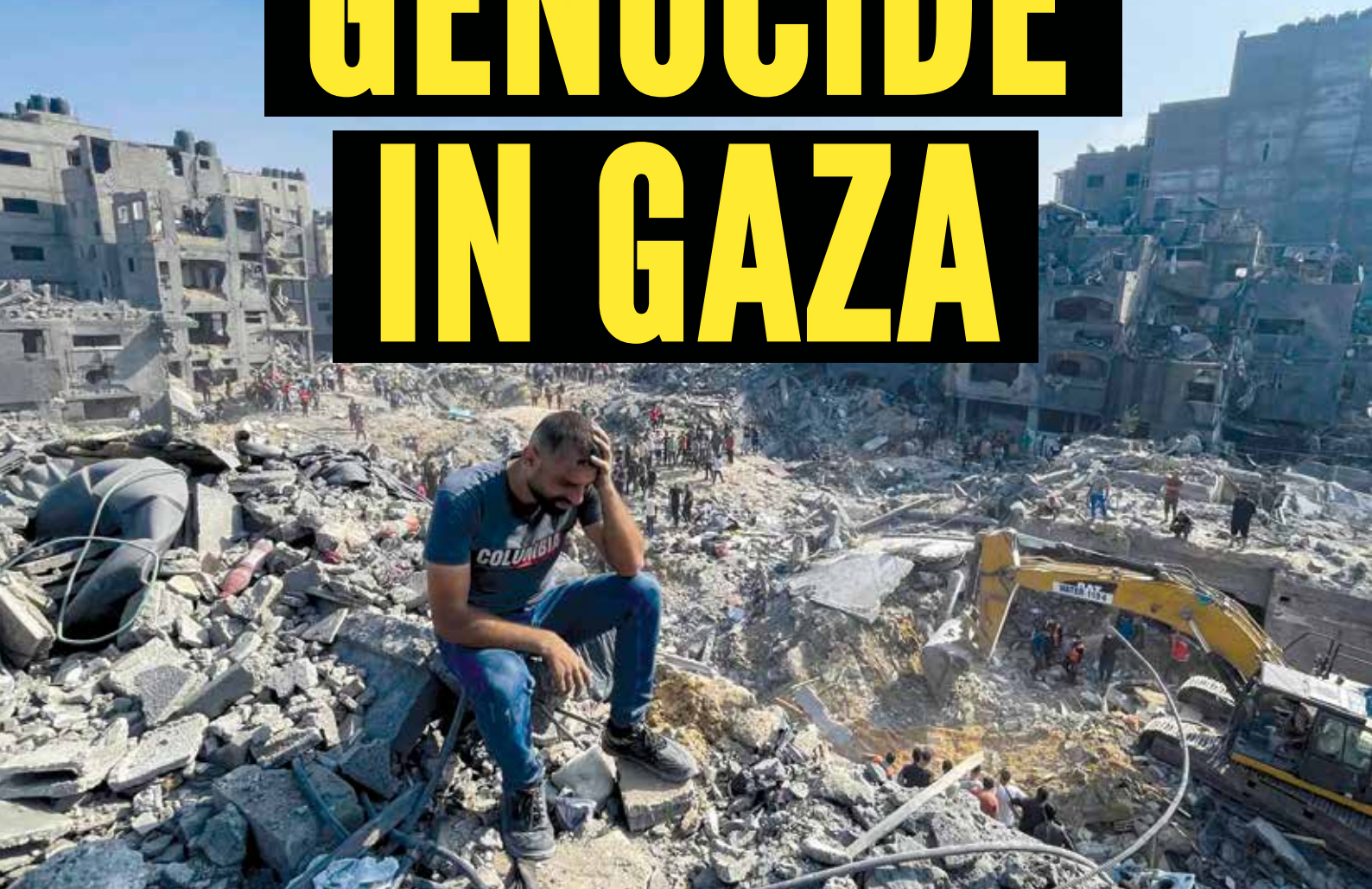


BLOOD ON ALBANESE'S HANDS

STOP ISRAEL'S

GENOCIDE

IN GAZA



UNIONS

Organising for
Palestine takes off

PALESTINE

Why Arab revolution
is the path to liberation

AUSTRALIA

Imperialist partner
not a US puppet

Solidarity **WHAT WE STAND FOR**

Capitalism is a system of crisis and war

Capitalism is a system of competition, crisis, and war based on exploitation of workers, producing for profit not human needs. Although workers create society's wealth, they have no control over production or distribution. Through environmental degradation and climate change capitalism has become a threat to humanity's future and life on earth.

Workers power and socialism

The working class has the power to challenge the existing system and create a better world. We stand for socialism, a society based on democratically elected workers councils which would control and plan the economy to produce for human need. The authoritarian states like Russia and China are not socialist but forms of state capitalism where workers have no power.

What about elections and parliament?

Parliament, the army, the police and the courts are institutions of the capitalist state that maintain the dominance of the ruling class over the rest of society. The capitalist state cannot be taken over and used by the working class, it must be smashed. Workers need to create their own state based on workers councils.

While parliament can be a platform for socialists, real change doesn't come through parliament. It is won by mass action in strikes, protests and demonstrations.

We are internationalists

The struggle for socialism has no national boundaries. We oppose everything that turns workers from one country against those from another; we campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose borders and immigration controls, and welcome migrants and refugees.

We oppose imperialism and support all

genuine national liberation struggles. We oppose Australian nationalism.

Australia is an imperialist power established through genocide on stolen Indigenous land. We support the continuing struggles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for land, justice and self-determination.

Oppression and liberation

We oppose sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia. We fight against all forms of discrimination and the oppression of women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, migrants, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. We oppose discrimination against Muslims and people from the Middle East.

Linking up the struggles

We are active building movements for environmental and social change and economic equality. We are active in our unions and work to build the organisation and self-confidence of the rank and file. We work to bring activists together to strengthen each movement and build a common struggle against capitalism.

Educate, agitate, organise

Socialism cannot be introduced from above, by parliament or parties. The emancipation of the working class is the act of the working class itself.

