

# Solidarity

Issue No. 202 / December 2025

\$3/\$5

## 'Ceasefire' is a lie



# STOP ARMING ISRAEL

### PALESTINE

UN approves plan for  
colonial control of Gaza

### RACISM

The Cronulla riot  
20 years on

### EAST TIMOR

Why Australia backed its  
invasion 50 years on

# 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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Meeting 6.30pm every Thursday  
Brown St Hall, 8-10 Brown St  
Newtown  
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### Melbourne

Meeting 6.30pm every Thursday  
Kathleen Syme library and community  
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## Things they say

**Beautiful, menacing and extremely cool.**

Richard Marles, Defence Minister and Deputy PM, drooling over weapons at the Indo-Pacific arms expo in Sydney

**They're not selling nuclear weapons ... we want to see the industry grow.**

Chris Minns, NSW Premier, defends the indefensible arms making industry and the arms expo held in Sydney

**I want to reassure people listening who care about the climate that I do too, which is why we have dedicated emissions reduction goals in our plan.**

Liberal leader Sussan Ley struggling to explain her abandonment of net zero by 2050

**I'm deciding between a classy watch and what we in the watch world call a 'FU' watch...it's something that's like, half a million dollars, but only certain people will know what it is...**

Andrew Rasa, CEO of Sydney based marketing company, OMG, shopping in Hong Kong

**I've never directly racially abused anybody.**

Leader of anti-immigration Reform UK Nigel Farage trying to deny complaints against him

**It's an exercise in discipline**

Finance Minister Kay Gallagher trying to justify 5 per cent across the board cuts in the public service

**Reports of my death are grossly exaggerated, and I'm here to fight.**

Former NSW Liberal leader Mark Speakman the day before resigning to make way for a new leader

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## Victoria Police racial targeting exposed

NEW DATA has shown Victoria Police's shocking level of racial profiling against Indigenous people, African, Middle Eastern and Pacific Islander people.

It shows people thought to be Indigenous were 15 times more likely to be searched, but less likely to have drugs or weapons found, ten times more likely to have force or the threat of force used against them, and 13 times more likely to have tasers used on them compared to someone of white appearance.

The Racial Profiling Data Monitoring Project obtained the data from police using Freedom of Information requests about police operations in 2024.

It also shows that people of African appearance were eight times more likely to be searched, and police were 24 times more likely to start a pursuit against them.

They were also five times more likely to use or threaten use of force against Pacific Islanders.

## Australian government markets weapons to UAE

AUSTRALIAN ARMS companies at a major arms fair in Dubai offered weapons that may be used in the savage civil war in Sudan.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is now Australia's largest arms export market, purchasing \$300 million worth of arms and ammunition over the past five years, the UN Comtrade database shows. This makes Australia the UAE's fourth largest arms supplier.

The Australian government gave more than 35 companies space in the "Team Defence Australia" pavilion at the Dubai International airshow held in November. It paid for their costs to market weapons "face-to-face with the UAE ministry of defence" according to Austrade.

The event describes itself as a "showcase [for] cutting-edge military aircraft and air defence technologies".

The country is widely believed to be funnelling weapons to the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan, who recently carried out a wave of atrocities and ethnic cleansing after capturing the city of El Fasher.

## Corruption the cost of Nauru's offshore prison



NAURU HAS employed members of the Finks bkie gang to provide security managing members of the NZYQ cohort of refugees and non-citizens deported from Australia, whistleblower Oisin Donohoe told the *Nine Papers* and *60 Minutes*.

The first of 358 people who could be deported there were sent in late October.

"The fact that I've had zero response from any of the ministers that I've contacted suggests that they're more than happy to sweep it under the rug", Donohoe said.

Nauru will gain up to \$2.5 billion in payments to keep the group there for the next 30 years.

It comes as a senior Home Affairs Department official alleged millions of dollars in Australian government money have been siphoned off through corruption on Nauru. Home Affairs acting assistant secretary Dr Derek Elias says he was told to keep this quiet in an effort to protect the offshore detention system.

Canstruct's contract for running detention was rorted by the company and siphoned off in corrupt payments to Nauruan politicians between 2019 and 2021, he says. "We were renewing contracts which were no longer fit for purpose. We were overpaying for services that were no longer required or delivered."

It's far from the first time the Australian government has ignored corruption on Nauru in order to maintain its offshore gulag. Another former senior official in the Immigration Department told the *Saturday Paper* that when offshore detention was being reopened in 2012, "Anything the Nauru government wanted, they got. Corruption was aided and abetted. [The Nauruan government] was basically a corrupt gangster operation."

### Calls for spit hood ban after Queensland death

THERE WERE calls for a ban on spit hoods in Queensland jails as the coroner released a report into the death of 44-year-old Selesa Tafaifa in October. The woman of Samoan background died in November 2021 after an altercation with prison guards that caused her to go into cardiac arrest.

Less than a minute after they pulled a spit hood over her head she warned a number of times "I can't breathe". Guards had denied Selesa a phone call that was part of her "daily ritual" of contacting relatives.

While the coroner would not say that the spit hood directly contributed to her death she said the state should consider banning them as other states have done. Queensland, WA and the NT are the only jurisdictions that still allow the use of spit hoods in adult prisons.

## Labor welcomes Israeli arms traders at Indo-Pacific expo

HUNDREDS OF protesters descended on the Indo-Pacific weapons expo in Sydney in November, as the NSW and Federal governments welcomed key enablers of Israel's genocide.

Israeli weapons firms Elbit and Rafael were allowed to exhibit their killing machines alongside other suppliers for Israel such as Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems, Raytheon and Boeing.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles celebrated the arms fair as "a fantastic three days" in his opening address. In a display of sickening enthusiasm for the arms trade he described the event as "a kind of version of Navy Disneyland" and "the happiest place on earth" for navy chiefs.

Defence Materials Minister Pat Conroy defended the promotion of Israeli weapons companies, saying it was about "getting the best possible equipment for the Australian Defence Force". What it was really about was boosting the profits and production of the companies that arm the Israeli terror state.

It was another example of the Albanese government's willingness to work with Israel and refuse to sanction companies directly responsible for horrific war crimes.

The NSW Labor government also backed the event, providing funding of almost \$1 million for it over three years.

## BYD claims carbon credit for cars in storage

ELECTRIC VEHICLE company BYD has been importing far more cars than it expects to sell, since it can pocket \$7050 per car under a government carbon credit scheme.

According to the *Financial Review* it imported 50,918 cars in the first nine months of the year and sold only 37,923. Most car companies import far fewer vehicles beyond the number sold.

Because the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard scheme is calculated based on imports rather than sales, BYD can make money leaving them sitting in a warehouse. It can sell carbon credits to other car companies that haven't met their fuel efficiency targets under the scheme.

# EDITORIAL

## Albanese still arming Israel as it kills despite ‘ceasefire’

AFTER CONSISTENTLY avoiding answering whether or not Australia has been supplying F-35 fighter jet parts or other military hardware for Israel, in early November the Albanese government quietly imposed a ban on the export of some defence goods to Israel. According to *The Nightly* “a small number” of Australian companies have been told they can no longer export goods to Israel.

The government refused to say what goods were involved—but it’s a clear admission that Australian companies are supplying the Israeli military and that Australia is complicit in the genocide.

Parts for the F-35 fighter jets and other material are still being exported. At Bisalloy’s AGM in November the company, which produces military grade steel, also confirmed their “20-plus-year business relationship with several leading Israeli companies”, while complaining about protests at the Wollongong factory disrupting production.

Meanwhile in the 44 days following the “ceasefire” in Gaza, Israel has violated the supposed truce almost 500 times bombing houses and tents, killing hundreds. Israel has also again broken the “ceasefire” in Lebanon, murdering the second in command of Hezbollah in Beirut.

The US has given Israel the green light for the continued butchery. US Vice-President JD Vance dismissed the continual Israeli violations as “little skirmishes” and claimed “the ceasefire is holding”.

Now the UN Security Council has rubber-stamped Trump’s proposal to hand control of Gaza to a colonial administration run by the US and Israel. This will guarantee Israel’s domination and ensure that the genocide will continue.

Disgracefully, Albanese is in lock-step with Trump. Following his October visit to Trump in the White House, Albanese sat next to Trump at a special dinner at the ASEAN summit. Trump sang Albanese’s praises saying he had “done a fantastic job” and “we’re working on a lot of things together”.

Albanese has cemented Australia as an integral part of the US war machine, expanding US bases across the country and ploughing \$368 billion into nuclear-powered subs to further preparations for a war on China.

### Liberals’ crisis

The Coalition has been in crisis since its crushing federal election defeat in May. Leader Sussan Ley has failed



to move away from the Trump-like policies of Peter Dutton that led to the rout.

The Nationals and the Liberals’ right-wing have now forced the Liberal Party to dump its support for net zero emissions by 2050.

The Coalition is left exposed as a right-wing rump with no immediate chance of winning back government.

But rather than seize the opportunity to deliver some desperately needed change, Albanese is chasing them to the right, defending the interests of big business and the climate polluters.

Speaking as the COP30 global climate negotiations took place in Brazil, Albanese ruled out any limit on coal exports and declared again his support for more gas projects. In a completely empty gesture, Australia then put its name to the summit’s meaningless call for a “phase out” of fossil fuels.

Based on current government policies worldwide, we are headed for a hellish 3.3 degrees of warming by the end of the century.

Albanese’s failure to act on the cost of living and housing has also opened the door for the far right.

His government has fed the racist opposition to immigration, moving to cut international student visas and boasting recently that it’s cut immigration by 40 per cent.

One Nation is reaping the benefits, hitting 18 per cent in one poll.

