

# ISRAEL, US, AUSTRALIA GUILTY OF GENOCIDE



**PALESTINE**

Hezbollah, the Houthis and  
the axis of resistance

**INDIGENOUS**

Ray Peckham and the 1960s  
campaign against segregation

**IMPERIALISM**

Arab nationalism  
and socialism

# 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  
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### Melbourne

Meeting 6.30pm every Thursday  
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## Things they say

**The devastation that we have witnessed in some of those border towns—unfortunately, I'll never be able to forget it.**

Labor MP Josh Burns on tour in Israel, talking about Israeli towns, not Gaza

**There's been far too much loss of life. Far too much suffering. But it's vital that Israel achieves its very legitimate objectives.**

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken gives Israel the green light for more killing in Gaza

**I think the intent is there [to avoid civilian casualties]. But the results are not always manifesting themselves.**  
Antony Blinken again

**The whole Gaza Strip needs to be empty. Flattened. Just like in Auschwitz**

Mayor of the Israeli town of Metula  
David Azoulai

**The German Government is yet to fully atone for the genocide it committed on Namibian soil. Therefore, in light of Germany's inability to draw lessons from its horrific history, President @hagegeingob expresses deep concern with the shocking decision... in which it rejected the morally upright indictment brought forward by South Africa before the #InternationalCourtOfJustice**

Namibian President Hage Geingob condemns Germany's decision to support Israel's defence on genocide charges at the ICJ

**I stand behind my words. It is better to burn down buildings rather than have soldiers harmed. There are no innocents there... We need to eliminate them**

Deputy Knesset Speaker Nissim Vaturi responds to his words being used in South Africa's genocide case

**Palestinians should go to the Rafah gate and Egypt should take them. They should go to pro-Hamas countries. That's where they should go.**

Nikki Haley, supposedly "moderate" US Republican Party Presidential contender, backs ethnic cleansing

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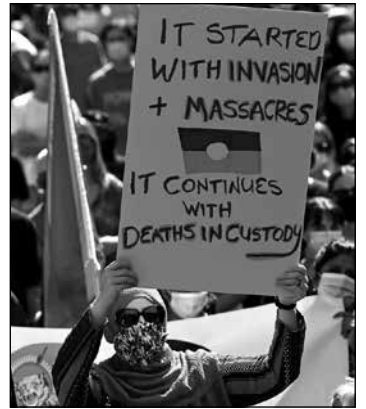
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# INSIDE THE \$Y\$TEM

## Gaza war also costs the climate

ISRAEL'S WAR on Gaza is also a disaster for the climate, fuelling global heating through a massive increase in carbon emissions.

The first 60 days of the war produced 281,000 tonnes of emissions, an estimate by US and UK researchers shared with *The Guardian* shows.

This includes just some of the actions associated with the war, including fuel for aircraft missions, tanks and other vehicles, and the making and explosion of bombs and rockets. Half the total emissions were produced by US cargo planes flying arms and military supplies to Israel.

Hamas rockets by contrast accounted for only 1 per cent of the emissions caused.

Armed forces worldwide are enormously polluting, with the US military releasing 51 million tonnes every year, more than a medium size country like Portugal.

Reporting military emissions is voluntary, but one estimate has global military operations as responsible for 5.5 per cent of total emissions, more than the world's aviation and shipping industries combined.

And the carbon impact of rebuilding Gaza after the war will add more pollution, with one third of buildings across the whole of Gaza destroyed so far, including damage to up to 59 per cent of buildings in the north.

## Billionaires gain over \$2 trillion in 2023

THE WORLD'S wealthiest 500 people were \$2.2 trillion richer at the end of 2023 than a year before, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Many of the gains were the result of another surge in technology companies on the stockmarket, with tech billionaires' total wealth up 48 per cent.

Elon Musk's wealth was up \$92 billion making him again the world's richest person, after he lost \$200 billion in 2022. Mark Zuckerberg was up over \$120 billion for the year while Jeff Bezos gained \$100 billion.

The three richest Australians, Gina Rinehart, Andrew Forrest and Harry Triguboff, have increased their wealth by 70 per cent since 2020, Oxfam says.

## Gaza the worst place in the world for children



OVER 1000 children had a limb amputated as a result of Israel's bombing of Gaza by the end of November, according to the UN children's agency (UNICEF).

Another ten children lose one or both their limbs every day, Save the Children says. Many of the amputations have been carried out without anaesthesia as a result of the collapse of medical services in Gaza.

Around 70 per cent those killed in the war have been women and children, with at least 10,000 children alone dead.

"The Gaza Strip is the most dangerous place in the world to be a child", the UNICEF's James Elder said in late December.

In addition to the danger from the bombing, the displacement of people from their homes has created an unbelievable humanitarian crisis.

"Currently in Gaza, there's on average around one toilet for 700 children and families", due to crowding into "safe zones", he said.

The lack of water, sanitation and proper shelter means "these so-called safe zones have become zones of disease."

"I'm furious that those with power shrug at the humanitarian nightmares unleashed on a million children."

## Kids in 'horrendous' conditions in Cairns lock up

OVERCROWDING IN Cairns' police watch house is so bad that a police sergeant complained they "cannot meet" basic requirements such as delivering food and toilet paper. Sergeant Damien Taylor made the comments in a complaint to external agencies, *The Guardian* has reported.

In early January there were 15 children in extended periods of custody. Some have been there for 20 days, with nine apparently kept for more than ten days. This comes after the Queensland government last year suspended its own Human Rights Act last year to allow the indefinite detention of children in watch houses at police stations alongside adults.

Senior psychologist Andrea Bates sent a separate letter to senior state officials that she described as a "cry for help" saying conditions in Cairns were "horrendous", with children going without proper food, legal help or medical attention.

Young people held there appeared to be malnourished, she said, and were so underfed that officials held an "emergency meeting".

Some had been confined to their cells for two days at a time due to lack of space in the yard to exercise.

"[There are] four [children] to a cell at a time, having to urinate in front of each other. Mattresses on the floors. Open shower cubicles such that [young people] feel embarrassed to shower", she added.

On an average night 70 per cent of all young people in detention in Queensland are Indigenous.

## Victorian SEC won't deliver public control of power

THE VICTORIAN government announced the return of the State Electricity Commission (SEC) to great fanfare during the last state election campaign. It promised to bring back publicly-owned power to speed up the shift to renewable energy and cut power bills.

But the promise to secure a majority publicly-owned stake in each project, guaranteeing public control, has been quietly dropped. The government will own just 38.5 per cent of the first project it is helping fund, a 600 megawatt big battery, with the rest of the funding coming from private investors.

The total government funding for the SEC at \$1 billion is far too small to fund a majority stake in the number of projects needed. It aims to deliver the 4.5 gigawatts of power needed to replace the Loy Yang A coal-fired power plant by 2035.

The lack of a controlling interest will also limit the SEC's ability to push down power bills through intervening in the electricity market. Its initial battery project will have three units, with the SEC securing the rights to decide when its stored energy is sold into the energy market only for one of them.

Public investment on a much greater scale is going to be needed to make a real difference in delivering the urgent shift to renewable energy or lower power bills that are possible.

# EDITORIAL

## Australia rejects ‘premise’ of genocide as Israel faces world court

ISRAEL’S “GENOCIDAL acts” in Gaza have been laid out in meticulous detail in South Africa’s case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

But Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu has declared “no one will stop us”, vowing that there are “many more months” of war ahead.

South African lawyer Adila Hassim argued that, “Israel has deliberately imposed conditions on Gaza that cannot sustain life, and are calculated to bring about its physical destruction.”

Over 30,000 are dead, including thousands missing under the rubble. Israel has destroyed 70 per cent of the basic civilian infrastructure of Gaza, including schools, hospitals, universities, water and sanitation services, the Euro-med Human Rights Monitor says.

Israel aims to make Gaza completely uninhabitable.

Israeli government ministers hope to make conditions unbearable enough to force “as many Palestinians in Gaza as possible to leave the Strip”, as heritage minister Amihai Eliyahu put it. “We need to find what hurts them, what will overwhelm them, break their spirit,” he said.

South Africa has requested urgent “provisional measures” instructing Israel to halt military operations. A decision against it would have enormous moral weight. But the ICJ has no way of enforcing its decisions.

It issued an advisory opinion in 2004 declaring Israel’s apartheid wall in the West Bank illegal that did nothing to stop it.

But the charge under the Genocide Convention shows the growing outrage at Israel globally.

The prospects of a wider war are growing, with the US and UK launching air strikes against the Houthis in Yemen. Israeli bombing against Hezbollah in Lebanon is also escalating.

The Houthis have vowed to keep targeting Israeli-linked shipping and other traffic in the Red Sea, near the Suez Canal, until Israel ends its war on Gaza.

The air strikes were immediately backed by the Albanese government, which boasted of Australia’s involvement with military personnel at the operation’s headquarters.

They are designed to send a message that any efforts at military action in support of the Palestinians will be punished.

US President Joe Biden followed up with a private message to Iran, which supplies arms to the Houthis,



**Above: Foreign Minister Penny Wong has visited Israel to reinforce the Australian government’s “solidarity”**

that the US was “well-prepared” for war.

### Pressure on Labor

The Albanese government has refused to support the prosecution at the ICJ. Foreign Minister Penny Wong said it does not recognise the “premise” of South Africa’s charge of genocide. It is also hedging its bets by saying it, “respects the independence of the ICJ and the judicial process.”

But it is feeling the pressure from weeks of enormous protests after the government declared it “stands with Israel”.

