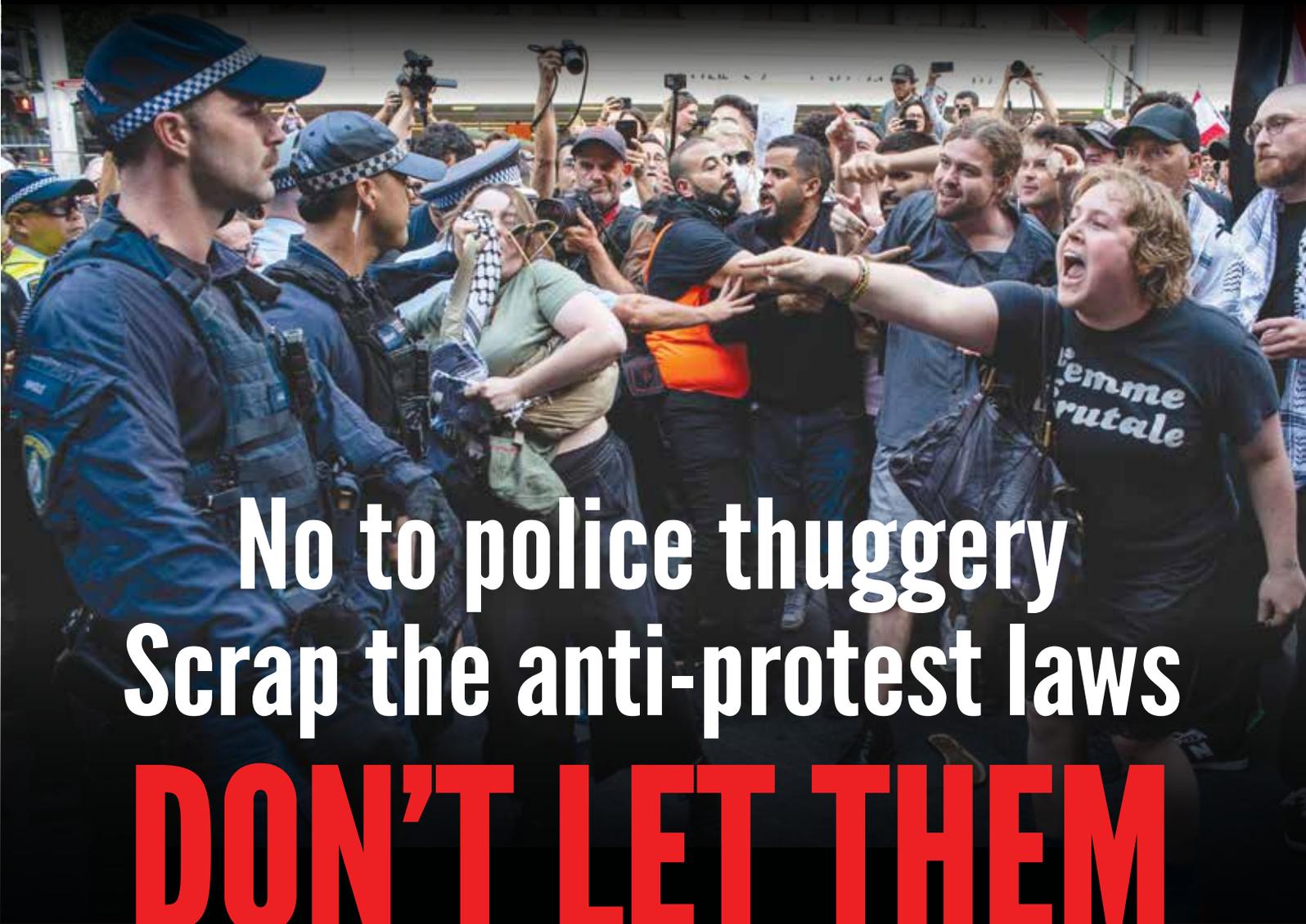


Solidarity

Issue No. 204 / February 2026

\$3/\$5



No to police thuggery
Scrap the anti-protest laws

**DON'T LET THEM
BAN PALESTINE
SOLIDARITY**

COALITION

Liberals' chaos feeding
One Nation racism

MINNEAPOLIS

How resistance forced
back Trump's ICE thugs

RIGHT TO PROTEST

Lessons from Queensland's
Right to March campaign

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
For more information contact:
Adam on 0400 351 694
sydney@solidarity.net.au

Melbourne

Meeting 6.30pm every Thursday
Kathleen Syme library and community
centre, 251 Faraday St, Carlton
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Things they say

They did all we asked them to do
NSW Premier Chris Minns on the police and the violence they unleashed at the Herzog protest in Sydney

The curious thing a lot of people say about Angus Taylor is he is the best qualified idiot they've ever met
Former Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on new Liberal leader Angus Taylor

Most people live in urban areas. If we are extinct in the city, we are extinct.
Liberal Senator Andrew Bragg on the Liberal Party's predicament, where it now only holds ten of the 90 urban seats nationally

Due to recent events I have decided there are other ways I can support women and Australia.
Charlotte Mortlock, Liberal Party member who founded Hilma's Network after the party's 2022 election loss, after she quit the party following Sussan Ley's ousting as leader

I'm not scared of a germ. I used to snort cocaine off of a toilet seat
Donald Trump's Secretary of Health and Human Services and anti-vaxxer Robert F. Kennedy Jnr

First we need to push back on the lies; then crush the pedo/trafficking narrative; then rebuild your image as philanthropist
Fascist and Donald Trump ally Steve Bannon advising Jeffrey Epstein in April 2019

So many guys caught in the me too reaching out to me. asking when does the madness stop
Jeffrey Epstein's emails are full of attacks on the #MeToo movement, including from dozens of his associates

We had to spend so much time writing a letter to take the files down so they could be properly redacted with the powerful people's names present and the survivor names omitted. It's been really, really exhausting.
Lisa Phillips, activist and survivor of Epstein's abuse, explains how the Justice Department redacted the names of men accused of abuse but left survivors names public

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Suspect crypto donation to Labor MP

LABOR MP Andrew Charlton accepted a personal donation from a cryptocurrency firm just before the last election, just months before he was put in charge of cryptocurrency regulation.

Charlton was gifted \$49,500 from Brisbane-based cryptocurrency exchange platform SwyftX to fund his re-election campaign in Parramatta, Mark Di Stefano revealed in the Financial Review.

At the time Charlton had no official role in the Albanese government's cryptocurrency policies. But he had become the Labor co-chairman of the Parliamentary Friends of Blockchain, the technology behind cryptocurrency.

SwyftX obviously thought it was a good bet he would end up responsible for cryptocurrency regulation. It was clearly paying attention, since it fired off a press release welcoming his appointment within hours of its announcement saying it was "unequivocally good news".

Gas companies win big from environment laws

NEW FEDERAL environment laws passed in December include a hidden carve out for offshore gas companies, according to the Environment Centre NT's Kirsty Howey.

Federal Environment Minister Murray Watt is now able to effectively transfer the power to approve projects to the offshore energy regulator, NOPESMA. Any project approved by this body would not require environmental approval. This would mean approvals fall under the control of the notoriously pro-mining Resources Minister Madeleine King.

It is, as Howey puts it, "a fairly stunning capitulation to the likes of Woodside, Inpex and Santos."

This would allow mining companies to get around the decision in 2022 in a case brought by Tiwi Islanders that increased mining companies' obligations to consult Indigenous communities about the cultural and environmental damage offshore oil and gas mining projects could cause.

The mining companies have been lobbying for legislation to overturn the decision ever since—and Labor has now given it to them.

Charity funds IDF soldiers

A REGISTERED charity raised nearly \$29 million in Australia in 2024 for an Israeli organisation that funds IDF soldiers who move from abroad to serve in the army, Michael West Media has revealed.

The United Israel Appeal in Australia is the local fundraising arm of Israel's Keren Hayesod, which says it "works to further the national priorities of the State of Israel".

Since the Australian charity began disclosing records in 2013 it has sent \$376 million to the organisation, the bulk of its funds raised.

The money goes to the "Lone Immigrant Soldier" campaign, which provides grants, housing, employment assistance and counselling to immigrants who move to Israel to serve in the IDF without family there. In 2024 this funding went to 2200 soldiers.

When it received charitable status in 1998, then federal Treasurer Peter Costello described the United Israel Appeal's work as a "valuable humanitarian service". It describes its aims as assisting "persons suffering persecution, famine or other forms of physical or economic hardship" to migrate to Israel.

Palestinian bodies vaporised by bombing

PALESTINIANS IN Gaza were vaporised by Israel's use of internationally prohibited thermal and thermobaric bombs, an *Al Jazeera* investigation has shown.

There are 2842 cases of Palestinians who have vanished since the beginning of Israel's genocidal war in October 2023, according to Gaza Civil Defence teams. This includes cases where people have told authorities the number of family members inside a house that was destroyed by bombing, but some of the bodies could not be found.

Experts have attributed this to the use of US-supplied weapons, also known as vacuum or aerosol bombs, that can generate extreme temperatures of over 3500 degrees celsius.

"When a body is exposed to energy exceeding 3000 degrees combined with massive pressure and oxidation, the fluids boil instantly. The tissues vaporise and turn to ash", Dr Munir al-Bursh, director general of the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza told reporters.

Stop work to stop racism action sends Pauline Hanson a warning



PAULINE HANSON'S screening in Melbourne of the reactionary film *A Very Progressive Movie* was challenged when cinema workers walked off the job and joined an anti-racism rally.

Hanson was at Village Cinemas in the Crown Casino complex on 29 January for two screenings, to raise money and support for One Nation.

But the screenings were almost cancelled as members of the United Workers Union voted the day before to cease work over health and safety concerns.

Management agreed to cancel the event but were overruled by national cinema management.

On the day, UWU members ceased work with some joining a rally called by the Refugee Action Collective outside the venue.

Senior cinema management were left to serve soft drinks and popcorn—a job they did badly.

A cinema worker told *Solidarity*, "We had a cease to work put in place for the people working that function, so they sat in our staff areas during the cease to work [or joined the rally]."