But it’s rich housing investors that have made house prices and rents

**Above: Rallying for Gaza to mark two years of genocide**  
Photo: Solidarity

unaffordable, not migrants.

The large racist March for Australia rallies have given confidence to far right and fascist groups.

When the National Socialist Network staged a rally outside NSW Parliament with 60 members in November, it triggered a wave of shock.

But the actions of NSW Premier Chris Minns and the police won’t push back the Nazis.

Their rallies need to be met with counter-protests to demoralise them and push them off the streets. March for Australia plans to rally again on Invasion Day. Their intent to celebrate a White Australia on the day marking the start of the genocide of Indigenous people is particularly disgusting and must be challenged.

The Invasion Day marches must be as big as possible.

We also need to keep fighting for Palestine. National rallies are taking place on 7 December.

In Italy unions have called a nationwide strike on 28 November to protest a government “war budget” that cuts spending on public services while boosting military spending, and to block supply of weapons and goods to Israel.

With Albanese totally committed to running capitalism, there is an urgent need to fan the flames of resistance. We need to keep demanding sanctions and to cut all ties with Israel, to close the US bases and scrap the nuclear submarines.

We need socialists organised in every workplace, university and movement to link every struggle with a fight against the system that breeds racism and war.

.....  
**Albanese’s failure to act on the cost of living and housing has also opened the door for the far right**

# Uni workers strike back over pay and drastic job cuts

By Angus Dermody

A WAVE of strikes has hit universities across the country, as NTEU members begin the latest round of enterprise bargaining, and fight back against management restructuring.

Hundreds of workers at UTS, where the Administration is implementing a drastic restructuring program of course and staff cuts, staged a four hour strike on 26 November demanding no forced redundancies, improved consultation, a fair pay rise and more rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

On 19 November a busload of striking Newcastle University staff (UON) rallied outside NSW Parliament. Inside, the University bosses, who want to axe 140 jobs, joined politicians celebrating 60 years of the University. The staff were on 24 hour strike, the second strike of the campaign, which is demanding job security and wages that match inflation.

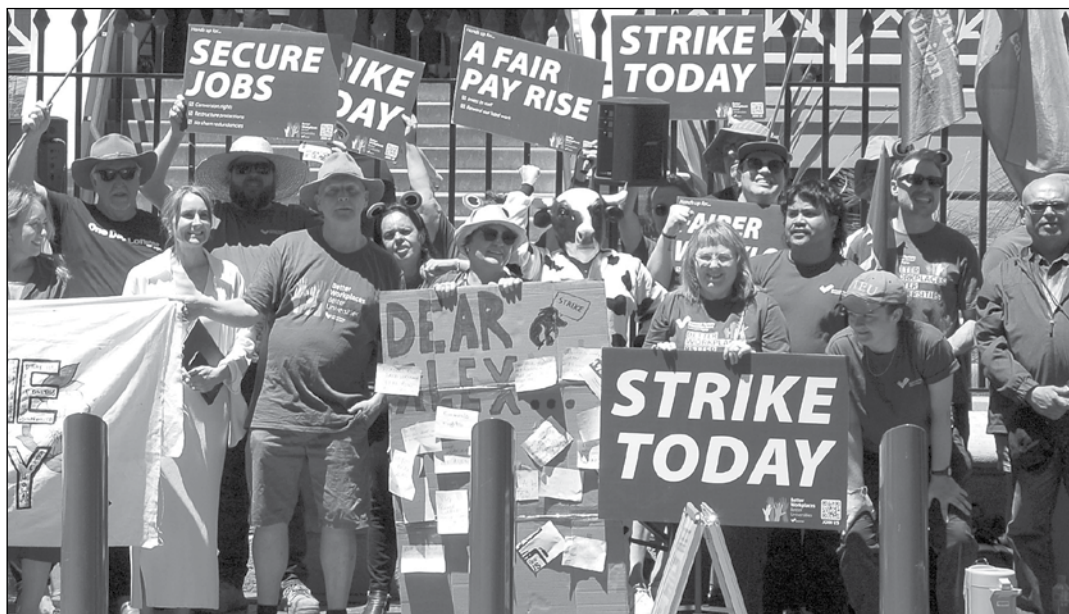
At the Australian Catholic University staff took strike action on 15 October and again on 22 October, as they fight for an above-inflation pay rise, extending decasualisation, and stronger flexible work rights.

Staff have already rejected management's offer of 2.8 per cent a year after the Vice-Chancellor took a 5.8 per cent pay rise last year. A 24-hour strike is being planned for Semester 1 next year unless management meets their demands.

At Curtin University in Western Australia, staff went on a half-day strike on 5 November, fighting for a real pay increase and workload protections.

At ANU, a staff and student campaign earlier this year stopped over 100 forced redundancies and put an end to some of management's drastic restructuring plans. Staff and students organised rallies, petitions, and carried a vote of no-confidence motion in the Vice-Chancellor, who was subsequently forced to resign. Staff at the College of Arts and Social Sciences also stopped work when a surprising cease-work order was issued by Fair Work due to the psychosocial harm posed by the cuts.

The strike action comes in the face of a concerted management offensive and a crisis in the tertiary education sector. Hundreds of jobs are being cut and courses discontinued as university bosses make staff and students pay



**Above: Staff from the University of Newcastle outside NSW Parliament during the 24 hour strike** Photo: Solidarity

with an avalanche of cost-cutting measures. The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) estimates that the announced cuts across universities amount to 3578 jobs lost in just one year, between 2024 and 2025.

## Job cuts

The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) management is aiming to save \$100 million by cutting 400 jobs and discontinuing 167 courses and 1101 subjects, including by closing down the schools of Public Health, Education and International Studies.

Management's plan was briefly paused when SafeWork NSW intervened due to the "serious and imminent risk of psychological harm" and recently UTS Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) have forced further delays on similar grounds.

SafeWork also intervened at Macquarie University, ordering the administration to provide opportunities for staff consultation over a draft proposal that would see 63 positions cut (although the University claims some of these positions are now safe).

At the University of Wollongong job cuts may amount to 10 per cent of the workforce, included cuts to the Safe and Respectful Communities service which provides support to students dealing with sexual assault and domestic violence.

University managements try to blame the cuts on government policies and their unsustainable finances. And while it's true that Labor should be fully funding tertiary education, the university managements should

not be let off the hook.

For starters, the average pay for an Australian Vice-Chancellor is over \$1 million. UTS VC Andrew Parfitt was grilled in a recent NSW parliamentary inquiry into university governance over the fact that his lucrative contract had been extended for another five years by the self-selecting UTS Council without any announcement being made to staff.

A number of universities imposing cuts, like UTS and Western Sydney University, are spending tens of millions of dollars on consultants each year. Shamefully, UTS bosses paid \$7 million to consultancy firm KPMG to assist with restructuring!

Analysis from the Australia Institute found that at both the University of Newcastle (UON) and the Australian National University (ANU) the financial deficits used to justify course and job cuts were invented.

At ANU, the University claimed a deficit of \$142.5 million in 2024 but audited accounts found an \$89.9 million surplus, meaning that the University had excluded almost a quarter of a billion dollars in revenue when reporting its financial situation.

Similarly, audited accounts from UON showed a surplus of \$61.3 million and a net asset increase of more than \$150 million since the previous year.

Strike action is the way to make the university managements pay. And while enterprise bargaining laws supposedly prohibit industrial action against staff cuts already being imposed, the industrial campaign is also the way to beat back those attacks.

**Hundreds of jobs are being cut and courses discontinued with an avalanche of cost-cutting measures**

# Nazis gain confidence from growth of racist rallies

THE NAZI National Socialist Network (NSN) rally outside NSW Parliament in November drew outrage. Unmasked, 60 Nazis carried a banner reading “Abolish the Jewish Lobby” accompanied by antisemitic and racist chants, calling for a return to a “white and free Australia”.

It was a sign of the growing confidence of the NSN following the racist March for Australia rallies.

For the past two years NSW Police have worked overtime trying to shut down pro-Palestine and anti-genocide protests, with Chris Minns passing new anti-protest laws and saying he wanted weekly protests for Palestine banned.

Yet police decided to allow the Nazi rally to go ahead without any court challenge and failed to inform the Police Commissioner it was even happening.

This was a stark contrast to NSW Police brutalising and pepper-spraying pro-Palestine protesters at the Indo-Pacific arms expo earlier the same week.

In the aftermath of the Nazi rally Chris Minns declared, “If we had our time again, that rally wouldn’t have taken place.”

He has announced laws against any conduct supporting Nazi ideology in public, including a ban on Nazi chants and slogans, with a maximum penalty of two years’ jail and a potential \$22,000 fine.

However, these laws won’t stop the Nazis. The NSN was careful to claim the rally had limited demands that did not explicitly advocate fascism.

In future they could organise rallies through front-groups and not the NSN itself—as they appeared to do in organising the March for Australia (MFA) protests.

Messages leaked by the Nine Papers between prominent NSN members and MFA organisers confirm the strategy of appointing people to front them.

Nor can we rely on the police or the courts to take the action needed. In late October a magistrate in Victoria let off NSN leader Thomas Sewell on a charge of offensive behaviour after a white supremacist tirade during a Nazi march in Ballarat in December 2023.

Anti-fascist activists managed to identify several NSN members who attended the Sydney rally, with some



**Above: Marching against the second racist March for Australia rally in Sydney** Photo: Solidarity

sacked from their jobs as a result and one deported to South Africa.

We shed no tears for the deported Nazi but the left should not call for deportations—a measure used overwhelmingly against people of colour.

So we can’t leave efforts to stop them there.