Solidarity is an organisation of activists, anti-capitalists and revolutionary socialists committed to socialism from below. We are part of the International Socialist Tendency.

A democratic revolutionary party is necessary to deepen resistance to capitalism and to build a movement to overthrow the system. Solidarity members are beginning to build such a party out of today's struggles against the system.

SOLIDARITY MEETINGS AND BRANCHES

Sydney

Meeting 6.30pm every Thursday
Brown St Hall, 8-10 Brown St
Newtown
For more information contact:
Adam on 0400 351 694
sydney@solidarity.net.au

Melbourne

Meeting 6.30pm every Thursday
Kathleen Syme library and community
centre, 251 Faraday St, Carlton
For more information contact:
Jason on 0456 624 661
melbourne@solidarity.net.au

Brisbane

Contact Mark on 0439 561 196 or
brisbane@solidarity.net.au

Perth

Contact perth@solidarity.net.au

Canberra

Contact canberra@solidarity.net.au

Adelaide

Contact Robert on 0447 362 417 or
adelaide@solidarity.net.au

Or check fb.com/soliaus/events

CONTACT US

Magazine office

Phone 02 8964 7116
Fax 02 9012 0814

Email

solidarity@solidarity.net.au

Website

www.solidarity.net.au

Facebook

Search for "Solidarity Magazine" or
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Solidarity No. 177

November 2023

ISSN 1835-6834

Responsibility for election
comment is taken by James
Supple, 410 Elizabeth St, Surry
Hills NSW 2010.

Printed by El Faro, Newtown
NSW.

SUBSCRIBE TO SOLIDARITY MAGAZINE

Solidarity is published monthly. Make sure you don't miss an issue—pay by credit card online at www.solidarity.net.au/subscribe or send in this form with a cheque or money order and we will mail you *Solidarity* each month.

5 issues—\$15 One year (12 issues)—\$36 Two years (24 issues)—\$65

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EDITORIAL

All out to stop slaughter as Albanese backs Israel's genocide

ISRAEL'S HORRIFYING assault is targeting the entire population of Gaza. Every day brings more sickening war crimes and atrocities.

Over 10,000 people have been killed in relentless bombing—70 per cent of them women and children. Schools, hospitals, UN shelters and mosques have all been targeted.

Israel's siege of 2.3 million people, the lack of sanitation and safe drinking water, has created a catastrophe.

The trickle of aid that Israel has allowed to enter has done nothing to alleviate its butchery.

Around half of the hospitals in Gaza have completely stopped functioning. Many of those left are without electricity, anaesthetic or antiseptics for wounds.

Israel is committing genocide.

Galit Distel Atbaryan, an MP from the ruling Likud party and a recent minister, declared everyone living in Gaza "monsters" and called for, "Erasing all of Gaza from the face of the Earth."

Current Israeli minister Amichai Eliyahu said that using nuclear weapons on Gaza was an option, replying to a question about whether an atomic bomb should be used by saying, "This is one of the possibilities." He also opposed sending any medical or humanitarian aid adding, "There is no such thing as uninvolved civilians in Gaza."

The Israeli government has discussed expelling Palestinians from Gaza into the Sinai desert in Egypt and allowed settlers in the West Bank to step up the dispossession of Palestinian farmers.

Yet Anthony Albanese blatantly sides with Israel. In line with statements from the White House, Albanese justifies Israel's massacres and puts the blame on Hamas, despite over 75 years of Israeli ethnic cleansing and occupation.

Albanese says that the deaths in Gaza are "causing enormous concern", yet the government refused to vote for a ceasefire at the UN General Assembly.

The Australian government is supporting the US call for a "humanitarian pause" but won't call for an end to the Israel's slaughter.

Labor MPs Ed Husic and Anne Aly broke ranks declaring that Palestinians are being "collectively punished" although they still say they want Hamas "held to account".



Above: Israel's murderous attack on Gaza has targeted refugee camps and levelled civilian areas

But some sections of the Labor Party are feeling the community anger. Labor councillors in Canterbury-Bankstown in Sydney voted unanimously to fly the Palestinian flag until there is a ceasefire.

The Greens walkout from the Senate did for a moment "bring the people's protest into parliament" and expose the government's disgraceful support for Israel.

Break all ties

Tens of thousands have joined huge protests across Australia, chanting that Albanese is "supporting genocide".

The protests need to continue and deepen. We have to demand not just a ceasefire but that Israel stops the bombing, gets out of Gaza and ends the siege.

We need to fight to break all ties with Israel, including with Israeli weapons dealers and other companies. In Sydney and Melbourne protests are targeting Israeli shipping company Zim. Universities should cancel all research and exchange partnerships with Israeli institutions.

Action inside the unions to push for stronger support for Palestine can strengthen the movement and increase the pressure on the Labor government.

We should not retreat in the face of intimidation from the mainstream media, government or supporters of Israel.

Pro-Palestine activists have been constantly asked to "condemn Hamas". This accepts the idea that

what's happening in Gaza is a conflict between two equal sides that are both to blame—or worse, that somehow Hamas is responsible for Israel's violence.

Student activists have faced intimidation and harassment from university security when holding pro-Palestine events. At Sydney University a Solidarity students meeting on Palestine was banned by the Vice-Chancellor for using the title "Palestine: The Case for a Global Intifada". The title meant it "may be linked to support for terrorist activities" and Hamas, he ridiculously claimed.

Sydney Uni staff for BDS opposed the ban and joined a subsequent campus Intifada protest speakout. But some left-wing student activists succumbed to the intimidation refusing to chant "Resistance is justified while Palestine is occupied" or anything that included "Intifada".

But there can be no compromise on the Palestinian's right to resist Israel's illegal occupation. There is no comparison between the violence of the oppressor and that of the oppressed.

Israel is a nuclear-armed power backed with billions of dollars in high-tech weaponry from the US. It brutally oppresses and occupies Palestine, as it continues to ethnically cleanse and steal more land.

We should be unequivocal in our support for the Palestinian struggle—and build an unstoppable movement to demand freedom for Palestine.

