

Solidarity

Issue No. 200 / October 2025

\$3/\$5



No to March for Australia, No to Nazis

MIGRANTS ARE

WELCOME

RACISTS ARE NOT

FAR RIGHT

How can we push back
March for Australia?

PALESTINE

Resisting Israeli terror
after two years of genocide

RACISM

Lessons from
stopping One Nation

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

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Things they say

We're not quite finished. We have to get Hamas.

Donald Trump explains his latest 'ceasefire' proposal

The people of Gaza deserve a better future, but that better future cannot begin until Hamas is eliminated. You can count on our unwavering support and commitment to see it come to fruition.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaking at a press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

A Palestinian state will not be established west of the Jordan River... Moreover, we doubled Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria and we will continue on this path.

Netanyahu responds to Australia, Britain, France and Canada's recognition of a Palestinian state

The worst thing we could do is to defend the status quo. It hasn't worked for working people.

Keir Starmer, not talking about actually doing anything to improve workers' lives, but about immigration

By the way, I think I can say that there are certain groups of people that don't take vaccines and don't take any pills that have no autism; that have no autism. Does that tell you something?

Yes, that Donald Trump knows nothing about vaccines or autism

Self-appointed ambassador-at-large for Israel.

How Sylvan Adams, co-owner of the Israel Premier Tech cycling team whose inclusion in Spain's Vuelta-a Espana sparked protests, describes himself

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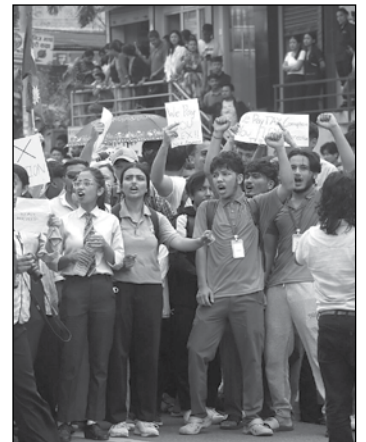
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Driver who killed Aboriginal man in hit-and-run escapes jail

A MAN who hit two Aboriginal people with his car and then sped off, telling his friends he'd struck down an "oxygen thief", has avoided jail time in Darwin.

One of his victims, 39-year-old Mr Whitehurst, died from his injuries after he was thrown seven metres, suffering a traumatic brain injury. The other was also hospitalised but recovered.

In the hours afterwards driver Jake Danby sent a series of disgusting racist text messages to friends, calling his victims "dogs" and "n****ers", saying they needed someone "to teach these c****s a lifelong lesson" and "maybe if I'm lucky I'll be able to claim his Centrelink for taking out another oxygen thief".

The judge, while saying the text messages showed a "shockingly callous disregard for the welfare of the victims" said she was "prepared to accept that you are genuinely remorseful" now. She handed him a 12-month community corrections order including five months in home detention.

Australian company hand-in-glove with exploitation

AUSTRALIAN-OWNED latex glove maker Ansell is in hot water over the exploitation of 220 Bangladeshi workers at its Malaysian factory.

While Ansell Malaysia Chair Arumugam Suppiah denies the allegations, the Australian section of Ansell said the claim "identified a number of issues that did not meet international labour standards".

Workers at the factory allegedly faced wage theft and forced labour, after they were made to pay fees of \$8000 to secure the jobs from recruiters in Bangladesh. Workers who complained about their treatment were also allegedly deported.

Many of them took industrial action earlier this year after months of unpaid wages and overtime.

Ansell made a profit of \$156 million in 2024, up 38 per cent. It operates 14 factories in nine countries, including China, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, employing 16,000 workers.

Albanese hands Israeli arms firm another \$10 million



An Elbit Hermes 900 drone Photo: Martin Thoeni

THE ALBANESE government has just handed another \$10 million to blood-soaked Israeli weapons firm Elbit, makers of the drone the IDF used to murder Australian aid worker Zomi Frankcom.

The company is Israel's largest military manufacturer, supplying the bulk of its drones and vehicle weapons systems.

The new Australian Defence Department contract valued at \$9.7 million was awarded after a tender process begun in December 2024, long after Elbit's role in the genocide in Gaza was clear. The contract was revealed in the same week Albanese recognised a Palestinian state at the UN, Crikey reported.

It's further evidence of the ongoing arms trade with Israel. In February last year Elbit scored a major \$900 million contract to provide weapons systems for Australian land fighting vehicles. But Elbit alone also received five other separate contracts last year valued at \$4.5 million including for drone support systems, explosives and security systems.

In August, Israel arms firm Rafael also gained a \$460 million contract for guided missiles.

It shows Albanese is continuing to support Israel's weapons companies even as they arm Israel's murderous war crimes against Palestinians.

War Memorial stops award to book on Roberts-Smith's war crimes

THE AUSTRALIAN War Memorial stepped in to stop the award of a military history prize to a book critical of war criminal Ben Roberts-Smith.

This followed its panel of judges picking Chris Masters' book *Flawed Hero: Truth, Lies and War Crimes* as the winner of the Les Carlyon literary award for military history.

Documents and internal emails obtained by *The Guardian* show that in response it decided to change the criteria for the prize to exclude the book by restricting the award to new authors publishing their "first major book or publication".

Masters' book is an account of Roberts-Smith's war crimes in Afghanistan that examines the support for the war criminal from powerful and high-profile figures, including some associated with the War Memorial.

Roberts-Smith recently lost in court on his final attempt to overturn findings in the defamation trial that found media reports about his involvement in a series of war crimes were "substantially true".

Mayors' conference told watermelons are antisemitic

MAYORS AND politicians gathered at a Gold Coast resort last month for the Australian Mayors' Summit Against Antisemitism. The US-based "Combat antisemitism movement" offered to pay for all travel and accommodation costs to the junket, although some councils opted to pay up to \$6500 per person so councillors could attend.

Speakers included Albanese's antisemitism envoy Jillian Segal, while Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles and former Labor Prime Minister Julia Gillard sent video messages.

A report from the organisers presented a laughable list of symbols and actions that it labelled antisemitic.

They included watermelons, which it described as "a subtle yet insidious threat" that symbolises a wish "to replace Israel with a Palestinian state", hands painted red (signifying that Israel or governments supporting it had blood on their hands), and slogans "From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free" and Intifada but also "Free Palestine" and the description of Israel as a form of settler-colonialism.

It advised councils to employ "strict monitoring and decisive action, both at the law enforcement and policymaking levels" against them.

Billionaire says he fears uprising of the poor

THE OWNER of luxury jewellery company Cartier Johann Rupert, with a fortune of \$7.5 billion, has told *The Financial Times* Business of Luxury Summit that fears of a mass uprising from below keep him up at night.

He thinks that if robots replace workers then mass revolt is imminent, and told the conference he was worried by Oxfam figures that show the top 1 per cent now owns more wealth than the bottom 99 per cent of society.

Among his fears are that the middle class will no longer be willing to flaunt their wealth through buying luxury brands.

EDITORIAL

Albanese's racist scapegoating of migration only feeds far right

ANTHONY ALBANESE'S fawning selfie with Donald Trump in New York showed his devotion to militarism and US power.

He has worked desperately to secure a one-on-one meeting with Trump to shore up the deal to buy nuclear submarines under the AUKUS pact.

Not satisfied with the \$368 billion price tag of the subs, Albanese announced another \$12 billion to build a new submarine repair base near Perth that could be used by US boats.

Trump isn't likely to ditch AUKUS. But Albanese's desperation to ingratiate himself meant he had not a word to say against Trump's arming of Israel's genocide, or the racism, anti-migrant lies and climate denial that were on display in Trump's rant at the UN.

While at the UN General Assembly, Albanese formally recognised a separate Palestinian state, hypocritically declaring that, "We must end the cycle of violence" while he continues to allow the export of parts for Israel's F-35 fighter jets and other weapons components that it is using in Gaza.

Israel and the US's latest ceasefire proposal is not a serious offer but simply a demand for Hamas to surrender, give up its weapons and allow Trump and Tony Blair, a war criminal and one of the butchers of Iraq, to take control of Gaza.

Albanese rushed to "welcome" the plan and demand that Hamas agree.

But Palestinians shouldn't have to submit to the US and Israel's demands—they have the right to resist Israel's occupation.

Global opposition to the genocide and support for sanctions is growing.

The Spanish government has now imposed a total arms embargo, banning the export of weapons and other goods used by the Israeli military.

It has also cancelled several arms purchases from Israeli companies including Elbit and Rafael.

Following protests against an Israeli team's inclusion in a cycling tournament, the country's Prime Minister has also backed a ban on Israel's participation in sporting events.

But Albanese won't do the same.

Racist rallies

The scale of the March for Australia anti-immigration rallies on 31 August was shocking. The Nazi National Socialist Network and the far right hope to use them to grow.