## Nazi recruitment

A Nine papers expose has detailed how the NSN is recruiting out of the MFA rallies. According to the White Rose Society, which tracks Nazi organising, “Rallies have always been the NSN’s key recruiting ground.”

The papers reported that at the second round of MFA rallies in October “prospective recruits were sent directly to neo-Nazi vetting meetings held at secret locations around the country”.

This shows the importance of the anti-racist counter-rallies held to challenge the racist marches.

But with the racists mobilising thousands of people, we need far bigger numbers of people to attend the anti-racist protests. Our counter-rallies need to show the opposition to racism and fascism on a scale that demoralises the racists and stops them coming back.

Many people are still complacent about the threat. But the anti-immigration rallies are already leading to a rise in violent racist attacks.

In late November a 63-year-old Indian-Australian man was punched in the face in Westfield Parramatta by a woman who shouted “F--- off

Indian, go back to where you come from”, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported.

Similar incidents against Indian-Australians in the last three to six months have “been more than the last few years put together”, Pawan Luthra, publisher of the *Indian Link* newspaper, said.

The MFA rallies specifically targeted Indian immigration, with leaflets denouncing the number of Indian migrants claimed to have arrived in the last five years.

A different racist group has called protests on 29 and 30 November to “Put Australia First”. While they have distanced themselves from the NSN, the rallies will feature Tommy Robinson, a violent British Nazi, speaking via videolink.

The rallies oppose immigration and have targeted the Palestine rallies, lamenting that for the past two years “almost every weekend ‘extremist’ groups have freely occupied Sydney’s streets and parks”.

March for Australia is planning to rally again on Invasion Day—potentially disrupting the Indigenous-led Invasion Day marches.

Unless we stand up to them the racist rallies will not go away. We need to respond by ensuring the Invasion Day marches are as large as possible. This is the best way to ensure the far right skulks off and doesn’t try to rally on the day again.

We need to prove to the racists that there is no room for their racism, Nazism and hate-filled agenda.

.....  
**The anti-immigration rallies are already leading to a rise in violent racist attacks**

# Unions recommit to fight for Gomeroi rights

By Paddy Gibson

UNIONS NSW has sponsored a new report, “We Stand With Gomeroi: Trade unions oppose the Santos Pilliga Narrabri gas project”.

Released at NSW Parliament on 18 November, the report outlines a comprehensive case against Santos’s plans to drill 850 coal seam gas wells on Gomeroi land in the Pilliga forest in northwest NSW.

Featured testimony from union leaders includes Allen Hicks, NSW Secretary of the ETU, “The last thing we need is a dirty gas field, with no obligations to hire apprentices, diverting resources away from the ongoing energy transition, and against the wishes of Traditional Owners”.

Michael Whaites, Assistant General Secretary of the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association, outlines the serious risks to community health.

NSW Nurses and Midwives Association delegate Michelle Cutmore explains, “The Narrabri Gas Project severs the lifeline between people and country, silencing the songlines that carry cultural memory” and the NSWNMA also provide detailed analysis of health risks from both gas-field pollutants and climate change.

The report is the latest solidarity initiative from the Unions NSW Pilliga campaign committee, established in 2022 after the peak union body voted to oppose the Santos gas-field.

This stance came in response to appeals from Gomeroi people, who voted overwhelmingly in March 2022 to reject any Native Title agreement with Santos.

## Imposition

The report explains the fundamental weaknesses of Native Title.

“If Aboriginal people oppose a development and refuse an agreement, companies like Santos can apply to the Native Title Tribunal (NTT) seeking permission to mine regardless.”

The NTT ruled in favour of a Santos application in December 2022, leading to a series of appeals.

Extraordinarily, the latest Federal Court hearing set for 25 November was postponed after presiding Justice Natalie Charlesworth removed herself from the case. Gomeroi had made representations to the court querying her close personal relationship with a senior Santos employee. The hearing will now be in March.

Santos also has friends high-up in



**Above: Rally against the Pilliga Narrabri gas project earlier this year**

government, with both Anthony Albanese and NSW Premier Chris Minns backing the project.

In November, Minns vowed to compulsorily acquire any land Santos needs for pipeline infrastructure needed to take the gas to market. These threats apply to farmers, Gomeroi and other Aboriginal peoples who have in-

terests in land along the 833 kilometre pipeline route.

Despite this tough talk, Santos faces an uphill battle in the courts and from community protest. The company has still not made a “final investment decision”. Union power and ongoing Gomeroi resistance can stop the project in its tracks.

## Qld healthcare ban part of wider war on trans rights

THE QUEENSLAND government’s ban on puberty blockers and hormone treatments for children was overturned in October, with Supreme Court Judge Peter Callaghan ruling it unlawful. The decision was met with celebration from trans people across Australia.

However, less than a day later, Queensland Health Minister Tim Nicholls reinstated the ban. The original ban was overturned because it was made without proper consultation. This time, Nicholls simply followed Judge Callahan’s own directions to successfully reinstate it.

Puberty blockers are used to delay puberty in children, by suppressing the production of estrogen/testosterone. They allow children who are questioning their gender identity to delay unwanted changes to their body that come with puberty, and lessen gender dysphoria as a result. This medication is not only safe, it has also been proven to reduce suicidal thoughts in young transgender people.

The Queensland Liberal National Party’s ban mimicked Donald Trump’s attacks on gender affirming care, and has fuelled the anti-trans agenda of the right-wing in Australia.

It is far from the only recent attack on trans rights. In the Northern Territory, the Country Liberal

Party government has revealed it has stopped detaining transgender women in female prisons. Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro says that “If you are born a gender, that is the prison you go in”. Transgender women are at a much higher risk of being physically and sexually assaulted within male prisons. Mara Ellis, a trans woman who was sent to a male prison in Perth in 2018, reported that she was put in solitary confinement for three months, as a “solution” to the violence she was experiencing there.

Earlier this year, Sonya, a Filipino trans woman, was held in the male section of Villawood Detention Centre in Sydney and reported that she was misgendered and sexually harassed by Border Force officers. These are not isolated incidents. Operation Ingleenook, established to combat sex trafficking, has allowed officers to carry out raids on the workplaces of Asian migrant sex workers, many of them trans women. These raids have continued, despite the Operation ending in 2024.

The Queensland government’s ability to get around the court decision shows we can’t rely on the courts. We need to continue to build public support, on the streets and in our workplaces, to fight the ban and to fight for trans rights.

**Genevieve Carnsew**

**Minns vowed to compulsorily acquire any land Santos needs for pipeline infrastructure**

# Admin purge of CFMEU in Victoria targets militancy

By Tom Orsag

ADMINISTRATION'S CONTROL of the CFMEU ratcheted up further in November with Zach Smith, the Victorian Branch Executive Officer, putting all 30 Victorian organisers' jobs on the line.

Eleven organisers have now left, some reluctantly.

According to media reports, Smith told CFMEU delegates that, "The Administration, in my view, is going to move far more ruthlessly than ever before." Omitting to say he is part of Administration.

Administrator Mark Irving has already purged organisers in the Queensland, NSW and SA branches.

Admin is systematically sacking organisers to remove anyone employed by the former democratically-elected officials.

It wants compliant organisers, loyal to the Administration, who won't challenge the anti-union laws of the Fair Work Commission or stand up for the right to strike. Irving wants to make sure that no one associated with the old CFMEU, or its militant traditions, are around to challenge the Administration, or contest elections after Administration ends.

At the Queensland LNP government's Commission of Inquiry, Irving said he is considering expelling a shopping list of removed officials, organisers and delegates, to eliminate them from the unionised construction industry.

The purge has even extended to office employees. An ACT branch employee was recently sacked when they refused to sign an "Agreement" pledging absolute loyalty to Admin.

Irving and Smith's purge in Victoria comes in response to a media offensive claiming the Admin is failing to tackle corruption.

Smith, on \$376,000 a year, is hoping this will save his skin after media exposure of his decisions as an Administration employee.

These included sending an organiser to meet alleged organised crime figure Mick Gatto to discuss an industrial dispute.

Smith had also appointed a long-term organiser, John Perkovic, to his new Victorian leadership team as a "co-ordinator", to curry favour with delegates and members loyal to the old elected leadership around John Setka.

Perkovic had corruption allegations hanging over him dating back



**Above: CFMEU members rally against Administration in Victoria last year**  
Photo: ETU Victoria

many years. A Victorian delegate appointed as an organiser in Sydney by the Admin had also allegedly previously assaulted a CFMEU official.

Once the media got a hold of this, Irving was quick to force the two to resign.

Former NSW Secretary Darren Greenfield and his son Michael Greenfield were recently jailed for taking bribes, although their charges date back years prior to Admin.

But 16 months on from the hysterical media claims about the union's "massive infiltration by bkie gangs" no charges have resulted.

Far more evidence has come to light about building contractors either run by crime gangs or using organised crime than about bkie gangs in the union.

Earlier this year, *The Age* reported that at least seven fire bombings of construction companies in Victoria over the past two years were linked to a bkie gang.

In October, the paper revealed that three men, including the son of a Grocon executive, had been charged over trying to extort \$6.6 million from a construction company.

Without a hint of irony, Irving admitted there was a problem where, "Employers in construction continue to use organised crime figures and outlaw motorcycle gangs representatives in the industrial relations system."

## Dissent

The Administration is using authoritarian measures against anyone who stands up to it.

In late October, Admin phoned Ralph Edwards, a former presi-

dent of the Victorian branch before Administration, to inform him he was "banned" from the union office, where monthly branch meetings take place.

Edwards' "crime" was to be a trustee of a long-running CFMEU fighting fund, which Irving could not get his grubby hands on.

For over 20 years, the fund grew from donations by members to campaign in union elections, not through funds from the union.