More than 50 current and former Labor MPs signed a letter in December calling for an “immediate, permanent ceasefire” and an end to Israel’s “domination” over the Palestinians.

Penny Wong is visiting Israel to show the Australian government’s ongoing support for the Zionist state. Her trip comes in response to calls from Israel’s supporters for a high-level Australian visit.

While Wong initially presented her visit as “advocating for a pathway out of this conflict”, once there she declared that, “Our nation stands in solidarity with Israel”.

While the Australian government voted in support of an “immediate humanitarian ceasefire” at the UN General Assembly in December, it refused to call for an unconditional ceasefire.

A joint statement from Albanese and the Canadian and New Zealand Prime Ministers before the December vote showed that Labor is backing Israel’s continuation of the war.

It made it clear that Albanese was advocating only another “pause” in Is-

rael’s attack, and that Australia backed a long-term ceasefire only if Hamas completely surrenders, laying down its arms and unconditionally releasing all its hostages.

Labor’s efforts to blame Hamas for the genocide in Gaza mean they are still justifying and giving support to Israel’s war.

Israel can only continue to slaughter Palestinians because of the support of Western allies like the US, UK and Australia.

The US continues to supply Israel with all the weapons it needs to continue its saturation bombing. Australian companies are also supplying military equipment and parts. Bisalloy Steels in Wollongong provides armoured steel to Israel’s Rafael Defense Systems while other companies supply parts for Israel’s F-35 strike fighters.

We need to spread and deepen the support for Palestine to break Australia from backing Israel and the US. Organising in the unions with new groups of activists, and building union contingents on demonstrations will build a stronger movement and increase the pressure on Labor.

Invasion Day protests this year will include demands in support of Palestine, as Indigenous activists show their opposition to Israeli settler-colonialism.

Protests demanding boycotts and sanctions against economic and military links with Israel, such as Zim shipping, can also target Australia’s militarism and help create a political crisis around Australia’s support for Israel.

Escalating the protests and outrage worldwide against Israel’s genocide will be needed to force it to a halt.

.....  
**The charge under the Genocide Convention shows the growing outrage at Israel globally**

# Palestine movement should welcome dissenting Labor members

By Caitlin Doyle

SUPPORTERS OF Palestine are rightly horrified by Albanese's support for Israel as it continues to annihilate Gaza.

The ALP has a long history of support for Israel. Labor's "Doc" Evatt, as Foreign Minister and President of the UN General Assembly, was one of the leading architects of the 1947 plan for the partition of Palestine.

In 1978, Labor leader Bill Hayden joined Malcolm Fraser at Camp David to celebrate the Egypt-Israel peace agreement, saying there, "My party feels a keen sense of involvement in the future integrity of an Israeli state."

Bob Hawke, a staunch Zionist, first visited Israel in 1971 as president of the ACTU, where he described his meeting with then-Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir as "life-changing".

But since the war on Gaza began 40 Labor branches have passed motions calling for a ceasefire and four Labor MPs have attended pro-Palestine rallies. Labor-controlled Canterbury-Bankstown Council voted to fly the Palestinian flag until a ceasefire is declared.

Even former Labor leaders such as Bob Carr and Paul Keating have condemned Israel's war.

This raises the question of how the campaign for Palestine should relate to supportive Labor members and MPs.

Some activists argue that pro-Palestine Labor Party members should not be welcome in the movement unless they leave the party.

So far the Palestine Action Group has voted to exclude Labor speakers from the platform at their weekly rallies in Sydney. Many on the left, including the Greens, say that Labor is essentially the same as the Liberal Party.

But Labor MPs who speak out and break with Albanese and the Labor leadership's position increase the political pressure on the Labor government over Palestine. More internal dissent makes it harder for the government to continue supporting Israel.

Palestine activists should encourage Labor members to support our demands and seek to draw them into the movement.

The involvement of dissident Labor MPs on speaking platforms will build the movement's power through drawing in people who still look to Labor as a progressive force and are disappointed by its stance on Palestine.

Demanding that Labor members



**Above: Labor Party members march at one of the Sydney rallies for Palestine**  
Photo: Labor friends of Palestine

resign from the party as a condition of involvement will simply cut these people off from the campaign and weaken it. They are more likely to be won to the need for protest and action outside of parliament, and potentially pulled to the left, and out of the Labor Party, if they are welcomed into the wider movement.

Mass movements in Australia that have brought change, like the anti-Vietnam War, anti-uranium and women's and Aboriginal rights movements, have always involved large numbers of Labor members and supporters. Rank-and-file Labor and union members have often challenged the leadership or party policy, as they did on Labor's support for conscription in World War One or the Vietnam War in the 1960s.

### Divided party

The existence of starkly conflicting views within one party is because Labor, like all social-democratic parties, is a contradictory force.

Labor is pulled in two directions, between its working class base on one hand and its desire to manage capitalism on the other. Labor, particularly when it is in government, consistently prioritises the profits and needs of the ruling class.

This explains why Albanese has gone from speaking at pro-Palestine rallies 20 years ago to now fervently supporting Israel, whose role as watchdog state in the Middle East is so crucial to the alliance of Western imperial

powers, of which Australia is a part.

Labor's support base among workers and sections of the left differentiates it from the Liberal Party, which is an out-and-out party of the rich. When Peter Dutton makes racist comments or calls for even greater support for Israel, there is virtually no disagreement from Liberal Party ranks.

Support for Labor among workers has undoubtedly diminished since the 1980s and Albanese won government with the lowest primary vote for Labor since 1934.

But there is still a class divide between the average Labor and Liberal voter. An opinion poll in 2021 showed a clear preference for Labor among lower income earners, and the opposite among the wealthy.

Crucially, unions still control 50 per cent of the votes at party conferences, meaning Labor has an organic connection with the organised working class.

Unionists for Palestine has shown the possibility of bring rank-and-file union members into the Palestine movement and pushing the leadership of individual unions, including the Teachers Federation and the Labor-affiliated ASU, to support the campaign.

Since many trade union officials and activists are Labor Party members, this also increases the pressure on the Labor party from within.

Rather than excluding Labor members, activists must build a united front and as broad a movement as possible if we are serious about ending Israel's war and liberating Palestine.

**Labor MPs who speak out and break with Albanese's position increase the political pressure on the government**

# Mass action and union support key for protests against Zim shipping

By Adam Adelpour

THE GOVERNMENT'S continued backing for the genocide in Gaza has raised the question of what kind of movement can break its support for apartheid Israel.

At the end of 2023 Palestine solidarity activists and trade unionists launched blockades at ports around the country to protest Israel's Zim shipping-line.

Palestinians, including Palestinian trade unions, are calling for an economic boycott of Israel. The Zim shipping-line is regularly in Australian ports. The company has offered Israel its vessels, ships and infrastructure for the "national needs of Israel" during its savage war on Gaza. It is also a major transporter of weapons.

The actions against Zim have helped ratchet up the political pressure on the Albanese and state governments, put the need for serious boycotts against Israel on the map and point towards the militancy, class politics and union solidarity we need to strengthen the movement. This is what will be necessary to help make Israel a pariah state globally and create a real political crisis for the Albanese government over its support for Israel.

## Mass action

But the campaign against Zim has also raised questions of strategy. Some look to smaller, secret, guerilla actions to target the company and cause economic disruption—for example small groups blocking ships with kayaks or secretly assembling at the ports to block trucks.

We should defend those taking these actions when they are attacked by police, politicians and the media. But we should also be clear this strategy is a dead end.

Often this guerilla "direct action" approach is justified on the basis that it causes more disruption. But disruption alone is nowhere near enough to get Zim out of our ports or end Australia's support for Israel. Shipping companies know delays are common and factor them into their operations.

What is needed are actions that can create a real political crisis. A key strength of mass direct action is that it can help sway public opinion, build solidarity, and win new recruits to movements for change, as well as disrupting business as usual.



In a recent article reporting on the port blockades against Zim, *The Australian* was anxious to try and divide the Palestine movement between what it described as "two tiers" of protesters—the "largely peaceful" majority who march on the weekend and the "radical protesters adopting criminal tactics" against Zim.

We need to reject this division and win the thousands marching on the weekend to a strategy of port blockades and union action. But guerilla tactics involving small groups reinforces the division, leaving most Palestine supporters as spectators rather than participants.

## Strategy for success

The most successful actions against Zim have combined mass action with union support.

There have been two major actions at Port Botany in Sydney—a standing rally of 1500 on 11 November and a mass blockade of Hutchison Ports on November 21 when the Zim vessel the *Calandra* was docked.

The 11 November action helped build wide support and confidence. This acted as a launch pad for 500 people to block the bridge into the port for two hours at short notice on 21 November.

Workers from Hutchison Ports attended both actions and the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) site committee there as well as the union's Sydney Branch supported the action.

As well as being disrupted by

**Above: Blockade against Zim shipping at the Port of Fremantle**

Photo: Unionists for Palestine WA

the blockade the *Calandra* spent two weeks beforehand trying to avoid planned protests between Sydney and Melbourne.

When police cleared the blockade 23 people were arrested and charged under draconian anti-protest laws. This further highlighted the need for mass numbers and wider union and political support in order to sustain the actions.

In Fremantle in WA 200 people blocked the entry to the port in December. Thanks to the support of the MUA workers respected the picket and two shifts were turned away from working the Zim vessel the *As Nadia*. Activists estimate this cost Zim \$250,000, a clear reminder that even in purely economic terms mass action organised openly with union support is more disruptive than small, secret actions.