Racism and the scapegoating of migrants from Albanese, mainstream



politicians and the media is feeding this. Polling shows 53 per cent of people think immigration is too high.

Last December Labor cut international student numbers, engaging in a racist competition with then Liberal leader Peter Dutton blaming them for the housing crisis.

When the Liberals blocked one of Labor's measures Immigration Minister Tony Burke declared, "If anybody out there is thinking that because of the rate of immigration they are having trouble getting into a home, just know the leader of the Opposition has decided to make that worse."

Albanese has repeatedly said that "we are getting the numbers down" and cutting immigration. He has passed new deportation laws to allow the dumping of refugees and non-citizens on Nauru.

So it was no surprise that he refused to condemn the racist March for Australia rallies, saying there were "good people" on them who were simply concerned about immigration. But there is nothing good about accepting racist myths or marching alongside Nazis.

Liberal Shadow Minister and leadership aspirant Andrew Hastie has gone further, denouncing immigration as "unsustainable" and labelling it "the real reason you can't afford a home". He even claimed, "We're starting to feel like strangers in our own home," appealing to racist nostalgia for a white Australia.

Migrants are not to blame for the skyrocketing cost of housing and rents, or the cost of groceries and electricity. But Albanese wants to

Above: Marching against racism in Melbourne in September Photo: Refugee Action Collective

use racist scapegoating to cover for his government's responsibility for them.

Living standards have gone backwards since 2022, with real household disposable income down 6.9 per cent.

Albanese refuses to take on the rich property investors who are driving up housing prices by scrapping the negative gearing and capital gains tax policies that have created the crisis.

The far right aims to feed off the discontent with Labor's failure on the cost of living.

Everyone needs to join the counter-demonstrations against the next March for Australia protests on 19 October. If anti-racists can mobilise larger numbers than the racist rallies, it will help demoralise them and stop the racists taking to the streets.

We also need to counter the racism coming from Albanese and the political mainstream that is fuelling them.

Everyone who has marched for Palestine should also join the anti-racist protests. March for Australia have opposed the Palestine solidarity protests and are a threat to all migrant communities here.

Alongside this we have to keep up the fight for sanctions on Israel—with the next step the rallies on 12 October to mark two years of genocide.

Drawing in the unions, as well as left-wing Labor members and Greens, will be key to fighting racism and mobilising the power to win action for Palestine.

General strikes for Palestine in Italy and Greece show the kind of action that's needed. We should draw inspiration from them to help build the struggle here.

.....
Albanese has repeatedly said that "we are getting the numbers down" and cutting immigration

Why migrants aren't to blame for the housing and rent crisis

By Liam McMullen

THOUSANDS JOINED the racist anti-immigration March for Australia rallies on 31 August, with further racist rallies planned for 19 October. The far right wants to exploit frustration with house prices, rent increases and the cost of living and blame them all on migrants.

The cost-of-living crisis and the real decline of public services are the result of policies of successive governments which benefit the rich.

But fears about immigration are being fuelled by the major parties and the mainstream media. Anthony Albanese responded to the March for Australia rallies by saying there were some "good people" there simply concerned about immigration levels and affirmed that "we are getting the numbers down" in response.

The idea that immigration is driving up housing prices due to a shortage of homes is widespread. Morgan Cox's plea to Albanese on Q&A earlier this year to cut immigration to address the housing crisis went viral.

"It's just about numbers," he said, "the number of people and the number of homes."

But it's a myth that the housing crisis is the result of immigration and population growth.

The number of new homes has consistently outpaced population growth. Between 2001 and 2021 population increased by 34 per cent but there was a 39 per cent increase in dwellings. Even over the past five years the number of dwellings grew 8.2 per cent while the population increased 7.4 per cent. Despite this, house prices have rapidly increased.

During the pandemic when the borders were closed and migration virtually halted, housing prices increased by an enormous 20 per cent in 18 months, boosted by low interest rates. When interest rates increased, landlords passed the cost on as rent increases.

The real problem is wealthy investors driving up the price of houses. This is the result of government policies that have delivered tax breaks for the rich and chronic underfunding of public housing.

In 1999 the federal Liberal government introduced capital gains tax concessions and negative gearing for investment properties. This encouraged property speculation by cutting



Above: Rallying against racism and March for Australia on 31 August Photo: Solidarity

the tax on profits in half, sending housing prices soaring over the past 25 years. These tax breaks will cost \$165.6 billion over the next decade—money that could be spent on public housing or other services.

The rich are also leaving thousands of homes sitting empty. Prosper Australia estimated that in 2023, more than 27,000 dwellings were empty in Melbourne. A further 70,000 are thought to be barely used. In total this is enough to supply homes for the entire social housing waiting list twice over.

Public housing

Government have also underfunded and neglected public housing for decades. This is the result of neoliberal policies that have handed tax cuts to big business, squeezing government revenue and delivering privatisation of housing, services and infrastructure.

In 1995-96 public housing made up 6 per cent of housing stock in Victoria. By 2019-20 that figure halved to 2.9 per cent. Community housing hasn't made up the shortfall.

Despite there being 55,000 people on the social housing waiting list, the Victorian government is about to knock down 44 public housing towers, demolishing 6660 homes to sell the sites to private developers and community housing organisations. The first housing towers to be knocked down and redeveloped in North Melbourne and Flemington will not include any public housing.

Instead of investing in public hous-

ing and changing policy to alleviate the housing crisis, governments have consistently sought to scapegoat migrants and refugees for their own failures.

Last year Labor capped the number of international students, suggesting this would reduce pressure on the rental market. A study from the University of SA found there is no link between the number of international students and rising rental prices and concluded international students were "thrown under the bus".

Labor has also passed laws that could be used to deport 80,000 non-citizens, striking a \$2.5 billion deal with Nauru to deport people there who have been released from indefinite immigration detention.

Racist rhetoric from the government and media seeks to paint them all as an existential threat.

All this simply gives legitimacy to the racist opposition to immigration from the far right.

We need to reject the efforts to scapegoat migrants and build an anti-racist campaign to counter the racist ideas and policy pushed by governments, the mainstream media and the far right, at the same time as mobilising a mass united movement on the streets to confront racists and Nazis.

Alongside this we must demand that the government take real steps to alleviate the economic pain people are in.

This means building a movement with socialist organisation at its heart which can lead a fight for change in our workplaces, universities and communities, alongside migrants and refugees.

The real problem is wealthy investors driving up the price of houses

Beating back March for Australia, racism and the far right

By James Supple

MARCH FOR Australia has called a second round of protests on Sunday 19 October. Organising for counter-demonstrations is already underway.

The size of their racist rallies on 31 August was shocking. It's now clear that the Nazi National Socialist Network (NSN) orchestrated the protests. In Sydney and Melbourne, at least, they were welcomed as speakers.

The NSN's attack on the Indigenous protest Camp Sovereignty was a stark reminder of their readiness to use racist violence.

March for Australia held the largest racist protests in decades, much larger than any counter-protests held to date.

In response to the attack on Camp Sovereignty, Indigenous people took the lead organising anti-racist marches nationwide on 13 September. These were well supported at short notice.

But a "freedom march" of anti-vaxxers and conspiracy theorists on the same day had larger numbers in most cities, including 3000 in Sydney. In Melbourne the anti-racist rally was slightly bigger.

Organising larger demonstrations requires pulling in the widest forces on the left possible—through working with Greens, unions and Labor Party members to try to mobilise their supporters. Too often the far left fails to approach union leaders and left-wing Labor figures even to speak at demonstrations—and has denounced them from the stage when they do attend.

Refugee Action Collective in Melbourne organised a rally of up to 500 on 26 September with broad support.

In Sydney there will be a united anti-racist counter-rally on 19 October, following a broad organising meeting initiated by Refugee Action Coalition.

Anti-racist protests that outnumber the racist rallies can demoralise them and make the racists less confident to come back.

Holding counter-protests on the same day as the March for Australia means there will also be a challenge calling out their racism and the involvement of fascists—both in the lead up and in media coverage of the day.

We should also aim to challenge the racist marchers themselves, through getting as close as possible to their protests to make it clear that thousands see their racism as unacceptable.

But doing this requires building



Above: The racist March for Australia rally on 31 August in Melbourne Photo: Louisa Billeter/Flickr

confidence amongst the broader left that anti-racist organisers are not trying to orchestrate street battles against racists or the police.

Many Palestine supporters, for instance, despite marching in their tens of thousands repeatedly over the last two years, have been unwilling to attend the counter-demonstrations out of concern about confrontations with the racists.

But some on the left, in particular Socialist Alternative, want to focus on elitist confrontation instead of working to build a united movement to oppose the Nazis and the racist rallies.

This will only narrow those attending to a small core of the far left.

Fighting racism

Racism is widespread because blaming migrants is the "common sense" promoted by mainstream politicians and the media.