"We had queer people working this event and no one else wanted to work it, so it wasn't safe for anyone to be there, especially around racists.

"Our team are incredible, there are 120 of us and all of us are opposed to this. If you have this camaraderie you can make things happen."

Short notice

More than 200 people attended the rally, including a contingent from the state public service union, the CPSU SPSF, and other unionists.

A RAC activist told *Solidarity*, "We circulated the event through our networks, scrambled to establish a broad platform of speakers, and handed out 1000 leaflets at the Invasion Day rally on 26 January.

"Mass leafleting brought us into contact with workers at Village Cinemas who were furious that upper management was allowing hundreds of racist and far right supporters to come into their workplace.

"The fact that RAC had called a rally gave workers inside more confidence to stand up to Hanson, her far right supporters and their own management.

"With One Nation riding high in the national polls we need to continue to mobilise in broad numbers against Hanson."

EDITORIAL

Defiant protests disrupt Albanese's embrace of war criminal Herzog

ANTHONY ALBANESE invited Israeli President Isaac Herzog to visit in the hope of boosting support for Israel. Instead mass protests, and anger at police violence in Sydney, showed the continuing depth of opposition to the genocidal state.

It was an outrage for Albanese to invite a war criminal named in both the International Court of Justice ruling and a UN Commission of Inquiry as inciting genocide. Lawyer Chris Sidoti, a Commissioner on the UN Inquiry, called for Herzog to be arrested on his arrival.

But Albanese thought that, after the Bondi attack, he could silence supporters of Palestine by smearing the movement as antisemitic.

Instead tens of thousands defied him. Albanese said he was “devastated” by the scenes at the protest in Sydney, as rage against Herzog’s visit dominated the news.

NSW Premier Chris Minns launched an authoritarian crackdown designed to stop people protesting. Minns warned people not to come into the city on the day of the protest and used anti-protest laws to ban the demonstration from marching.

Up to 20,000 defied him, with large sections of the crowd willing to march in defiance of the law.

Footage of police violence has generated outrage. Many have drawn comparisons to ICE’s crackdown in Minneapolis ordered by Donald Trump.

This was a defeat for Minns’ efforts following Bondi to smear the Palestine movement as hateful and dangerous.

In the aftermath NSW police have ended the restrictions on protests introduced after Bondi in a victory for the right to protest. The day after Minns refused to call an independent inquiry into police actions, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission announced one.

It is Minns and the police that are creating violence and chaos. Minns should resign.

The lesson is that defiance works.

Following the Bondi attack, sections of the Palestine movement went into retreat, calling off vigils and protests. But it was right to stand up to the intimidation and assert our right to protest.

The actions held in the weeks before Herzog’s visit, including the efforts of Indigenous activists in Sydney who forced police to allow a march on Invasion Day, showed that it was possible to defy the anti-protest laws.



Above: Up to 20,000 took to the streets for a defiant protest in Sydney Photo: Solidarity

The efforts to silence and criminalise support for Palestine are far from finished. NSW has imposed a new code of conduct on teachers, threatening them with the sack for vaguely defined “hate speech”. This is designed to suppress any expression of support for Palestine.

Minns plans to ban the phrase “Globalise the Intifada”, with legislation likely in March. The Victorian government wants to amend vilification laws to prosecute people for using it. The Queensland government is going further and banning “From the River to the Sea” as well.

Albanese has committed to implementing all the recommendations from antisemitism envoy and pro-Israel activist Jillian Segal. Universities will be a particular target.

Supporters of Israel will also use the Royal Commission into antisemitism to attack the Palestine movement and demand further repression.

We need to take the spirit of defiance around the Herzog protests into resisting all these attacks.

Cut ties with Israel

The genocide in Gaza continues and so must the fight for sanctions on Israel.

Albanese’s invitation to Herzog was part of strengthening ties with the genocidal state. Foreign Minister Penny Wong called the visit “an important signal ... of our relationship with Israel”. Herzog himself praised the Albanese government as “serious partners” following official talks.

Albanese continues to aid Israel’s genocide through allowing the export of weapons parts alongside intelligence sharing from the Pine Gap spy base.

The efforts to silence and criminalise support for Palestine are far from finished

Australia also has a raft of contracts with Israeli arms firms that inject billions into Israel’s war economy.

This relationship is part of Australia’s military alliance with the US, with Israel a key US ally. Albanese wants to boost US power even as Trump pursues brazenly gangster imperialism.

Albanese is spending \$368 billion on nuclear subs while expanding US bases in Australia to prepare for war against China.

And as Trump launches violent deportation raids across the US, Albanese is also fanning racism here.

One Nation is surging in the polls, scapegoating migrants for housing prices and the cost of living. Albanese has encouraged this racism, declaring that he is getting immigration down and passing new deportation laws to dump non-citizens with criminal convictions on Nauru.

Following the Bondi attack he imposed new “hate speech” laws, promoting the idea that the Muslim community contains terrorist sympathisers.

Interest rates, inflation and the cost of living are all rising again, with real wages going backwards. Albanese’s failure on living standards will also feed the growth of the far right.

We need to learn from the resistance in Minneapolis and the defiant demonstrations against Herzog—protest works. We can build on this to beat back Albanese and state governments’ offensive against Palestine.

Alongside the protests, every workplace, every school, every university, needs to get organised. And we need to link that resistance to a fight for a socialist alternative to the capitalist system that is run by a profit-hungry class of billionaires and warmongers.

Defiance at Uni Melb shows how to beat Palestine repression

By Julie Monteiro

In the wake of the Bondi attack, governments are attempting to repress the Palestine movement, with anti-protest laws, federal hate crime laws and plans to ban chants such as “Globalise the Intifada”.

The experience of activists at the University of Melbourne, mobilising hundreds to face down threats of police and academic sanctions, provide a rich example how we can fight repression and continue the fight for Palestine.

Since Israel’s genocide Gaza began, students at UniMelb have campaigned relentlessly to cut the university’s ties to weapons manufacturers complicit in the genocide as well as Israeli universities.

With the emergence of a global student movement of Gaza solidarity encampments, students at UniMelb set up their own encampment in April 2024.

After three weeks, on Nakba Day, students escalated by marching a rally of over 500 people into the Arts West building and renaming it Mahmoud’s Hall, in memory of a prospective Palestinian scholarship student who was killed by an airstrike in Gaza.

Students called on the university to disclose and divest from its ties to weapons manufacturers, determined to stay in the hall until these demands were met.

Within 30 minutes of the sit-in starting, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor came to tell students they had to leave or the police would be called to clear them out. Students willing to defy arrest formed a circle in the middle of the hall.

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) called a snap picket, where dozens of members wearing “Academic Staff” signs guarded every entrance of the hall.

Despite the university threatening to call them, the police never came.

In the following eight days as the sit-in continued, threats of disciplinary action blared through loudspeakers and the hall was littered with copies of the warning in writing. Every day, students would call for a rally to defend the sit-in, mobilising hundreds of students, staff and community members to ward off the university’s threats.

University management then plastered the campus with signs claiming that anyone who wasn’t a student or staff member attending protests could



Above: The sit-in at Mahmoud’s Hall at University of Melbourne in 2024
Photo: Matt Hrkac

be arrested for trespassing. Staff immediately organised a union meeting and the NTEU called a rally, inviting unions and community members to defy the new trespassing rules, rendering them unenforceable.

The same notices warning of trespassing remain at every entrance on campus today. But we have held countless rallies on campus with outside speakers and not a single arrest has occurred.

After the sit-in ended, the university brought disciplinary action against 19 students and two staff members. In a defiant response, hundreds of students and staff rallied on the day of the misconduct hearings, scaring university management to the point where they tried to change the location of the hearings.

As a result, all participants were given warnings on their academic transcripts, a mere slap on the wrist in comparison to the suspensions and expulsions that the university had threatened. This was a major victory for a movement that united student and staff power to defy repressive measures and threatened the everyday functioning of the university.

In contrast, smaller sit-in attempts have not been as successful in garnering wider support and fighting back repression.

In the following semester, a sit-in with a handful of students was held in the office of the head of the joint PhD program with Hebrew University. Police were called within 30 minutes and issued protesters a move-on order.

The university expelled two students and suspended another two. Fortunately, at least one expulsion has been overturned on appeal.

Indoor protest ban

On the first day of the academic year in 2025, the Vice-Chancellor introduced a ban on indoor protest, clearly in response to the sit-ins of 2024 and fearing more militant action on campus.

Some have argued that since Mahmoud’s Hall, defiance is more risky. But the repression has been beaten back whenever it’s been fought with mass action.

Students against War has openly defied the ban on indoor protest twice, with rallies of hundreds of students and staff marching back into Mahmoud’s Hall, confidently calling for more people to join us and come out in defiance of the rule until it’s scrapped.

Despite the university issuing threats during defiance of the indoor protest, nearly a year later it has not penalised anyone.

Despite the ceasefire agreement, Israel is still bombing Gaza and expanding settlements in the West Bank. So long as this genocidal apartheid state exists, the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians will continue.

We must keep up the fight for Palestine everywhere by engaging with broader layers of students and the community and building a movement willing to stand up to repression and ultimately end our universities’ and government’s complicity in the genocide.

Repression has been beaten back whenever it’s been fought with mass action

Protests against visit of Israel's President defy anti-protest laws and police violence

ANTHONY ALBANESE'S hopes that he could use Isaac Herzog's visit to normalise genocide and win sympathy for Israel after the Bondi attack have blown up in his face. Instead tens of thousands took to the streets nationwide, disgusted at his efforts to embrace the genocidal state.

Sydney saw the most dramatic scenes, as up to 20,000 protesters gathered in defiance of intimidation from police and NSW Premier Chris Minns, who refused to allow the protest to march.

Minns' new anti-protest laws ban marches in restricted areas, including at Sydney Town Hall where the rally was held, with police given extra powers to move on protesters under the new laws as well as a "major events" declaration.

But the enormous turnout and determination of protesters saw the crowd defy the anti-protest laws and push to march. The crowd stood its ground until police forced people from the area—when thousands were able to claim a victory by marching back towards Central station.

This shows the kind of defiance that the movement needs to stop the efforts to silence support for Palestine.