Irving wants to stop any challengers in future union elections having access to those funds against his "preferred leadership", when the union leaves Administration.

Edwards defied the Admin order by attending the October branch meeting. While he is a retired member Admin could still expel him from the union. A motion condemning Admin for "banning" Ralph and reaffirming his right to attend branch meetings was passed unanimously by 170 members and delegates.

Yet days later Smith told a mass delegates' meeting that CFMEU members had to "understand the Administration is NOT the enemy".

Currently, a strike at CSR's Gyprock plant in Melbourne is another test of whether the union can operate effectively under Administration.

CFMEU members at the plant walked out on strike in mid-November for a 4 per cent pay rise.

If CSR takes a hard line Admin's meek compliance with Fair Work laws will undermine an effective picket line.

Rank-and-file organisation, independent of Smith and Administration, will be key to maintaining the CFMEU as a militant, fighting union.

**Admin wants loyal compliant organisers who won't challenge the anti-union laws**

# Mamdani's win a blow against Trump and the US establishment

By James Supple

ZOHRAN MAMDANI'S victory in New York horrified the whole US political establishment. It gives hope to everyone desperate for an alternative to the cautious mainstream parties and politics run for the rich.

It was a slap in the face for Donald Trump. But after his win Mamdani agreed to a friendly media appearance with Trump at the White House.

Mamdani is part of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) but refuses to be bound by the DSA platform. Mamdani successfully argued that the DSA should not challenge pro-Israel Democrat leader Hakeem Jeffries.

He humiliated Andrew Cuomo, a right-wing Democrat who Mamdani beat in the pre-selection, but who then stood as an independent funded by the rich. Billionaire Michael Bloomberg pumped \$8 million into his campaign.

Mamdani made clear his support for Palestine and will be the city's first Muslim mayor.

There was massive enthusiasm for his campaign. The voter turnout in New York was the highest in 50 years.

Mamdani focused on making New York affordable for the city's working class. He talked about how working class people are being "pushed out of the city they built"—promising to freeze rents and build 200,000 affordable housing units in the next decade.

He wants to deliver free childcare for kids under the age of five, free bus services and a network of low-price, publicly-run grocery stores.

And he wants the rich to pay for it through a wealth tax.

"It shows that people want something different," Eric Fretz, a socialist activist in New York, told the British *Socialist Worker*.

New York has become a playground for the rich, with the most billionaires of any city in the world.

"The city has just been changing—there used to be pockets where things were actually affordable but they've all disappeared," Eric said.

But this was more than a campaign focused on economic issues. Mamdani also promised to keep Trump's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids out of city facilities and support immigrant workers.

NYC DSA member Jesse Ortiz said that Mamdani "has demonstrated a commitment to supporting Muslim and immigrant groups. He has worked



**Above: Zohran Mamdani speaking at a protest in New York** Photo: Bingjiefu He/Wikimedia Commons

tirelessly with mosques and other community organisations.

"I think this is particularly salient in post-9/11 NYC when Muslims, Arabs and South Asians were brutally villainised and targeted by local and national politicians".

## Where now?

Mamdani's campaign mobilised 104,000 volunteers to door-knock and build support. This is a huge base that could strengthen the Palestine solidarity movement, organise against ICE raids and fight for action on the cost of living.

Mamdani will come under huge pressure from the rich and the political establishment. Implementing his plans will require a fight.

Trump has threatened to send in the National Guard to enforce ICE raids and to cut city funding.

The Democratic Party establishment will be looking to force him to compromise. The tax increases on the rich needed to fund his policies require approval from the state government controlled by corporate Democrats.

Resisting this will require mobilising his supporters in the streets and the workplaces in a defiant movement.

But already there are signs that Mamdani is prepared to retreat in order to try to work with business interests and powerful institutions.

He has agreed to keep the city's Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch in place, a signal that he won't challenge the notoriously corrupt and powerful NYPD. Tisch was appointed by previous mayor Eric Adams, who flooded the subway with extra cops and demanded more arrests.

Mamdani also moderated his stand around Palestine, saying he would stop using the slogan "Globalise the Intifada" and that he supports Israel's right to exist. And he has sought out meetings with business leaders to reassure them about his program and willingness to listen to their concerns.

Some will use his success to argue for the left to focus on elections and winning power within Congress and city halls. But the real power to change society lies in movements outside parliaments and workers' strike action.

Mamdani and the DSA, however, are committed to working within the Democratic Party.

The Democratic Party is one of the central political institutions of US capitalism and is dominated by corporate interests. The problems with trying to take over the Democrats can already be seen in the compromises made by Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC).

Bernie's decision to work within the Democrats meant he threw his support behind Joe Biden, the candidate of the corporate machine and the imperialist establishment. AOC has moved from being a radical outsider in the party to voting in Congress last year against a measure that would have cut funding to Israel.

The millions of people who mobilised in the recent "No Kings" rallies show the potential to turn the tide against Trump and the corporate elite.

Socialist politics focused on building movements of resistance outside the Democratic Party and the electoral process is going to be needed to win real change.

**Mamdani will come under huge pressure from the rich and the political establishment**

# ‘Peacemaker’ Trump threatens military strikes on Venezuela

By Luke Ottavi

VENEZUELA IS under fire from US imperialism and Trump’s attempts to reassert US hegemony over Latin America.

The US has undertaken the biggest military build-up in the region since its invasion of Panama in 1989.

More than a dozen warships, 15,000 troops, a nuclear-powered submarine, F-35 jets and B-52 bombers—capable of carrying nuclear weapons—have been circling Venezuela. This includes the world’s largest aircraft carrier that can house over 5000 military personnel.

A \$70 million bounty has been placed on President Nicolas Maduro’s head and Trump publicly announced he had authorised covert CIA operations in Venezuela, something not typically broadcast by US presidents.

On Trump’s orders the US has blown up at least 21 alleged drug boats since September in the Caribbean and Pacific. Over 80 people have been killed.

The airstrikes are extra-judicial killings designed to destabilise Venezuela’s government and provide a pretext for further US intervention. Just as the US lied about Saddam Hussein harbouring “weapons of mass destruction” to justify its invasion of Iraq, it is lying about Maduro being responsible for cocaine and fentanyl being smuggled into the US.

The US Drug Enforcement agency’s annual report on cocaine in 2024 named Colombia as the main source of cocaine smuggled into the US. It did not mention Venezuela at all. Nearly all the fentanyl smuggled into the US comes from Mexico. Venezuela plays little to no role.

Trump has never released any evidence that the people killed were smuggling drugs bound for the US. The families of those killed have provided evidence that their loved ones were fishermen, not drug smugglers.

In late November the US began a new phase of “Venezuela-related operations”, beginning with an increase in covert operations, a series of US officials told Reuters.

Trump wants to bring down Maduro’s government although he has denied he is considering airstrikes on Venezuela.

Trump wants a government in Venezuela that’s more pliable to accepting US policy and is less friendly to the



**Above:**  
**Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, who Trump wants ousted** Photo: Eneas De Troya/ Flickr

US’s main rival, China.

## Method to the madness

Trump is intervening in Venezuela to try to strengthen US influence in the region so it is better positioned to take on China. The US has always seen Latin America as its own backyard.

But as the Latin America editor of the *Financial Times* writes, “Almost every US president since Clinton has neglected Latin America, with serious economic and military consequences.”

China is now South America’s largest trading partner, amassing nearly \$800 billion of trade in 2024.

China has invested billions into lithium extraction in Latin America, a critical component of batteries for electric vehicles and military uses. It holds multiple trade agreements targeting strategic sectors, such as electricity distribution agreements with Chile.

Venezuela sells around 90 per cent of its oil to China and has the largest proven oil reserves in the world. Venezuela has over \$90 billion in loans to China and is the largest buyer of Chinese armaments.

The US wants China out of “its backyard” and sees Venezuela as a key link in the chain to reassert its control over Latin America.

Trump promised Ecuador billions of dollars if the plebiscite vote on whether the US could re-open a military base in the country came back with a yes. The people of Ecuador voted no, in a blow to Trump’s ambitions.

Trump helped erratic right-wing president Javier Milei win a surprise victory in Argentina’s midterm elections by promising billions of US dollars to Argentina if Milei triumphed.

And Trump has targeted Brazil’s left-wing government with tariffs after Brazil’s former authoritarian leader Jair Bolsonaro was convicted for plotting a coup to overthrow the government.

But Trump’s attempts to reshape the region in the interests of the US are far from guaranteed.

Under President Hugo Chavez, Venezuela became a beacon for the international left in the 2000s. Chavez defied US imperialism and fought off a coup attempt thanks to the active support of the poor in the capital Caracas.

But even before his death in 2013 a corrupt bureaucratic regime was taking shape around his successor and current president, Maduro.

Solidarity signed an international declaration on Venezuela initiated by the Workers Party in Argentina. It says, “We oppose imperialist intervention and militaristic aggression aimed at regime change, but we do not give political support to Maduro and his corrupt, repressive circles against the working people.”

Workers and the poor in Venezuela and Latin America need to fight against both US imperialism and their own corrupt rulers. Here in Australia we must break the support Albanese gives Trump as he rains terror on workers and the poor from Venezuela to Gaza.

.....  
**Trump publicly announced he had authorised covert CIA operations in Venezuela**

# Fresh atrocities in Sudan as rival generals tear country apart

By Jacob Starling

THE CAPTURE of the city of El Fasher in Sudan in late October by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), following an 18-month siege, produced horrifying atrocities.

Satellite imagery and the testimony of survivors have borne witness to mass executions and systematic rape among the 250,000 civilians who remained in the city.

For the past two and a half years rival generals in the RSF and Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have been fighting a civil war that has produced appalling suffering. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and more than 15 million have been displaced in what is now the world's biggest humanitarian crisis.