Anthony Albanese's response to March for Australia was to say that those simply concerned about immigration were "good people" raising legitimate issues, and that the government was already "getting the numbers down".

This simply legitimises the racist lies that immigration is responsible for house prices, rising rents and the cost of living. The left needs to counter the racism through pointing to those really responsible—wealthy housing investors, governments and the rich.

We need to do whatever we can to take these anti-racist arguments into workplaces and local communities. This can help make the racists' arguments and their protests unacceptable.

Failing to recognise that the far right feeds off concerns about housing and the cost of living results in abstaining from countering their racist arguments.

We can also undermine the racist protests through working to break the softer racist support away from the hard core Nazi organisers.

The crowds at the March for Australia rallies were a mish-mash of racists, with participants covering the spectrum from Nazis to One Nation voters and even union members.

The protests on 13 September show there are tensions among the racist protesters. While the organisers included anti-immigration demands alongside anti-vax and other issues, they made it clear the NSN was not welcome.

Exposing that anyone who joins March for Australia protests will be marching alongside and helping fascists will help to undercut their support.

The danger that March for Australia and the fascists pose is serious. Far right and fascist parties are becoming a serious force across Europe. US President Donald Trump has a global megaphone to spread anti-migrant hate.

In London fascist Tommy Robinson succeeded in mobilising over 100,000 racists in Britain's largest ever far right protest.

Nigel Farage's racist Reform UK party is now leading in opinion polls on 30 per cent of the vote. Labor Prime Minister Keir Starmer's response has been to echo its racist lies and promise renewed crackdowns against refugees and migrants.

We need to begin organising to make sure this doesn't happen here.

Anti-racist protests that outnumber the racist rallies can demoralise them and make the racists less confident

Labor copies Trump playbook with ICE-style deportation laws

By David Glanz

LABOR HAS passed a fourth law to clear the way for forced deportations to the tiny South Pacific island of Nauru.

The legislation, dubbed by refugee activists as the Anti-Fairness Bill, was rammed through parliament in days with the support of the Coalition, depriving those facing deportation of the final skerrick of their rights. It follows three related laws passed in December.

Voters in May thought they were rejecting Trump-like politics in defeating the Coalition. But now under Labor, Border Force has ICE-type powers to pick up people without notice and deport them.

People who have exhausted legal appeals and are on bridging visas on departure or removal grounds can potentially be seized without warning and put into the deportation process.

The latest law provides extraordinary, sweeping, retrospective powers that give legal protection to the government for any previous mistakes or unlawful actions they may have made.

Labor is acting tough to avoid criticism from the Coalition and its friends in the media. But every concession to a racist agenda that scapegoats asylum-seekers and refugees gives strength to the argument to go even harder.

The vast majority of people recoil in horror at demands from the Nazi National Socialist Network for mass deportations.

But it's Labor that is laying the ground for such deportations to become a reality.

The Albanese government has concluded a deal with Nauru to take hundreds of non-citizens who cannot be sent to their homelands and cannot be held in detention.

The arrangement will cost \$408 million upfront and \$2.5 billion over 30 years.

Indefinite detention

Labor's immediate target is 354 non-citizens who, having committed crimes and therefore failing the Migration Act "character test", lost their visas—but who cannot be sent to their home countries because it would put them at risk.



Above: Fast Track refugees are not the immediate aim of the deportation bill, but there is nothing to stop it being used against them Photo: Solidarity

This cohort was being held in immigration centres until the High Court ruled that the government could not keep people in indefinite detention, in a case known as NZYQ.

It is a racist proposition. Citizens who commit crimes are free to return to their families and communities once they've served their sentences. Some 60,000 people in Australia are released from jail each year.

But politicians and media treat a handful of non-citizens as an existential threat.

Meanwhile the suite of deportation laws threatens many more vulnerable people, according to the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

"We know that the power of these laws can be used against a broad range of people, including anyone on a bridging visa E that was granted on departure grounds. The government also has the freedom to designate any type of visa it wants to apply these powers to," it said.

"We know from a Senate inquiry hearing into those Bills that they could affect over 80,000 people, and because this new Anti-Fairness Bill relates to those powers, it is reason-

able to expect it could affect the same number of people."

Among the 80,000 could be those rejected under the Liberals' "fast track" system. Most have been living in Australia in visa limbo for 13 years, despite having been found to be refugees.

Many have jobs, pay taxes, have children born here (who become citizens when they turn ten) but have so far been refused permanent visas.

Others could include those brought to Australia from offshore detention on Medevac visas for health care.

It's unlikely that Labor is intending to target so many people—each deportee to Nauru will need to be issued with a personal Nauruan visa, which will slow the process. And Nauru, which is smaller than Melbourne airport, would not be able to receive thousands of deportees.

But the risk remains that a future government might decide to use the laws to their full.

Refugee activists will be campaigning over coming months to prevent deportations and make Labor's shameful laws a dead letter.

.....
Labor's immediate target is 354 non-citizens who, having committed crimes, lost their visas

Queensland LNP takes advantage of Administration to go after CFMEU

By Tom Orsag

ONE YEAR on the Administration regime has secured a tight grip on the CFMEU.

Administrator Mark Irving reported to parliament that “a large number of organisers in NSW and Queensland have exited the union” and been “removed in South Australia”, in his second six-monthly report tabled at the end of August.

In total 75 per cent of the organisers in NSW and about half of those in SA and Queensland have been replaced, it said.

The Administration is ridding those state branches of organisers, employed by the former democratically-elected officials, who were committed to industrial militancy.

Irving wants organisers who won’t challenge the anti-union laws of the Fair Work Commission (FWC) that restrict the right to strike and a union that collaborates with the bosses.

Many activists within the union have given up on resisting the Administration.

But organising within the union independently of the Administration, based on delegates and activists across building sites, is urgently needed to push back against this tame cat agenda and keep alive the militant traditions of the CFMEU.

Irving’s report sings the praises of the National Construction Industry Forum (NCIF), a class-collaboration body set up by the federal government involving the union and employer groups.

CFMEU staff including National Secretary and Victorian Executive Officer, Zach Smith, and National Legal Director of the CFMEU, Lucy Weber, sit on the body.

They do so alongside bosses’ groups like the Master Builders Association and the Civil Contractors Federation.

Irving’s report talks about the NCIF’s *Blueprint for the Future*, which involves increased productivity and the goal that “adversarial relationships give way to a culture of collaboration and shared interests”.

But the union and bosses do not have shared interests in higher wages for workers or guaranteeing safety on sites.

These can only be won through a fighting union that is prepared to defy



Above: Queensland CFMEU members on strike following the High Court decision in June Photo: Solidarity

to anti-union laws.

Queensland

Since the High Court rejected the legal challenge to Administration in June, the Queensland branch has been particularly targeted.

It was the only branch to respond with industrial action against Administration, with a two-day strike to protest against the court ruling.

Another result of Administration is that the CFMEU in Queensland is now facing a frontal assault on the union’s hard-won wages and conditions from a rampant Liberal National Party state government.

The LNP sees further attacks on the union as a way to address a combination of a housing shortage and the massive infrastructure projects required for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics.

A state-run Productivity Commission into the construction industry, set up by LNP Premier David Crisafulli, has been used to justify scrapping union rights under the Best Practice Industry Conditions (BPICs).

The commission has also called for a “broader reset” of already-negotiated EBAs in order to meet “productivity targets” for Olympics construction.

Crisafulli and the LNP government want to take full advantage of the climate created by the media campaign against the CFMEU and the union’s neutering by Administration to further the LNP’s anti-union agenda.

Crisafulli has publicly stated, “There’s no place in modern Queensland for the CFMEU.” This implies tame-cat unions like the Aus-

tralian Workers Union are more than likely to be favoured on state government contracts for construction work, at the expense of the CFMEU.

Queensland CFMEU organisers close to the former elected branch leaders have capitulated to these demands for “productivity”, supposedly as a way to “get out of Administration”.

There is no prospect of this happening soon. Administrator Irving told Queensland CFMEU staff in September 2024 that no state or territory branch of the union will exit Administration for at least three years.

And it means accepting attacks on wages and conditions that the CFMEU has won over many years.

Building companies and property developers are queuing up to argue that rostered days off and pay rises are impacting “productivity” in Queensland.

Don O’Rourke, CEO of Consolidated Properties, has blamed “union rules that restrict working days” for “worsening the state’s housing crisis”.

In reality there are simply not enough construction workers for the work in the pipeline, including the Olympic stadium and other venues, new hospitals and a major rail tunnel.

The CFMEU has won the support of construction workers for its relentless campaigns to maintain safety at work. Greater productivity too often comes at the expense of more dangerous conditions.

There is a real danger that the CFMEU’s ability to defend workers and maintain safety standards built up over decades will wither as the Administration rolls out its plans. This can’t be allowed to happen without a fight.