In Melbourne, up to 10,000 blocked the roads outside Flinders Street station on Monday, and a similar number did the same three days later when Herzog visited town.

Chants of "From the River to the Sea" rang out from the thousands who rallied in Brisbane, a day after Premier David Crisafulli announced he was going to ban the phrase.

There were at least 28 protests nationwide, in cities from Adelaide to Wagga Wagga, Ballarat, Bathurst and Bunbury.

Sydney defies police

From the platform in Sydney, Grace Tame led the crowd in a chant of "Globalise the Intifada", the slogan Chris Minns and other state premiers want to ban.

Four state Labor MPs defied the Premier to attend the protest, with Labor upper house MP Sarah Kaine addressing the crowd, saying, "We do not welcome a man who incites genocide. We do not welcome a man who signs bombs to drop on children."

But police were determined to get their revenge. Thousands were



Above: Part of the crowd against Isaac Herzog's visit in Sydney Photo: Solidarity

blocked from entering Town Hall square. The majority crowded around the entrances, ignoring police directions to move on and instead chanting "let us in". Police were finally forced to let hundreds in after over an hour of waiting.

Police then went on a violent rampage when the huge crowd began to push for a march. Dozens of protesters were punched, thrown to the ground and pepper sprayed.

Despite police threats, Lizzie Jarrett from the Blak Caucus declared from the stage that an Aboriginal contingent intended to lead a march.

This contingent took the brunt of the first wave of arrests. There was also spontaneous momentum towards police lines from many sections of the crowd determined to defy the anti-protest laws.

One protester, Ali, told *Solidarity* that, "I was holding a megaphone and police dragged me along the ground. I had five or six cops come up to me. One of them racially abused me and then started punching me on the back of my head.

"They pushed me down on the concrete and handcuffed me. Then they said 'we're going to give you a move on' and released me."

Protesters stood their ground for at least an hour after police blocked the march, before dozens of police swept through to violently clear the whole area.

There were 27 arrested, with 15

expected to face charges. A number of protesters were taken to hospital to be checked for head injuries, with one suffering four broken vertebrae.

Police also pushed over and assaulted a group of Muslim men praying inside Town Hall square, who were clearly no threat to anyone, demanding they leave.

It later emerged that police wanted to clear protesters from the city to allow Isaac Herzog and those attending a pro-Israel event at the International Convention Centre further across town to travel through the city.

But as police dispersed the crowd, thousands were able to march on the road back to Central station.

The scale of the protests has shown that Albanese's efforts to push back the movement for Palestine are failing. Over two years of genocide in Gaza has shifted masses of people to support Palestine.

His support for Herzog has disgusted even more, and widened cracks inside Labor.

We need to keep defying all the efforts to crack down on people speaking out for Palestine and continue to push back the new anti-protest and "hate speech" laws.

The kind of mass, collective defiance seen against Herzog's visit is the best way to do this—and the best way to keep fighting to end the Australian government's complicity with the genocide and impose the sanctions on Israel that are needed.

.....
This shows the defiance that the movement needs to stop the efforts to silence support for Palestine

Racist terror attempt at Invasion Day rally shows far right threat

By Paddy Gibson

IN A shocking racist attack on Aboriginal people and supporters, a far-right terrorist targeted the Boorloo (Perth) Invasion Day rally on 26 January with a home-made bomb. It thankfully failed to explode.

WA Police confirmed that if this bomb had detonated it could have caused a “mass casualty event”.

Only on 5 February, however, did they announce that the bomber would be charged as a terrorist.

After a four week suppression order, police have finally released his name. Luke Alexander Hall is a 32-year-old white man prosecutors say was motivated by “nationalism and racism” and influenced by “hateful online content”.

Silence and hypocrisy

In stark contrast to the hue and cry over anything deemed to be antisemitic, there was virtual silence from the media and political leaders in the wake of this racist attack.

There have been no demands to scrutinise whether he joined the March for Australia, voted Liberal or was influenced by the racist diatribes of One Nation or the Murdoch Press.

The truth is that anti-Aboriginal racism is not news—it is built into the fabric of Australia, has been surging since the failed Voice to Parliament referendum and reached fever pitch in the lead up to 26 January.

The Albanese government has allowed this to happen and in fact encourages such ideas with its own racist policy agenda—including presiding over the sharpest increase in Aboriginal prison numbers in history.

Just weeks prior to the attack, the City of Perth cancelled its annual Survival Day Birak Concert under pressure from the hard right, instead funding a nationalist festival sponsored by Gina Rinehart.

Despite this, Invasion Day rallies across the continent were some of the biggest in history, with tens of thousands of people turning out.

Anti-protest laws

In Sydney, Invasion Day organisers made it clear they would defy any attempt to suppress a march using Chris Minns’ anti-protest laws.

Police backed down and carved out Hyde Park and the southern CBD



Above: Invasion Day rally, January 2026
Photo: Solidarity

to ensure the planned march route was lawful.

Disgracefully, the Cook government in WA is using Hall’s terrorism to mount its own attack on the right to protest.

A bill set to be introduced next week would give police the power to refuse a permit for protesters if they decide it is “likely to promote hate”.

There is a clear danger here to the Palestine movement, with pro-Palestine slogans being branded “hate speech” by governments across Australia.

Aboriginal community leaders rejected these laws during a protest outside Hall’s court appearance on Tuesday.

Brielle Jackson, an Aboriginal Muslim woman told the protest:

“These proposed laws will not address Islamophobia and will not reduce the ongoing racism towards Indigenous communities.

“Instead, there is a real risk that they will limit the very movements and communities who are speaking out against hate.

“The trauma many of us experienced on Invasion Day must not be used to introduce laws that restrict multiple [protest] movements. Our pain should not be turned into a policy that narrows democratic space”.

Far right

Reform to federal laws after Bondi led the National Socialist Network (NSN) to disband to avoid prosecution as a “hate group”.

But this has not stopped the

growth of the hard right and has increased the immediate threat of violence from former NSN members.

In February, the Nine Papers reported on the scale of the connections between NSN members and Nazi groups overseas with a history of terrorism.

Members of groups such as Terrorgram and National Action have shared material including instructions on how to carry out violent attacks.

Former NSN members openly participated as marshals in March for Australia rallies on 26 January, targeting migrants and Indigenous people.

These were smaller than previously but still attracted around 2000 racists in both Sydney and Melbourne.

The Lakemba mosque in Sydney also received a letter threatening an attack a few days before Invasion Day.

Former NSN leaders have promised to set up a registered political party as a front for the group.

The surge in racism following the Bondi attack promoted by politicians and the mainstream media has only fuelled anti-migrant politics.

We can’t rely on Labor and the political mainstream to stop the rise of the far right.

One Nation is rising in the polls and Anthony Albanese’s response will be to pander further to their racism.

We need a united anti-racist movement that is both able to counter their lies about migrants, their antisemitism and their racism against Indigenous people, and willing to oppose them on the streets.

.....
Just weeks prior to the attack, the City of Perth cancelled its annual Survival Day Birak Concert

Liberals' new leader stuck with same problems as One Nation gains at their expense

By David Glanz

THE LIBERALS have a new leader. But they're still stuck with their old problems—and Angus Taylor isn't going to dig them out of a deep hole.

Taylor beat Sussan Ley on 13 February with a party room vote of 34-17, just nine months after she became leader.

It's a sign of a party in freefall. One opinion poll had the newly reformed Coalition on just 18 per cent. The change of leadership reflects the panic among Liberal MPs.

Senator James Paterson summed it up the day before the spill, "At the last election, which was the Coalition's most devastating defeat, almost 5 million Australians voted for us.

"Over the last nine months ... 2.1 million of those people have since deserted the Coalition. That's more ... than 7000 votes a day. If it goes on, there'll be nothing left of the Liberal Party."

Core beliefs

Taylor immediately declared that he would be cracking down on migration, saying: "If someone doesn't subscribe to our core beliefs, the door must be shut."

After Bondi the reference to "beliefs" is an ear-shattering dog whistle, targeting Muslims. It's also a transparent attempt to pull Liberal supporters back from the grasp of One Nation.

But Taylor faces the same problem as Ley. The party is caught in a tug-of-war between the Teals and One Nation.

The Teals have seized substantial ground on the Liberals' left flank in the cities. The Liberals now hold only nine of 88 metropolitan seats.

To win back Teal voters would mean backing net zero, dumping plans for nuclear power and toning down the racist rhetoric around migration and Welcome to Country ceremonies.

But that would drive even more conservative Liberal voters into the arms of Pauline Hanson and One Nation, which opinion polls have riding as high as 27 per cent.

Former ABC election specialist Antony Green has drawn up a list of 25 seats that One Nation could win on its current polling. Nineteen are held



by the Coalition—12 by the Nationals and seven by the Liberals.

Like the Nationals, who face a potential wipe-out, Taylor has made it clear that he sees One Nation as the greater enemy, hence the immediate attack on migrants.

It's unlikely to work. In outer regional areas—where One Nation is strongest—65 per cent of people do not think that federal politicians understand and represent them.

Hanson can pose as an outsider who has stuck to her guns for 30 years. Meanwhile, Taylor, who boarded at The King's School in Sydney, won a Rhodes scholarship and went to Oxford University before becoming a management consultant, is establishment through and through.

No impact

Even sections of the ruling class and the Liberals have little faith in Taylor, who was widely regarded as a dud shadow treasurer under Peter Dutton.

When he stood against Ley for the leadership in 2025, Liberal senator Hollie Hughes lashed Taylor, saying, "I have concerns about his capability ... I don't know what he's been doing for three years."

The *Financial Review*, the bosses' paper, said this month in an editorial, "Nothing Taylor has done before gives us any hope he is the right man for the job."

Financial Review columnist Jennifer Hewett was scathing about his ministerial track record, saying,

Above: New Liberal leader Angus Taylor doesn't even inspire confidence among diehard party loyalists
Photo: Angus Taylor

"Taylor has shown little evidence in his parliamentary career that he has ... personal political appeal."

Taylor faces an immediate challenge with Ley resigning, creating a by-election in her regional NSW seat of Farrer. Independents, the Nationals and One Nation will be jostling to take her place.