In Melbourne in December, 300 assembled to block the road into the Port. This became a celebratory rally when the ship they were targeting was diverted. There were banners or flags from unions including the UWW, ASU, CPSU and RTBU and the rally was addressed by a former MUA State Secretary.

It is building on these kinds of actions—with mass participation, with union support inside the ports and beyond—that can take the campaign against Zim forward. Malaysia banned Zim ships from its ports in December. We need a campaign that can force Albanese to do the same—as well as cut all other ties with Israel.

**Some look to smaller, secret, guerilla actions to target the company**

# Labor's migration policy puts profit before people

By David Glanz

LABOR IS pandering to racist views about migration, announcing a major crackdown on the number of people entering Australia to study or work.

It marks a retreat from the concept of a "Big Australia", with the government boasting that net migration will fall from 510,000 in 2023 to 375,000 in 2024 and 250,000 in 2025.

This is a return to pre-COVID levels after several years of catching up for the period where borders were closed.

The ALP is facing widespread worries about housing affordability. The Scanlon Institute reports that 33 per cent of Australians are concerned the migration intake is too large, the highest such figure in more than 15 years.

The response from Home Affairs Minister, Clare O'Neil, and Immigration Minister, Andrew Giles, is to "rebuild social licence". That's code for blaming migrants for problems the government won't solve.

It's a race to the bottom, with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese goading Opposition leader Peter Dutton that "there were more than 100,000 asylum-seekers claiming protection" from his time as Home Affairs Minister.

The new migration policy was announced by Albanese on 11 December, shortly after the government caved in to Dutton and rushed through draconian new restrictions on non-citizens released from indefinite detention.

Taken together, the crackdowns are a capitulation to racist myths that foreigners are responsible for housing shortages and crime.

Rather than building public housing and ordering rent freezes, Labor is turning migrants into scapegoats. It's a strategy that risks stoking racism.

## Two objectives

Labor's new migration strategy includes eight "key actions". But they boil to two objectives—cutting migration numbers and recruiting more high-skilled workers.

The first victims will be international students, with tougher language standards and "genuine student" tests.

It will be harder to get a second student visa or to move between university and vocational education.

International student numbers



**Above: Anthony Albanese's rhetoric about immigration is based on scapegoating and racism**

shot up after the end of the pandemic. These measures are designed to slash numbers quickly, especially among those attending cheaper institutions.

There is no concern for the students themselves, whose high fees are a major export earner, worth \$41.3 billion in the 12 months to September 2023.

But Labor is also using its changes to help the bosses who are facing shortages of skilled workers.

There is compassion for employers who can't find workers, but none for refugees and asylum-seekers still living in limbo.

Labor could grant permanent visas tomorrow to refugees who spent years in offshore detention in Papua New Guinea or Nauru, or to the 12,000 victims of the flawed, so-called "fast track" system designed to keep out asylum-seekers.

It could make family reunion easier for migrants already settled here. Or slash the waiting time for partner visas, which has blown out to as much as eight years for offshore applications.

But its focus is on boosting profits.

Labor will introduce a Skills in Demand visa to make it easier for Australia to attract highly skilled workers and a Talent and Innovation visa for migrants "who can drive growth in sectors of national importance".

As the government statement says, "Our task is to get migration working for the nation. Reorienting the program to address our national challenges ... And building better planning in the system so we can get the skills we

need, where we need them."

Previous scare campaigns about the level of migration have centred on concerns about jobs, urban overcrowding or traffic jams.

This time the focus is on housing. Housing Australia, a federal government agency, predicts a shortfall of 175,000 homes by 2027.

Rents for units are increasing on average at about 10 per cent a year. Everyone has stories about long queues to inspect empty properties.

But it's not high migration that is slowing the rate at which private houses and units are built but shortages of labour and materials, and high interest rates.

Migrants need housing but they can also contribute to building it.

Government policy favours property speculators and landlords. When Labor blames migration it is deflecting attention away from its refusal to build homes.

Meanwhile negative gearing and capital gains tax discounts for property investors will cost the government \$39 billion this year—78 times what Labor is proposing to spend through its housing fund.

And many investment properties simply stand empty. In Victoria, the Parliamentary Budget Office estimates that 10,000 homes are long-term vacant.

As one local councillor put it, "People can't get into housing, but there's an abundance of housing—it's just not being put on the market."

Migrants don't cause housing shortages—government support for property speculators is to blame.

**When Labor blames migration it is deflecting attention away from its refusal to build homes**



# Victorian teachers organise for Palestine despite intimidation

By Lucy Honan

AS ISRAEL ramped up its genocide, and our own state and federal education ministers threw their weight behind it, teachers in Victoria used our rank-and-file networks and the Trade Unionists for Palestine campaign to take collective action.

We met up at the weekly rallies and in online meetings, formed a Whatsapp group of more than 100 educators, and started planning our own “week of action”.

Our plan was to replicate Sydney teachers’ actions, wearing keffiyehs or badges and t-shirts with Palestinian flags to work, having watermelon morning teas, and holding a vigil for the children, educators and all Palestinians killed.

The ruling class is always anxious to control what teachers do in the classroom, but never more so than when we expose the depravity of Australia’s alliance with Israel. Across Victoria, principals enacted department directives to shut down our week of action.

Teachers were warned to feign ignorance when discussing Israel and Palestine with students, others were told to remove keffiyehs, flags and badges.

Teachers were issued warnings for handing out information to colleagues about Israel’s genocide. Shockingly, one teacher was sent home for giving a flyer about the week of action to a colleague in a staff room!

Our group responded immediately to each instance of repression. When the teacher was sent home for handing out our flyer, we mobilised for the regional Australian Education Union (AEU) meeting scheduled for that evening.

In an excellent show of solidarity about 20 Teachers and Support Staff for Palestine attended and won motions supporting her, Palestine, and the week of action.

The union meetings helped consolidate us as an organised and fighting group.

Seven regions have passed strong Palestine resolutions. School sub-branches have successfully forced principals to retract “warnings”, and groups of rank-and-file teachers have defied explicit directives to remove keffiyehs.

Just before our week of action we won a muted and belated victory, with AEU leaders sending out a bulletin



**Above: A Teachers and Support Staff for Palestine vigil in December**

defending our right to have “respectful” discussions about Palestine at work and with students. More than 200 people came to our vigil, and most of them participated in some way in the week of action.

More than 1000 educators have signed an open letter calling for Education Ministers to end their military and diplomatic support for Israel, and we held a fiery speak out at the Department of Education, symbolically delivering the letter.

When school goes back we will hit our union meetings with motions about participating in a “Palestine in our classrooms” week. This will mean refusing to teach programs with links to weapons manufacturers (there are

an alarming number of STEM programs linked to them). And exploring the questions avoided by our teaching resources and suppressed by media and the government.

Ben Carroll, our Education Minister, has accused us of being inflammatory, and threatened that we are breaking the Code of Conduct.

Zionists are lobbying for the sacking of one of our members who spoke out at the Department of Education. But the more resistance we meet, the clearer it is that the government depends on teachers and schools to normalise war and their complicity with genocide. We are organised, and with the momentum of the global movement, we won’t be silenced.

## PSA members win union to support Palestine

THE PUBLIC Service Association (PSA) initially refused to take a position on Palestine—with organisers even belittling members who pushed for a statement.

A few PSA members signed up to Unionists for Palestine and together we set up a Whatsapp chat. I suggested that we do a photo action in Parramatta.

The photo action brought a core of us together against a real atmosphere of fear in the public sector about taking political action as workers. People thought they might lose their jobs but wanted to do the action anyway.

We decided to launch a petition to put pressure on the union. Almost 100 PSA members have now signed it.

The group has grown from five of us to 50 on Whatsapp in a few weeks. A number of people joined the union so they could sign the petition and be involved in the group.

The State Library Workplace

Group and the Art Gallery of NSW passed motions for a ceasefire they wanted discussed at the PSA Central Council. This forced a debate and while the union’s leadership watered down the original motion they voted unanimously calling, “on the Australian Government to exercise all avenues of diplomacy to stop the bombing and ground assault by Israel into Gaza and call for an immediate ceasefire”.

This was a very real victory after the union had initially refused support by providing flags or defending members fighting for Palestine.

The group has also successfully challenged plans, following Zionist complaints, to change a reference to Palestine in the Australian Museum’s Ramses and the Gold of the Pharaohs exhibition. The group organised a letter co-signed by PSA members at the Museum—and the Museum has now backed down.

**One teacher was sent home for giving a flyer about the week of action to a colleague in a staff room**

# Israel threatens war on Lebanon against Hezbollah resistance

By James Supple

ISRAEL IS threatening to widen its war into Lebanon, trading rocket attacks over the border with Hezbollah. By the end of December it had killed around 120 people, including at least 20 civilians.

Israel has illegally used white phosphorous on at least four occasions including in a strike against the town of Dhayra that Amnesty International labelled “indiscriminate” and said “must be investigated as a war crime”.

Two Lebanese-Australian men died in December when Israel bombed their house in the town of Bint Jbeil. In a further escalation in early January, Israel bombed a Hezbollah office in Beirut, killing senior Hamas leader Saleh Arouri.

Hezbollah is right to oppose Israel and the genocide it is inflicting on Gaza. Israel is a ruthless expansionist power that has invaded Lebanon several times.

The Australian government has hypocritically declared Hezbollah a terrorist organisation. But it is Israel that is waging a campaign of terror against the whole civilian population of Gaza—and threatening to spread this into Lebanon as well.

Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982 killed an estimated 18,000 people, as it laid siege to the capital Beirut and indiscriminately bombed civilian areas. It aimed to crush Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) fighters who were allied with left-wing groups in Lebanon’s civil war, and to install the Christian Phalange leader Bashir Gemayel in power.