Crisafulli has publicly stated, “There’s no place in modern Queensland for the CFMEU”

Labor's unambitious new climate targets rest on offsets fraud

By James Supple

THE WORLD is on track for catastrophic warming and climate disasters are multiplying. Yet the Albanese government's new climate targets refuse to meet the urgent need for action.

The government's own Climate Risk Assessment, released a few days before the targets, lays out the horrifying consequences of global heating for Australia.

Fires, droughts and heatwaves, alongside sea level rise and coastal flooding, will have a catastrophic impact. Current global pledges for action would result in heating of 2.9 degrees, it notes.

Days of extreme heat will double at 2 degrees of heating and more than quadruple at 3 degrees, driving more heat-related deaths and droughts. Parts of Australia would regularly face hellish 52 degree temperatures.

Albanese tried to brand his newly announced 2035 targets as "ambitious", with Climate Minister Chris Bowen saying anything higher was "not achievable".

But that's only because they won't stand up to the coal and gas companies or threaten business profits.

Even a target of 75 per cent cuts to emissions by 2035 would leave the world headed for more than 2 degrees of warming, according to the Climate Council, well above the safe limit of 1.5 degrees agreed at the global climate summit in Paris a decade ago. Labor's target of 62 to 70 per cent by 2035 falls well short of this.

But it gets worse. Buried in the government's Net Zero Plan is the admission that between 2030 and 2035, 13 per cent of the claimed emissions reductions will come from offsets or the fantasy of carbon capture and storage.

It claims that by 2030 gas export facilities will be implementing "carbon capture and storage technology" when it's "cost effective", even though it has repeatedly failed to work on any large scale.

It is pledging \$52 million in extra funding for a second round of its "Carbon Capture Technologies Program" that it says will "continue to accelerate the development of new carbon management technologies".

The picture out to 2050 is even worse, with the government estimating one third of current emissions will



Above: Albanese is allowing coal and gas mining, a major source of even domestic emissions, to expand Photo: rawpixel.com

continue despite the aim of reaching net zero by that date.

The target is only met through the hope that carbon offsets will double between 2035 and 2050. It says this will be "primarily driven by reforestation activities".

The scandals about the use of dodgy offsets under Australia's offsets program and over-counting of how much carbon they actually store shows how hopeless Labor's climate targets are.

Fossil fuel expansion

The mining and export of coal and gas makes up 18 per cent of our domestic emissions, according to the Australia Institute, not including the final emissions when the fuels are burned overseas.

But instead of phasing it out, the Albanese government is continuing to expand the industry.

Last month alone it approved another two massive fossil fuel projects. It gave final approval for another 45 years to Woodside's carbon bomb North West Shelf gas project in WA. Its domestic emissions alone each year will be equivalent to another coal power station.

It also gave the nod to expanding Glencore's Ulan coal mine in NSW until 2035, allowing it to produce another 18 million tonnes of coal.

This is because Labor is deeply committed to allowing fossil fuel companies to keep making massive profits exporting coal and gas, valued at an

enormous \$130 billion last year.

Instead of any government plan to roll out increased use of public transport or rail freight instead of road transport, it is simply hoping that electric cars and new technologies like hydrogen fuels become cheap enough for businesses to adopt them.

Far more is possible. The Climate Council's *Seize the Decade* report outlines how even existing technology could slash our emissions by 75 per cent by 2030, going further than the government's target for five years later.

But Albanese is not prepared to impose the costs on business necessary for this to happen.

Taxing the rich, and the fossil fuel companies that have made billions out of destroying the planet, would allow government spending to build the renewable energy, housing and transport we need.

It could provide hundreds of thousands of jobs in green manufacturing, public transport and land management to ensure mining and fossil fuel workers were guaranteed alternative work on good wages.

But winning this kind of action requires building a mass grassroots movement backed by union and working class power.

This will mean fighting both Albanese's continuing expansion of the fossil fuel industry and his determination to support capitalism and company profits at the expense of workers and the planet.

Last month alone the government approved another two massive fossil fuel projects

PNG and Vanuatu deals show Australia's growing contest with China

By Luke Ottavi

EVENTS AROUND this year's Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) have shown how Australia and China are competing to win influence over the region, as the risk of war grows.

Solomon Islands, the host of this year's PIF, received more than \$18 million in gifts from the Australian government, including over \$5 million for 61 cars for the Solomon Islands Police Force to ferry dignitaries around the conference.

China also donated 40 vehicles to the police, typifying the tit-for-tat competition between Australia and China as they try to gain favour and increase their influence.

But Australia failed to confirm its desired security agreements with Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

Australia's aim in the South Pacific has always been to prevent any hostile power from gaining a foothold and to ensure the Australian government is the dominant player. This is designed both to secure the investments of Australian companies such as in mining as well as ensure overall military control.

China's growing economic and military power threatens Australia's position.

China's competition with Australia for security and infrastructure partnerships with countries like Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands is ringing alarm bells for Australia's rulers who fear their influence in the Pacific is diminishing.

PNG deal

Australia has sought to sign extensive security agreements with PNG and Vanuatu to exclude China.

The PNG deal would see Australia provide the PNG military with billions of dollars of new weapons and equipment, allowing the PNG and Australian militaries to become "totally integrated", according to PNG Defence Minister Billy Joseph.

Australia has already given PNG \$3.1 billion worth of budget support loans over the last five years in addition to about \$700 million a year in aid.

The defence treaty requires both countries to come to the other's aid in the event of attack and entrenches Australia's role as PNG's main security partner.

PNG Prime Minister James Marape has justified this agreement on the basis that PNG is not strong enough to



Above: PNG troops will become "totally integrated" with the Australian military under the new deal Photo: Papua New Guinea Defence Force

defend itself on its own

But when the agreement was set to be signed in September, PNG cabinet failed to make quorum and ratify the deal, showing not all of PNG's ruling elite are convinced of the necessity of the agreement with Australia.

Both Marape and Albanese have promised that the agreement will be signed in the coming weeks.

PNG, as the largest of the South Pacific nations, has always been the most important to Australia both for its mining resources and in strategic terms. It sits on the "northern approaches" that Australia's rulers have always wanted to control.

The country recently marked 50 years since the end of Australian colonial rule, which lasted from 1906 until 1975.

Australia did little to develop the country, plundering its resources and imposing massive mining projects that created enormous environmental damage, leaving the country dependent on Australian investment and aid.

Vanuatu

The future of the Nakamal Agreement between Australia and Vanuatu is even less certain. The deal was meant to entrench Australia's position as Vanuatu's number one economic and security partner.

Over a decade, Australia would pour \$500 million into Vanuatu's economic, climate and security projects, with the stipulation that China be excluded from funding any critical

infrastructure or security projects.

Albanese travelled to Vanuatu personally to try to secure the agreement. However, Vanuatu's Prime Minister Jotham Napat has made it clear that the condition that excludes China from partnering with Vanuatu is the cause of the delays in signing the agreement.

China has funded key projects like roads that make travel easier and more efficient in Vanuatu, costing hundreds of millions of dollars. And Chinese police have been playing more visible roles in Vanuatu.

Over the past 20 years China has been the biggest lender in the Pacific, signing agreements with countries like Tuvalu, Tonga and Samoa.

China's offers to provide loans and funds to Pacific nations has caused Australia's rulers to ramp up their attempts to win favour in the region and exclude China.

A joint communique signed at the PIF declared the "Blue Pacific Continent an Ocean of Peace". But there will be no peace for the people of the Pacific while Australia and China compete for power and control over the region's resources, trading routes and people.

Australia is an imperialist bully that wants to dominate the region. We need to oppose its efforts to secure regional alliances against China.

Instead, unions need to be strengthening links with their counterparts in PNG, Fiji, New Caledonia/Kanaky and elsewhere to build workers' solidarity against the Western war drive.

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China's growing economic and military power threatens Australia's position

Nepal's Gen Z rebellion rises up against the rich

By Jordi Pardoel

ON 8 September, Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, erupted. Tens of thousands of young people rallied against poverty, corruption and repression.

Many protesters livestreamed the protests on apps the Nepalese government had tried to ban days earlier. Within 48 hours, parliament, the supreme court and the homes of top leaders were in flames.

Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli resigned and former Chief Justice Sushila Karki was chosen as interim prime minister through a vote on the gaming app Discord.

The protests were a result of decades of frustration. Nepal became a republic in 2008 after several mass movements for democracy. But the prosperity many expected has not become a reality.

Left wing political parties including Maoists such as the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist have presided over neoliberal cuts and intensification of exploitation.

Nepal's GDP per capita remains under \$1500, youth unemployment is 20 per cent and at least six million Nepalis work abroad.

Barsha Rai, a social work student from Nepal, explained to *Solidarity*, "Inflation is high ... your median, average household salary honestly can't keep up ... The fight is to create an environment in Nepal where students like myself don't have to come abroad to study or work just to keep our families afloat."