And the Liberals are widely expected to cop a caning in the South Australian election next month.

Vicious laws

Meanwhile Labor is enjoying seeing its main rival tear itself apart. The rise of One Nation splits the conservative vote and makes another Labor landslide likely at the 2028 election.

The ALP created the circumstances for One Nation's rise, with no real answers to a cost-of-living crisis that is hurting working class people hard.

Labor could scrap the \$368 billion AUKUS nuclear submarine deal and boost health, childcare and education. Instead, its response has been to crack down on migration and to pass vicious deportation laws—legitimising Hanson's agenda.

The danger is that Anthony Albanese will give One Nation an easy run to hurt the Coalition, giving the racists more space to spread their poison.

Socialists and activists can take pleasure in the Coalition's pain. But we cannot afford complacency. We need to take the fight to Hanson's racism and the Labor policies that have created the space for her to prosper.

Taylor immediately declared that he would be cracking down on migration

New cost of living crunch as Labor and Reserve Bank target workers

By James Supple

THE RESERVE Bank (RBA) pushed interest rates back up in February, as workers face a new cost-of-living shock.

Maddeningly, it said the move was, in part, a response to people spending too much and driving up inflation. But many people are still struggling with the cost of living, not going on a spending binge.

The RBA expects inflation to keep rising, saying it will hit 4.2 per cent later this year.

Its answer is to smash living standards, putting up rates to make people pay more on their home loans and credit card debts. Two more interest rate rises are likely this year, according to financial markets.

The Bank also wants to push more people out of work, claiming that the unemployment rate in December of 4.1 per cent is too low. It thinks unemployment of at least 4.5 per cent will help reduce inflation.

Workers are already falling further behind cost-of-living increases.

After two years where wages finally started to gain ground again after the horror period of high inflation following the pandemic, wages are going backwards again.

There was a sharp decline in real wages between July and September last year, wiping out almost all the gains workers made in the previous year.

Wages are now back to 2011 levels after inflation is factored in and won't start rising again until 2027, according to RBA estimates.

Labor's Budget

Big business and pro-market economists have responded by demanding further attacks on workers.

In the *Financial Review* John Kehoe demanded "serious, overdue action from Canberra and our state governments on productivity-boosting policies and fiscal discipline".

In other words they want cuts to government spending and ways to make us work harder.

Reserve Bank Governor Michele Bullock has backed the push from business on productivity, saying inflation was due to underlying weaknesses in the economy and that, "Years of weak to no productivity growth is a big part of that story."

Business lobby group the Australian Chamber of Commerce and



Above: Workers on strike for a living wage at Berkelouw Books in December
Photo: Solidarity

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Wages are now back to 2011 levels after inflation is factored in and won't start rising again until 2027

Industry has called for \$50 billion a year worth of federal budget cuts.

They point to a modest increase in government spending since Labor came to power, claiming this is driving inflation. The Reserve Bank, however, has pointed to consumer spending and business investment in data centres for AI as mainly responsible.

Labor Treasurer Jim Chalmers is open to business demands. He told ABC's *Insiders* that productivity measures and spending cuts would be major elements of the budget in May.

There are also rumours that Labor will finally take a small step to unwind the tax handouts for housing investors that have produced surging house prices.

Treasurer Jim Chalmers is reportedly considering changes in the budget to reduce the 50 per cent discount on capital gains tax paid on profits in housing investment.

This allows investors who hold housing properties for 12 months to avoid a huge amount in tax, costing the government \$32 billion each year.

This overwhelmingly benefits the rich. The top 10 per cent of income earners take 82 per cent of the benefits, a Parliamentary Budget Office review reported this month. The top 1 per cent, those earning at least \$363,000 a year, receive 60 per cent.

But don't expect Labor to take the action that's needed. On their own, the changes they are considering would not significantly reduce housing

prices. A reduction in the capital gains tax discount from 50 to 33 per cent would only produce a 1.5-2 per cent drop in prices, conservative economist Chris Richardson says.

Labor's failure on living standards will fuel the rise of One Nation, who will blame immigration for housing costs and price rises.

But it's capitalism and the rich who are really responsible.

Whenever the economy runs into problems their solution is always to make workers pay, whether through cuts to wages or public spending, productivity measures or higher mortgage rates. Bosses' profits are never on the chopping block.

We need to force business to pay through a fightback for higher wages.

Some union leaders are talking about the need for this. But unions have too often failed to seize on the anger over the cost of living to lead a serious fight.

The Electrical Trades Union in NSW plans to demand 6 per cent a year wage rises from electrical contractors. The Transport Workers Union has lined up 200 agreements to expire by the middle of the year, including at Qantas, Virgin, Toll and Linfox, to increase its power in wage bargaining.

We need to seize on every opportunity to fight for wages to put an end to the cost-of-living pain—and reject the racist idea that migrants are to blame.

Violent police exist to protect capitalism and the rich

By James Supple

THE SCALE of the police violence in Sydney at the protest against Isaac Herzog’s visit has rightly drawn outrage.

But this is far from the first time protests have faced violence from police. The two port blockades against ZIM shipping in Sydney in 2023 and 2024 saw 42 protesters arrested, with people punched, kicked and tackled by police.

In December a court awarded \$54,000 in damages against Victoria police for grossly excessive use of force against demonstrators outside the International Mining And Resources Conference in 2019. Last year police in Melbourne used capsicum spray, flash bang grenades and pepperball projectiles against anti-racist demonstrators.

Violence against protests is not the result of rogue officers. It is part of the basic role of the police. Their central function is to defend a deeply unjust social order, protecting property and wealth in a capitalist system based on extreme inequality.

The police are part of the armed core of the state, alongside repressive institutions like the courts, prisons and the police, that exist to defend the interests of billionaires and the ruling class. They exist not just to deal with crime but to suppress threats to the social order.

The state first emerged with the development of classes only a few thousand years ago. The exploiters needed some organisation to apparently “stand above” and hold together a society based on divisions between rich and poor, while in reality helping the ruling class to maintain its power through force.

When capitalism emerged, the economically dominant class, the one that owns and controls the factories, banks and major corporations, became the politically dominant class. It took over and reshaped the state in its own interests.

Karl Marx therefore described the state as “a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie”, the capitalist class.

The state creates “order”, an order that enshrines the right of the rich and powerful to exploit the vast majority of society, of the government to launch imperialist wars against the wishes of the majority, and of the



Above: Police violence at the protest against Isaac Herzog in Sydney Photo: Sydpalpics

courts to imprison people who steal to feed themselves or refuse to be evicted from their homes.

In extreme situations the state has been prepared to physically eliminate elected governments when the interests of capitalism are threatened—such as when the military overthrew Salvador Allende’s government in Chile in 1973.

The state is much more permanent than any government. Parliamentary majorities change. But the state machine goes on regardless of the views of voters.

Police and protests

Modern policing was born in Britain during the industrial revolution to force compliance amongst the newly formed working class.

From 1838 they were used against the Chartists, the first mass working class movement. They attacked workers’ demonstrations and broke up picket lines—and still do so today.

Police have been used countless times since then to attack protests. During the Vietnam War police in Chicago famously beat up protesters outside the Democratic National Convention in 1968. The same year police in Melbourne used batons and horse charges against anti-war protesters outside the US embassy.

In 1978 the first Mardi Gras was driven from the streets by police, with protesters severely beaten and 53 people arrested.

The way to answer this is to mobilise people in large numbers—since the bigger the crowd the higher the political cost is to police for unleashing repression.

In Australia, the police were first created to discipline convicts and other lower classes. They also helped carry out the massacres of Aboriginal people, driving them off the land to make way for pastoral capitalism. Police have been central to upholding Aboriginal oppression ever since, enforcing racist Protection laws, confining people on reserves and forcibly removing children.

Even today they still spend much of their time harassing and locking up Indigenous people. Aboriginal people make up 37 per cent of the prison population nationally despite being only 3.8 per cent of the total population. There have been 623 Aboriginal deaths in custody since the Royal Commission into the issue in 1991.

Police focus on patrolling and monitoring Indigenous people because they often live in situations of economic marginalisation and oppression. As a result, deeply racist attitudes are ingrained within the police.

The police spend most of their time dealing with the homeless, people suffering mental illness or living in poverty.

Their role enforcing social order means they are not simply “workers in uniform”. Instead they come to dehumanise the people marginalised under capitalism and develop a brutal authoritarian and reactionary mindset.

Police should be held accountable. But the police cannot be reformed. They are a product of class society and defend the interests of capitalism. The police should be abolished—but achieving this requires a socialist revolution that gets rid of the capitalist system altogether.

.....
Their central function is to defend a deeply unjust social order

Epstein files expose rich and powerful running a sick system

By Chris Breen

AN ARTICLE by Gerard Baker in the London *Times* summed up the Epstein files by saying: “Thanks to Epstein’s crimes, we have been given a glimpse into the way the liberal capitalist global order has worked. And in the process, perhaps, we can see even more clearly why so many people want to sweep it away.”

Indeed. They expose the corruption and depravity of some of the world’s richest and most powerful people.

Epstein abused and exploited women on a hideous scale, constructing a vast sex-trafficking operation. Many of his victims were children—the youngest was alleged to have been just nine.

Yet a number of very powerful people were prepared to keep supporting and working with Epstein even after he had been convicted in 2008 of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl and federal prosecutors had identified 34 others he had allegedly abused.