.....
There can be no compromise on the Palestinian's right to resist Israel's illegal occupation

Biden embraces Israel to cement US power

By James Supple

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden has given Israel’s murderous rampage in Gaza his full and absolute backing.

Biden’s administration has worked to give Israel freedom to act with impunity, echoing its lies and propaganda. Biden made a special trip to Israel to embrace Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu.

He blamed the bombing of the Al-Ahli Arab hospital on a stray Palestinian rocket, telling Netanyahu, “It appears as though it was done by the other team, not you.”

Biden then rejected the estimated death toll in Gaza, saying he had “no confidence in the number that the Palestinians are using” and sending out a White House spokesman to dismiss the Gaza Health Ministry that produced the figures as “just a front for Hamas”.

This was a disgraceful effort to downplay the deaths of thousands of civilians—even though the UN and even the US State Department have accepted the figures’ accuracy.

Biden is also seeking \$14 billion in additional military aid for Israel from the US Congress.

The US has sent military advisers such as Marine Corps Lt Gen James Glynn, who played a key role in the assault on Fallujah in Iraq in 2004. It wants Israel to use its experience in urban warfare for the ground invasion of Gaza.

Two American aircraft carriers have arrived off Israel’s coast in a demonstration of strength.

Biden has pressed Israel about allowing more humanitarian aid into Gaza and reportedly advised it to delay its ground invasion over fears that it had no plans for what would happen once it left.

But the US, like the Australian government, has refused to call for a ceasefire. White House spokesman John Kirby even said, “We’re not drawing red lines for Israel” about what it should do.

For decades Israel has been a crucial ally for the US in safeguarding its imperialist interests across the whole Middle East.

The massive oil reserves there mean the region has been of vital strategic importance since the First World War. Its oil economy remains the source of enormous wealth and power.



Above: US President Joe Biden embraces Benjamin Netanyahu on his visit to Israel

But after 1945 there was a wave of revolts against European colonialism that produced newly independent states and an Arab nationalist movement that threatened Western imperialism.

The new regimes attempted to nationalise assets controlled by the West, including the Suez canal in Egypt and the oil reserves in Iran.

Watchdog state

Israel offered itself as a reliable partner for Western imperialist interests.

As the Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz* put it in 1951: “Israel is to become the watchdog. There is no fear that Israel will undertake any aggressive policy towards the Arab states when this would explicitly contradict the wishes of the US and Britain.

“But if for any reasons the western powers should sometimes prefer to close their eyes, Israel could be relied upon to punish one or several neighbouring states whose discourtesy to the west went beyond the bounds of the permissible.”

Israel has proven its importance to the US with a series of military victories over the Arab states—especially in the 1967 war, when it defeated the combined strength of Egypt, Syria and Jordan, and the 1973 Yom Kippur war when it defeated Egypt and Syria again.

These defeats helped force the Arab ruling classes to accept US domination of the Middle East. But the dictatorships in places like Egypt and Jordan remain unstable—as the

wave of revolutions in 2011 showed.

Israel by contrast is a highly militarised society that relies on the support from the US to sustain itself and is therefore a much more dependable ally.

As a settler colonial state established through driving Palestinians off the land, Israel can never be permanently at peace. The Palestinian population of the occupied territories of West Bank and Gaza still numbers around 4.5 million. Short of expelling or killing them all, it faces a perpetual conflict.

When the US became the world’s dominant power after the Second World War, it also became Israel’s key sponsor. Since then the country has received \$243.9 billion in US aid.

Increasingly this has taken the form of military aid, as part of a US policy designed to supply Israel with the latest in high-tech weaponry and ensure it maintains what the US calls a “qualitative military edge” over neighbouring states.

Since 1999 the US has provided ten-year agreements that commit to ongoing aid payments. The most recent was signed by President Barack Obama in 2016 committing \$38 billion in aid for the financial years 2019-2028.

US President Joe Biden once summed up Israel’s importance to the US by saying: “If there were not an Israel, we would have to invent one to make sure our interests were preserved.”

Ending Israel’s murderous oppression of the Palestinians requires ending Western imperialism’s support for it.

Israel has been a crucial ally for the US in safeguarding its imperialist interests across the Middle East

Surge in union action for Palestine from rank-and-file

By Chris Breen

UNION SOLIDARITY with Palestine has exploded as anger grows over Israel's genocide in Gaza and the Labor government's support for Israel.

Over 2600 unionists have now signed the statement "Union members in solidarity with Palestine". Union flags are obvious at demonstrations, giving confidence to unionists to take further action.

Unionists for Palestine public meetings drew 150 in Sydney and 200 in Melbourne. Solidarity groups within individual unions are springing up everywhere.

MUA members and other unionists are rallying against a ship from the Israeli company Zim docking in Port Botany in Sydney and in Melbourne. The action received union backing after Palestinian activist Ahmed Abadla addressed Sydney's MUA branch meeting.

Many official union statements have followed the line of the national peak body the ACTU. While it called for a ceasefire, it equally condemned both Hamas and Israel, as if resistance to occupation is the same as the violence of the occupier.

The ACTU repeated Labor Party talking points, labelling Hamas a terrorist organisation and claiming, "Hamas does not represent the aspirations of the Palestinian people", which fits the agenda of the West to eliminate Hamas, just as they tried to do after Hamas won the last Palestinian elections in 2006.

However, the surge of rank-and-file activity has put pressure on union officials who have been slow or hostile to acting. Officials from the United Services Union spent \$7000 to text members distancing themselves from the Unionists for Palestine petition, but over 80 of their members signed anyway.

Rank-and-file organising

Australian Services Union (ASU) member Alex explained how activists have built support in their union: "We had a meeting of ASU members for Palestine with roughly 50 members in attendance from around the country. We built this from the Unionists for Palestine petition, which over 400 ASU members have signed so far.

"Members insisted on being involved as unionists, and pushed back against official suggestions in response to our demands for union backing that we should instead donate or be involved



Above: A union contingent at one of the huge Sydney rallies for Palestine

in Palestine solidarity as individuals."