Israel continued to occupy southern Lebanon for the next 18 years in order to create a “buffer zone” on its northern border.

Hezbollah was formed as an armed resistance movement against the Israeli occupation, based among the country’s impoverished Shia Muslim population and inspired by Iran’s Islamic revolution.

Its courageous resistance and its network of health and welfare services brought it mass support.

Israel responded by assassinating its leaders and targeting villages where it gained support. In 1996 it bombed a UN compound in the village of Qana, killing over 100 refugees.

Hezbollah fighters succeeded in driving Israel out of southern Lebanon in 2000. In 2006 Israel was humiliated



**Above: A border village in Lebanon after an Israeli bombing**

again after it invaded a second time with the aim of wiping Hezbollah out.

These victories made Hezbollah and its leader Hassan Nasrullah heroes across the whole Arab world.

But Hezbollah then discredited itself when it sent fighters into Syria to help crush the 2011 revolution, siding with the dictatorship of Bashar Assad.

This was the result of Hezbollah’s alliance with the Iranian government, which helps fund and arm it as part of what it calls an “axis of resistance”. But Iran’s real aim is to secure its own power in the region.

## Sectarianism

Hezbollah has become part of Lebanon’s sectarian political elite. The country’s political system parcels out power based on religious identity, including Sunni and Shia Muslims and Maronite Christians.

Instead of seeking to unite workers and ordinary people on the basis of class against Lebanon’s corrupt elite Hezbollah has joined the scramble to divide up the spoils of office.

Since 2005 it has participated in a number of governments, supporting wave after wave of austerity measures and defending the sectarian political system against challenges from below.

In October 2019 mass protests erupted after the government introduced a tax on WhatsApp calls, sparking a movement against decades of privatisation and neo-liberalism. It spread across the whole country, uniting ordinary people across sectarian divisions.

Weeks of road blockades and strikes forced the resignation of the prime minister and the axing of the

new tax.

Hezbollah, however, was part of the governing coalition and opposed the protests. Its supporters even beat up some of the protesters.

Hezbollah’s support base among some of the poorest areas in Lebanon has meant that, at times, it has backed efforts to challenge inequality. But it also draws support from across the class divide within the Shia community, relying on wealthy donors to fund the party’s schools, hospitals and welfare services.

The more it has become incorporated into Lebanon’s political system the more it has backed wealthy business interests, sponsoring property development and facing accusations of corruption.

Lebanon’s economy is in a state of collapse, with hyperinflation and surging cost of living and unemployment. Yet it also boasts six billionaires with a combined wealth of \$11.8 billion.

In the 1990s nationwide strikes demanding wage rises paralysed the country. Public sector strikes between 2012 and 2017 succeeding in winning a new pay system.

But workers’ struggles have been continually undermined through state repression and the establishment of rival sect-based trade unions that have fostered division and tied them to the political elite. Hezbollah has colluded in this process by setting up separate unions under its own control.

Fundamental change requires united working class action across sectarian divides against Lebanon’s corrupt ruling class—and challenging Hezbollah’s own role as part of it.

**Hezbollah has become part of Lebanon’s sectarian political elite**

# Iran's 'axis of resistance' can't deliver real challenge to imperialism

By James Supple

THE US has lashed out, bombing targets across Yemen, after the Houthis began targeting Israeli shipping in the Red Sea.

The Houthis' efforts have exposed the lack of any sanctions or embargoes against Israel from other Arab states, despite their claims of support for the Palestinians.

The Egyptian government, for instance, could halt trade on the Suez Canal altogether until Israel stops the killing. But the corrupt Egyptian regime has made its peace with Israel and the US.

The Houthis have pledged to continue targeting Israeli ships and traffic heading to Israeli ports until it ends its war on Gaza, in the most significant effort to aid the Palestinians anywhere in the Arab world.

Their attacks have disrupted the route through the Suez canal used by 12 per cent of global seaborne cargo and 40 per cent of Asia's trade with Europe. Most shipping companies are diverting traffic to the much longer route around Africa.

Shipping traffic at the Israeli Red Sea port of Eilat has dropped 85 per cent. This will hurt, although most ships use Israel's ports on the Mediterranean Sea.

The Houthis are part of what some commentators have called an "axis of resistance" in the Middle East linked to Iran. It includes Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas and armed groups in Iraq.

## Iran

Since the Islamic regime in Iran took power in 1979 it has declared its opposition to imperialism and support for the Palestinians. Iran still faces continuing US sanctions and threats of war.

But Iran's main priority is not opposing Israel and imperialism but maintaining its own wealth and power in the region.

Despite the genocide in Gaza and subsequent Israeli attacks on Lebanon and Syria, the "axis of resistance" has been extremely restrained, limiting any military response.

Hezbollah has fired rockets over the border into Israel but sought to limit the strikes to a narrow strip of land to avoid escalation. But Israeli ministers are still aggressively determined to drive Hezbollah away from the border with Israel. They have even



**Above: Houthi fighters in Yemen**

threatened to flatten Beirut.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabbollahian has said openly it does not want the war to "spread out" beyond Gaza. A Hamas official even told Reuters that Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had asked Hamas to silence those who were calling for greater action to support it.

Instead of encouraging wider resistance to imperialism Iran has been willing to cut deals with the US and its allies.

In March last year it signed an agreement restoring diplomatic ties with key US ally Saudi Arabia. As part of this it agreed to reduce arms shipments to the Houthis—showing that it is happy to use such groups as a bargaining chip to advance its own interests.

In 2015 it signed a deal on its nuclear program with US President Barack Obama in return for a relaxation in sanctions. The deal was later scrapped by Donald Trump.

Iran is also pursuing deals with Russia and China, and has sold its Shahed-136 drones to Russia, which is using them to bombard Ukrainian cities and slaughter civilians.

Behind its Islamic facade Iran is a capitalist economy with massive wealth inequalities.

In recent years the number of millionaires has increased to around 250,000 while at least 30 per cent of the population are below the poverty line. The children of the senior Islam-

ic clerics have become enormously wealthy, with a series of scandals over their imported luxury cars and lavish weddings and parties.

In 2023, the regime also killed over 500 people during months of street protests triggered by the death in police custody of Kurdish woman, Mahsa Amini, after being arrested for not wearing her hijab correctly.

It has unleashed savage attacks on national minorities like the Kurds. Trade union activists are also ruthlessly repressed.

Despite its rhetoric, the Iranian regime will not build the challenge to imperialism in the Middle East that is needed.

Both Iran and Hezbollah sent troops to support Syrian dictator Bashar Assad when he faced a popular uprising as part of the Arab revolutions in 2011. They helped train militias that worked to turn the revolt into a vicious sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Shia.

Consistent opposition to Israel and imperialism will only come from mass movements and working class revolt that can bridge the religious and ethnic divisions.

From the national liberation movements of the 1950s to the Arab revolutions of 2011 there is a rich tradition of revolt from below in the Middle East. Building a mass socialist movement is the key to challenging both Israel and the corrupt Arab regimes that oppress their own working class and back the existing imperialist order.

**Iran's priority is not opposing imperialism but maintaining its own wealth and power in the region**

# World leaders still on course for climate catastrophe

By Angus Dermody

LAST YEAR was the hottest on record. Former NASA climate scientist James Hansen has warned that the safe limit for 1.5 degrees of warming will be passed this year, with 2 degrees likely by the late 2030s.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that serious action is urgently needed to avoid the worst impacts of the climate crisis, 2023's UN climate summit COP28 provided nothing in the way of solutions.

Held in Dubai over two weeks in November and December, the conference was attended by more than 80,000 participants. A record 2456 representatives of the oil and gas industries attended, outnumbering Indigenous representatives by seven to one.

Before the conference, a "Global Stocktake" was conducted to assess the progress made by governments towards their commitments under the Paris Agreement, signed in 2015 with the goal of limiting global warming to well below 2C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing a limit of 1.5C of warming.

Unsurprisingly, they are not on track to meet those commitments. Germany's climate envoy and former executive director of Greenpeace, Jennifer Morgan, told a press conference in Dubai that the current trajectory means we will see "a temperature rise of 2.5C to 2.9C".

The proven failure of governments to take these climate thresholds seriously threatens irreversible damage to the planet and poses a catastrophic threat to billions around the world.

The deal signed by more than 200 countries at COP28 has been hailed as historic. But the reality should give no cause for optimism.

The final agreement was a compromise with petro-states like the United Arab Emirates, (UAE) which hosted the conference. Pacific island states refused to vote for it and said they were kept out of the conference hall until after it went through.

Those who celebrated the deal argued that because, for the first time, it calls for "transitioning away" from fossil fuels it provides a pathway that could keep warming to 1.5C. But the conference rejected calls for a complete phase-out of fossil fuels.

Worse the agreement promoted "abatement" technologies like carbon



**Above: Sultan Al Jaber, the oil boss who oversaw the COP28 talks in the United Arab Emirates**

capture and storage as part of the answer, a fraud that is nothing but cover for the fossil fuel industry to keep polluting.

The plans made at COP28 had far more to do with protecting the profits of fossil fuel bosses and the ruling class at large than they did with real climate action.

At COP28 the president of the conference, Sultan Al Jaber, proclaimed that the deal was "unprecedented" and told reporters that he is "committed to the transition".

Al Jaber is the chief executive of the UAE's national oil and gas company Adnoc. He announced two days later that his company would invest \$150 billion in oil and gas over seven years to maintain its current production levels.