The gulf between the living standards of most Nepalis and the ruling class is stark. Originating in Indonesia and the Philippines, the #NepoBaby trend spread to Nepal, where social media posts highlight the flaunted wealth of the children of the rich.

One viral photo in Nepal showed the son of a provincial minister standing next to a Christmas tree made of boxes of luxury brands including Louis Vuitton, Gucci and Cartier.

Youth Against Corruption

On 4 September the government banned 26 social media platforms ahead of protests organised for 8 September. Despite that, tens of thousands of youth gathered on the streets of Kathmandu that day. An NGO, Hami Nepal, called the protest under the banner of "Youth Against Corruption".



Police opened fire killing 19 people, including high school students. Police had killed 51 people by the end of the uprising.

"It was supposed to be a peaceful protest ... but by midday the police forces started becoming more aggressive, and they started open firing on people," said Barsha.

By the evening, Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak resigned and the government was forced to lift the ban on social media apps.

The next day, 9 September, tens of thousands more poured onto the streets, burning government buildings and politicians' homes.

The Prime Minister resigned and fled to an army barracks. "We toppled the government on just the second day, which probably never happened in history," Barsha said.

The Nepali Army declared it would "take charge". It dissolved parliament, instituted curfews and appealed to Hami Nepal for talks.

Hami Nepal hosted a chat room where users could vote between candidates for interim prime minister. More than 100,000 took part and Sushila Karki came out on top.

But the debates on Discord were about who would be the next prime minister, not about fundamentally changing the system.

This left Sudan Gurung, the leader of Hami Nepal, as the unelected negotiator with the army. Karki was not named prime minister until she got military approval.

Nepal's recent history shows the danger of placing faith in politicians.

Protesters in Nepal in front of government offices in Bharatpur Photo: Himala Suvedi/ Wikimedia Commons

From the 1990s to 2006 there were mass movements against dictatorship. The Maoists waged a "people's war" in the countryside.

In 2006, millions joined mass strikes and protests that forced King Gyanendra to step back from absolute rule. In April 2008 the Maoists won the largest share of seats and the Constituent Assembly voted to abolish the monarchy.

But once in parliament, the Maoists abandoned radical transformation. They claimed Nepal was "not ready" for socialism in line with a stages theory, of more capitalism now, socialism later.

The Maoists ended up running Nepalese capitalism. There was no land reform, no moves to transform agriculture, no effort to break the power of landlords or expand production and jobs in the public sector. The uprising was the outcome of this betrayal.

For the first time in decades, young Nepalis believe in their power to shake governments. Barsha said, "It's about time people start realising that everything that happens to them is political."

The creativity, determination and hunger for democracy shown by the movement is an inspiration.

But the protests were limited by the leadership being left to NGOs and organisation being left to online platforms.

Real change cannot come from parliamentary compromise but from sustained struggle and organisations accountable to the working class itself.

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#NepoBaby social media posts highlight the flaunted wealth of the children of the rich

Changing the world: What do we mean by revolution?

Casey Forsyth explains why revolutions happen and why such major social upheavals always involve violence

THERE IS widespread recognition that there are deep problems with the way society is organised.

The genocide in Gaza, the climate crisis, the rise of Donald Trump and the far right, all underline this.

Socialists say we need a revolution. What do we mean?

Revolutions are often characterised as violent and chaotic. But what typifies them is the mass of the population moving to change society themselves. The Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky described revolution as the “forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny”.

Revolutions are a consequence of a deep crisis in society. Lenin famously argued that a revolutionary situation required the unwillingness of the mass of people to continue to live “in the old way”, combined with an inability of those in power to continue to rule “in the old way”, leading to splits at the top of society.

The modern world was created by revolution. The rise of capitalism required revolutions in Europe from the upheaval of the mid-1600s in England that established the supremacy of Parliament to the French revolution. Anti-colonial revolutions swept Africa and Asia in the mid-20th century.

Any revolution involves an element of violence, not because of the actions of revolutionaries but because any major challenge to the interests of the ruling class is met with violent repression.

The mass arrests in Britain of supporters of Palestine Action, which has been designated a terrorist organisation, shows how state repression is used to protect the interests of the system.

Routinely, police are used to break picket lines of striking workers and to squash working class resistance.

The police and the army are the hard core of the state apparatus. Although the state presents itself as existing “above” society as an independent force, it serves the interests of the capitalist class because they control the economy on which the state depends.

After the Egyptian revolution of 2011 it was the army that worked to re-establish a murderous dictatorship

Any major challenge to the interests of the ruling class is met with violent repression

to end continuing strikes and protests that threatened the interests of capitalism in Egypt.

The military is willing to use violence even against a democratically elected government.

The ultimate example of this is what happened in Chile in 1973, when the Allende government was seen by the ruling class to be encouraging rather than suppressing the combative workers’ movement. As a result, it was overthrown by generals, who oversaw a brutal right-wing dictatorship that crushed all opposition from the left and trade unions.

This means that any challenge to capitalism will require a confrontation not only with the economic power of the ruling class but also the armed forces that defend it.

Revolutions rarely succeed without winning over or neutralising the rank-and-file of the army, as opposed to direct armed confrontation with them. For this reason, revolutionary violence can be quite minimal—directed against those that would use violence to try to preserve the old system against the overwhelming majority who want it gone.

That’s what happened in the October revolution in Russia in 1917. So few were willing to defend the old regime that not a single person was killed during the insurrection in Petrograd that brought the working class to power. It was the old ruling class that began the civil war that followed when it sought the support of imperialist countries to invade Russia to crush the new workers’ government.

The experience of countless failed workers’ revolutions—such as Germany in 1919, Spain in 1936, Hungary in 1956, Chile in 1973—has proven that any major challenge always leads to the most violent backlash from the ruling class, who will employ mass murder to defend their rule.

Revolution is not about introducing violence. It’s about ending it. We are faced with a system that delivers ever more catastrophic wars and genocide. It encourages racist violence and attacks on LGBTIQ+ people to defend its rule. And it daily uses violence against strikers and protesters to defend its profits and maintain the misery and inequality on which the

system depends.

What kind of revolution?

There is also a difference between a revolution that replaces the existing political elite and one that transforms the social system itself.

When only the form of rule or regime changes, this is called a political revolution.

The revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia in 2011 for instance toppled dictators but control over the factories remained in the hands of the capitalists.

A social revolution involves the transfer of power from one class to another.

The revolutions in England in the 1600s and France in 1789 were social revolutions because they destroyed feudal monarchies and opened the way for capitalist rule.

Under capitalism, many revolutions begin as a challenge to the political elite. But during this fight, working class power can emerge as an alternative to the capitalist system.

This raises the potential for the political revolution to become a social revolution that replaces the rule of the capitalist class with the rule of the working class, which can organise society democratically on the basis of need rather than profit.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was an example of this. In February, mass strikes and mutinies toppled the Tsar’s dictatorship. But landowners still controlled the land, capitalists still owned the factories and the new Provisional Government continued the war that had driven people into revolt.

Over the following months, however, workers, peasants and soldiers built their own organs of power through the soviets (Russian for councils). This created a situation of dual power that posed the question of whether the capitalist class or the working class would run society. In October, under the leadership of the Bolshevik party, the soviets seized state power.

Getting rid of capitalism requires such a social revolution. It is only by developing the working class’s power to challenge the system that socialism and the radical change needed is possible.

FIGHTING BACK RACISM LESSONS FROM DEFEATING ONE NATION IN THE 1990s

Mark Gillespie looks at the role of counter-protests in defeating One Nation, and the lessons for the fight against March for Australia and the far right today

PAULINE HANSON'S explicitly racist One Nation Party was launched in 1997 and soon had 350 branches and about 18,000 members. One Nation was dividing workers and legitimising open racism and looked set to make gains in the 1998 federal election.

But a campaign of protests saw Hanson kicked out of the parliament and One Nation confined to the political wilderness for 18 years. The lessons of the struggle against One Nation in the 1990s is important in the face of the rise of March for Australia and the newly resurgent far right.

Pauline Hanson began 1996 as an obscure Liberal Party candidate in the traditionally safe Labor seat of Oxley, west of Brisbane. She was dis-endorsed by the Liberal Party after writing an explicitly racist letter to a local newspaper complaining about "Aboriginal privileges".

She stood as an independent but was still listed on the ballot paper as a Liberal. She won, riding an enormous backlash against Labor that not only swept her into parliament but also gave John Howard a landslide victory.

Her maiden speech to parliament openly promoted racist myths about Australia being "swamped" by Asians, that immigration caused unemployment and that Indigenous people were living lavishly on government benefits. The bigots cheered while the media began courting her as representing "mainstream Australia".

