

Solidarity

Issue No. 205 / March 2026

\$3/\$5

Iran, Gaza, Lebanon
Break the US war alliance

**STOP TRUMP'S
TERROR**



PALESTINE

Resisting the ban on
protest slogans

ISLAMOPHOBIA

One Nation, racism and
the SA election

IRAN WAR

Why US bombs won't
bring democracy

Solidarity **WHAT WE STAND FOR**

Capitalism is a system of crisis and war

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

Workers power and socialism

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

What about elections and parliament?

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

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

We are internationalists

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

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

We oppose imperialism and support all

genuine national liberation struggles. We oppose Australian nationalism.

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

Oppression and liberation

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

Linking up the struggles

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

Educate, agitate, organise

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

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

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

SOLIDARITY MEETINGS AND BRANCHES

Sydney

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

Melbourne

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

Brisbane

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

Perth

Contact perth@solidarity.net.au

Canberra

Contact canberra@solidarity.net.au

Adelaide

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

Or check fb.com/soliaus/events

CONTACT US

Magazine office

Phone 02 8964 7116
Fax 02 9012 0814

Email

solidarity@solidarity.net.au

Website

www.solidarity.net.au

Facebook

Search for "Solidarity Magazine" or
go to fb.com/soliaus

Twitter

@soli_au
twitter.com/soli_au

Solidarity No. 205

March 2026

ISSN 1835-6834

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

**Printed by El Faro, Newtown
NSW.**

SUBSCRIBE TO SOLIDARITY MAGAZINE

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

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

Name Phone

E-mail Address

Cheques payable to ISO Publishing. Send to PO Box 375 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012.

Things they say

They want to negotiate, they want to negotiate badly.

Trump tells reporters Iran wants a deal, less than a day after the Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told CBS TV, “No, we never asked for a ceasefire, and we have never asked even for negotiation.”

We want to pick a president that’s not going to be leading their country into a war.

Donald Trump about Iran but most Americans are thinking the same thing

Most of the people we had in mind are dead. Now we have another group, they may be dead also, based on reports.

Donald Trump when asked who he would like to become political leaders in Iran

We are playing for keeps... This was never meant to be a fair fight and it is not a fair fight. We are punching them while they are down, which is exactly how it should be.

US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth outlines Trump’s policy for war on Iran

No stupid rules of engagement, no nation-building quagmire, no democracy-building exercise, no politically correct wars. We fight to win and we don’t waste time, or lives.

Hegseth again

Good unionists understand the boss needs to make a quid, and that capital needs to make a return.

Future SA Labor Premier Peter Malinauskas to the national council of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association in 2013

We need to have more Australian everything. We need to manifest a hyper Australia. We need more Australian babies. We need more Australian humour, more Australian jokes. We need more Australian barbecues, sometimes often fuelled by fossil fuels.

New Nationals leader Matt Canavan thinks he has the solution to all our problems

CONTENTS

ISSUE 205 MARCH 2026



No to Trump and Israel’s war on Iran

5 Albanese joins Trump’s war

13 Trump’s imperialist attack in trouble

14 Why US bombs won’t bring democracy to Iran



16 Iran 1979 and workers’ revolutions thwarted



18 How the First Mardi Gras won the right to protest

Australia

6 New anti-protest measures target Palestine movement

7 Why we need to oppose Globalise the Intifada ban

8 One Nation threat looms as Labor set to win SA election

10 UWU members on the union election

11 Which way forward for the UWU?

20 Islamophobia and the rise of One Nation



International

9 Trump’s plans to occupy and profiteer in Gaza

12 Mainstream parties boost fascists in France after Nazi killed



Calls for release of death in custody footage

THE CORONER'S Court of Queensland is refusing to release footage of the death in custody of 27-year-old Stevie-Lee Nixon-McKeller in Toowoomba in 2021.

He died after a police officer applied a chokehold following a struggle. Another officer can be heard on footage played in the court saying, "Choke this c*** out, choke him out."

An autopsy report said the chokehold was a "significant contributing factor" to his death. But the coroner's decision in February let police officers off the hook by saying that "the extent of its contribution cannot be quantified", and describing the death as the result of several factors including drug use and asthma.