The meeting's vote to request an ASU contingent with union flags at rallies resulted in the officials bringing flags to rallies in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

There are now over 140 ASU NSW members in an organising WhatsApp group. ASU members have been leaf-letting for protests and have a Palestine 101 lunchtime meeting planned. People have also joined the ASU on the spot after seeing the flags at Palestine rallies.

NSW Teachers Federation officials have attended Palestine rallies, but initially declined to bring union flags. Although the union has a longstanding position of support for Palestine, it was initially reluctant to publicly stand up to the pro-Israel media onslaught, and concerned not to disrupt their relationship with the equally pro-Israel NSW Labor government.

But pressure from activists has now seen the union shift its position on carrying flags. A motion was passed at Marrickville High School calling to "bring NSWTF union flags to future major Palestine rallies so that teacher union contingents are proudly visible".

Teachers for Palestine NSW was launched at a meeting of 15 teachers, and has grown to an organising group of over 100.

Sydney University NTEU members held a Sydney Staff for BDS forum that drew 210 people, and have helped organise union contingents at the protests. Nine NTEU members held a successful pro-Palestine stall at Sydney Uni, and built a Staff Boycott, Divest-

ment and Sanctions campus meeting.

Now is the moment to organise rank-and-file unionists to win support for the Palestinian cause as common sense within the union movement. Union forums, and political material exposing the media lies, and explaining the political questions, are also needed to win wider layers of members. Grass-roots union action will also be important to break the Labor Party from its appalling support for Israel.

Palestinian trade unions have released a call to end all complicity and stop arming Israel:

"We ask you to speak out and take action in the face of injustice as trade unions have done historically. We make this call in the belief that the struggle for Palestinian justice and liberation is not only a regionally and globally determined struggle. It is a lever for the liberation of all dispossessed and exploited people of the world."

Unions have a proud history standing against Apartheid and war.

The movement against the Vietnam war saw workers economically disrupt the war machine.

Maritime unions first refused to load Australian ships with war supplies. Later seafarers banned work on all US ships. The moratorium marches involved maritime workers, teachers, and construction workers on strike against the war.

Organising in our unions now can build towards union action that will have to confront anti-strike laws in Australia and directly disrupt economic and military ties with Israel.

The surge of rank-and-file activity has put pressure on union officials who have been slow or hostile to acting

After the Voice's defeat, we need the politics of protest

By Ian Rintoul

THE CONFUSION that surrounded the Yes campaign for the Voice to parliament has turned into some despair among the official Yes campaigners in the aftermath of the referendum's defeat.

Even after taking a week off for "mourning", all the official Yes campaign could come up with was a commitment to keep pushing for change to Australia's founding document.

"There is no plan B," said Voice architect, Noel Pearson. Marcia Langton despondently announced, "Reconciliation is dead."

The official Yes campaign post-mortem puts most of the blame on the Coalition, declaring, "The lack of political bipartisan support from Nationals leader David Littleproud and Opposition Leader Peter Dutton was a determining factor in the referendum that could not be overcome by the Yes campaign."

Predictably the racists are trying to take advantage. Tony Abbott has suggested the result, "Should mean abandoning, or at least scaling back ... flying the Aboriginal flag ... and the routine acknowledgement of country by all speakers at official events."

The Indigenous face of the No campaign, Jacinta Nampijinpa Price, has tried to launch a new wave of assimilationism by insisting that Indigenous people are not disadvantaged. But her re-energised zealotry is doomed; facts are stubborn things.

The confusion in the aftermath of the vote does not end there. On the one hand, Noel Pearson cited constitutional lawyer Greg Craven who considered the proposal "so modest that no reasonable non-Indigenous person could reject it". On the other hand fervent Yes campaigner Stan Grant declared, "The Voice was never a modest ask, it was monumental." Really?

On this question, Pearson is right. The Voice was too modest and its deliberate design with a view to attracting conservative support was the fundamental flaw. While the referendum had majority support among Indigenous people, the fact is that a significant proportion of Indigenous activists voted No.

At the state level, variations of the Voice or Treaty are continuing to be rolled out. In South Australia, Premier Peter Malinauskas says it is full steam ahead with elections planned for



March for representatives to the state-based Voice to parliament, the first by any jurisdiction in Australia.

But like the referendum, it would be a mistake to put too much hope in the process. In Queensland, after a little hiccup with the LNP withdrawing their support, Labor Premier Anastasia Palaszczuk has, "confirmed it would release expressions of interest soon, as planned, for two key bodies—a treaty council and a board of inquiry to conduct a truth telling and healing process".

But Queensland is also the state that suspended its own Human Rights Act in September to pass legislation to allow under-18s, including children as young as ten, to be detained indefinitely in police watch houses.

A federal Voice in the constitution would have been just as powerless. Despite the official Yes campaign's insistence that "a 'founding document' without recognition of First Peoples of this country continues the process of colonisation", the oppression of Indigenous people is not driven by the constitution.

Distraction

The biggest single consequence of the referendum has been that for the last 18 months, since Albanese declared his commitment to the Voice on the night of Labor's election, it has served as a distraction from demanding action from the Albanese Labor government.

For Albanese the referendum has been all about the form and nothing about substance.

Above: The Yes campaign spread confusion about how a Voice would actually bring change

His response to Labor MPs following the defeat of the referendum is revealing. When he was asked in the parliamentary Labor caucus how the government should respond to the referendum defeat, Albanese said, "We need to continue to do the work which we've been doing."

But while Albanese said that the Voice was about improving outcomes in health, education, jobs and housing, the government has done nothing about any of them.

The High Court has just ruled in favour of compensating NT residents of Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) following their complaints first made in 2016 about leaking sewage, unstable electricity and a lack of air conditioning. The government housing authority had refused to address them.

On 7 November, Victoria became the second last state (Queensland still hasn't) to decriminalise public intoxication—one of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody from over 30 years ago. Thirty years!

The referendum defeat does not prevent federal Labor from legislating to protect Indigenous land rights from mining companies, or from providing funds to improve Indigenous housing. But Labor was never going to do so without a fight.