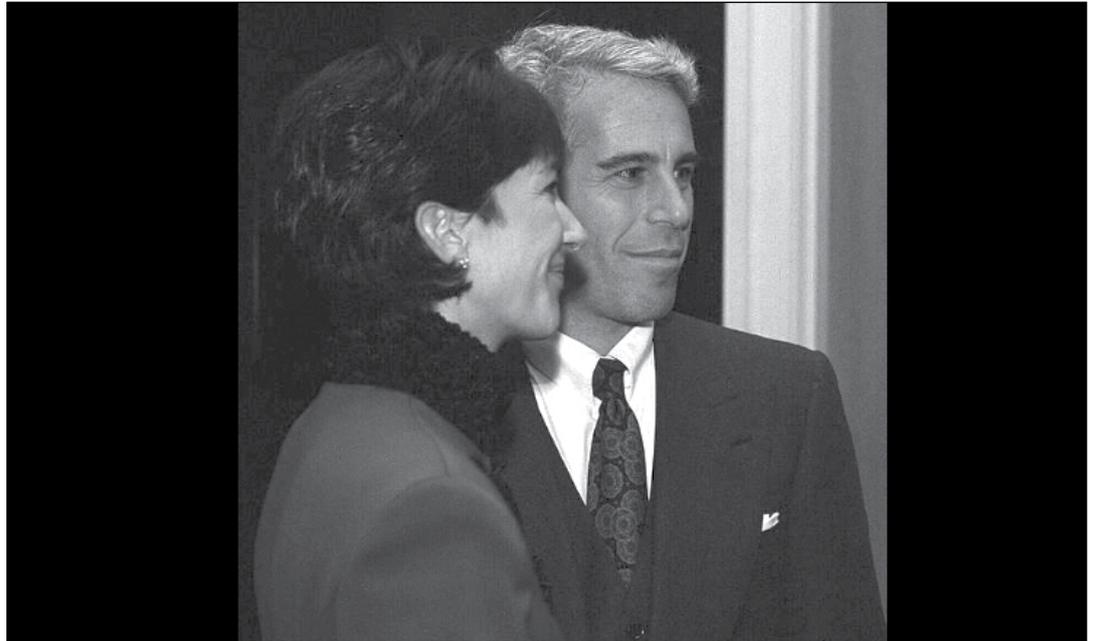
As Baker put it, “scroll through Epstein’s email contacts” and you have a “roll call” of the global elite. That roll call includes politicians like Donald Trump, Bill Clinton, fascist and Republican powerbroker Steve Bannon, former British minister Peter Mandelson and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, royalty like Prince Andrew, prominent intellectual Noam Chomsky and billionaires such as Bill Gates, Elon Musk and Richard Branson.

All have denied having anything to do with Epstein’s crimes. But many have been exposed as having lied about the extent of their connections with him and knowledge of his activities.

Musk claimed, “Epstein tried to get me to go to his island and I REFUSED,” but Epstein’s emails show him writing to ask, “Do you have any parties planned? ... I really want to hit the party scene in St Barts or elsewhere and let loose.”

There are endless conspiracy theories about Epstein, such as those claiming that he worked for Russia or Israel. Epstein knew and worked with powerful people in both countries. But the reality is that Epstein worked for himself.

Epstein personally was a paedophile sexual abuser. He also traded access to the bodies of young women as a favour to wealthy and powerful men.



Alongside this he provided flights on private jets or visits to his island for information and profit.

Epstein worked to build connections with billionaires and other powerful figures in order to strike business deals. This allowed him to build a personal fortune worth at least \$800 million when he died in 2019.

The rich and powerful who colluded with him were not ensnared but willing participants. Some participated in his sexual abuse, others were prepared to overlook his crimes because of his money and power, in search of business opportunities and profits for themselves.

What explains this is not a shadowy conspiracy theory but the way the ruling class constantly conspire between themselves for power and profit.

The rich also use their money to buy their way out of trouble. Billionaire Leon Black paid \$US62.5 million to the US Virgin Islands to be released from any potential claims arising from the territory’s investigation of Epstein’s sex trafficking.

Deutsche Bank agreed to pay \$US75 million in 2023 to settle a lawsuit alleging it had knowingly profited from it, too.

Epstein himself avoided a potential life sentence for his initial conviction after a deal with then district attorney Alexander Acosta, who is now Trump’s Labor Secretary.

That deal saw Epstein sentenced to a private wing of Palm Beach County

Above: Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell in 1993 Photo: Public Domain

jail that enabled him to leave six days a week for a plush office, despite clear rules stating that sex offenders cannot qualify for work release.

Sexism

The Epstein files also expose the deep sexism at the heart of the system and of those who run it. Epstein and his rich associates willingly abused young women often from vulnerable or poor backgrounds.

They justified this by dehumanising their victims. There are transcripts of Epstein’s offside, Ghislaine Maxwell, calling the girls “trash”. In one email Epstein describes a woman to Prince Andrew as “26, russian, clevere [sic] beautiful, trustworthy”.

In another, Epstein tells Steve Tisch, co-owner of the New York Giants, he had a “present” for him—a woman he calls “tahitian speaks mostly french, exotic”. Branson invited Epstein to visit his own private island, “as long as you bring your harem!”

Epstein and his collaborators assumed that their money and power meant they were above the law. Most of those who participated in Epstein’s crimes still walk free.

But as British socialist Judy Cox points out, “Epstein was eventually brought down not by the justice system but by determined women he had abused.” We will need more determination like that to bring down the system that allows people like Epstein and his rich friends to run, and ruin, our world.

The Epstein files also expose the deep sexism at the heart of the system

Israel extends land grabs and genocide in West Bank

By Luke Ottavi

WHILE ISRAEL continues to massacre Palestinians in Gaza during the so-called “ceasefire”, at times killing over 20 people a day, it is also stepping up the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in the West Bank.

New laws announced this month by the Israeli government remove restrictions that have prevented Israeli settlers buying land in the West Bank’s Areas A and B.

Since the Oslo Accords in 1993 this land, where all major Palestinian cities and towns are located, has been under the control of the Palestinian Authority.

Now building permits will be controlled by the Israeli Civil Administration—run by far-right Israeli Minister Bezalel Smotrich—instead of Palestinian authorities. This will extend Palestinian dispossession and settler land grabs.

It follows an increase in violent settler attacks that recently wiped out the village of Ras ‘Ein al ‘Auja in the Jordan Valley near Jericho, evicting all 135 Palestinian Bedouin families making up about 650 people living there.

It was the last village left in the area following a settler campaign of arson, theft and poisoning of live-stock. As a result of its destruction settlers now have complete control of 250 square kilometres.

Solidarity spoke to a Palestinian activist from the West Bank who explained, “This is the worst period ever, at least since the second Intifada [which ended in 2005]. The occupation is enforcing new laws and rules every single day. It affects the daily life of any Palestinian living in the West Bank.

“The thing that is really out of control is the settler attacks. Ben-Gvir [Israeli Minister of National Security] decided that all settlers should be armed. So now, groups of at least ten settlers, usually guarded by two or three Israeli soldiers, can go into any village. They attack the elderly, children, they burn olive trees.

“And it’s not just villages. The other day there were 20 settlers in their cars inside the city of Ramallah. That’s the one city where the PA is supposed to be a bit safer and controlled by Palestinian police. And [the settlers] burned over 50 cars.”

Al Jazeera reported last month,



Above: Palestinians surveying the ruins of their homes demolished by the Israeli occupation forces in Tarqiyah, West Bank Photo: Hernandez Jose Maria?Alamy

“Every week, there is an average of nine Palestinians killed, 88 more injured, 180 arrested ... an average of 100 Israeli settler attacks, 300 military raids and assaults and 10 demolitions of Palestinian homes and property.”

Settlements

Illegal settlement construction is accelerating. In December the Israeli Land Authority invited bids to build 3400 new houses in the E1 area settlement project that will effectively cut the West Bank in two. Smotrich boasted that this “buries the idea of a Palestinian state”.

As the activist from the West Bank told *Solidarity*, “Before 7 October, there used to be around 70 checkpoints in the West Bank. After, there are around 300 active checkpoints. And then they added more gates.

“So there are around 910 gates right now. The entire West Bank has 480 Palestinian villages and towns. So you have nearly twice as many gates [to go through] in order for you to go into these villages and come out.”

Palestinians can be forced to wait for hours at gates and checkpoints, due to arbitrary closures imposed by occupying Israeli troops protecting the movements of settlers.

“From Nablus to Ramallah there is a road that used to take 45 minutes to an hour to travel. Now it’s taking six, seven hours. So a lot of time people

can’t even get to work.

“And the settlers close the roads. I saw a ten-year-old [settler] kid with a gun the last time I came to Jericho, it was crazy.

“If you visualise the amount of land that is being taken every single day since 7 October, they have a feeling that they can get away with anything. So I think in the long term it will either result in displacement of the entire population, or Palestinians will be trapped in these very, very bad areas in very small regions.

“The recognition [of a Palestinian state at the UN General Assembly] doesn’t mean anything. One of my friends said, ‘so now what? I go to the checkpoint and I say, no, you can’t do that. Because I’m standing in a land that is recognised by the international community?’ It means nothing to the Palestinians.”

Anthony Albanese voiced token opposition to Israel’s efforts at dispossession in the West Bank during Isaac Herzog’s visit. But the Australian government’s ties with Israel make it complicit in its policies of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

We need to keep building the Palestine solidarity movement to force sanctions on Israel and demand an end to its brutal policies of occupation and apartheid—not just in Gaza but also in the West Bank and across all of Palestine.

.....
Illegal settlement construction is accelerating

RESISTANCE IN MINNEAPOLIS FORCES BACK TRUMP'S RACIST VIOLENCE

Trump's ICE agents have unleashed an orgy of racist violence in Minneapolis, but also faced a city in virtual uprising against them, writes **James Supple**

IN A victory for the resistance that has surged across Minneapolis, Donald Trump has been forced to withdraw his Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) thugs from the city.

When he began targeting the city in December his Department of Homeland Security boasted it would see the "largest immigration enforcement operation ever".

The last few weeks have seen Trump's racist violence reach shocking new heights. But they have also shown the possibilities of resistance.

Trump has scaled up the number of ICE agents at his disposal nationwide from 10,000 to 22,000 in the past year, and the numbers are still growing.

The raid on Minneapolis saw 3000 agents descend on the city, vastly outnumbering its regular police force.

It resembled a city under occupation, swarmed by masked, heavily armed officers roaming the streets to track down and abduct migrants for deportation.

Trump has given ICE near complete impunity. The brazen murders of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, two of the thousands of activists acting as legal observers to try to protect the community, were the result.

Thousands have been sent to detention centres, including children such as five-year-old Liam Ramos, arrested as he arrived home from school.

Anyone ICE agents decided looked foreign risked being stopped and questioned.

