him about MintPress and other independent media is our supposed connections to foreign governments. This is bizarre, as Potter himself is quite literally – and openly – in the pay of the German government. Nicholas Potter is a British-born German national who decided, in the midst of a genocide, to move to Jerusalem and work for an outlet championing the extermination and forced displacement of Palestinians, along with the annexation of Lebanon and Syria.

He did so thanks to his position as the Ernst Cramer and Teddy Kollek Fellow of the International Journalist Program, a post funded by the German Federal Foreign Office. The head of this fellowship is Dr. Frank-Dieter Freiling, the senior vice president of the German state broadcaster, ZDF. As Red has detailed, Potter has a long history of working for groups and outlets sponsored by Berlin.

Meanwhile, the Jerusalem Post is no less connected to state power than Potter. Avi Mayer, its editor-in-chief until recently, was formerly the project

coordinator for the office of the President of Israel and was acting head of the IDF's spokesperson unit for North America. To this day, he is still a reservist in the IDF unit.

Mayer's successor, Zivka Klein, is a former IDF Spokesperson's Unit commander. After leaving the military, he worked for the World Zionist Organization and later became a government official in the office of the President of Israel, Reuven Rivlin.

MintPress News receives no funding and has no connections to any government. And yet, leading the smears against us is a German government-funded journalist writing in a newspaper headed by senior Israeli government and military officials. In every accusation, they say, lies a confession.

### **Can Journalists be Terrorists?**

Why, then, has a German with seemingly no connections to Israel decided to move there to defend the country and throw baseless accusations at supporters of Palestinian liberation?

Potter is influenced by the Antideutsche tendency, a rather complicated current among the German left wing, who see opposition to German nationalism and atonement for Germany's past crimes as among their priorities. This has led them to zealously support the State of Israel and see any criticism of the country in Germany as a potential Nazi dog whistle.

As a consequence, the movement has even targeted German Jews protesting Israeli crimes – a rather bizarre outcome for an anti-fascist tendency. In previous years, this somewhat warped ideology has also seen them support George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq and his plan to transform the Middle East.

The German state has offered its full support to Israel and has gone so far as to ban Palestine protests and lock up countless activists, including Jewish people. The phrase "From the River to the Sea" has effectively been criminalized, with Berlin announcing that it would deny citizenship to any that used it. New German citizenship laws require all applicants to sign what is, in effect, a loyalty oath to the State of Israel, declaring that it has a "right to exist."

In addition to his German government-funded role at the Jerusalem Post, Potter is the editor of the German publication Die Tageszeitung. Last week, he wrote and published an article defending Israel's slaughter of reporters in Gaza titled, "Can Journalists be Terrorists?"

Potter argued that "the distinction [between journalist and terrorist] is sometimes difficult," noting that many Palestinian journalists "lead double lives" as Hamas or PIJ fighters, and even listing at least one publication that he implies is fair game for the IDF to target. The effect of the article is to cast doubt upon the claim that Israel has indeed killed so many media workers. Given this context,

perhaps MintPress News and the other outlets Potter labeled got off lightly, only being marked as state-sponsored disinformation peddlers.

A foreign government-sponsored journalist writing in an extremist, genocide-supporting publication has claimed that a small, independent anti-war outlet opposing the slaughter is part of an expansive disinformation network.

All the charges against MintPress News – that we are state-sponsored, that we peddle disinformation and antisemitic conspiracies – are entirely false. And yet they are predictable; being smeared by big outlets as foreign agents is, unfortunately, par for the course for independent media. Those who opposed the Iraq invasion were presented as secretly in league with Saddam Hussein. Those who questioned NATO's bombing of Libya were in the pay of Muammar Gaddafi. Today, those who oppose Western imperialism around the world are reflexively described as agents of Cuba, Venezuela, Assadists, Putin's Puppets, or part of a network controlled by the Chinese Communist Party.

By highlighting the crimes of Washington and its allies – and corporate media's complicity in them, alternative media threatens both the power of the state and the establishment press. That is why it is relentlessly suppressed, defamed and marginalized. Unfortunately, there appears to be no lack of journalists with more ambition than morals willing to climb the career ladder by smearing activists and anti-war voices.

The silver lining is that when attacks come, it is a sure sign that we have provoked the ire of the empire and those who support it. The MintPress investigations that drew the Jerusalem Post's ire went viral and were read by vast numbers of people. Throughout the article, Potter warned about our reach and influence. Clearly, then, to deserve such a disingenuous attack, we are doing something right.