The disappointment among the people who campaigned for the Voice is understandable. But it's no time to despair. It's the politics of protest that can beat back racism, win Indigenous rights and real social change.

For the last 18 months the Voice has served as a distraction from demanding action from the Albanese government

Unions stand up to right-wing campaign against offshore wind

By James Supple

RIGHT-WING GROUPS are mobilising against offshore wind projects, holding rallies in Wollongong and Port Stephens on the NSW coast against plans for nearby projects.

Barnaby Joyce spoke at a rally in Port Stephens alongside members of One Nation and Liberal leader Peter Dutton has visited the area twice to cheer on the opposition to renewable energy.

Around Wollongong anti-wind farm groups have targeted the consultation process on an offshore wind zone between ten and 30 kilometres offshore.

“Unfortunately, the Liberal National parties and alt right groups have used this as an opportunity to spread disinformation,” South Coast Labour Council Secretary Arthur Rorris told *Solidarity*.

“Even though they’ve had wall-to-wall free advertising on Sky news, 2GB and all of the major outfits who are part of the Murdoch machine, they were still unable to get more than 500 people to a rally on a sunny Sunday afternoon at Wollongong Beach.

“What is happening, though, is a polarisation driven by the conservatives flooding the public space with ridiculous misinformation and lies. We have heard that the sun won’t rise because these turbines will be so big on the horizon. We have heard that the wind will not blow over Stanwell Park - Bald Hill, to allow hang gliders to take off.

“Yet when you look at it, there is no proof at all. Even though there is not a shred of evidence that even one whale has been killed by an offshore wind farm, they are repeating Donald Trump’s words, saying that the wind farms are causing deaths.

“We know that the thing that’s actually causing current whale deaths is boats and nets. And in the longer term, the biggest threat the whales face is climate change, which will deplete their access to krill in the Antarctic and cause the acidification of the oceans.”

The South Coast Labour Council has been helping organise support for offshore wind in the area. This has involved “getting the broadest possible coalition”, including “organisations that people readily identify as protecting whales like Greenpeace coming out and saying this is part of a right



Above: Around 500 people at a rally against offshore wind projects in Wollongong

wing agenda to try and hijack environmental sentiments and use it against the environment movement”.

Wind farm opponents have been using social media to “intimidate anyone who they see as disagreeing with them,” he said. “The idea is to scare anyone with any credibility out of the discussion. And it’s working, that’s the sad part.

“We have seen them target Greenpeace, the ACF, even accusing the university [of Wollongong] of corruption for accepting money to do research to look into the [impact on] whales and all the claims that they make.

“The lesson that we have learnt is that it’s not good enough to treat these things as something that you can just ignore.”

Union campaign

Unions in the Illawarra area including the MUA have been campaigning to demand offshore wind in the area as an alternative source of jobs for workers in the fossil fuel industry.

The local steelworks at Port Kembla, nearby coal mines and heavy industry are all carbon-intensive.

Offshore wind in the area could deliver an estimated 2500 jobs in construction and 1250 ongoing jobs. This would include work at the port and in seafaring. “We’re going to require two extra ships just to service these things,” Rorris said.

“These projects are big, we’re talking enough to power more than

three million homes. But it would also open the gateway to make hydrogen with clean energy, which you need to move the steelworks to being able to produce green steel. To make hydrogen in the quantity that we need, we need massive amounts of clean energy.

“This is what we were talking about when the short-sighted suggestion came up about a nuclear submarine base at Port Kembla. Why would you risk this offshore wind for that?

“It’s an opportunity of a lifetime economically and industrially.”

Government investment in renewable energy is needed to ensure these projects are built in areas like the Illawarra and Newcastle where they are needed to replace coal jobs.

The South Coast Labour Council also argues that using locally-made steel for foundations and wind farm components would guarantee further jobs.

Climate activists need to organise to counter the myths about renewable energy and push for the government to act. The campaign in Wollongong shows how unions can be a key ally in this fight.

We need to fight for alternative jobs for fossil fuel workers, not simply call for existing coal ports and infrastructure to shut down. Workers will not support calls to transition away from fossil fuels unless they can see there are real alternative jobs on offer.

The climate movement needs unions and organised workers to have the power to force change.



South Coast Labour Council Secretary Arthur Rorris

REVOLUTION IN THE ARAB WORLD REGION-WIDE REVOLT KEY TO PALESTINE LIBERATION

The solidarity for Palestine across the Middle East needs to feed into a revolt to bring down the corrupt regimes that collaborate with imperialism, writes **James Supple**

THE MASSACRES in Gaza have sparked rage across the Arab world. Iraq has seen mass protests of hundreds of thousands, while tens of thousands have marched in Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.

Recent years have seen continual waves of revolt across the Middle East. Last year saw the most widespread protests in Iran since the revolution of 1979, continuing despite fierce repression for almost six months.

In 2019 hundreds of thousands in Lebanon called for revolution, in protests sparked by austerity measures and economic collapse. The same month mass protests took to the streets of Iraq against corruption and poverty.

The horror in Palestine has the potential to trigger a new wave of rebellion all across the region.

The Palestinians have never stopped resisting Israeli occupation.

But the odds against them are enormous.

Israel is a major military power that has humiliated all of the nearby Arab states in a series of wars.

It has the full backing of US imperialism, which acts to ensure its military supremacy through supplying it with the most high tech weapons available.

The Palestinians have every right to resist Israeli terror. But on its own Palestinian armed resistance can never hope to defeat Israel.

This is a fundamentally unequal conflict. Israel is an occupying power in the West Bank and East Jerusalem that dominates and controls Palestinian lives. Israeli soldiers and settlers terrorise the Palestinian population with virtual impunity as they slowly steal more land.

The Palestinians desperately need allies with the power to stand up to Israel and dismantle the system of imperialist dominance on which it depends.

The surrounding Arab regimes

play a key role in enforcing Palestinian oppression. Overthrowing them is the key to winning Palestinian liberation.

Working with imperialism

Egyptian dictator Abdelfattah al-Sisi has held shut the border with Gaza at the Rafah crossing, working with Israel to enforce its brutal siege. Since it signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979 Egypt has also received huge amounts of US aid, accepting Western imperialism's aims in the Middle East.