She became an even more serious threat when she used her newly found celebrity status to hold packed public meetings and then launch One Nation as a party.

One Nation was not led by fascists but every far right group in the country rushed to join—including the antisemitic League of Rights and the openly fascist National Action. Verbal and physical attacks on Asians and Indigenous people escalated as com-

plaints of racism to the Federal Race Discrimination Commission doubled.

The mainstream parties boosted One Nation's racism. Rather than slap Hanson down, Liberal Prime Minister John Howard defended her right to free speech and tried to undercut her appeal by implementing some of her policies.

Immigration was cut by 20 per cent as Howard launched an ideological offensive against the so-called "black armband view of history" saying "we have been too apologetic about our past". Abstudy was cut by \$38 million as was funding to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, which Howard later abolished.

Labor leader Kim Beazley wasn't much better. Rather than denounce her maiden speech explicitly he described it as "extraordinary and disappointing". While he called on Howard to "exercise leadership on this issue" he failed to do so himself.

When NSW Labor secretary John Della Bosca called Howard a racist and received a standing ovation at the NSW Labor conference in October 1996, Beazley responded saying he wouldn't be "characterising John Howard that way".

Labor, too, was responsible for creating the conditions that allowed Hanson to get a hearing. Labor had ruled for 13 years federally and during that time embraced neoliberalism. State assets were privatised, the economy and the labour market deregulated and the welfare state run down, creating widespread bitterness.

It was no accident that Hanson was elected in Oxley, a seat based on the industrial city of Ipswich. Seven hundred jobs were lost in the local railway workshops in the early 1990s despite workers in the city voting for Labor to represent them at all three levels of government.

Labor's vicious turn on its own supporters created the political space

The mainstream parties boosted One Nation's racism

for Hanson to pose as an opponent of deregulation and privatisation and present herself as the "voice of the people" against the "elites".

The fightback

With Howard pandering to Hanson's explicit racism and Labor failing to put up a clear left alternative, it was left to unionists, Aboriginal activists, ethnic community councils and socialists to organise a serious fightback.

Building the broadest opposition to Hanson and clearly labelling her a racist was important. Hanson was casting herself as representing the "mainstream" and the media backed her message.

Big, broad, but militant, demonstrations directed at stifling her public meetings were needed to counter Hanson's recruitment drive.

The first major rally against Hanson was the "Unite against Racism" rally in Brisbane in November 1996. Four thousand rallied and for the first time there was a clear anti-racist message on the evening news.

Socialists played an important role initiating this rally and right from the beginning sought to involve Indigenous, migrant, student and faith groups, alongside sections of the Labor Party and importantly the union movement.

Hanson and Howard's racism was directed at dividing the working class and sought to divert anger over unemployment away from the bosses and the government onto to migrants and Indigenous people. A stand by the unions was needed to combat the spread of racist myths in the workplaces.

The Brisbane rally was addressed by Dave Harrison ACTU (Qld) and state Labor MP David Hamill and was endorsed by six trade unions. Numerous union banners were seen there and the leaflet promoting the rally was translated into Chinese. Several Labor Party branches did mail-outs promot-

ing the rally.

Further rallies followed in Sydney, Canberra, Perth and Melbourne. The Melbourne rally, organised by the Victorian Trades Hall Council and the Ethnic Communities Council, drew over 30,000 people.

On the same day in Ipswich, in the heart of Hanson country, hundreds rallied and marched behind a banner painted by local high school students, "Ipswich Residents Against Racism". All these protests sought to link Hanson to John Howard, opposing the way he was encouraging and legitimising her from within the political mainstream.

Counter-protests

Hanson launched her One Nation Party in Ipswich in April 1997. Socialists initiated a counter-protest that led to wild scenes outside the Ipswich Civic Centre, as angry protesters confronted those attending the launch. The news that night showed Hanson running through the car park trying to avoid protesters.

Politicians and the media denounced this and the similar protests that followed as "violent" and an attack on "free speech" but, rather than being deterred, anti-racists were inspired. From then on wherever Hanson spoke there was a counter protest outside attended by hundreds, sometimes thousands—in Perth, Adelaide, Newcastle, Sydney, Dandenong, Geelong, the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast, Ipswich, Brisbane and many other places.

Protests spread like wildfire. People didn't just protest outside Hanson meetings but also wherever One Nation tried to form a branch—including in Toowoomba, Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo, Kiama, Rockingham, and Queanbeyan.

Militant counter-protests were important for several reasons. First and foremost they delegitimised Hanson, clearly labelling her a racist, something the mainstream parties wouldn't do.

The counter-protests were also important for splitting softer racists from the hard racist core of One Nation. Entering a One Nation meeting now required the political commitment to walk through a hostile crowd. Attendance at Hanson's meetings began to fall, as would be supporters turned away rather than face the protests.

"They do make it very embarrassing for those who want to come to our meetings," complained One Nation co-founder, David Ettridge. Hanson described her visit to Perth, where



Above: A protest outside one of One Nation's meetings

2000 people disrupted her meeting at the Challenge stadium, as "the worst 24 hours of her life".

The size and determination of the protests also shifted the media narrative from: "is she an unstoppable juggernaut" to "is she racist"? They also encouraged more timid politicians, community leaders and union leaders to speak out against racism. A number of local councils banned her from using public spaces for meetings.

Hanson's demise

For a long time, John Howard considered One Nation as the "lesser evil" and refused to rule out a preference deal with them. "Put One Nation Last" became a demand that the movement made on the politicians of both sides.

Some federal Coalition MPs even considered forming a coalition with One Nation. In the 1998 Queensland election the Coalition parties ignored the anti-racist demand and actually preferred One Nation ahead of Labor. But it backfired dramatically with Labor holding on as a minority government and One Nation taking five of the 11 seats they won off the Coalition.

Between One Nation's electoral success in Queensland in June 1998 and the October federal election, protests continued to escalate.

Hanson had to abandon a public meeting in the Hawthorn Town Hall in Melbourne because of a massive counter-protest. She also had to abandon a "meet the people" walk in Bendigo after high school students joined a counter-protest.

Thousands of high school students joined a nationwide march on 24 July

and a few days later in Brisbane thousands of high school students joined an Indigenous-led protest outside the first sitting of the Queensland Parliament.

At the 1998 Federal election Labor and the Coalition preferred each other ahead of One Nation. Hanson won 36 per cent of the primary vote in the seat of Blair but failed to win because preferences flowed against her.

The demonstrations had politically isolated One Nation and pushed the racists to the margins.

Today March for Australia is being fuelled by mainstream racism from Labor and the Liberals blaming migrants for the housing and cost of living crisis. This means we have to fight the mainstream racism that allows them to grow.

Exposing the organising role of open Nazis will help split the soft racists attracted to the rallies from their more hardened core.

Mobilising big, broad anti-racist rallies can intimidate the racists at the same time as they increase the confidence of the anti-racists. And just as importantly socialists argue against the flag-waving nationalism that covers up the inequality and misery of capitalism that MFA and Nazis thrive in.

While in the 1990s we were able to push the far right back onto the margins of politics, as long as capitalism creates inequality, misery and alienation, there will always be an audience for their toxic politics. That is why part of the fight against the far right today has to be encouraging every fightback over wages and conditions, for public housing, better health and education, to push back against the despair that fuels them.

TWO YEARS OF GENOCIDE RESULT OF A SAVAGE IMPERIALIST SYSTEM

Albanese and the world's most powerful governments have facilitated seemingly endless barbarism in Gaza in service of their own imperialist interests, argues **David Glanz**

AS WE tried to escape, the school was bombed again and Sila was hit in the head by shrapnel. Her head was covered in blood. I hugged her and screamed for help. My son Muhammad took off his shirt and tried to bandage Sila's head to stop the bleeding. I shouted for an ambulance, but no one paid attention.

—Aya Husu, 25 August

There are hundreds of thousands of such stories among the Palestinians of Gaza, who have withstood non-stop horror in the two years since Israel launched its genocide.

The official death rate has passed 68,000 but everyone knows there are many more bodies that will never be counted.

Even Israeli military intelligence acknowledges that five out of every six Palestinians killed in Gaza have been civilians.

“The future feels destroyed—no one knows what to do,” Abed Alaleem Wahdan told *Al Jazeera* as he fled his home. “The bombing is everywhere, even in the south.”

Palestinian children have taken much of the brunt. Gaza has the highest proportion of child amputees in the world.

In August, 19 per cent of children in Gaza City were suffering malnutrition—before Israel launched its latest major attack on the area.

But Gaza continues to resist, demonstrating the Palestinian value of sumud—of steadfastness.

Sometimes the resistance takes the form of armed struggle. A roadside bomb killed four Israeli soldiers and wounded three on 18 September.