Queensland police banned the chokehold that was used on Stevie-Lee five months before the coronial inquest began.

The court has claimed the release of the footage would risk it being "taken out of context". Activists have launched a petition saying that, "Releasing the footage will hold the police accountable for their conduct."

PM seeks business cash at birthday bash

BUSINESS CEOs and lobbyists paid up to attend a special Labor fundraiser in Canberra marking the joint birthday of Anthony Albanese and Treasurer Jim Chalmers on 2 March.

Just three dozen attended for the opportunity to dine with the pair as well as senior ministers Richard Marles and Penny Wong. All were members of Labor's Business Forum paying up to \$110,000 a year for membership.

They included Westpac CEO Anthony Miller, the Pharmacy Guild's Trent Twomey, Australian Hotels Association CEO Stephen Ferguson and Tania Constable of the Minerals Council.

Labor made around \$7 million from its Business Forum last year in the run up to the federal election through offering access to government ministers at private events.

Israeli Minister celebrates slogan ban

ISRAEL'S FOREIGN Minister has celebrated the ban on Palestine slogans in Queensland in comments made to a Zoom briefing hosted by Jeremy Leibler, president of the Zionist Federation of Australia, *Michael West Media* has revealed.

"I want to praise the change in legislation in Queensland designating some anti-Israeli slogans as criminal," Gideon Sa'ar said.

"I think it is crucially important and to the extent that you can influence other districts or states in Australia to do the same, that would be blessed," he added.

The ban has already seen two people arrested, including an 18-year-old woman for wearing a shirt with "From the River to the Sea" on it.

AI climate disaster

DATA CENTRES being built to capitalise on the AI craze are sending power use soaring. And instead of using renewable energy they are opening new fossil fuel power plants. Elon Musk's Colossus, being built for his company xAI, will require as much power as the whole city of Seattle. It is building its own gas-fired power plant to run it.

Now the model is coming here, with a new 700 megawatt gas plant proposed to power data centres for Sydney company Cloud Carrier in Moss Vale. The carbon pollution from this would be around 2.4 megatonnes a year, the same amount avoided by all the renewable energy in the state last year.

Australian plane helping US pinpoint Iran strikes

INTELLIGENCE GATHERED by the Australian Wedgetail surveillance plane over Iran is being made available to the US, Defence Minister Richard Marles has confirmed. This means it can be used to help pinpoint Iranian missile and drone launch sites to facilitate US and Israeli attacks.

All the information gathered by the plane is being sent to the Combined Air Operations Centre in Qatar, a joint military facility co-ordinated by the US. This put the lie to the government claims that Australia's assistance in the war is simply for defensive purposes.

Palestine supporters assaulted and kicked out of Mardi Gras



Above: Supporting Palestine and the right to protest at Mardi Gras Photo: Pride in Protest

SUPPORTERS OF Palestine were banned from this year's Mardi Gras parade and thrown off floats by police, continuing the climate of repression created by NSW Premier Chris Minns' anti-protest laws.

The Pride in Protest float was kicked out the night before the parade on 28 February, after the Mardi Gras Board demanded the group take down a social media post that suggested the Jewish float Dayenu supported Israel's genocide in Gaza.

Dayenu had earlier announced they were withdrawing from the parade, labelling the rally against the visit of Israeli President Isaac Herzog a "violent riot" and saying they had safety concerns about participating in Mardi Gras as a result.

In 2024 they also claimed to be concerned for their safety after the Mardi Gras officially supported a ceasefire in Gaza, with the group blaming Pride in Protest.

In the end the Mardi Gras Board helped persuade Dayenu to participate and excluded Pride in Protest.

On the night of the parade, police assaulted and ejected members of the Drag Kings float, targeting them because some were holding political signs and one had a Palestinian flag.

As Charlotte Mac Sweeney, who was with the group, told *Honi Soit*, "About ten riot cops just stormed in in a line ... I heard them say, 'Go for anything Palestine'."