Officers have smashed car windows to haul out those who refused to give their name, including a disabled woman, Aliya Rahman, on the way to a medical appointment for brain injury.

Anyone who got in their way has faced ruthless violence, from the use of chemical sprays, arrest without charge and the assault even of local politicians.

Some of Trump's most extreme racist supporters have found jobs as ICE agents. ICE is actively seeking

to recruit fascists and supporters of the far right at gun shows and via far right podcasts.

One protester in Minneapolis told *The Atlantic* magazine, "It became clear very quickly that ICE is the Proud Boys, the Boogaloo boys. They've given them uniforms and let them run wild."

As one leader of the Proud Boys, who helped storm the Capitol building in Washington in 2021, put it, "We've kind of gotten what we want, right? There's no reason to fucking protest."

But Minneapolis has also shown how to resist and given a glimpse of the kind of movement that can bring down the Trump regime.

Trump targeted the city for a reason. Minneapolis has a proud history of union struggle. In 2020, it was the epicentre of the Black Lives Matter revolt after George Floyd's murder there.

ICE's invasion of the city has turned thousands of people into activists, organising to track and monitor the movement of ICE agents, disrupting their efforts to abduct migrants, fundraising and supporting migrant families too scared to leave their homes and organising to protect local neighbourhoods.

General strike

Minneapolis has also put the working class and the idea of strike action back at the centre of how to resist.

On Friday 23 January the city was shaken by a day of "No Work, No School, No Shopping". At least 50,000 marched in temperatures of minus 30 degrees. *Labor Notes* reported that, "Almost a quarter of Minnesotans say they took part."

A number of unions supported the call, including the state-wide peak union body the Minnesota Federation of Labor.

But most unions did not call of ficial strikes, instead "giving members

.....
Minneapolis has put the working class and the idea of strike action at the centre of how to resist

a nod-and-wink to skip work by raising safety concerns, using sick days or personal days", as *Labor Notes* reported.

More than 700 businesses closed for the day as a result of community pressure, including many shops and small businesses.

On the day, thousands joined a blockade against deportations that shut down the airport.

Nick Benson, an organiser with the 50501 campaign group, explained that, "This airport is the narrow end of the funnel where our neighbors are getting shipped off."

This was not yet a general strike. But it points to the power that can stop Trump and his racist deportation raids.

Workers drive the trains, run the schools, factories and offices, and staff the hospitals and stores. Strike action holds the power to cut off the flow of profits to the corporations and their billionaire bosses and hit the rich and powerful where it hurts.

Trump's small army of 20,000 ICE agents cannot control a country of 340 million power through force. If workers in their millions shut down the country it could stop Trump in his tracks.

The rebellion against Trump is still spreading. The Friday following the Minneapolis day of action saw over 300 protests nationwide as part of an "ICE out of everywhere" day of action. Chants of "Minnesota make us proud—general strike, shut it down" rang out across the US.

But instead of building on the resistance from below, many are still looking to the Democratic Party in the hope of defeating Trump at the mid-term elections in November.

Democrat figures such as Minnesota Governor Tim Walz raged against Trump, demanding that ICE leave the city. But he also agreed to undermine the state's sanctuary policies for migrants, agreeing to notify ICE when any non-citizen is released from jail.

The Democrats prepared the way

for Trump's racist frenzy. Under President Joe Biden, ICE arrested more than 500,000 people and deported almost 600,000. Barack Obama still holds the record for the most deportations of any US President.

The Democratic Party aims to channel the anger against Trump into the dead end of election campaigning for a party that is a key pillar of US capitalism.

What's needed in the US is an uncompromising fight to end the racist terror campaign against migrants as well as the agenda of imperialist war, support for genocide in Gaza and rule for the billionaires backed by both major parties.

This requires socialist organisation focused on building struggle from below, to mobilise the power of the working class against all the horrors of the system. Here, in the face of growing anti-migrant racism and a failing political system, the same kind of politics is needed.



Above: March through Minneapolis during the 23 January shutdown Photo: Chad Davis/Flickr

Student in Minneapolis: 'we are actively supporting people any way we can'

Leo, a university student involved in resisting ICE in Minneapolis, spoke to *Solidarity*

THE VIDEO of Renee Good's murder really pushed me to properly get involved.

I decided I needed to actively help people and support my community in any way that I can. I went to a meeting and that one meeting opened so many doors.

I got introduced to people, got put into Signal chats. We have one for literally every tiny little neighbourhood, everybody is connected through them.

The 23 January strike was amazing. It was -30 degrees. I have photos of my eyelashes being frozen. But over 700 businesses closed that day and I've seen reports of 50,000 to 100,000 people on the streets.

Unions that supported it included the teachers union, the communication workers, Service Employees International Union and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America.

Then the day after, I woke up to the video of Alex Pretti being assassinated on the street. That was a really hard day. But it only motivated me to get more involved.

There are rapid response groups, including legal observers. That's what Alex was doing when he got assassinated.

People attend training sessions to

.....
People are strengthening networks, as we want to keep up the momentum that forced ICE out

know your rights and what to do when you have a kidnapping taking place and who to call. Legal observers have already trained over 30,000 people.

Then you have patrolling on the look-out for ICE vehicles. I've done that where somebody drives me around, and then I'm frantically on my phone scanning licence plates and looking them up in a database.

ICE cars have heavily tinted windows, out of state licence plates and are often SUVs. We have a massive database in which you can confirm ICE licence plates.

Then you basically call in and alert that there's ICE in that area and then other people can mobilise to go there.

Then you've got the protests.

Noise protests happen outside hotels where ICE is staying. There's actually a hotel on campus here called The Graduate. It's owned by Hilton, but it's on campus. Students go there to study. The University will host events there. Sports teams that come into town to play the University of Minnesota football or hockey team commonly stay there.

They have ICE agents staying there. Last Wednesday there were over 40 students arrested for violating noise ordinances after 10pm.

Then you have the protest that occurs right outside the federal Whipple building, which is where ICE is headquartered here and also where they take US citizens that they've detained.

There are usually daily protests there.

There was another strike on the following Friday after 23 January. It was a less union-supported strike and more dominated by student strikers.

Some unionists want to push for weekly strikes and economic black-outs every Friday, no shopping, no working, no nothing. Multiple Fortune 500 companies wrote a letter to Governor Walz and Mayor Frey basically trying to get the situation back to normal so people can start spending money and stop affecting their bottom lines again.

So we want to try to affect them as much as possible with these strikes to really force Fry and Walz to actually do something. There's still no eviction moratorium signed, so our Black and brown neighbours that are afraid to go to school, get groceries, go to their businesses are now at risk of being evicted because they can't make money.

It's been a really hard time, both mentally and physically. But it's been great to see the community action, how much our neighbours love and support each other and that we're not going to let some fascist government come and have us eat the boot.

Now we have to build on this moment and not let the campaign simmer out. There's a week of action planned, and people are strengthening connections and networks, as we want to keep up the momentum that forced ICE out.

HOW DEFIANCE DEFEATED BJELKE'S PROTEST BAN

LESSONS FOR THE PALESTINE MOVEMENT

Ian Rintoul looks at the campaign of defiance that ended Joh Bjelke-Petersen's ban on street marches in Queensland and draws lessons for the Palestine movement today

ALMOST 50 years ago, on 4 September 1977, Queensland Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen launched one of the most serious attacks on democratic rights in Australian history, declaring, "The day of the political street march is over. Don't bother applying for a permit. You won't get one. That's government policy now."

There was no debate in parliament. The ban was rubber-stamped by his cabinet and put to state parliament two weeks later. But between September 1977 and August 1979, a right to march movement, initially called the Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Committee, rose to challenge the ban.

There were at least 29 organised rallies and marches, many more pickets of government offices, disruption of press conferences, protests at watch-houses and court hearings and protests outside the Boggo Road prison. There were over 3000 arrests of more than 2000 people.

Three days after Petersen's ban, the first attempted march from the University of Queensland (UQ) was blocked by hundreds of police. The march proceeded on the footpath to join a mass union rally in support of Ted Zaphir, a union organiser facing criminal charges as part of Bjelke-Petersen's anti-union offensive to break the closed shop (compulsory 100 per cent membership).

On 22 September, after a march from UQ was again blocked and forced to march on the footpath to the city, 21 people were arrested trying to march from King George Square to Parliament.

The first debates in the campaign were over what strategy was needed to defeat the ban.

The Communist Party argued the fight against the ban was a diversion. They said the campaign should hold town hall meetings to build up public support and subsume itself into the movement against uranium mining, which was seen as more acceptable

and more popular.

The other main force on the left, the Socialist Workers Party (a predecessor to today's Socialist Alliance), also argued for a lowest-common-denominator approach, opposing defiant marches and arguing to keep the demands at a civil liberties level that would not alienate anyone.

SWP members were forbidden to march and be arrested; their speakers at rallies urged demonstrators to "go home, you have made your point".

Others similarly argued that the campaign had to avoid confrontation with the police in order to win public opinion, that the campaign shouldn't fall into the government's trap.

Bjelke-Petersen wanted confrontation for a law-and-order election campaign in the upcoming state election, they said.

But on 22 October, 5000 people rallied against uranium mining. The attempt to march saw 418 people arrested in what is still the biggest mass arrest in Australian history. Like the police attack at the anti-Herzog rally in Sydney, the rally had an electric effect much wider than the demonstrators themselves.

The campaign called for a rally and march for 11 November, the day before the state election. Both the ALP opposition and Queensland's peak union body, the Trades and Labor Council (TLC), opposed the rally and march, yet more than 2500 people, including Labor Party members and unionists, assembled and marched. Some 197 people were arrested, the majority blue-collar workers.

Far from alienating public opinion the angry rallies produced a historic 10 per cent swing to the ALP in the Brisbane area.

The infamous Queensland gerrymander of electorates meant that the National Party was guaranteed to be returned to government. This meant that an electoral strategy, that so often

Proposals to march were debated and put to democratic votes at the rallies themselves

derails campaigns, of subordinating the struggle to getting a Labor government elected, was ruled out. The right to march campaign had to mobilise sufficient political and industrial weight to defeat Petersen.