Jordan's ruler King Abdullah II also collaborates with Israel and the US, hosting 3000 US troops and accepting billions in economic aid.

The Saudi monarchy with its vast oil wealth also plays a key role in propping up the other Arab regimes and ensuring they accept the existing situation.

Historically the Palestinian movement has sought alliances with the Arab regimes to win support for armed struggle against Israel. This has proved disastrous.

In the 1970s Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) were at the head of the Palestinian resistance. They pledged never to interfere with any Arab regime.

Palestinian guerillas operated from Jordan as a base to launch guerilla attacks on Israel. But when the PLO's popularity and military strength in Jordan began to pose a challenge to his regime, King Hussein sent in his army in 1970 to crush them, killing thousands of Palestinians in an event known as "Black September".

The PLO moved to Lebanon but was finally dislodged following an Israeli invasion in 1982.

Hamas has also sought to appeal to Arab leaders, pleading with Egypt and Saudi Arabia to pressure Israel to end its savage assault on civilians.

Regimes that are hostile to the

Fusing the anger about Palestine with the power of the Arab working class is the key to overthrowing the regimes

US, like Syria and Iran, give Hamas some funding and support.

The bulk of Hamas' funding, however, comes from taxes and levies imposed on business activities in Gaza, according even to US counter-terrorism experts like Matthew Levitt.

And neither Iran nor the Hezbollah resistance movement in Lebanon have been willing to take serious action to stop the genocide unfolding in Gaza. The main concern of Iran's rulers is maintaining their own power and wealth. A major regional war between Iran and Israel threatens that.

The Iranian regime's brutal repression of its own population, seen in the 450 protesters killed during last year's protests, also means it is no reliable ally for the Palestinians. When Hamas criticised the Syrian dictatorship of Bashar Al-Assad during the uprising against his regime in 2012, Iran cut its support to the group.

Struggle from below

The real hope for the Palestinians lies in mass struggle by workers and the poor all across the Middle East.

The mass of the Arab population remains deeply committed to the Palestinian struggle.

Solidarity with Palestine has the potential to ignite movements that target the corrupt Arab regimes—as the recent wave of protests show.

In Egypt the Sisi government called its own pro-regime protest opposing the talk of expelling Palestinians from Gaza into Egypt. But as an Egyptian revolutionary explained opposition activists organised a separate rally so that there "were two protests" and:

"The opposition one ended in Tahrir Square, the historic centre of the 2011 revolutionary uprising."

"The main difference between the two is the tone in the chants directed to the regime. One is answering to the regime and celebrating Sisi's stand.

"The other took more of a critical

stand saying you should cut all ties with Israel, open the borders and that we are with Palestinians' right to resist the occupation. There were even some pro-Hamas chants.

"The protests criticising Sisi were definitely smaller in size than the state-backed ones. But also it was the first protest in Tahrir in ten years so very significant in terms of breaking the idea that this would never be allowed to happen."

In Jordan too demonstrations for Palestine that attempted to march to the border with the West Bank have been attacked by regime security forces.

Fusing the anger about Palestine with the power of the Arab working class is the key to overthrowing these corrupt regimes.

The wave of Arab revolutions in 2011 and 2012 showed how this is possible—and the working class was a key element.

Workers' strike action has the power to disrupt the whole operation of society. Workers' ability to shut down everything from oil production to transport, electricity, manufacturing and government offices is a power that can bring down governments and force radical change.

Arab revolutions

In 2011 rage at poverty and inequality saw revolution sweep across the Arab world, beginning with the fall of the regimes in Tunisia and Egypt, before revolt spread to Libya, Bahrain and Yemen.

Decades of neoliberal policies have produced falling wages, cuts to the welfare state and privatisation, while a tiny elite have become staggeringly rich. All this is enforced by brutal dictatorships.

The most significant of the revolutions was in Egypt, a country with a population of 110 million that has always played a leading role in Arab politics.

The Egyptian revolution did not spring out of nowhere. Opposition movements had been growing for the previous decade. They began with Palestine solidarity protests in 2000 that the dictatorship had to allow, winning a small space to organise and demonstrate.

Opposition to the regime encouraged workers' resistance. In 2006 there was a major rebellion in the textile mills in Mahalla, where thousands went on strike and won pay rises. This spread to other sectors, and had to allow independent unions for the first time.



The revolution in Egypt in 2011 came after 18 days of mass protests in Tahrir square in Cairo that toppled dictator Hosni Mubarak.

But according to Egyptian revolutionary Hossam el-Hamalawy, "Despite the heroism in the squares, however, it was largely the factories that brought down the dictator." Workers walked out of work to join demonstrations in defence of the protests in Tahrir square and strikes began to spread across the country.

The military removed Mubarak from power in an effort to save the regime behind him from total collapse.

The strike wave continued as tens of thousands walked out of government offices, factories, textile mills, ports, hospitals, schools and universities. Workers demanded the removal of managers linked to Hosni Mubarak's party, wage rises and independent trade unions.

But there was not a sufficiently large revolutionary socialist party able to organise the working class as an independent force within the revolutionary events.

The largest opposition group was the Muslim Brotherhood. The military allowed them to form government in the hope they could end the continuing strikes and protests. When they failed the military looked for a way to take back power directly.

They gained the support of secular political forces who were hostile to the Islamist politics of the Muslim Brotherhood and cheered on a military coup in 2013.

Activists take a convoy to the Rafah crossing with Gaza in 2012 during the Egyptian revolution
Photo: Gigi Ibrahim/
Flickr

The army used their support as cover to massacre Muslim Brotherhood members, before turning its fire on the rest of the political opposition. The result was the return of a savage dictatorship.

Egypt's generals profit from the deals with the US and Israel and are committed to Egyptian capitalism. The revolution needed to break the power of the army in order to succeed.

Focusing on building the power of the mass movement, and workers' strike action in particular, is the power that can break the military.

Future eruptions of struggle and revolution both in Egypt and across the Arab world are inevitable. The poverty and inequality that fuelled the revolt and the demands for "Bread, freedom and social justice" are as sharp as ever.