At least 1500 to 2000 civilians were killed in the first few days following the RSF takeover of El Fasher. In a single massacre, 460 civilians were killed at a maternity hospital. The RSF has also set out to exterminate non-Arab ethnic groups, including the Zaghawa and Masalit minorities.

The fall of El Fasher has split Sudan down the middle, with the SAF governing from Port Sudan on the Red Sea, and the RSF now controlling the whole Darfur region in the southwest, an area the size of Spain.

## Outside powers

Regional powers have helped the war continue by feeding weapons to the rival armies, hoping for a share of Sudan's resources.

The SAF is backed by Egypt, Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia, while the RSF has received support from Russia, Libya, Chad and, most notoriously, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Egypt, Sudan's neighbour to the north, has been an open ally of SAF leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan since the civil war broke out. Following the fall of El Fasher, the Egyptian military set up a joint command force with the SAF to protect Egypt's southern border from RSF infiltration.

Turkey, despite past rivalry with Egypt, has partnered with them in Sudan, supplying the SAF with drones. Iran has also sold drones to the SAF, keen to increase its influence in Africa and contain the UAE's.

But the RSF has used its control of the lucrative Jebel Amer gold



**Above: Protest in solidarity with Sudan in Sydney**

mines to win its own allies. The gold is smuggled through Chad and the Central African Republic to the UAE, where it can be refined and sold. The UAE has been the primary importer of Sudanese gold since the late 1990s and has interests in the country's financial sector.

Sudan's Red Sea coast, offering access to one of the busiest international shipping corridors, is also strategically important.

In 2022, the UAE signed a \$6 billion deal to develop the Abu Amama port on the Sudanese coast. But after the civil war broke out, al-Burhan scrapped the deal, condemning the UAE for giving financial support and high-tech weaponry to the RSF.

Last year, a document sent to the UN Security Council revealed that the UAE had armed the RSF with modified drones capable of dropping thermobaric bombs.

None of these states are among the biggest players on the international stage but all of them have an interest in prolonging the war and profiting from the chaos.

They are "sub-imperialist" powers, unable to rival powers like the US or China globally, but able to compete with each other for regional influence.

## Counter-revolution

The RSF has rightly been castigated for its atrocities in Darfur but the SAF is not a progressive alternative. As Sudanese activist Khalid Sidahmed put it, "Both sides of the war are two

faces of the old regime. They are both equally criminals and militias."

Both armies have set out to roll back the gains of the 2019 revolution that toppled the dictator al-Bashir.

Hemedti, the leader of the RSF, and al-Burhan, the leader of the SAF, used to be allies. They sat together in the transitional government following the revolution.

The revolution mobilised millions of ordinary people, rising up in their workplaces and on the streets against the despotic regime. But without a revolutionary socialist party spearheading the mass movement, the old military and security apparatus survived.

The leaders of the opposition ended up forming a transitional government with al-Burhan and Hemedti.

In October 2021, the two generals felt confident enough to officially seize power, arresting opposition figures and dissolving the transitional government.

The RSF and the SAF worked together for 18 months to crush the revolution. It wasn't until April 2023 that they began to fight over the spoils, sparking a devastating civil war.

The slogans of the 2019 revolution were "Freedom, Peace, and Justice". Neither the RSF nor the SAF offers a path towards these principles.

Only a movement from below, carrying the torch of the 2019 revolution, can challenge the power of the generals and build the struggle towards liberation.

**The RSF has rightly been castigated for its atrocities in Darfur but the SAF is not a progressive alternative**

# Where does racism come from—and how does it survive?

**David Glanz** looks at the origins of racism and how it continues to be pushed from the top of society in the interests of our rulers

AUSTRALIA IS riddled with racism. It does real damage to its victims and divides working class people.

So where does racism come from and why, more than 50 years since the formal abolition of the White Australia policy, does it continue to fester?

Racism is widespread. The Australian Reconciliation Barometer reports that racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people increased over 10 years from 39 per cent to 54 per cent in 2024.

New research by Victoria University finds that 76 per cent of people in ethnic and religious minority groups have experienced racism.

Racism causes deep harm. A Victorian government report states, “Racism has serious effects on people’s mental health and wellbeing ... The suicide rate among First Peoples nationally is twice the rate of the non-First Peoples population ...

“For young people, racial discrimination is linked to higher rates of anxiety, depression and psychological distress.”

Racism is not just a matter of individual hateful acts. Systemic racism means all Indigenous people, migrants and refugees are at risk.

This can be seen in the disgracefully high level of Indigenous incarceration—36 per cent of all prisoners, though Indigenous people are only 3 per cent of the population. Or the refusal to grant permanent protection to thousands of refugees.

## Competition

To fight racism we need to understand its origins.

There’s a widely held belief that racism is the outcome of ignorance and a lack of education, leading to the finger being pointed at blue-collar workers and their families.

Some explain the rising racism behind the spate of March for Australia and similar racist rallies as a product of working-class anger over the housing and cost-of-living crises.

There is an element of truth about this. Workers, including union members, have joined the MFA rallies.

Capitalism brings workers together in factories, universities, hospitals and warehouses and lays the basis for unions and collective resistance. But it also creates competition between

**The ‘debate’ on cutting immigration is not driven by the Nazi NSN. It is fuelled by Labor and the Coalition**

workers, for jobs and access to housing and services.

The ruling class play on those divisions—blaming migrants for the job losses or housing crisis that the capitalists themselves have created. They pit workers against each other through outsourcing jobs or encouraging tensions based on skills or wages.

But that doesn’t explain where the racist ideas that workers are encouraged to adopt come from.

## Imperialism

Racism was imported into this continent with British invasion in 1788. By this time, Britain was the leading slave-trading nation. Profits from slavery made up about a third of new investment made by British capitalists in the years around 1770.

Racist ideas of white superiority were generated by the wealthy to excuse getting rich from such barbarism. Those ideas arrived with the First Fleet and were applied to Indigenous people to justify land theft and genocide.

The new ruling class saw Aboriginal people and society as inferior and stealing an entire continent and imposing capitalism as historically progressive. Australia’s rulers believed they had a right to dominate the region because they represented a superior European civilisation.

Today, Australia’s position as an outpost of western imperialism in Asia continues to contribute to intense racism. In recent years we’ve seen Islamophobia to justify US-led wars in the Middle East and anti-Palestinian racism to obscure the reality of the genocide.

The emerging Australian ruling class also found racism useful to divide the new working class between Europeans and the large numbers of people from southern China attracted by gold mining. By encouraging racism among workers, Australia’s rulers hoped to defuse class struggle and bind white workers to the system.

That early ruling class agenda of driving racism into society to divide the working class has continued—from the White Australia policy, to giving a platform to the racism of One Nation, refusing to act over Indigenous deaths in custody, and the tough-on-borders policy shared by Labor and the Coalition.

The “debate” on cutting immigra-

tion is not driven by the Nazi NSN or the MFA. It is fuelled by Labor and the Coalition, competing on who can be more vicious.

The politicians and billionaires fomenting these ideas are for the most part highly educated. But racism suits their class interests.

## Fighting racism

We desperately need a working class fightback over the cost-of-living crisis. But that alone won’t automatically destroy racist ideas.

France has seen titanic workers’ struggles over pensions and against austerity. Yet opinion polls show the presidential candidate for the fascist National Rally still on about one third of the vote.

So racism needs to be challenged in its own right. We cannot rely on governments to lead the way.

The Victorian government, for example, has an official anti-racism strategy. Its “key areas for action” include supporting community-driven anti-racism initiatives and reducing racism and discrimination in policing.

That strategy meant nothing when, in April, police announced a “strong show of force” in the Melbourne suburb of Footscray. Less than a week later, cops there shot and killed Abdifatah Ahmed, a homeless Somali Australian man.

Police clashed with some of those who joined a community rally to mourn his death.

The Victorian government recently agreed a Treaty with Aboriginal representatives. But within days, it announced it would change the law so children as young as 14 can be brought to court as adults and face possible life sentences—a measure that will disproportionately affect Indigenous kids.

Instead we need to build a movement against racism from below that can take the message of unity into workplaces, campuses and communities. The rally against racism in September called by Melbourne’s Refugee Action Collective shows the potential—endorsed by 60 organisations including ten unions and bringing together activists from ethnic communities, Greens and Labor.

The ruling class fosters racism. Our slogan must be, don’t let the bosses divide us.

# LESSONS TWENTY YEARS ON FROM THE RACISM THAT LED TO THE CRONULLA RIOT

**James Supple** looks at how the Cronulla riot was the result of the racism pushed by John Howard's government and the media, and the lessons as we face a rising far right today

THE CRONULLA riots were the shocking result of years of racist poison pumped out by governments and the mainstream media.

On 11 December 2005 more than 5000 people descended on Cronulla beach after text messages began circulating urging them to, "Come to Cronulla this weekend to take revenge. This Sunday every Aussie in the Shire get down to North Cronulla to support the Leb and wog bashing day."

This followed bubbling racist hostility in the overwhelmingly white suburb directed at Lebanese-Australians for daring to visit the beach. The week before there had been a fight between off-duty surf lifesavers and young Lebanese men.

Shock-jock Alan Jones stirred up a racist panic through the week on his radio program, reading out the message and saying it was a call for, "A rally, a street march, call it what you will. A community show of force."

Murdoch's tabloid *The Daily Telegraph* joined in, demanding a crackdown on anyone who assaulted a lifeguard.

The NSW Labor government at the time backed them. "Premier Morris Iemma proposed a ludicrous 25 year maximum jail sentence for assaults on lifesavers," academic Scott Poynting recounted.