The state Labor Party was weak in any case. State Labor politicians were banned from attending the rallies. Ed Casey, a right-wing Labor figure who replaced Tom Burns as leader in November 1978, was famous for declaring that Labor "would not win government from the back of a paddy wagon".

But thousands of Labor members and voters were well to the left of the Labor leaders and ready to fight.

In mid-1978, the increasing discontent with the cowardly stance of the Labor leaders led to the formation of a Socialist Left around Senator George Georges, who initiated a new series of meetings of what was now called the Civil Liberties Campaign Group.

This injected new forces and enthusiasm for the defiant strategy of the right to march campaign.

Role of the radical minority

The right to march movement produced a political ferment not seen since the movement against the Vietnam War.

As one socialist recalled, "The small Brisbane left suddenly found itself in organising meetings of hundreds which went on until the middle of the night, and it was able to mobilise thousands of people—all in the course of a few weeks."

The first protests were rallies at UQ but from October 1977 the rallies were called in King George Square in the city centre, followed by attempted marches into the city streets. Thousands of police were brought from across the state to enforce Petersen's bans.

The Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Committee that had been formed in

the days after the ban was declared became a hot bed of democratic discussion and organisation. It went from meeting on campus to meeting in Trades Hall.

International Socialist members (as Solidarity was then called) argued that by “pursuing a militant course—marching and if necessary getting arrested—the issue could become a focal point for anti-government sympathies”.

Debates on whether to organise illegal marches preceded every rally until March 1978, with the resistance to marching steadily losing ground. Proposals to march were debated and put to democratic votes at the rallies themselves. Repeatedly the rallies voted to march and face arrest.

Between October 1977 and March 1978, more than 100 rank-and-file and union meetings were addressed by Right to March speakers.

By 3 December 1977, growing rank-and-file agitation from union members had pushed the TLC (which had endorsed the anti-uranium 22 October rally) into calling a delegates meeting. That meeting voted decisively for the TLC to explicitly endorse the proposed rally and illegal march. Two hundred and four were arrested on the day.

The radicalisation driven by the campaign could be seen on May Day 1978. About 20,000 marched, but the 12,000-strong Red Contingent led with Right to March and anti-uranium slogans was bigger than the 8000 in the official union contingents.

The rallies in 1978 took on an increasing class character. In August, the TLC combined an anti federal budget rally with a right to march protest.

Then, in December 1978, a maritime union mass meeting called on the TLC to call a rally and march in the name of the unions, for a weekday, 7 December. A subsequent proposal was carried calling for the TLC to call on affiliates to stop work to attend the rally.

In a desperate move to stall the growing movement, Bjelke-Petersen offered the unions a permit to march if the rally was held on a Saturday. But under pressure from the maritime unions, the right to march movement and the emerging Socialist Left led by Senator Georges, the unions refused the government’s political bribe and marched without a permit.

Federal Labor politicians, and a vice-president of the ACTU, John Ducker, led the march into the police lines. Three hundred and eighty-three



Above: Taking to the streets against the ban on marches in Queensland

people were arrested, over 70 per cent of them blue-collar workers.

The writing was on the wall for Bjelke-Petersen’s ban. Maritime workers threatened to strike if any of their members were held in the watchhouse. A two-day strike by seafarers had forced the release of two union members who had gone to jail rather than pay fines for marching.

In August 1979, the police refused a permit for a Hiroshima Day march. However, within days, a permit was granted for a march on Nagasaki Day. It was the first police-authorised protest march since September 1977.

The movement had not brought down Bjelke-Petersen, one of the campaign’s aspirations, but in a major victory over the authoritarian premier it had broken the ban on street marches.

Lessons for today

The arguments for defying the law and looking to the power of organised workers were crucial for the struggle for the right to march.

Just as activists almost 50 years ago defied the ban on street marches, we need to stand up to the attempts to intimidate people out of joining political protests today, even if it means breaking the law and organising acts of mass civil disobedience.

The police actions in Sydney have radicalised wide sections of the community. It was bad enough that Albanese and Minns seized on the Bondi massacre to welcome Herzog and normalise genocide, but the police

brutality has dramatically shown that more radical action is needed if we are going to end our own governments’ complicity.

The system that enables the genocide is now trying to silence the Palestine movement and drive it off the streets.

In three states, government are introducing laws to outlaw the slogans that they regard are the biggest threats to their own complicity with the genocide.

The movement needs to orient towards the growing minority that is willing to defy the ban on protests and deepen the resistance.

Workers do not have the right to strike that they had in 1977. That also must be fought for. Cinema workers on Melbourne used OH&S laws to refuse to be part of screening the Pauline Hanson film.

Organising rank-and-file teachers, university workers and public servants will be crucial to opposing codes of conduct, bans on wearing keffiyehs and definitions that equate anti-Zionism with antisemitism—measures that governments are imposing to keep the Palestine out of the workplace.

Thousands more people recognise that there is an imperialist system that maintains Israel’s genocide and occupation of Palestine. Defiance beat back Bjelke-Petersen in 1977; defiance will again be key to the movement to beat back the state and federal governments’ offensive against the Palestine movement today.

FROM PINE GAP TO NORTH WEST CAPE AUSTRALIA'S GROWING ROLE IN THE US'S EMPIRE OF BASES

The expansion of US bases here locks Australia in as a key part of the US's military machine, and its strategy for war with China, writes **Tom Fiebig**

IN THE red desert of the Northern Territory, on unceded Arrernte land about 18 kilometres from Alice Springs, sits one of the most important military installations in the world. Pine Gap, established by the CIA in 1966, has been described by defence analysts as “America’s most valuable intelligence site outside US soil”.

This is no exaggeration. The US maintains more than 750 foreign military bases across the globe, with around 173,000 troops deployed in 159 countries. Yet even among this sprawling imperial infrastructure, Pine Gap stands out.

One analyst bluntly stated that the US military would be “useless” without access to its Australian bases.

This reality exposes the lie that Australia is merely a passive or reluctant partner in US wars. From Pine Gap to North West Cape, from Darwin to Amberley, Australia is being integrated ever more deeply into the US war machine—as Washington prepares for potential conflict with China.

Pine Gap: cornerstone of US imperial power

Pine Gap is nominally a “joint” facility, run by both the Australian and US governments. In practice, it functions as a critical node in US global surveillance, intelligence gathering and war-fighting.

The base is studded with 45 satellite dishes hidden beneath white radomes. According to former MI5 head Sir Richard Dearlove, Pine Gap is “a sophisticated listening post—and a lot else besides”. Its importance, he said, lies above all in providing “Western coverage of China”.

This is not simply about espionage. As revealed in documents leaked by whistleblower Edward Snowden, Pine Gap plays a direct role in US military operations. Journalist Peter Cronau reported in 2017 that signals intercepted at Pine Gap can be transformed into precise geolocation data

and transmitted to US forces in near real time. This data has been used to locate targets for special forces operations and drone strikes.

During the so-called “war on terror”, US drone strikes killed tens of thousands of civilians across Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Yemen. Pine Gap’s intelligence was central to making this possible.

Over the past decade, Pine Gap’s capabilities have expanded dramatically. Ten new satellite antennas have been installed, significantly enhancing the base’s capacity to monitor missile and rocket launches. According to academic Richard Tanter, these systems can collect detailed information on the location, size, speed, trajectory and target of missiles, forming a core component of US nuclear war-fighting strategy.

One of Pine Gap’s largest radomes provides “battlefield surveillance capability” that allows the monitoring not only of military communications, but also of personal phones and civilian data. These tools were refined in the brutal wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Pine Gap intelligence has almost certainly been shared with the Israeli Defence Forces during Israel’s genocidal assault on Gaza. Pine Gap’s satellites are well-situated to tracking the launch sites of rockets fired from Gaza, making Australia complicit in Israel’s war crimes.

As Tanter has argued, Pine Gap’s role in intelligence gathering for US and Israeli wars means Australia is “essentially complicit with whatever the end result is”.

Recent upgrades to Pine Gap also expand its second, even more dangerous purpose. The base plays a key role in detecting the thermal signatures of missile launches, feeding data from US early-warning satellites directly into American nuclear command systems.

This gives the US advance warning of an enemy nuclear strike and the

Pine Gap plays a direct role in US military operations

capacity to launch a so-called “second strike”—a retaliatory nuclear attack that would guarantee mass destruction.

Australian and US leaders claim this makes the world safer by “detering” China. But by hosting Pine Gap, Australia paints a giant target on itself. In any conflict between the US and China, facilities like Pine Gap would be among the first targets for Chinese missiles or cyberattacks.

Rather than protecting ordinary people, this role in US nuclear strategy makes Australia less safe.

As Tanter notes, Pine Gap “will play an irreplaceable role in US military operations from Africa to the Pacific—both conventional and nuclear”. That is precisely why it should be dismantled.

North West Cape

Pine Gap is not the only US base in Australia. At North West Cape near Exmouth in Western Australia stands another crucial installation.

Thirteen towers, each 300 metres tall, support a vast array of antennas originally built in the 1960s as a submarine communications facility. Using very low frequency signals, the base can communicate with nuclear-armed submarines without them surfacing.

Though nominal control was transferred to the Australian Navy in 1992, North West Cape has operated as a joint US-Australia facility since 2008. Between 2008 and 2010 it was upgraded with an advanced space radar and space telescope.

These upgrades have transformed it into a key site for “space situational awareness”—the ability to track and potentially target satellites. In any future conflict, this could draw Australia directly into space warfare, including attempts to blind Chinese communications and missile systems.

Kojarena and the Five Eyes

A third major facility, the Australian Defence Satellite Communications Station at Kojarena in Western Aus-

tralia, forms part of the global “Five Eyes” intelligence alliance linking Australia, the US, Britain, Canada and New Zealand.

Commissioned in the late Cold War, Kojarena was designed to intercept satellite communications across Asia, including those of China, Russia and North Korea. It contributes to the US-led global surveillance system known as Echelon.

This network has been used to track military targets—such as Osama bin Laden in the 1990s—but also to conduct mass surveillance of civilians. In 2007, Australia agreed to expand Kojarena into a fully joint facility, granting the US access in exchange for satellite funding and intelligence sharing.