This deal does nothing for workers, Indigenous communities or the environment. It stands only to benefit the fossil fuel industry.

## Greenwash

David Spratt and Ian Dunlop, writing for *RenewEconomy*, described the delegates to the conference as "cheering an outcome which will push societies everywhere closer to civilisational breakdown."

But as climate scientist Kevin Anderson put it, "The time for polish, rhetoric and applause is long gone. We face a climate emergency that the COP process appears simply unwilling or unable to address."

Labor's Climate Change and

Energy Minister Chris Bowen took the opportunity to spruik his government's greenwashing on the international stage. Bowen had much to say about keeping "1.5 degrees alive" and the threat that climate change poses in the Pacific, promising that "we are not going to see our brothers and sisters inundated and their countries swallowed by the seas".

But these comments don't stack up with Australia's actual track record on climate. Labor are currently overseeing a massive expansion of the fossil fuel industry in Australia, including projects like Santos's Pilliga Gas Project and Woodside's Scarborough.

When Bolivia's negotiator called out the hypocrisy of the developed nations, Bowen replied, "You know, every country has things at stake. We're a fossil fuel exporter, we've got things at stake ..."

We cannot look to the market or to conferences like COP28 to solve the climate crisis. Even at their most ambitious, the action promised by 2050 will not be enough and will come far too late. The fossil fuel industry and their supporters in world governments are willing to sacrifice the planet to protect their profits.

If we want to stop the worst impacts of the climate catastrophe then we urgently need a mass movement from below that includes workers, First Nations peoples and climate activists to fight for a real and just transition to 100 per cent publicly-owned renewable energy.

**COP28 had far more to do with protecting the profits of fossil fuel bosses than with real climate action**



# US still backing Ukraine proxy war despite bloody cost

By Jack Stubbley

EVEN WITH the war in Ukraine stuck at a bloody impasse, the US and NATO are determined to keep the killing going to further their own interests in a proxy war with Russia.

Ukraine claimed its 2023 counter-offensive would seize back significant areas of the country and show that Russia could be defeated. The US and NATO poured in tens of billions of dollars worth of tanks, troop carriers and ammunition, and helped train tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers.

Instead the counter-offensive has failed to retake significant territory, let alone reach the nominated goal of cutting off Russia's land bridge to Crimea and reaching the Black Sea.

Ukraine's military leadership vastly underestimated Russian defensive preparations. The latest reports indicate that even its few marginal successes such as recapturing Robotyne in the south, breaching Russian defensive lines, are being reversed.

Thousands of lives were spent assaulting fortified Russian positions with little to nothing to show for it. Those left on the ground holding and defending Ukrainian gains are in increasingly dire conditions.

Many argue the war is at a stalemate or deadlock, as Ukraine's commander-in-chief, General Valery Zaluzhny now says.

Much of the frontline consists of a trench system similar to those in the First World War. The onset of the muddy season means, "Ukrainian soldiers are also now dealing with mud and a rodent infestation that would also feel familiar to those who fought over a century ago," according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

"They eat into beds, they eat clothes, and whatever they eat they damage, and whatever you do to cover yourself at night, they still get in," one artillery commander said. The rodents are even devouring corpses left on the battlefield.

However a long war of attrition favours Russia, with its ruthless President Vladimir Putin able to draw a vastly greater population and economy and willing to throw away tens of thousands of lives.

Ukraine is totally reliant on NATO and US support to continue the war, increasingly hostage to decisions made in Washington.



**Above: The war in Ukraine has descended into trench warfare, with both sides dug into defensive positions**

*The New York Times* reported in December that the US is, "stepping up the face-to-face military advice it provides to Ukraine, dispatching a three-star general to Kyiv to spend considerable time on the ground."

Ukraine is running short of artillery ammunition. Frontline units are having to ration shells, with one unit in eastern Ukraine telling the *New York Times* that, "during the offensive last summer, they had five times as much ammunition at their disposal".

This is the result of a shortage of ammunition stockpiles in the US and Europe. Both are working to scale up production, but the European Union looks unlikely to meet its target of supplying one million shells in the year to March, with only one third of that amount delivered so far.

Russia is already outproducing the US and Europe, and has also sourced over a million shells from North Korea.

There are also increasing divisions in the US Congress over continuing to fund the war following Ukraine's lack of success in the counter-offensive.

Far from opposition to the waste of lives and rising imperialist tensions caused by this proxy war, the Republicans are currently refusing to support more military aid unless US President Joe Biden agrees to stricter anti-immigration measures on the US border.

## Set for war

Despite these woes, Zelensky and the Biden Administration are determined to maintain the conflict in Ukraine and

have shown no interest in a negotiated peace.

The US's belligerence has continued since even before the invasion.

In the run up to war it disregarded Russia's insistence that Ukraine joining NATO was a red line.

This has been confirmed in a dramatic interview with David Arakhamia, the parliamentary leader of Zelensky's Servant of the People party, who led Ukraine's negotiations with Russia shortly after its invasion.

In late November he confirmed that the two sides had been close to a peace deal where Ukraine accepted neutrality and dropped its effort to join NATO.

But then British Prime Minister Boris Johnson visited Ukraine, encouraging the Ukrainians on behalf of the US and NATO to "make war".

The US is perfectly willing for tens of thousands more Ukrainians to die simply to keep the war at a stalemate. Western imperialism hopes to grind down Russia's economy and military strength by prolonging the war, and deal a blow to Russian power but also send a message to China.

This proxy war is not in the interests of either Ukrainian or Russian workers, who will also be sent to die in appalling numbers.

We need to demand an immediate end to the hundreds of millions of dollars of Australian military aid being sent by the Albanese government for the continuation of this bloody conflict—and an end to the senseless slaughter.

**Zelensky and Biden are determined to maintain the war and have shown no interest in a negotiated peace**

# ABORIGINAL RIGHTS AND THE 1960s RAY PECKHAM: HOW UNIONS HELPED STOP SEGREGATION

**Paddy Gibson** interviews Indigenous activist **Ray Peckham** about the fight against segregation and the Aboriginal Welfare Board, and how trade unions aided the struggle

IN EARLY December, 2023, I travelled from Sydney to Dubbo with Gadigal, Bidjigal and Yuin Elder Auntie Rhonda Grovenor-Dixon to interview Ray Peckham, a 94-year-old Wiradjuri man who played a central role in the Aboriginal rights movement in the 1950s and 60s. We were joined by Suellyn Tighe, a Gomeroi woman from Coonabarabran.

Auntie Rhonda, Suellyn and I are all involved in campaigns against racism and for self-determination and land rights.

We learned some important lessons from Ray, who shared many precious stories and insights from his experience in the struggle.

Ray was a communist and his activism was grounded in the trade union movement.

When he first travelled to Sydney in 1950 at the age of 20, Ray was greeted by veteran Aboriginal activist Pearl Gibbs, who immediately recognised his potential, recruited him to the struggle and took him to Trades Hall to meet with union leaders.

Ray started work as a builders' labourer and became deeply involved in efforts by the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) to mobilise the support of working-class organisations behind campaigns for Aboriginal rights.

He joined two campaign organisations operating in Sydney, the Australian Aboriginal Fellowship (AAF), which included non-Indigenous activists, and later the Aborigines Progressive Association (APA).

For two decades, Ray fought against the system of apartheid that operated in NSW and across Australia. The NSW Aboriginal Welfare Board (AWB) exercised dictatorial powers. Aboriginal people were kept in horrific poverty on the fringes of country towns and excluded from many shops and services.

Ray travelled across NSW organising Aboriginal communities to fight

for their rights.

He also worked tirelessly to campaign in workplaces and trade union meetings, appealing to non-Indigenous workers to take a stand against racism and use the power of the trade union movement to seriously contest the draconian AWB.

Central to Ray's political outlook was an analysis that Aboriginal people and non-Indigenous workers shared a common struggle against a capitalist system based on exploitation, war and racism. It was the common experiences of exploitation that created opportunities to use the collective power of trade union organisation to fight back:

"We were all working class people. Black and white, New Australians, it didn't matter who you were, you were a union member. It's that unity that gave us power".

Ray got a taste of union power very early in his activist career. In 1951 he was invited to attend a Peace conference in East Germany, within the Soviet Bloc.

Ray was on board a vessel ready to sail from Melbourne, when they received word that the AWB was not going to let him travel and had stopped the government issuing him a passport, "they reckoned they were saving my life, protecting me from communism".

The Peace Festival delegation, however, had the endorsement of a range of trade unions, who now mobilised to fight this racist restriction on the right to travel:

"The weight of the trade union movement said that if Ray Peckham doesn't sail on this ship, we will tie up all the ports of Australia, nothing will move. For four hours we held up that ship, it cost them a lot of money too".

This threat of widespread union action to stop commercial shipping forced the AWB to back down. A passport was hastily prepared and

rushed to the ship so Ray could sail.

**For two decades, Ray fought against the system of apartheid that operated in NSW and across Australia**

## **Union power against the Aborigines Welfare Board**

Over the course of the next two decades, Ray worked to bring union power to bear against the AWB at strategic times, eventually breaking their system of racist controls. One campaign Ray argues was of crucial significance was a fight in 1960-61 led by Dunghutti man Horace Saunders, from the Purfleet Aboriginal Reserve at Taree.

The residents of Purfleet were refusing to pay rent to the AWB, protesting about the shocking conditions on their reserve. Houses had no running water, electricity or proper drainage:

"There were no bathrooms then. No toilets. No cooking facilities, you did all your cooking on a fire in the yard. Babies were dying from diphtheria and that sort of thing, caused by torrential rain flooding the pit toilets".