The crowd of thousands set out to hunt down and attack anyone who looked Arab or Middle Eastern.

Groups of men draped in Australian flags ran around screaming "fuck off Lebs" sporting racist slogans written across chests and t-shirts including "Ethnic cleansing unit", "We grew here, you flew here" and "Save Nulla, F\*ck Allah".

Nazi groups including the Australia First Party, its youth wing the Patriotic Youth League and Blood and Honour handed out leaflets and attempted to direct the crowd.

One man was chased into a local pub. A large crowd gathered, hurling bottles at him before he was dragged out and attacked.

A rumour spread that dozens of Lebanese men were on trains heading to Cronulla station. When the crowd got there all they found were two men sitting on a train waiting for it to depart.

After the first group ran onto the train and started attacking them, "Within seconds the carriage was full of people throwing punches and bottles at these two guys," photographer Craig Greenhill explained.

## Pushed from the top

The right-wing media storm may have provided the spark. But it was years of racism pushed by John Howard's Liberal government that fuelled the fire.

Ever since his election in 1996, Howard had stirred up racism, first against Indigenous people, then against refugees and the Muslim community.

First he attacked Indigenous Native Title and the results of the High Court decisions in Mabo and Wik, refused to apologise to the Stolen Generations and cut funding to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, which he later abolished.

In the lead up to the 2001 election he sent the SAS onto the *Tampa* to stop hundreds of asylum-seekers making it to Australia, vilifying refugees in an effort to demonise them.

After the 9/11 attacks in 2001, there was a wave of Islamophobia as political leaders blamed "Islamic terrorism". Islam was presented as a "backward" and savage religion that encouraged violence.

The US responsibility for devastating the Middle East through decades of interventions to prop up

**The crowd of thousands set out to hunt down and attack anyone who looked Arab or Middle Eastern**

pliant dictatorships was never mentioned.

Instead the racism against Muslims and Arabs became the justification for further wars, as the Howard government supported the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Muslims in Australia were presented as an enemy within and a threat to the community.

Howard accused the Muslim community in Australia of failing to "integrate" and claimed that "extremism" among Muslims was "not a problem that we have ever faced with other immigrant communities". The Liberals claimed refugees arriving by boat, mostly from the Middle East, could be terrorists.

In 2005 the London bombings led to a panic about "home grown terrorism".

In November 2005 there were dramatic anti-terror raids in Sydney and Melbourne, with police declaring they had foiled an imminent terrorist attack. More than 400 police were sent to arrest 18 men, with video footage fed to the media to help dramatise the event.

The result was a surge in racist attacks against Muslims. In 2004 two-thirds of Muslims said they had experienced violence or abuse in public.

The rise in racism in the community was also dramatically demonstrated in opinion polls.

More than half of Victorian Year 10 and 11 students surveyed in late 2005 said they viewed Muslims as terrorists, over 50 per cent thought they "behave strangely" and 40 per cent agreed that Muslims "are unclean". A 2006 Gallup poll found four out of ten Australians believed Islam is "a threat to our way of life".

This was combined with a panic about "ethnic crime" and so called "Lebanese gangs" in Sydney that was promoted by the police, media and

Bob Carr's NSW Labor government from the late 1990s.

Between 2000 and 2002 the media and the state government racialised a number of sexual assaults by Lebanese males.

All those involved were second-generation migrants born and socialised in Australia. But the assaults were presented as a result of their cultural background.

Alan Jones was also implicated in promoting this racist campaign, saying they were "the first signs of an Islamic hatred towards the community that welcomed them".

But when wealthy, white students from Trinity Grammar School in Sydney were implicated in another set of sexual assaults in 2000, they were treated very differently. The offenders received relatively light sentences and there was no attempt to link the crimes to their racial background or religion.

## Response

There was a real danger after Cronulla of a new racist movement emerging that would allow fascist and far right groups to grow—just as there is today with thousands joining the racist anti-immigration March for Australia protests.

Howard's response to the violence at Cronulla was to claim there was no "underlying racism" in Australia.

But it was clear there was widespread disgust and opposition to what had happened. A poll in the *Sydney Morning Herald* found 75 per cent of people rejected Howard's claim.

Many rightly blamed the government for the racism that caused the Cronulla riots. The following week-end more than 10,000 people rallied against racism in central Sydney, with several hundred Lebanese-Australians joining the protest.

This was the consequence of consistent anti-racist campaigning all through the Liberals' time in power.

When Pauline Hanson's One Nation emerged in 1998, anti-racist marches and protests outside her meetings helped to discredit her racist attacks on migrants and Indigenous people and made it impossible for her to build a mass membership party based on racism.

As the Liberals' attacks on refugees escalated from 1999, the left began organising to counter the myths that refugees were "queue jumpers", "illegal" and a threat to working class people.

The grassroots Refugee Action Collectives held regular protests and



**Above: Crowds during the Cronulla riot in 2005** Photo: Warren Hudson/ Wikimedia Commons

focused particularly on taking anti-racist arguments into the trade union movement and the working class.

The Labor Party Opposition shamefully backed Howard over the *Tampa* crisis in 2001.

But several important union leaders supported the refugee rights campaign, including former Unions NSW Secretary John Robertson, recognising the way Howard was trying to use racism to win support within the working class.

The refugee movement was able to significantly shift public opinion over time, with Newspoll showing that the number of people who thought some or all asylum boats should be able to land went from 47 per cent to 61 per cent between 2001 and 2004.

After 9/11, a mass movement against the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq helped undermine the Islamophobia used to justify the wars. At the height of the movement in 2003 more than 750,000 people joined a week-end of protests against the Iraq war nationwide.

In the years following, the anti-war movement worked with the Muslim community to oppose new anti-terror laws and the Liberals' campaign of racism and fear.

Socialists argued that Howard was trying to use Islamophobia and terrorism scares to distract attention from his attacks on trade unions and workers, such as the WorkChoices laws passed in 2005.

Today racism in the mainstream from the Labor and Liberal parties and the media is again producing a climate

where far right groups can grow.

In late 2024 the Albanese government cut international student numbers in response to a racist campaign blaming them for the housing crisis. Albanese has responded to the racist marches against immigration by repeatedly declaring that "we are getting the numbers down" by cutting immigration.

Liberal leader Sussan Ley is also moving to campaign more aggressively against immigration levels.

This follows Liberal MP Andrew Hastie's labelling of immigration as "unsustainable" and "the real reason you can't afford a home" along with dog-whistling to nostalgia for a White Australia by saying, "We're starting to feel like strangers in our own home."

All this has legitimised the lies that immigration is to blame for housing prices and the cost of living.

As a result 63 per cent of people say they want fewer immigrants allowed in, according to a Newspoll in November.

We need to rally against the anti-immigration marches to make sure there is a clear voice against their racism. Nazis should never be allowed to take to the streets unchallenged.

But we also need to campaign against the racism that feeds them. The left's response to the racism of the Howard government helped ensure there was no repeat of the Cronulla riots.

Grassroots campaigning against racism can help stop the far right and their racist marches again today.

# HOW AUSTRALIA BETRAYED TIMOR-LESTE

For decades Australian governments backed Indonesia's occupation and repression in Timor-Leste to advance their own interests in the region argues **Maeve Larkins**

THIS MONTH marks 50 years since Indonesia invaded Timor-Leste. For 24 years, it maintained a brutal occupation.

At least 100,000 Timorese died—a full eighth of the population by the time of independence—either massacred by the Indonesian military or through illness and starvation.

Successive Australian governments, both Labor and Liberal, actively supported Indonesian rule.

Timor-Leste was colonised by Portugal in the 15th century and was largely neglected. By 1973, illiteracy was estimated at 93 per cent and there were just ten schools. Most of the population relied on subsistence farming.

Portugal's 1974 "Carnation Revolution" placed military officers in power who sought to pull out of its colonies. This opened space for the Timorese to organise their own political parties.

Most important was the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor or Fretilin. They were inspired by the Frelimo independence movement in Portugal's other colony of Mozambique, which took power with support from the Soviet Union.

Indonesian military dictator Suharto was worried about the prospects of a "Little Cuba" in the middle of their archipelago. He had come to power a decade earlier by ruthlessly purging Indonesia's communist movement, killing over a million.

Suharto began a covert operation to undermine the Timorese movement for independence in late 1974, a month after meeting Australian PM Gough Whitlam.

Whitlam told Suharto that he thought Timor-Leste was "too small for independence ... and would inevitably become the focus of attention of others outside the region", encouraging Indonesia to invade. Whitlam, like Suharto, was similarly concerned to avoid a Communist-sponsored "Little Cuba" in Australia's backyard.

Australia's ambassador to Indonesia at the time, Richard Woolcott, explained that Australia's alliance with

Indonesia was "unquestionably more important than the future of Portuguese Timor".

Australia saw Suharto as a bulwark against the spread of communism in the region, as well as a strategically critical ally, running the fourth most populous country in the world with control of vital shipping lanes.

In the 1970s—when Indonesia invaded Timor-Leste and carried out the worst of its war crimes—Indonesia was, behind Papua New Guinea, the second largest recipient of Australian military aid, providing state-of-the-art Australian Sabre aircraft, as well as training Indonesian soldiers.

On top of this, Australia and Indonesia had negotiated in 1972 a maritime boundary in the Timor Sea which placed most of its lucrative oil and gas reserves inside Australian waters. One of the largest of these reserves, the Greater Sunrise gas field, has an estimated value of \$40 billion.

By the time Indonesia was making clear to Australia that it planned to annex Timor-Leste, government officials had already suggested that complete Indonesian control of Timor would make future negotiations over these reserves easier.

Whitlam's government was told on 13 October by its Jakarta embassy about the planned invasion and resolved to turn a blind eye.