In 2019 around 60 per cent of Egyptians were living near or below the poverty line—and surging inflation has now pushed many more underneath it.

Yet the top 10 per cent of the population receive half of national income. There are more than 16,000 millionaires.

Freedom for Palestine requires bringing down all the corrupt Arab regimes to upend the imperialist order right across the Middle East.

This can only succeed if we build socialist organisations focused on workers' struggle and an unrelenting opposition to imperialism—both here and across the world.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIALISM REGIONAL BULLY NOT JUST A US PUPPET

Anthony Albanese and the Australian government back the US and Israel as junior partners in bullying and exploiting the world, argues **David Glanz**

AS ISRAELI bombs rained down on Gaza, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was enjoying a rare White House state dinner hosted by President Joe Biden.

It was all smiles in Washington DC over a meal of Sarsaparilla-braised short ribs followed by hazelnut and chocolate mousse cake as the two leaders discussed how to peg back China.

But neither were prepared to condemn the second Nakba under way in Gaza, let alone call for a ceasefire.

And, without a pause for embarrassment, Albanese declared that the US alliance was based on, “a shared belief that freedom, peace, and equality are not just American ideals or Australian values, they belong to all humankind”.

Many see this nauseating display as evidence that Australia is subservient to the US, a mere lapdog that follows its master’s commands.

After all, there was once a time when Albanese spoke at pro-Palestine rallies against Israeli slaughter. Now, as prime minister, he insists that Australia is in lockstep with the US in support of Israel.

Australia has willingly sent the military to support US-led wars under both Coalition and Labor governments: in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq (twice) and Afghanistan.

Canberra is stepping up its collaboration with the US against China, buying nuclear-powered submarines through the AUKUS agreement, joining the US in ramping up the Quad alliance with Japan and India, and hosting more US forces in the Northern Territory, including potentially nuclear-armed B52 bombers.

It seems that Australia really is the US’s deputy sheriff, taking orders from Washington.

There is a major problem with this

common misunderstanding of the relationship between the two countries, however.

Putting all the blame on the US masks the role that Australia plays in its own right as an imperialist bully.

And it can open the door to the argument that while Australia should not join US-led wars, it should still build up its military at the expense of action on poverty, housing or climate change.

To make sense of this situation, it’s important to understand how global politics is constantly shaped by the rivalry between the major imperialist powers.

The US, Russia, China, France and Britain, which at last count had 12,672 nuclear warheads between them, are jostling for influence—military and political domination of entire regions, control of sea lanes, access to markets for their corporations.

In military terms, the US is dominant, spending more on its armed forces than the next ten military spenders combined. But it is worried about the economic growth of China, which underpins a build-up of armed force.

Unlike the big imperialist nations, Australia cannot project power on a global scale. But it is far from insignificant. It is the 13th largest military spender in the world and dominates across the South Pacific, PNG and beyond.

Australian forces are currently deployed across the Middle East (including Syria, Egypt, Israel and Iraq), in South Sudan and in and over the waters of south-east Asia, the South Pacific and bordering North Korea.

Australian aircraft operate out of Royal Malaysian Air Force Base Butterworth. The RAAF is spending \$500 million upgrading its airstrip on the Cocos Keeling islands, which are

closer to Jakarta than Perth.

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Putting all the blame on the US masks the role that Australia plays in its own right as an imperialist bully

Colonial settlers

From the first years following the 1788 invasion of this continent by the British, the colonial settlers worried about their control of the land mass—fighting frontier wars against Indigenous resistance and keeping a wary eye on encroachment by European rivals.

The emerging Australian ruling class benefitted from its domination of the region, including control of the sugar trade in Fiji and the mining of phosphate for fertiliser on Nauru.

As Australian capitalism grew, it expanded into mining in PNG and industries like coconut oil processing, soap manufacturing, biscuits, plastic products, plantations, beef breeding, sales and distribution across islands including Fiji, Niue, Tonga and Samoa.

The profits from these ventures were eclipsed by Australia’s exports of wool and later minerals. But the establishment of Australian colonies (in particular, PNG) and the domination over other island nations ensured Australian control over shipping lanes to more lucrative markets in the northern hemisphere.

Meanwhile the fear that rivals—principally Germany before World War One and Japan after—would challenge their control meant that the Australian ruling class was constantly attempting to draw stronger imperialist allies into the region as a back-up.

The colonial premiers had to campaign to persuade Britain to take control of the south coast of New Guinea (Papua) in November 1884. For Britain, it was an inconsequential addition to its empire—for Australia, it helped form a bulwark against rivals.

Australia put pressure on Britain to seize colonies on other occasions—

in Fiji, the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), Samoa and the Cook Islands.

Regional rule

With the entry of the US into the Second World War in December 1941, and the eclipse of the British empire, the Australian ruling class began to look to America as the guarantor of its regional rule.

In 1951, Australia, the US and New Zealand signed the ANZUS Treaty, thought to offer a guarantee that the US would intervene if Australia was under threat.

But the Australian ruling class has always lived in fear of being abandoned by its imperialist guarantor.

One researcher wrote that in early 1960 the Australian government was planning for the possibility, “that, to escape a war, Britain and the US might some day decide that Australia was expendable, even in the face of a Chinese atomic threat against Australia”.

In 1968, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk visited Australia and reported Liberal Prime Minister John Gorton as, “saying that Australia could not rely upon the United States for nuclear weapons under ANZUS in the event of nuclear blackmail or attack on Australia”.

Three times, the Australian ruling class found that the US would not automatically support Australia against Indonesia.

Between 1964 and 1966, Australian troops fought alongside British soldiers to defend the newly independent state of Malaysia from Indonesia, in what became known as the *Konfrontasi*.

Historian Hugh White wrote that the US, “would not assure Australia of military support against a disruptive and increasingly well-armed Indonesia”.

In 1969, the US supported Indonesia’s takeover of West Papua, which Australia had coveted as a potential possession, given its shared border with PNG.