One of the babies that died was a child of Saunders. In response to the strike, the AWB moved to evict Saunders and his family for non-payment of rent. Saunders was targeted "because he was the only man on the reserve at the time who had collateral", owning two boats and other equipment from his commercial fishing business.

Ray explained that "they wanted to make a holy show of him, so instead of just taking him to the local magistrates court in Taree, they took him to the Supreme Court".

Both the AAF and the APA supported Ray to travel to Taree, spend time with Saunders and help plan a fight back: "I said, the best thing you can do is come to Sydney with me, I'll introduce you to the Trades and Labour Council and we will get the weight of the Trade Unions behind us".

More than 20 trade unions participated in solidarity activities when Saunders visited Sydney in February 1961. A large delegation organised by

the NSW Labour Council accompanied Saunders to see the Chief Secretary of the Aborigines Welfare Board and demand the case be withdrawn.

The CPA's newspaper *Tribune* reported at the time that "wide trade union and public support in the Purfleet eviction case has lifted it from a housing struggle to a struggle for equal rights for the whole Aboriginal people".

Union resolutions backing Saunders also called for the abolition of the discriminatory powers wielded by the AWB.

Saunders and Peckham campaigned for weeks visiting unionised workplaces, speaking to lunch-time meetings about the case and winning donations and resolutions of support.

"I went on a tour of all the mines, travelling to Wollongong and Lithgow. Horry stayed with the Builders' Labourers in Sydney".

In an article in the *Tribune* in 1961, Ray said:

"At every meeting, I was given a very enthusiastic reception. The white workers' moral and financial support for the struggles of Aboriginal people are becoming a source of strength and courage which my people are coming to appreciate more and more.

"At the Coalcliff pit, the miners were actually meeting to hear a report on the strike at Nebo pit, but they deliberately delayed the vote on whether they would strike in sympathy to be sure I had an undivided hearing. They pledged full support for our campaign and decided on a 5/- levy per man to assist."

When the case was heard in the Supreme Court, Saunders was represented by Fred Patterson, a barrister and veteran CPA member. In a huge blow to the authority of the AWB, Saunders won the case, and the AWB was forced to compensate him for nine weeks of lost earnings.

According to Ray, this was the beginning of the end for the AWB, "they didn't last ten years after that. We showed they could be beaten and they were on the their way to being abolished".

### Breaking segregation

The success at Taree encouraged growing efforts to self-organise against appalling conditions in Aboriginal communities across NSW.

Throughout the early 1960s, the *Tribune* was regularly reporting on protests that led to the construction of new houses right across the state, from Moree, to Coonamble, Armidale, Nambucca Heads and down the



**Top: Ray Peckham speaking to workers at the Tallawarra Power Station on the South Coast during the campaign against the Purfleet evictions in 1961**



**Below: Ray Peckham at his home in Dubbo, December 2023**

South Coast.

In all these communities, the fight for better living conditions went hand in hand with demands against racial segregation. A visit by Peckham in 1962 helped residents of Moree successfully build pressure for new houses and win a declaration from the Health Minister that there could be "no racial or colour segregation of patients in Moree or other NSW State hospitals".

Ray talked with us about a campaign at Port Kembla in this period to illustrate the crucial role of unions. Residents of the Coomaditchie Aboriginal reserve were demanding new houses, but some of the only remaining land in the area was being taken over by the adjacent University.

"Bobby Davis [a local Aboriginal

leader] was a wharfie at Port Kembla and he worked with Joe Howe, a delegate from the Waterside Workers Federation.

They set up a campaign, naturally it was through the Trades and Labour Council and backed by the union. They won that strip of land and had eight houses built on it from that fight".

In Sydney and Wollongong too, union power was used to fight segregation. Pubs that refused to serve Aboriginal people would be confronted by crowds of trade unionists. Ray explained, "We would get the Liquor Trades Union to put a ban on the pub. Force them to change that way, with a black ban".

By the mid-1960s, the ranks of leading Aboriginal trade unionists had grown substantially and played a crucial role in the broader struggle.

Many unions were affiliated to the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI), which held annual conferences of hundreds of people and had a powerful trade union sub-committee convened by Peckham. This group issued a regular bulletin, *The Aboriginal Worker*.

The Waterside Workers' Federation in Sydney had a committee of Aboriginal members that sent six delegates to the 1965 FCAATSI conference, including Rhonda's father Chicka Dixon, who would come to play a crucial role in the Black Power movement.

That same year, in response to the jailing and forced removal of two Aboriginal children from Walgett for stealing some toys, Peckham led a delegation of 20 Aboriginal trade unionists from Sydney to visit and rally in support of community demands against racism.

Campaigning by FCAATSI, with the strong support of unions, led to a successful Yes vote in the 1967 referendum, which shifted constitutional responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs from the state to federal governments. Just two years later, the AWB was abolished for good.

Ray emphasises, however, that it was the fight at the grassroots, with community protests backed by the trade unions, that really broke the power of the board:

"The unions were like our boondi, or nulla nulla [fighting stick]. That's what we need back today, for the young people to understand that we are all working-class people we have power in the union to fight the system".

# HOW THE ARAB NATIONALIST REVOLT CHALLENGED IMPERIALISM

The national independence movements of the 1950s fought Western imperialism, but the states that resulted were not capable of winning real liberation, writes **Miro Sandev**

ISRAEL'S ESTABLISHMENT as a settler state in Palestine relied on European colonialism and the support of Western imperialist powers. The biggest challenge to this was the wave of national liberation struggles in the 1940s and 1950s that successfully ousted European colonial masters from Egypt, Iraq and Syria.

Colonial rule over the Middle East, and the humiliation of the Palestinians through the seizure of their land to create Israel in 1948, produced a powerful movement for a pan-Arab struggle against imperialist control.

People held out hope that with national independence, poverty and underdevelopment would also end.

However, these movements' refusal to challenge the capitalist system meant their leaders were forced into collaborating with imperialist powers—including Israel—as well as attacking their own people to maintain power.

At the end of the Second World War, Egypt, Iraq and Jordan were ruled by pro-British monarchs. Hundreds of thousands of British troops were stationed across the region. The Suez Canal, vital for British control of India, was firmly in British hands. The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 meant Egyptian governments were effectively controlled by Britain.

By 1952 a growing movement for national liberation in Egypt had weakened the state and fomented dissent within the army. A guerilla campaign was harassing British forces. Gamal Abdel Nasser led a coup by the Free Officers group against the monarchy. They took advantage of the crisis but they were not central to the movement which helped to create it.

When the Free Officers took power they quickly asserted their domination, cracking down on left-wing unions and students and eventually banning all other political parties.

Nasser argued that the capitalist

state could be used as a tool to change society. He imposed a one-party state under the guise of a three-year "transitional period" of military rule. He crushed a strike by textile workers just weeks after the coup, hanging two of the strikers.

Nasser's regime nevertheless was popular for kicking out the British and its efforts to address poverty and underdevelopment through the nationalisation of banks, insurance companies, shipping, transport and the press. The property of Egypt's 600 wealthiest families was seized. Land reforms were also introduced, eliminating the biggest landlords by limiting the amount of land any one family could own.

He called these reforms "Arab socialism" but most of the capitalist structure remained intact. Nasser copied the state capitalist strategy of Stalinist Russia by using state control of the economy to impose a program of planned industrialisation.

Nasser became a hero of the anti-imperialist and Arab nationalist movement in 1956 after he nationalised the Suez Canal at the expense of its French and British owners. A joint invasion by Britain, France and Israel to try to retake it was aborted as a result of US pressure. This gave Nasser a symbolic victory over Western imperialism.

## Iraqi revolution

The 1958 nationalist revolution in Iraq held out similar hopes of liberation. The regime that ruled the country until the revolution was imposed by Britain following its seizure of Iraq during the First World War.

In the ten years leading up to the 1958 revolution, Iraq's monarchy was shaken by growing waves of workers' strikes and protests. In 1948 strikes by rail, postal and oil workers rocked the country. Three thousand oil industry workers occupied the K3 pumping

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**Nasser's regime was popular for kicking out the British and its efforts to address poverty**

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station, elected a strike committee, organised around-the-clock picketing, support from local villages and, later, a 250-kilometre march to Baghdad.

"Al-Intifada" (the uprising) erupted in 1952. Mass demonstrations came onto the streets to demand an end to the corrupt electoral system. The regime again responded with brutal repression.

By 1958 the British-backed monarchy was totally isolated. On the day that the army officers led by Abd al-Karim Qasim removed the puppet king the capital overflowed with people, chanting: "Death to the traitors and agents of imperialism!"

Significant reforms followed. Unions were legalised, the eight-hour day established, rents cut by 20 per cent, social insurance introduced, wages increased by as much as 50 per cent, prices on bread and flour cut. Substantial land redistribution broke the power of the tiny landowning elite.

## Failure of national liberation

Iraqis were united in their opposition to the British but a struggle soon emerged over the shape of the new Iraqi society.

Workers in Baghdad, determined to prevent a counter-revolution by the old regime, began organising armed resistance cells, urged on by the main party among workers, the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP).

Although workers were mobilising against the old regime, their actions challenged Qasim's agenda.

As the party with the deepest roots among the masses, the ICP faced a choice. It could keep Qasim in power or lead workers to take power themselves.

Qasim, like Nasser, based his movement on the middle classes in the state bureaucracy and the military. He was concerned to reassure the upper classes, the foreign investors and the military elites that he could be trusted



to look after their interests.