Just three days later, five journalists based in Australia were captured and executed by Indonesian troops in Balibo, a village near Timor-Leste's border with Indonesia. They feared the journalists would expose that Indonesia had already begun covert raids into the country.

Australian intelligence had intercepted phone calls hours beforehand which indicated that the Indonesian military had intended to kill the journalists but nothing was done to stop them.

Australian officials then accepted the Indonesian military's cover story that the journalists had been killed in crossfire. This sent a signal to Indone-

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**Whitlam, like Suharto, was similarly concerned to avoid a Communist-sponsored 'Little Cuba'**

sia that they could act with impunity in Timor-Leste.

Indonesia launched its full-scale invasion on 7 December 1975. US President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had left Jakarta the night before, giving Suharto the go-ahead, only urging that they wait until their delegation left, that they wouldn't use US-made arms and that "whatever you do it succeeds quickly".

A bishop in the Timor-Leste capital of Dili described the horrors of the invasion, "The soldiers who landed started killing everyone they could find. There were many dead bodies in the streets. All we could see were the soldiers killing, killing, killing."

In the first days, almost one-tenth of the city's population was slaughtered. Within weeks, Indonesia had control of Timor-Leste's major cities.

In the years that followed, Fretilin waged a guerilla war from the interior, supported by villagers.

Indonesia's counterinsurgency was brutal. They wiped out entire villages they suspected of supporting Fretilin and detained about 300,000 Timorese in camps. Arbitrary arrests, torture and public executions were common.

Australia actively assisted Indonesia in "pacifying" the country.

Malcolm Fraser's Liberal government announced in 1978 de jure recognition of Timor-Leste as part of Indonesia. He stopped radio transmissions from Fretilin to supporters in Australia. Police confiscated equipment used by Communist Party of Australia activists for pirate radio broadcasts reporting Indonesian atrocities.

They reaped the rewards of this support when, in 1989, Bob Hawke's foreign minister Gareth Evans and Indonesia's equivalent Ali Alatas signed the Timor Gap Treaty, which gave Australia the lion's share of profits from the Timor Sea. The deal was finalised while the pair sipped champagne on an aircraft above the Timor Sea.

When pressed about Timor-Leste, Evans simply said, "The world is a

pretty unfair place.”

### The resistance

Under the leadership of Xanana Gusmao, Fretilin began to shift tack, viewing international solidarity and civil resistance as more effective than guerilla struggle.

As early as 1974, Fretilin leader Jose Ramos Horta had visited Australia and established contacts with the Communist Party of Australia.

A solidarity movement was forming which connected trade unionists, churches and student activists.

Dockworkers refused to load aircraft being shipped to Indonesia, and manufacturing workers in Melbourne, who produced parts for Indonesian jets, downed tools. In 1976, unionists collected donations at factory meetings to sail a shipment of aid across the Timor Sea. The Fraser government arrested the sailors shortly after the ship left Darwin.

Timorese activists began to demonstrate in Dili, particularly when foreign officials came to visit, despite facing brutal repression.

In October 1991, 2500 people attended the funeral procession in Dili of a murdered independence activist. After a scuffle in which two Indonesians were stabbed, the Indonesian military marched towards the cemetery and opened fire on the crowd. They trapped people inside, and proceeded to beat, bayonet and arrest them. Over 200 Timorese were killed and injured. An English cameraman managed to record the massacre.

The broadcast of his footage caused international outrage. In 1996, Timorese independence activists Jose Ramos Horta and Bishop Carlos Belo were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

### Reformasi

Suharto ran Indonesia for the benefit of his inner circle of accomplices and elites for 30 years. In 1997, the Asian Financial Crisis crashed Indonesia's economy.

The IMF bailed Indonesia out but demanded Suharto remove government subsidies for key commodities like fuel and electricity, sending prices soaring just as unemployment surged.

As popular outrage reached boiling point, students held regular demonstrations on university campuses.

On 12 May 1998, the military killed four student activists. This propelled the movement into the streets, now joined by the broader working class. Suharto was toppled, with his vice-president BJ Habibie taking his place.

Habibie was forced to pass reforms releasing political prisoners,



**Above: Supporters of the National Council of Timorese Resistance, the umbrella group for pro-independence forces, after Indonesia's withdrawal in 1999**

Photo: Anna Voss/  
Wikimedia Commons

legalising trade unions and reducing the military's role in government.

Facing a huge crisis domestically, and with Timor-Leste's occupation becoming intractable and internationally controversial, he decided, at the start of 1999, that Timor-Leste would be given a chance to vote for either integration with Indonesia or independence.

But the military wanted to make an example of Timor-Leste to stop the independence movements in provinces like Aceh and West Papua, which were emboldened by Suharto's fall.

When Timorese voted overwhelmingly in favour of independence, the military began a rampage using proxy militias trained by Indonesian Special Forces. In just over a week, thousands of Timorese were murdered.

It was only after this had happened that John Howard announced the deployment of Australian troops—after consulting Indonesia and receiving the go ahead. Howard's government had wanted Timor-Leste to remain a part of Indonesia until the last minute.

Howard's intervention into Timor-Leste, through a UN-sponsored "peacekeeping" force called INTERFET, was celebrated at the time, even on the left.

But it allowed Howard to bolster support for Australian military intervention as well as shore up Australian dominance in the South Pacific. Nor was Australia altruistically motivated.

Timor-Leste's independence threatened to void the Timor Gap Treaty. Timor-Leste's Exclusive Economic Zone, under the accepted UN standards, placed almost all the Timor Sea's oil and gas fields within their sole control.

Australia forced Timor-Leste to sign a series of treaties which gave Australia a share of the revenue from

oil and gas projects in those waters. Australia threatened to pull out of oil and gas projects from which Timor-Leste would receive sorely needed revenue, even if it was split. The Timorese reluctantly agreed.

During the negotiations, Australia's spy agency had planted listening devices in Timor-Leste's ministerial offices. Through blackmail and espionage, Australia forced one of the poorest countries in the world to surrender huge amounts of wealth.

From 1999 to 2014, Australia robbed about \$7 billion in revenue from Timor-Leste. When the spying operation was revealed, Timor-Leste revoked the treaty, and a new agreement set the maritime boundaries at the international standard. But Timor-Leste received no compensation for the lost revenue.

Last month Abanese signed yet another defence treaty with Indonesian President Prabowo. It aims to bring the two countries even closer, as part of Albanese and Trump's preparations for war against China.

Prabowo was an officer in the Indonesian Special Forces in Timor-Leste and likely orchestrated several of the worst massacres. During the Reformasi, Prabowo's command "disappeared" dozens of student activists.

Now, as president, Prabowo is overseeing the occupation and genocide of West Papua, where an estimated 500,000 have been killed since Indonesia's annexation in 1969.

We need to back the ongoing independence movements in places like West Papua, where the Australian government remains complicit in the Indonesian military's atrocities.

This means demanding that our government ends its ongoing military aid and joint training with the Indonesian military.

# WHY ALBANESE PARTNERS WITH TRUMP EXPOSING AUSTRALIA'S OWN IMPERIALIST AGENDA

Clinton Fernandes' new book exposes Albanese's own imperialist agenda in backing Trump and Israel, writes **Adam Adelpour**

CLINTON FERNANDES' latest book *Turbulence* is an ambitious attempt to outline Trump's domestic and foreign policy agenda and what it means for Australia. He says that Trump wants US global primacy over China above all else.

The book was written before Trump's inauguration and in the months that followed. Albanese's disgraceful pandering to Trump throughout the year has made the book only more relevant.

It was sickening to see Albanese grinning alongside Trump during his visit to Washington in September. Trump is an appalling far-right bigot and chief arms supplier to Israel's genocide.

In 2017 Albanese said Trump "scares the sh\*t out of" him. But now he is ploughing full steam ahead locking down the AUKUS military pact with the US. He announced \$12 billion in September for a submarine base in WA that can house and maintain US nuclear subs and has given the US \$1.6 billion directly so far to expand production of nuclear submarines.

The subs the US produces are armed with nuclear weapons meaning Australia is helping build key components of the US nuclear strike force. Now Albanese has signed a \$3 billion critical minerals deal with Trump as well.

Fernandes tears Albanese's embrace of US imperialism to shreds, along with the platitudes used to justify it.

As he puts it, AUKUS is "not an investment in national building" but a contribution to the "war fighting capabilities of the United States". He argues the defence of the "international rules-based order" used to justify the military build-up is a euphemism hiding the US's defence of its empire.

One of the stand-out sections of the book takes up the issue of Israel's

genocide in Gaza. He explains why the US has backed Israel to the hilt and why the Albanese government is so determined to support Israel.

But the book largely leaves the question of what is to be done open, while at times suggesting the way forward is for Australia to adopt an independent foreign policy separate from the US. This is the weakest aspect of *Turbulence*.

There are systemic forces behind the drive to war on China, the US's and its allies' support for the Gaza genocide and Australia's alliance with the US. This means we need much more radical solutions.

## US imperialism and Albanese's complicity in genocide

Swathes of people have been horrified that Albanese has continued to arm and provide political cover to Israel through two years of genocide.

The go-to explanation for the Albanese government's criminal stance is the influence of the Zionist lobby.

For example, in a recent interview with former Labor Foreign Minister Bob Carr titled "Exposing the disturbing Israeli lobby inside Australia", viewed 339,000 times on YouTube, he says:

"The Jewish lobby in Australia is a foreign influence operation. It's designed to put the interests of Israel above the interests of Australia in its foreign policy ... No one organises donations to attempt to elevate its influence in the way the Jewish lobby does in Australia."