The pattern was repeated in 1999, when President Bill Clinton refused Liberal Prime Minister John Howard’s request for military support against Indonesia in East Timor/Timor Leste.

Howard admitted to being “disappointed” and “stunned” that, on the one occasion when it was Australia asking for “boots on the ground”, the US said No.

Insurance policy

To minimise the risk of abandonment, Australia’s rulers have willingly joined



Above: Anthony Albanese during his visit Washington for a lavish state dinner at the White House

first British and then US-led wars as down payments on what is effectively a military insurance policy.

Far from being dragged unwillingly into successive conflicts by their “masters”, Australian governments have insisted on joining the fight.

In the case of the Vietnam War, Australia was keen to lock America into the region. As Liberal Prime Minister Harold Holt put it, “We will win there and get protection in the South Pacific for a very small insurance premium.”

Diplomat Malcolm Booker wrote that, “It was the Australian government which in the early part of 1965 pressed on the American government the need for strong military action in Vietnam.”

On 28 April 1965, Liberal Prime Minister Robert Menzies announced that an Australian battalion of 800 soldiers would be sent to Vietnam—the day before such a move was officially requested by the South Vietnamese government.

It was no different under Labor. Prime Minister Bob Hawke took Australia into the First Gulf War and the invasion of Iraq in 1990 in line with a request from US President George Bush senior—but it was later revealed that Bush’s phone call followed lobbying by Australian officials in Washington.

The AUKUS agreement, too, was an Australian initiative—not an American demand. Nine Newspapers writer Peter Hartcher reported

in May 2022, “When Joe Biden was first briefed on Australia’s request for nuclear-powered submarines, he did not say ‘yes’. He was cautious, even sceptical.”

Hartcher wrote that the AUKUS plan came from then Coalition Prime Minister Scott Morrison, whose officials sounded out the Pentagon in 2020 and British officials in 2021.

In May that year, the Director-General of Australia’s peak intelligence assessment agency, the Office of National Intelligence, Andrew Shearer, pitched the idea to the White House, where officials wanted assurances that Labor would fall in behind the Liberals’ proposal.

Given a secret briefing, Albanese gave that assurance, not because of US standover tactics but because he understood the value to Australian imperialism of enmeshing the US even deeper into the region as a guarantor of Australia’s power.

To stop the second *Nakba* and prevent the genocide that is taking place in Gaza, we need to build a mass movement that can challenge US imperialism.

Our task will be helped if we understand that Australia is an imperialist country in its own right—no lapdog of the US but a middle power that sees the US alliance as central to projecting its own power.

That means the best way to weaken the Western alliance that is backing Israel’s horrors is to take on our own government. The road to a free Palestine starts on our doorstep.



SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE SWEEPS THE WORLD

By Lucy Honan

FROM KERALA to Cairo, people are taking on their own governments in the fight for Palestinian lives in Gaza. Government protest bans and censorship have only amplified the solidarity protests across the world since 7 October.

Protesters made a mockery of NSW Labor premier Chris Minns' attempt to ban pro-Palestinian marches on the Opera House and at Town Hall, with about 20,000 people protesting in Sydney over consecutive weekends. On 5 November, more than 50,000 rallied in Melbourne.

Likewise, protesters have broken the blanket ban on pro-Palestine protests in France, with thousands gathering in both legally sanctioned and defiant protests.

Hundreds in Paris confronted tear gas and water cannon to hold a Palestine solidarity protest in front of the Star of David-lit Eiffel tower on 12 October.

Germany has banned almost all pro-Palestine protests, keffiyahs, Free Palestine stickers and the map of Israel in the colours of Palestine in all schools, and on 13 October Berlin police declared uttering the slogan "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" an indictable offence.

But on 14 and 15 October, thousands faced down police batons in Berlin to protest for Palestine, and hundreds protested in forbidden and

Above: Up to 500,000 have marched for Palestine in London

Protesters have broken the blanket ban on pro-Palestine protests in France

legal protests in other cities around Germany.

London has seen some of its biggest rallies ever, the most recent estimated at half a million, despite explicit and threatening discouragement from the Tory government and Labour opposition.

In Jakarta, one million or more rallied for Palestine, with similar figures for a rally in Istanbul.

Some 300,000 marched in Washington DC, the biggest rally for Palestine in US history.

Jews against occupation

Putting the lie to our rulers' conflation of opposition to Israel with antisemitism, Jewish organisations have led staunch protests in the US, calling for ceasefire and an end to Biden's unconditional support for Israel's atrocities.

Some 355 mostly Jewish activists were arrested at a sit-in at Capitol Hill while thousands of other Jewish Americans protested around America on 18 October. On 27 October, a protest of mostly Jewish New Yorkers took over the main hall of Manhattan's Grand Central station and hundreds were arrested.

In Botswana, 500 marched for Palestine, including Muslims, members of the human rights organisation Ditshwanelo and socialists.

In the Middle East, government efforts to co-opt and disorientate the pro-Palestinian protests have sparked unofficial protests and demands that

take aim at the complicity of the Arab states' own leaders.

Jordan's rulers have condemned Israel for its "butchery" of Gaza and pushed the UN resolution for a ceasefire. But protesters are angry at the hypocrisy of their rulers' cosy relationships with Israel and the US.

At demonstrations near the Israeli embassy in Amman on 24 October, Jordanian protesters demanded an end to the US military presence in Jordan that is used to support Israel and the end of the 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

In Egypt, the military dictator Abdel Fattah al-Sisi held state-sanctioned pro-Palestine protests.

But in defiance of this cynical attempt to co-opt solidarity for Palestine to prop up the unpopular regime, protesters held a separate protest that called on Sisi to cut ties with Israel, to open the borders with Gaza and in support of the Palestinians' right to resist the occupation.

Significantly, the unofficial protest ended in Tahrir Square, the first time a protest had been held there since the end of the Arab Spring uprisings in 2013.

For many protesters, the memory of the incredible global protest movement that did not stop the war in Iraq weighs heavily.

The demonstrations are essential, but we also have to translate this into union and workplace action that can stop Albanese's reckless support for genocide in its tracks.