A clash between Qasim and the ICP seemed inevitable. Britain backed Qasim, providing him with arms to help crush any attempt at a workers' revolution. But the revolution never came.

The ICP's Stalinist politics meant it saw its role as limited to consolidating the nationalist revolution by working with the military, rather than fighting for a socialist revolution. The ICP retreated and declared its loyalty to Qasim, who responded by repressing the party.

As the mass movement subsided, more conservative political currents came to the fore, including the Ba'ath Party. Its leader Saddam Hussein had no problem collaborating with US imperialism when it suited him.

### Popular anti-imperialism

Nasser postured as a supporter of the Palestinian struggle, backing the Palestine Liberation Organisation when it was launched in 1964.

But Nasser did not want a clash with Israel. When Israel began threatening war with Syria in 1967, however, Nasser mobilised troops in the hope of deterring Israel's attack. His prestige as the leader of the Arab nationalist movement seemed at stake. The result was disastrous.

Israel defeated the combined armies of Egypt, Jordan and Syria in six days. The entire Egyptian air force was disabled in the first hour of the war.

British socialist Tony Cliff argued at the time, "The strength of the anti-imperialist liberation movement is in the masses of the workers and peasants mobilised."

There had been a glimpse of that potential when Britain, France and Israel invaded Egypt in 1956. British writer Anne Alexander records "the popular mobilisation led by Communist activists who had played a central role in the mass movement against the British occupation during the 1940s". They organised civil defence, smuggled arms to the guerrilla resistance and mobilised thousands of volunteers for military training.

Similarly, despite its slide into being part of the Lebanese ruling class, Hezbollah was able to defeat Israel in the 2006 war. It succeeded in mobilising thousands of ordinary people into a popular force that combined guerrilla resistance with a more centralised command structure to defend Lebanese communities in the south.

However, Nasser's military strategy was the exact opposite. His



**Above: Nasser and other military officers thronged by crowds in Egypt**

was an anti-imperialism from above, which relied on the professional army officers and the military establishment.

Following Egypt's defeat in the 1967 war, Nasser began to call for peace with Israel. While he provided arms and finance to the Palestinian militant group Fatah, the main group in the PLO, he also advised its leader Yasser Arafat to seek peace with Israel and to aim no higher than a meagre Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

Following the defeat, Egypt eventually made its peace with Western imperialism, just as Iraq had. Anwar al-Sadat, who took over when Nasser died in 1970, signed a historic peace treaty with Israel and in return Egypt began receiving massive amounts of US aid, much of it military aid to help prop up the dictatorship.

Socialists defend the right of colonised peoples to resist their oppressors by any means necessary. We unconditionally support national liberation struggles like those of the Egyptians and Iraqis against Britain and of Palestinian resistance groups like Hamas against Israel.

These struggles serve to weaken the hold of imperialism and can create opportunities to fight for socialism. However, this support does not preclude criticism of how the struggle is waged.

The Arab nationalists' aim of establishing independent states within global capitalism failed to deliver real liberation. It simply put new rul-

ing classes in power that established brutal dictatorships in countries like Egypt and Syria that have spent decades attacking the living standards of workers and the poor.

The Arab revolutions in 2011 were directed squarely at the regimes that resulted from the distorted outcome of national liberation. The mass uprisings and strikes in Egypt and Tunisia that toppled dictatorships show that real change is still possible.

The struggle for Palestine cannot succeed without support from across the region. It remains bound up with the struggle for workers' liberation.

Egyptian port workers could stop all shipping passing through the Suez Canal. Iraqi oil workers could turn off the tap to the oil supplies.

To do this, those workers will have to fight their billionaire bosses and the corrupt rulers who collaborate with Israel.

Hamas and other Palestinian factions should be agitating for this sort of solidarity action. In return they need to stand shoulder to shoulder with Arab workers when they rise up against their own rulers. But that would mean a break from their current policy of "non-interference" in the politics of other countries.

The army that can free Palestine is not the one controlled by Egyptian dictator al-Sisi or the Jordanian King. It is the tens of millions of workers across the Middle East who could be mobilised in a popular struggle against both the Israeli apartheid regime and their own capitalist rulers.

# HOW LABOR BACKED ISRAEL'S BLOODY BIRTH

The Australian Labor Party's leaders have backed Israel from the beginning, playing a key role in the UN partition plan in 1947 that triggered the Nakba, writes **Tom Orsag**

ANTHONY ALBANESE'S support for Israel's atrocities in Gaza is not an aberration. In August 2023, Labor leaders blocked a vote at the party's national conference on recognising Palestine as a state.

But the Labor tradition of supporting Zionism dates back to the birth of Israel in 1947-48.

Its support has little to do with economic links. In 2019-20, Israel was only Australia's 45th largest two-way trading partner and its 50th largest export market.

Instead support for Israel has always been a strategic question, with the Australian ruling class looking to the dominant imperialist power of the day—first Britain then the US—as a guarantor of Australian domination of its own region.

In 1947, Australia was still connected to British imperialism. Oil and shipping routes were part of the British interest in the Middle East.

According to biographer Ken Buckley, these were, “major points of consideration in ensuring Australian support for Britain during the [United Nations] Assembly debate over the UN Sub Committee on Palestine report”.

Herbert V. Evatt, Labor External Affairs Minister from 1941 to 1949, was instrumental in the UN partition of the British Mandate of Palestine, as chair of its Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question and then President of the UN in 1948-49.

Australia's support for the partition of Palestine and its recognition of Israel during the height of the Zionists' ethnic cleansing of Palestine, known in Arabic as the *Nakba*, was due, in part, to Evatt's desire to maintain the British Empire, which he saw as central to Australia's interests.

Australia had turned to the US for military support in December 1941. But once the Second World War was over in 1945, Australia looked once again to Britain for its defence needs, while still encouraging the US to stay in the South Pacific.

In late 1944, Evatt told the US Ambassador to Australia, Nelson T Johnson, that, “The Commonwealth Government did not want to do anything that would lend colour to the belief that it was trying to part company with the Empire.”

Evatt also wanted Australia to join the table of the Big Four Powers—the US, Russia, Britain and China—in planning war strategy and the shape of the post-war world.

He argued that by the war's end Australia's “successful war effort will have converted Australia into a great nation”.

He added: “We cannot escape such a destiny. In truth, we will be trustees not only for British civilization, but also for a decent world order in the Pacific sphere of influence.”

Evatt was a former High Court judge who had visited Britain and been appointed to its Privy Council. He was fully integrated into the British world view of imperial pre-eminence, racism towards Arabs and the 1917 Balfour declaration of a “Jewish homeland” in Palestine.

## Bankruptcy

In July 1946, the Zionist terrorist militia, the Irgun, blew up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem which housed the offices of the British Mandate, killing more than 90 British, Arabs and Jews.

The British hurriedly passed the fate of the territory back to the UN.

Buckley writes, “Evatt intervened in the issue only when the British made it clear that the Mandate was becoming an acute embarrassment to them.”

Evatt favoured the partition of Palestine not only because it would allow Britain to save face but because he wanted to protect Australia's racist laws from UN interference.

If Palestine became a unified majority-Arab state, it could, under UN rules, be forced to admit more Jewish immigrants on the grounds of non-discrimination.

**Evatt intervened only when the British made it clear that the Mandate was becoming an acute embarrassment to them**

This precedent could then be applied to the White Australia policy.

As the Australian delegation to the UN saw it, it could lead to, “the UN attempting to open the doors to Australia to Asiatic immigration ... and that Australian immigration policy was contrary to the principles of the [UN] Charter in so far as it involved racial discrimination”.

## Antisemitism

Support for Israel's establishment went hand in hand with antisemitism in Australia, including from the Labor Party leaders. There was a long history of antisemitism inside the Australian ruling class.

As the Zionist historian, Suzanne Rutland, wrote in *The Conversation* in 2023, “Open antisemitism started to become prevalent in the 1880s with the emergence of Australian nationalism and the campaign for federation. It was further fuelled by fears of an influx of Jews fleeing the pogroms in Russia.”

Popular publications like *The Bulletin* and *The Truth* voiced anti-Jewish racism as well as anti-Chinese racism.

Labor had long drawn from the deep well of Australian racism and conservatism fostered by the ruling class.

It chose to redirect working class hatred of capitalists in a racist direction via antisemitism.

In 1915, left-wing federal Victorian MP Frank Anstey re-published his series of anti-Jewish newspaper articles as a pamphlet called *The Kingdom of Shylock* as part of his opposition to World War One.

There were large waves of Jewish refugees worldwide before and after World War Two, including Holocaust survivors fleeing Europe.

Before World War Two, there were fewer than 40,000 Jews in Australia.

The arrival in Australia of Jewish refugees after World War Two was met with an antisemitic outcry in the newspapers, as well as in statements by MPs.

Resolutions against Jewish migration were passed by Australian nationalist groups such as the forerunner of the Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) and the white Australian Natives Association (ANA).

In 1946, in response to the anti-Jewish hysteria, ALP Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, made administrative changes to ensure the Jewish community stayed a tiny minority of the population at 0.5 per cent.

His restrictions included a 25 per cent limit on Jewish passengers on ships bound for Australia, later extended to airplane arrivals.

### Imperial rivalry

In using his role in the UN to try to cement Australia's link with Britain in the post-war world, Evatt became the "nation-maker" of Israel.

As chair of the UN's Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian question from September 1947, he ignored opposition to the UN Partition Plan and a proposal for a one-state solution from the Arab Higher Committee, the Palestinian leadership.

This meant the views of the overwhelming 70 per cent majority of Palestine's population were simply disregarded.