There is no doubt about the tenacity of the Zionist lobby. But the chapter on Trump's Middle East policy in *Turbulence* presents a powerful argument as to why the interests behind the US and Australia's support for Israel go far deeper than lobbyists and donations.

Fernandes begins by saying that "control of Middle East Oil is the

**Fernandes argues that support for Israel is a way for Australia to 'demonstrate its relevance for US global strategy'**

main goal of US strategy for the region". He notes that the imperialist concern with the region's oil dates back to the First World War. British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon said the Allies "floated to victory upon a wave of oil".

Arthur Balfour, British Foreign Secretary during the war, described the region's oil supplies as "all important" not long after he made the infamous Balfour Declaration supporting a Jewish colonial project in Palestine in 1917.

Fernandes stresses that the goal of US policy today continues this tradition. It aims to control the region's oil using Israel as its attack dog. The value of having a stranglehold on oil isn't just to extract profit, it can be used to discipline other states dependent on it.

He provides a 1981 quote from US Secretary of State Alexander Haig saying, "A central aspect of US policy since the October 1973 war has been to ensure Israel maintains a qualitative military edge in the region."

This policy is very much alive today. In the last two years Israel has used its US-supplied arsenal not only to decimate Gaza but to bomb Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Yemen, Qatar and Tunisia as well.

In November this year Benjamin Netanyahu responded to news that Saudi Arabia would acquire US-made F-35 fighter jets by saying that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio had assured him that the US would supply Israel with advanced weapons to maintain its "qualitative edge" in military power.

Fernandes argues that support for Israel is a way for Australia to "demonstrate its relevance for US global strategy".

The conclusions that flow from this understanding are critical. If Australia's support for Israel was simply a result of a well organised Zionist

lobby then by implication a well-organised counter-lobby could break it.

But key imperialist interests are at stake. As a result it will take far more to break the West's support for Israel. It will take a sustained struggle that is powerful enough to challenge Australian imperialist policy and the US alliance.

## AUKUS and the drive to war on China

The chapter "Frontline China" paints a vivid picture of the stakes in the drive to war on China.

Fernandes brings a sharp focus to the way the shadow of nuclear war hangs over the escalating contest between the US and China in the South China Sea and over Taiwan. He details how the US has repeatedly threatened China with nuclear strikes.

During the Korean War, where China supported North Korea and the US supported the South, the US repeatedly threatened to use nuclear weapons.

In 1955 during escalating tensions between Chinese Nationalists in Taiwan and the Chinese Communist government in China, President Eisenhower publicly threatened to use tactical nuclear weapons if fighting broke out.

B-36 bombers were deployed to Guam and targets in mainland China selected. This was repeated during similar tensions in 1958. China did not detonate its first nuclear device until 1964.

There is a chilling description of how today US military strategy in the South China Sea is directed at neutralising China's ability to retaliate in the face of a US nuclear strike on the Chinese mainland.

To deter the US, China is developing a "second strike" capability using nuclear weapons-capable submarines. The idea is that even if mainland China was destroyed these submarines could launch ballistic missiles that would hit the continental United States. This is supposed to act as a deterrence against the US launching a major nuclear attack.

The US presence in the South China Sea and around Taiwan is designed to make this impossible by preventing Chinese subs getting within the range required for such a strike, and making them easier to detect and destroy. The undersea geography around Taiwan is littered with sensors for anti-submarine warfare.

This is the context in which Australia is assisting US "freedom



**Above: Albanese with Donald Trump at the White House in October** Photo: White House Photo by Daniel Torok

of navigation" exercises in the South China Sea and pursuing the AUKUS nuclear subs.

Far from being designed to defend Australia or secure the "rules-based international order" the AUKUS subs are designed to assist the US nuclear war fighting capability in its bid to maintain primacy over China.

Fernandes succinctly sums up Australia's imperialist motives in deepening the US alliance, saying, "Australia's foreign and defence policies remain resolutely sub-imperial: attempting to preserve dominance over the southwest Pacific and smaller neighbours in Southeast Asia such as Timor-Leste while demonstrating relevance to US global primacy through AUKUS.

"The declared goals are 'deterrence' and 'freedom of navigation'. The real goals were expressed candidly by Douglas MacArthur [an American general during the Second World War]: 'we can dominate with sea and air power every Asiatic port from Vladivostok to Singapore'."

## Resisting imperialism

The strength of the criticism of Australia's alliance with the US in *Turbulence* demands an equally strong answer about what is to be done.

Fernandes says in the introduction to the book, "It is an assessment written to inform the public about what the real goals [of Australian and US policy] are, not what they ought to be. The latter can emerge from discus-

sions once the former is understood."

However, throughout the book Fernandes does in fact nod towards his preferred alternative—an independent, sovereign foreign policy including conventional submarines outside US control. There is a whole section on why Australia should acquire air independent propulsion submarines instead of the AUKUS subs.

The Greens moved in this direction at the last federal election too, with the party adopting defence policy for the first time that included sovereign missile and drone capabilities.

This is a mistake. Australia is an imperialist bully-state in the region and it will wield its weapons accordingly.

Many of the strongest parts of the book point towards the systemic roots of imperialist policy in the Middle East and towards China.

But systemic problems require radical solutions. A "democratic" world order cannot be grafted onto global capitalism, any more than a benign foreign policy can be grafted onto an Australian capitalism sustained by its role in imperialist brutality alongside the US.

*Turbulence* paints a vivid picture of the increasingly unstable world order under Trump, his imperialist ambitions and Albanese's disgraceful support for them. In response we need a strong anti-war movement and international solidarity, not suggestions about how best to arm Australian capitalism.



**Turbulence: Australian foreign policy in the Trump era**  
**By Clinton Fernandes,**  
**Melbourne University Publishing,**  
**\$29.99**

# ISRAEL KEEPS KILLING IN GAZA AS UN APPROVES COLONIAL RULE



By James Supple

ISRAEL IS still massacring hundreds of Palestinians in intense bombing in Gaza despite the “ceasefire”.

It had killed almost 350 Palestinians since the ceasefire began as *Solidarity* went to press.

It continues to block basic food and medical supplies for Gaza’s population. Less than one third of the 600 trucks of aid daily Israel agreed to deliver are being allowed in.

Caroline Seguin of Doctors Without Borders said that “many Palestinians are still living in makeshift tents and without access to running water and electricity, next to piles of rubbish and overflowing sewage”.

This comes as the UN Security Council has backed Donald Trump’s plan for new colonial overlords to run Gaza—including the aim of wiping out Hamas.

A so called “Board of Peace” chaired by Trump will be given complete control over Gaza, including aid deliveries and decisions about any reconstruction. It’s not clear who the US will appoint to the board, but figures such as war criminal Tony Blair, former UK Prime Minister and one of the butchers of Iraq, have been suggested.

The Palestinian population will have no real say in Gaza’s affairs, let alone the self-determination they deserve. The only fig-leaf of Palestinian involvement is the pledge to set up a committee of Palestinian technocrats to run civil and administrative functions.

The motion at the UN also authorises an international “stabilisation

**Above: Heavy rains in Gaza have flooded many of the makeshift tents people rely on for shelter amid unsanitary conditions**

Photo: Mohammed Skaik/ TheNEWS2 via ZUMA Press Wire

**The UN motion also authorises an international ‘stabilisation force’ with the explicit aim of disarming Hamas**

force” to operate in Gaza. This would have the explicit aim of “demilitarising” Gaza through disarming Hamas and would gradually take over as Israeli troops withdraw. It is still unclear which countries will agree to send troops.

Hamas has refused to disarm, rightly noting that “resisting the occupation by all means is a legitimate right guaranteed by international laws and conventions”.

It has rejected the stabilisation force in Gaza, saying the Trump plan “strips it of its neutrality, and turns it into a party to the conflict in favour of the occupation”. This is not a plan for peace, but for ongoing occupation designed to get rid of Hamas and any resistance to Israeli domination.

## Regional rivalry

China and Russia, who both had the power to veto the plan at the UN, refused to do so.

A joint statement signed by Arab governments from Qatar, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, as well as other Muslim nations in Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey all threw their support behind Trump’s plan. But the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Jordan have indicated they won’t be part of the stabilisation force, wanting to avoid any clash with Hamas.

Underlying all this is jockeying among the Arab states as they vie for regional influence.

All through the Gaza genocide, the Arab rulers have refused to lift a finger to stop Israel’s crimes. Instead they have cracked down on Palestine solidarity protests and worked covert-

ly with Israel to protect it against missile attacks from Iran. These regimes collaborate with Western imperialism in order to maintain their own rule.

Trump secured their backing for his “peace plan” with the flimsiest of concessions. The US agreed to acknowledge that a “pathway” towards a Palestinian state “may” be possible, but only after “redevelopment” in Gaza has advanced and the Palestinian Authority (PA) has carried out further reforms demanded by the West.

The PA is a notoriously corrupt body that polices the West Bank on behalf of Israel by crushing any resistance to its occupation. Predictably, the PA has embraced the Gaza plan.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has insisted he will oppose any form of Palestinian state from ever happening. Far right Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir even said Israel should assassinate PA officials if it moves forward.

The US is planning to permanently divide Gaza along the “yellow line” that separates the 58 per cent of the Gaza Strip Israel occupies and the rest of the territory, US military documents obtained by *The Guardian* show.

Any reconstruction would be restricted to the Israeli-occupied zone in an attempt to force civilians out of areas with a continued Hamas presence.

Israel could then continue to bomb the rest of Gaza whenever it chooses—as it has been doing ever since the “ceasefire” began.

The genocide in Gaza continues. We have to keep fighting for sanctions against the Israeli terror state to cut off the supply of weapons and trade on which Israel depends.

**Solidarity**