More often it takes the form of refusing to surrender. As a journalist in Gaza City wrote,

“In Gaza today, many of us feel we are living through another Nakba—

one even more devastating than that of our grandparents. But unlike in 1948, Palestinians today understand that what is presented to us as ‘temporary’ displacement almost always becomes permanent. That is why so many of us refuse to leave, even as our homes come under fire.”

Meanwhile Israel continues to bomb—and not just Palestine. In the past year it has attacked Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Qatar and Tunisia ... without any consequences from its Western backers.

Global movement

It has taken a global movement of historic proportions to force some governments in the West into token action.

Millions have taken to the streets again and again—dwarfing the massive rallies against the Iraq War in 2003 and against the Vietnam War in the 1970s in size and worldwide reach.

The movement is penetrating deeper into society, as evidenced by the 300,000 who marched across the Sydney Harbour Bridge in August, the motions calling for sanctions carried at the Victorian Labor state conference, the flowering of community, student and union groups, and the growth of a boycott movement, seen vividly with the mass withdrawals from the Bendigo literature festival.

Regardless of all this, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese insisted that he would not budge.

On 27 July, he said about recognising Palestine, “Is the time right now? Are we about to imminently do that? No, we are not.”

Just two weeks later, on 11 August, he announced that Australia would recognise Palestine.

Albanese's aim in criticising Israel

It has taken a global movement of historic proportions to force governments in the West into token action

over the deaths of Palestinians is to save it. His statement on recognition boasted of Labor's role in establishing Israel in 1947-48 and made it clear that Labor stood in solidarity with the Zionist project.

But he was forced to concede recognition because of the strength of the Palestine solidarity movement. His backflip is a tribute to our rallies, university encampments and union and community organising.

But recognition and mealy-mouthed talk of a two-state solution will not save a single life in Gaza.

The urgent priority is to demand that the Albanese government sanctions Israel and ends the two-way arms trade.

And union members need to build support in workplaces to open the way for bans on Israeli trade and services—sanctions from below.

We can take inspiration from the Greek and Italian wharfies who have refused to handle Israeli cargo and from the general strike for Palestine in Italy in late September.

Arms sales

Gaza is in ruins. Hamas has been severely degraded as a fighting force. A ceasefire and IDF withdrawal would see the remaining hostages released. So why does Israel persist with the war?

The first answer is, because it can. For two years, with one small, temporary exception under Joe Biden, the US has poured weapons and ammunition into Israel. In just the first two months of the new Trump administration, the US approved \$18 billion in arms sales.

In mid-September, the White House announced that the US would sell Israel another \$9 billion in weapons, including 30 Apache helicopters and 3250 infantry assault vehicles.

Meanwhile, the ABC reports that the Department of Defence is allowing at least 35 military export permits to Israel to go ahead.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu benefits personally from the continuation of the genocide, which pleases his far-right coalition partners and keeps his government afloat.

If his government fell, he would face corruption charges.

But he is playing for much bigger stakes. Netanyahu sees an opportunity to dramatically expand Israel's borders with Trump's support.

Israel has already seized more territory from Syria in the Golan Heights. It controls a zone in southern Lebanon after destroying villages to drive out residents. In February, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said his forces were "staying indefinitely".

And while the world watches the horror in Gaza, Israel is stepping up ethnic cleansing in the West Bank as a prelude to possible annexation—meaning the land would become part of the Israeli state.

In January, it sent tanks into Jenin and neighbouring Tulkarem—nominally under the control of the Palestinian Authority—razing large areas of the Palestinian refugee camps in both cities and demolishing buildings in other areas.

The mayor of Jenin told the BBC that about 40 per cent of the town was now held by the Israeli military, with about a quarter of residents—including the entire camp—driven from their homes.

In a statement that should finally bury the illusion of a two-state solution, Netanyahu declared, "A Palestinian state will not be established west of the Jordan River ... Moreover, we doubled Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] and we will continue on this path."

He told Israeli settlers on the West Bank, "This place is ours. We will see to our heritage, our land and our security."

With the endorsement of Trump's grotesque real estate fantasy for the Gaza waterfront, Netanyahu seems intent on ethnically cleansing the Strip and annexing it, too.

Israel lobby

Why does the US and its allies like Australia let Israel continue with these crimes against humanity?

A common response is that the US



Above: Palestinians fleeing Gaza City in the face of Israel's offensive Photo: UNRWA

is controlled by the dictates of the Israel lobby, which funds politicians and organises lavish free trips to Israel.

But that gets things around the wrong way.

The Israel lobby has influence because it is pushing at an open door—it is in the interests of US imperialism to have a strong and dependable ally in the region.

Israel can be relied upon to punish those who endanger the West's vital interests in the Middle East, which contains 50 per cent of the world's oil supplies.

Those interests are not only fossil fuel profits but access to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, which handles up to 15 per cent of worldwide trade and about 30 per cent of global container traffic.

The US is not motivated just by immediate profits. Control in the region gives it leverage over its main rival, China, as well as India and even Asian allies, all of which rely heavily on Middle Eastern oil.

China buys about 90 per cent of Iran's shipped oil. In addition, 60 per cent of China's trade with Europe passes through the Suez Canal.

It is these imperialist interests that ensure that US politicians line up to pledge support for Israel and are keen to punish those who denounce the genocide in universities and elsewhere.

Albanese has broken ranks with Trump on the token issue of recognition but he and the rest of the Australian ruling class remain just as

committed to Israel as an ally in the Middle East.

World politics

Over the two years since 7 October 2023, Palestine has been at the centre of world politics and political activism.

Gaza has become for millions a symptom of a rotten system.

Politicians spout about Western "values" while watching Palestinian children starve. University leaders talk of diversity and inclusion while witch-hunting staff or students who speak up against the genocide.

The media falsely accuses Palestine protesters of antisemitism while promoting March for Australia rallies led by Nazis.

We're told that Hamas are terrorists and that Palestinians have no right to resist—while the government is spending \$368 billion on nuclear-powered submarines to be used in a war with China.

As we enter the third year of mass slaughter in Gaza, we need to turn our disgust and anger with this hypocrisy into ever greater action.

There will be demonstrations across the country on 12 October to mark the second anniversary of the genocide.

We need to carry the message of solidarity with Palestine and the demand for sanctions into workplaces, lecture theatres and the streets.

We need to build the largest possible turnout and deliver a message that Albanese cannot ignore.

KEY MOMENTS FROM SOLIDARITY'S 200 ISSUES

To mark 200 issues we look at key articles, issues and covers that have appeared in *Solidarity* since our first issue



SOLIDARITY WAS launched in 2008 just after Kevin Rudd's Labor government took power.

Lessons from Labor's last time in power summed up how he dashed the hopes of a break from the legacy of John Howard's Liberal government:

"Kevin Rudd won office on a massive 5.44 per cent swing—even unseating John Howard in Bennelong. On the back of Rudd's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and apology to the Stolen Generations, his approval rating soared to 70 per cent.

"But it all ended in tears. Labor's problems stem from their commitment to managing capitalism.

"Rudd and Gillard continually delivered policies tailored to the needs of big business. Even when the Global Financial Crisis struck in 2008, Rudd stimulated the economy and took the budget into deficit as he talked about "saving capitalism from itself". Mostly Rudd was concerned to save capitalism. The Treasurer, Wayne Swan, as early as 2010 was back to promising Labor would deliver budget surpluses. This meant making cuts welfare spending and education.

"As Labor crashed in the polls and the Liberals attacked, Labor's response was to move to the right."

WE'VE REPORTED on numerous strikes and union struggles such as the campaign in 2012 that saw **Nurses defy the law to defend the health system and jobs** in Victoria, staging "rolling stoppages involving over 1000 nurses, midwives and mental health nurses across 15 hospitals" that "showed how to take 'illegal' strike action in spite of the threat of fines from Fair Work Australia of \$6600 against individual nurses and up to \$33,000 against the union for breaching Federal Court orders".

And in 2018 we covered how **120,000 stop work in Melbourne to Change the Rules** as "Around 120,000 workers took over the streets of Melbourne on 9 May in an awesome display of working class power ... launching the Change the Rules campaign."

Yet "the emphasis was on preparing for an electoral campaign to get rid of Malcolm Turnbull's Liberal government."

But as we argued in **Enterprise Bargaining and the UnFair Work Act** "The system of Enterprise Bargaining restricting lawful strike action to bargaining periods is at the core of laws that have removed the right to strike" yet Labor government have maintained "the barring of industrial action outside protected periods".