US “pivot to Asia”

In 2011, US President Barack Obama announced the “pivot to Asia”. Under the Gillard Labor government, Australia agreed to host rotating deployments of US Marines and aircraft in the Northern Territory.

Since then, the US military presence has steadily increased. As of 2024, the number of US marines deployed to Darwin has risen to 2500. Here they conduct exercises and train with the Australian Defence Force for about six months. Nuclear-capable US B-52 bombers now regularly land at the RAAF Darwin base.

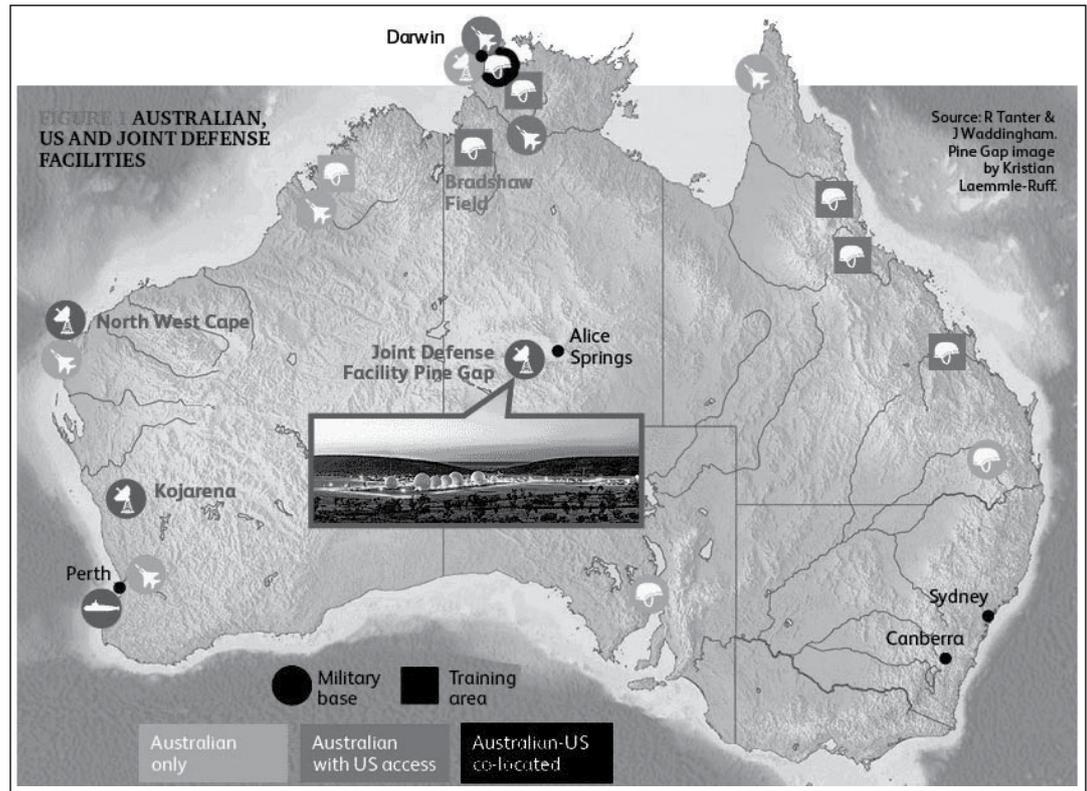
In 2020, Prime Minister Scott Morrison committed \$1.1 billion to expand RAAF base Tindal near Katherine. ABC’s *Four Corners* has seen Pentagon tender documents which show that extensive upgrades to Tindal are planned, including the construction of a squadron operations facility, a maintenance centre, aircraft parking, fuel dump and ammunition depot.

The planned upgrades would allow a squadron of six US B-52 bombers to have a permanent presence in Australia. More than half of the US’s currently deployed B-52s are nuclear capable.

In late 2024 US B-2 bombers used Australian airspace and likely refueling aircraft based here en route to an attack on Yemen.

At the most recent AUSMIN talks in December between Australian and US ministers, the US announced plans to scope infrastructure upgrades at the Amberley air force base near Brisbane and to expand logistics and infrastructure development for marines to operate near Darwin, and to pre-position Osprey aircraft there too.

In 2018 Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced plans to make Australia a major arms exporter.



Above: Map of Australia and US Joint Defence Facilities. Source: Richard Tanter and John Waddingham. Pine Gap Image by Kristian Laemmle-Ruff

Morrison then committed to massive military expansion, including the \$368 billion AUKUS submarine deal. Labor under Anthony Albanese has continued this agenda, announcing a \$30 billion nuclear submarine construction yard in Adelaide.

US nuclear submarines will use the HMAS Stirling naval base in WA from 2027, as well as the new Henderson shipyards nearby, before they eventually host AUKUS nuclear submarines alongside a new East Coast submarine base.

Joint exercises such as Talisman Sabre, held every two years, now involve tens of thousands of troops from nearly 20 countries.

US forces train alongside Australian troops across the continent—from Townsville to Amberley to South Australia—integrating command systems, logistics and strike capabilities.

Defence spending is now \$59 billion a year—double what it was 25 years ago. This is preparation for war.

Australia’s military build-up

Australia has historically relied on imperial patrons—first Britain, then the US—to enforce its regional interests.

Australian troops have joined every major US war, from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan, as a down payment for protection and influence.

At the same time, Australia has acted as a brutal sub-imperial power in its own right—exploiting the Pa-

cific, bullying Timor Leste, spying on Indonesia and warehousing refugees on Nauru.

Trump’s 2025 National Security Strategy makes clear that the US intends to “contain” China through military “overmatch”. But Washington cannot do this alone. It demands that allies like Australia shoulder more of the burden.

Australia’s ruling class is also seeking closer alignment with Japan and other regional powers.

In August 2025, Australia’s Defence Minister Richard Marles signed a \$10 billion deal with Japan to acquire 11 Mogami class frigates for the Royal Australian Navy.

The Australian Strategy Policy Institute, a ruling class thinktank, argues that an even closer “Australia-Japan defence alignment [is] central to maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific by deterring China in the region”.

Rival imperial blocs are hardening, arms races accelerating and the risk of catastrophic war growing.

None of this serves the interests of working people in Australia, China or anywhere else. The drive to war is rooted in a global system of imperialist competition and capitalist crisis.

To stop it, we need a movement capable of breaking Australia’s alliance with US imperialism, halting Australia’s independent military build-up—and ultimately overthrowing the system that produces endless war.



DOCK WORKERS STRIKE TO STOP ARMS FOR ISRAEL

By Maeve Larkins

TENS OF thousands of dockworkers across Europe and the Mediterranean shut down 21 major ports in a co-ordinated day of strike action in support of Palestine on 6 February.

The strikes spanned from Casablanca in Morocco to Mersin on the south coast of Turkey. Several ships with cargoes bound for Israel were delayed and forced to re-route because of the strike.

The slogan for the day of action was “Dockworkers Don’t Work for War”. It was supported by the World Federation of Trade Unions, which represents hundreds of millions of workers internationally.

Their demands were: a complete arms embargo on Israel, an immediate end to Israel’s ongoing genocide in Gaza, the opening of a humanitarian corridor into Gaza and an end to the European Unions plans for re-militarisation.

Many of the strikers connected the struggle against their own government’s austerity with the fight for Palestinian liberation.

Greece

In Greece, wharves from Piraeus—the country’s largest and most important port—were joined by teachers, health-care workers, public sector workers and students in a 24-hour city-wide strike.

Across the country, workers have been resisting the hugely unpopular New Democracy government, which has been gutting infrastructure while pumping money into arms deals and their own pockets.

Above: Demonstration during the strike in Piraeus near Athens, Greece Photo: Stelios Michaelides/Workers Solidarity

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Strikes spanned from Casablanca in Morocco to Mersin on the south coast of Turkey

Marina, a member of the Greek Socialist Workers’ Party (SEK), explained, “New Democracy is the most hated government we’ve ever had in modern times.

“In Greece, we have the most expensive rents and groceries, yet the lowest wages and longest work days in all of Europe.

“For the working class in Greece, it is no longer a question of there needing to be a real change, but how this change will happen.”

Recently, Greek farmers have been blockading major roads after it was revealed that New Democracy was channelling EU funds meant for supporting agriculture into phoney businesses owned by government allies. In one case, an airport was falsely called a cattle paddock to siphon funds away.

New Democracy has presided over several “state murders” where poorly funded infrastructure has caused fatal disasters, such as the derailment of a train near Tempì which killed 79.

More recently, a biscuit factory in Trikala caught fire during a night shift, killing five workers. Complaints about a gas leak a full five months before were ignored.

Meanwhile, New Democracy announced at the end of last year that Greece would buy 36 Israeli rocket artillery systems at a cost of around \$1 billion.

Italy

Most of the ports shut down were in Italy, where the Unione Sindicale di Base (USB) and the Autonomous Port Workers Collective (CALP) has already led several major strikes for

Palestine across Italy.

Last year, over a million Italians protested across the country, shutting down universities, ports and train lines in protest at Israel’s attack on the Sumud Flotilla, which sought to break Israel’s blockade of Gaza and deliver desperately needed humanitarian aid.

The Italian labour movement has built on this momentum and many workers have been taking separate initiatives, such as an “observatory” where arms shipments with Israel are monitored and tracked.

Italian workers are also demanding an end to Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni’s plan to privatise many of the country’s ports as part of sweeping austerity plans. As a result, the wharves were joined by groups of rail workers who are also facing the privatisation of state-owned railways.

The day of action is the most extensive industrial action for Palestine across Europe so far. More is likely to come.

In Ravenna, Italian strikers pledged, “Today it’s the ports, tomorrow it will be the entire logistics sectors and then it will be all workers.”

This is what it means to “Globalise the Intifada” and force sanctions on Israel.

The Palestine movement in Australia needs to work towards the same kind of action. Drawing unions into the movement on a more serious basis here is a key task.

Israel relies on weapons and support from the West to continue its occupation of Palestinian land. Workers have the power to shut down the logistics and supplies that are the arteries for Israel’s ongoing genocide.