Evatt's Partition Plan meant Israel was to have 55 per cent of the land, with 30 per cent of the population. Most of the Jewish population had only arrived in the previous 20 years as settlers with British support.

The countryside was still overwhelmingly Palestinian, with only 5.7 per cent of the land owned by Jewish settlers in 1947, and the bulk of the Jewish population living in the cities. This meant dividing the land into two states was bound to bring disaster.

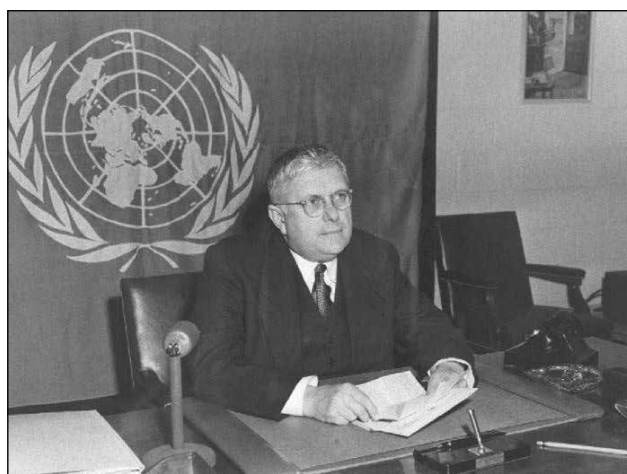
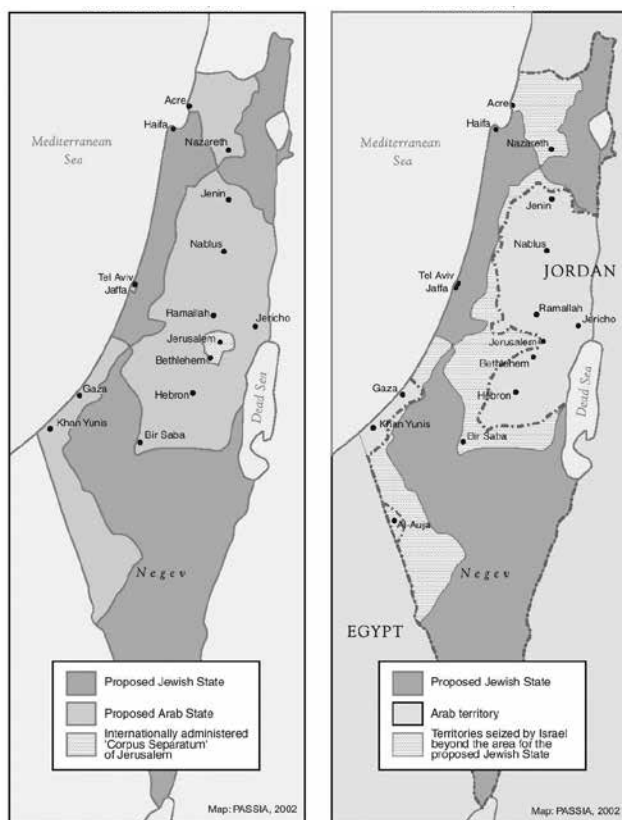
The Zionists had already publicly announced their intention to ethnically cleanse Palestinian Arabs to establish their state. But the UN plan made no effort to stop this.

By 1949, Israel's military had seized 80 per cent of Palestine by war, terror and theft—none of which concerned Evatt.

As Zionist Daniel Mandel wrote, "Evatt's preference for the Jewish cause put him in no moral quandary", even when Israel carried out massacres of whole Palestinian villages, like Deir Yassin in April 1948.

Evatt's loyalty was to Australian capitalism's needs. Arab deaths mattered little in that equation.

Following Palestine's partition in



**Top: The UN partition plan (left) compared to what Israel seized after the Nakba (right) Below: Labor's External Affairs Minister Doc Evatt at the United Nations**

November 1947, Evatt was elected as the fourth President of the UN General Assembly from July 1948 to June 1949.

The partition of Palestine was also supported by Russia and the so called "Communist" countries, adding further confusion on the international Left.

Australia repeatedly submitted resolutions calling for Israel to be admitted as a UN member state. One such resolution failed in 1948. Another succeeded in 1949.

Australia formally recognised Israel on 27 January 1949, more than three months before the UN did so

in May.

Since then, every federal Labor leader has been committed to Israel and the oppression of Palestinians.

The Australia Israel Labor Dialogue boasts of "an unbroken line" of Labor leaders supporting Israel—Chifley, Evatt, Calwell, Whitlam, Hayden, Hawke, Keating, Beazley, Crean, Gillard, Rudd, Shorten and Albanese.

Bob Hawke's support for Israel was very public and very nauseating long before he became PM in 1983.

His position flowed from his backing of US imperialism (the US saw Hawke as an "asset"), especially after Israel defeated three Arab countries led by radical nationalists in the Six-Day War of 1967.

Egypt, Jordan and Syria threatened US interests in the region and were allied to Russia. Israel's smashing victory over them made the US sit up and take notice.

During the early 1960s, US military loans to Israel averaged a paltry \$32 million a year, reflecting US disinterest in the country.

After 1967, US loans to Israel increased dramatically. Between 1970 and 1974, they rose to \$658 million a year.

The new-found usefulness of Israel to US imperialism meant Australia's rulers had to take notice. Hawke, then president of the ACTU, visited Israel for the first time in July 1971.

By this time, the 1960s and 1970s wave of radicalisation, in particular opposition to the war in Vietnam, had created an audience for Palestine solidarity within the ALP.

The Victorian branch supported the Palestine Liberation Organisation and forced an "even-handedness" approach on Palestine on to federal Labor—positions Hawke fought against, especially as Labor President from 1973.

Labor's support for Israel, due to its links to British and US imperialism, has put it on the wrong side of history ever since.

While individual MPs and branches may support Palestine, no MP aspiring to the leadership of the party can ever do so. Backing Israel is seen as a litmus test of loyalty to the Australian "national interest" and its imperialist allies.

Albanese's journey from being an MP who spoke out for Palestine to being a prime minister supporting Israel's genocide in Gaza fits the pattern perfectly.

All those who support the oppressed and, in particular, Indigenous people, stand with Palestine. Labor's commitment to ruling for Australian capitalism means it will never do that.

# ALBANESE WALKS AWAY FROM INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

By James Supple

THE FAILURE of the Voice to Parliament referendum has exposed Anthony Albanese's commitment to racist policies and severe neglect in Indigenous Affairs.

Months on from the referendum he has done nothing to advance Indigenous rights.

Many Indigenous people and supporters are still despairing after the Voice's defeat, seeing it as evidence of racism and indifference.

But Albanese glibly declared in an interview on 2GB that, "I am not Indigenous so it wasn't a loss to me".

The Voice was always a way of the government creating the appearance of action for Indigenous people in order to avoid demands for real change. It would have enshrined a simple advisory body without any power to force governments to act.

Albanese now says he is looking for "new ways" for the government "to close the gap in education, in health, in housing".

But the actions needed have always been clear.

Indigenous people still face huge levels of social deprivation and disadvantage as a result of colonisation. But instead of the funding and community control of services needed to address this, governments continue to remove kids, lock people up and punish communities.

Prior to the 2022 election, Labor promised to make the Income Management system that targets Indigenous communities in Northern Australia voluntary. They have now reneged on this and are also refusing to act on a promise to introduce a new publicly funded employment program.

The Albanese government continues to back race-based alcohol restrictions introduced with the NT Intervention. And Labor is supporting resource companies like Santos and Woodside to push ahead with destructive developments against the wishes of traditional owners from Gomeri country in NSW to the Burrup Peninsula in WA.

Racism and over-policing means



**Above: Indigenous people have voiced demands for action on deaths in custody for decades**

Indigenous people are massively over-represented in the prison system, making up a third of prisoners while only 3 per cent of the population. And the numbers are only increasing.

Yet Labor state governments continue to funnel more funding into police and prisons.

In Queensland, a special police task force roaming the state is deploying extra police on arrest blitzes against young people, boasting of over 450 arrests last year. The WA Labor government is bringing on an extra 1000 police.

Aboriginal legal aid is still starved of funds, with the NT's NAAJA forced to stop taking on new clients between 20 November and the end of 2023.

Albanese has done nothing to address the ongoing scandal of deaths in custody. Most of the recommendations of the Royal Commission from 30 years ago are yet to be implemented.

The week of the referendum 16-year-old Cleveland Dodd committed suicide in youth detention after long periods in solitary confinement on pre-trial detention. At least 20 Indigenous people died in custody in 2023, the third highest number in the last decade, including a 46-year-old man in Perth on Christmas Day.

The national housing crisis is hitting Indigenous communities hardest, who are ten times more likely to be homeless and suffer appalling rates of overcrowding.

But Federal Labor's only housing proposal has been to float a ridiculous, failed Howard-era policy of encouraging private home ownership instead of public or community housing in remote Indigenous communities—without explaining why companies would see that as a profitable investment.

## Fighting Albanese

The Indigenous leaders who championed the Voice thought that cuddling up to Albanese and working with the government could deliver change. But this approach has failed.

Some are still appealing for a legislated Voice to Parliament while others want local and regional voice bodies. But it isn't the lack of consultation stopping Albanese from acting.

It was grassroots organising and protest that ended the punitive Protection Acts in the 1960s (see page 14), and put the struggle for land rights and self-determination on the map in the 1970s.

We need to rebuild a movement on the streets with clear demands that can take the fight to Albanese and drive change.

**Labor state governments continue to funnel more funding into police and prisons**

# Solidarity