Rudd and Gillard continually delivered policies tailored to the needs of big business



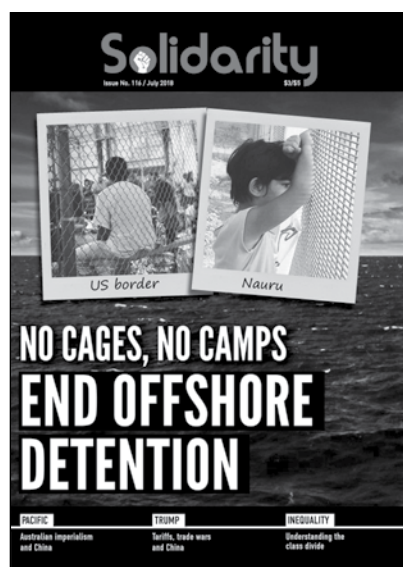
IN 2007, Liberal Prime Minister John Howard launched the Northern Territory Intervention. *Solidarity* reported on the resistance from Indigenous communities and discussed in **The NT intervention and the new politics of assimilation** how, "The Intervention is designed to dispossess, to push people off their lands and into towns" as "the most extreme manifestation of the assimilationist agenda" pursued throughout Howard's time in power.

Then "Shamefully, the Rudd Labor government, elected in late 2007, wholeheartedly embraced the Intervention" in ongoing analysis such as **After 15 years of racism—chance to tear out the NT Intervention by the roots** in 2022.

As the Black Lives Matter protests hit the streets in 2020 we examined how **Racist government policies fuel deaths in custody**.

More recently we explained **How the plan for a token advisory Voice was hatched** that offered no real rights and why **After the Voice's defeat, we need the politics of protest** and how **Albanese fails to act as deaths in custody and imprisonment surge**.

And we have covered the history of Indigenous struggle, and figures like William Cooper, Bill Ferguson and Pearl Gibbs as well as **Fifty years since the Gurindji strike**.



In Free Palestine—why we say by any means necessary we argued that “The resistance against the racist Israeli terror state is wholly justified.”

BRUTAL RACIST policies against refugees have been a shameful feature of Australian politics since John Howard “dramatically expanded detention centres—opening Woomera in November 1999” and then launched the Pacific Solution following the Tampa crisis in 2001 as we explained in a history of **How the refugee movement changed public opinion last time** in 2011.

Labor was already trying to outdo the Liberals in attacking refugees, but as we argued in 2013 Rudd’s PNG deal saw, “Labor’s plan to shut out asylum seekers completely and finally fulfil the project started by John Howard and the Immigration department in 2001—to create a Fortress Australia that denies asylum to anyone arriving by boat.”

This situation is still with us as **Labor’s refugee shame as Liberals claim ‘we are running the Immigration system’** argued last year as Albanese passed sweeping new deportation laws:

“Not for the first time, Labor has purposely sacrificed principles on the altar of electoral opportunism.

“Since Labor was elected asylum boats have been intercepted and turned around at sea. More than 100 asylum seekers have been sent to Nauru, with no prospects of resettlement.”

But as **Refugees and resistance in detention** explained, protests have also won gains, such as in 2016 when “news leaked that Lady Cilento Hospital staff had refused to discharge baby Asha to possible deportation to Nauru” and “refugee activists quickly organised a solidarity vigil and picket” as part of the Let Them Stay campaign that stopped refugees being sent back to Nauru and Manus Island.

IN OUR first issue in March 2008 we reported that “Israel has unleashed a new murderous offensive against Palestinians in the Gaza strip” as its “blockade denies the entrance of basic goods into Gaza”.

When Israel began its genocide in October 2023 we wrote, “This war didn’t begin when Hamas sent rockets and soldiers over the border. Israel has been waging war against the whole civilian population of Gaza almost continuously since 2007.

“From its foundation it has relied on the support of Western imperialist powers to seize and occupy Palestinian land, playing a key role imposing US control of the surrounding Arab states in return.”

In **Free Palestine—why we say by any means necessary** we argued that, “The resistance by Palestinians against the racist Israeli terror state is wholly justified. All the deaths, horrors and destruction—all of them—are rooted in violent Israeli occupation and dispossession.”

Shortly after **Revolution in the Arab world the key to Palestinian liberation** argued that, “In 2019 hundreds of thousands in Lebanon called for revolution, in protests sparked by austerity measures and economic collapse. The same month mass protests took to the streets of Iraq against corruption and poverty.

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



Use the QR code to read the full articles excerpted here and a selection of our best articles from 200 issues



DESPITE EVER more urgent warnings of catastrophe, world leaders have comprehensively failed to act on climate change. “The action needed means fighting the logic of capitalism and profit,” argued **Capitalism vs the climate: Why we need system change**.

In 2011 Labor and The Greens introduced a carbon tax but as we put it at the time, “Despite talk of making the polluters pay, the carbon tax was designed so that companies would pass the cost on through increasing electricity prices.”

“This was a gift to Tony Abbott and the Liberals, who declared that the tax would raise power prices and damage workers’ cost of living, promising to axe it.”

“The climate movement’s support for the tax cut it off from wider layers of workers,” we wrote in **Lessons from the last climate movement**.

As the Climate Strike movement rose, the 2019 election result “was a heavy blow that left many supporters of climate action reeling”, with the Liberals returned to power after a campaign that won votes in mining areas opposing climate action.

As we argued in **Election result shows why climate action must mean a fight for jobs**:

“Only a pro-jobs climate movement that draws in significant working class support can succeed. The demand for direct government investment in 100 per cent renewable energy by 2030 has to be raised alongside the call for a just transition.

“This means guaranteed re-training and new, public sector jobs for mining workers with no reduction in pay and conditions.”

GENERAL STRIKE IN ITALY BLOCKS ISRAELI TRADE, BACKS FLOTILLA



By James Supple

UNIONS IN Italy held a general strike for Palestine on 22 September, as global solidarity with Gaza continues to grow. The largest ever protest for Palestine in Berlin, Germany, a week later saw 100,000 march.

Greek workers are poised to walk out on a general strike for Palestine on 10 October.

The action in Italy followed a call from dockworkers to “block everything” in solidarity with the Sumud Flotilla to Gaza and to demand sanctions and an end to arms exports to Israel. Italy is the terror state’s third largest weapons supplier.

About a million people joined protests in more than 80 towns and cities as a series of left-wing unions went on strike.

Thousands of dock workers and supporters shut port entrances in Genoa, Salerno, Venice and Livorno, aiming to stop all exports to Israel.

Transport workers also halted buses and metro lines nationwide, and protesters set out to block train stations. Some schools and universities were also shut down.

At Livorno, activists discovered a US-flagged vessel was arriving from Israel loaded with equipment and vehicles for the US’s Camp Darby in Italy.

“Ten thousand people occupied the port—particularly Molo Italia, the dock where the US ship was supposed to unload,” Leonardo, an activist there, said.

Above: Members of Unione Sindacale Di Base (USB) trade union, which has a strong presence on the docks in Italy, during the general strike in September
Photo: USB

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Workers at the port of Genoa have repeatedly gone on strike to block arms headed for Israel

“From there, we established a permanent protest to prevent it from docking.”

It was the fifth major strike for Palestine since October 2023, organised in collaboration with Palestinian activists. Workers at the port of Genoa and trade unions USB and SI Cobas have repeatedly gone on strike to block arms headed for Israel.

In June they took action against a ZIM ship trying to transport 14 tonnes of ammunition parts to Israel, following action by workers in France. Last month dockworkers in Ravenna also stopped the shipment of two containers of explosives to Israel.

The action shows the kind of power that unionised workers can bring to the struggle for Palestine—through directly blocking the export of weapons and other trade with Israel.

Sumud Flotilla

Italian fascist Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has been a hardline supporter of Israel. In the face of widening public disgust at Israel she has now softened on her opposition to recognising a Palestinian state and says Israel has gone too far. She has denounced the Sumud Flotilla as “dangerous and irresponsible”.

But Italy has now sent a naval ship alongside one from Spain to assist the Flotilla, which has faced continual drone attacks from Israel as it nears Gaza. They aim to protect the Flotilla from attack in international waters, which are supposedly protected under international law.

As *Solidarity* went to press the Flotilla was just days away from reaching Gaza. It includes at least 44 vessels with participants from 45 countries including around ten Austrians and is the largest civilian effort to break Israel’s siege on Gaza and deliver desperately needed humanitarian aid.

After two years of genocidal barbarism, Israel is still expanding its murderous offensive against the people of Gaza.

Its air strikes in Qatar attempting to wipe out Hamas’ negotiators in the ceasefire talks showed its brazen contempt for any idea of halting its onslaught.

It is now setting out to raze Gaza City, demolishing buildings as it tries to expel hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to the south. Many are unable to leave and face death from starvation or intense bombing.

In recent months some unions here, as well as peak union bodies like Victorian Trades Hall, have organised contingents on Palestine protests for the first time.

This should have happened earlier. But the movement needs to welcome every move towards action for Palestine as a step forward—and organise within the unions to push union leaders to go further.

This is the way to build towards similar kinds of blockades and strikes against trade with Israel here—and to pull the weight of the unions into forcing Albanese to impose sanctions on Israel.

Solidarity