As a statement from '78ers (participants in the first Mardi Gras in 1978) and other LGBTQI+ community members to the Mardi Gras Board explained, "One person was carrying a Palestinian flag which a policeman grabbed off her. She was assaulted with four police on top of her, while calling for help.

"One participant, in their first Mardi Gras, had police grab them by the throat and throw them onto the floor. Another drag king was pushed to the ground for asking for a police officer's name. Many others were injured."

A number of people were then forced out of the parade for trying to stop police violence. "Fourteen people in total were ejected. All parade participants had valid permits to march as part of the Drag Kings Sydney float and had been checked in by Mardi Gras staff."

It is another example of the efforts to silence support for Palestine—and shows why we need to keep standing up against them.

EDITORIAL

Albanese joins Trump's war in Iran—time to break US alliance

DONALD TRUMP has unleashed weeks of savage bombing of Iran, threatening “death, fire and fury” as the regime refuses to capitulate.

On the first day the US bombed a school, killing 186 people, mostly children. Almost 1500 people are dead so far with the US and Israel hitting residential buildings, electricity infrastructure and a water treatment plant.

A strike on an oil depot in Tehran produced nightmarish scenes, blanketing the city in toxic smoke and acid rain.

The war is a naked act of imperialist aggression designed to force the Iranian regime to comply with US demands and weaken the US and Israel's biggest adversary in the Middle East.

Trump arrogantly expected surrender within weeks. But Iran has been able to strike US bases across the Gulf and is threatening to trigger a global economic crisis through shutting off oil exports through the Strait of Hormuz.

Democratic Senator Chris Murphy revealed that the US military “don't know how to get it safely back open” following a closed briefing.

This is pushing up oil prices and the cost of petrol and threatening a new surge in inflation that will drive up the cost of living.

There is little the US can do to reopen the Strait without a massive escalation of the war. It would likely require a ground invasion of Iranian territory with tens of thousands of troops.

Even for Trump this is likely too much. But in desperation he has threatened to further escalate the bombing, creating more chaos, death and destruction.

At the same time Israel has gone on the rampage in Lebanon as it tries to wipe out Hezbollah. One million people have been displaced after Israel demanded evacuations from the south of the country as well as from the Bekaa Valley and the southern suburbs of Beirut. Over 900 people are dead.

Israel is preparing for a massive ground invasion to clear out any Hezbollah presence in southern Lebanon.

Its far-right Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich has declared that parts of Beirut would “look like Khan Younis” in Gaza.

Labor's capitulation

Trump's bombing has also revealed Albanese's abject capitulation to US



imperialism. Albanese was one of the first world leaders to back the war, declaring his complete support for “the United States acting to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon”.

But there is no evidence that Iran is producing a nuclear weapon—and last June Trump claimed US bombing had obliterated its nuclear program.

Foreign Minister Penny Wong initially tried to claim Australia was not participating in the war.

But it's clear it is playing a significant role. The Pine Gap spy base near Alice Springs has almost certainly been directly involved in sending surveillance and targeting information for missile strikes to the US and Israel.

There were also three Australians on the US nuclear submarine that torpedoed an Iranian navy ship near Sri Lanka, training as part of the AUKUS deal. The orders to target the ship “were likely transmitted from Australia, through the North West Cape base in Western Australia”, as Peter Cronau pointed out at *Declassified Australia*.

The Australian government has also sent air defence missiles and a surveillance plane to the UAE. Any information on Iranian missiles it gathers will more than likely be used to launch attacks, not just for defensive purposes.

Albanese is welded to US imperialism through the AUKUS deal

Above: A residential building in Tehran smashed by US and Israeli bombing
Photo: Arash Media/Wikimedia Commons

with the US and UK. Besides the \$368 billion for nuclear submarines, Labor is boosting military spending and expanding domestic weapons manufacturing. It is expanding bases used by the US, like RAAF Tindal and HMAS Stirling, while increasing US troop numbers stationed in Australia.

Albanese's support for the bombing of Iran comes just weeks since he welcomed Israeli President Isaac Herzog to Australia. Tens of thousands demonstrated, defying anti-protest laws.

The Palestine movement needs to redouble its efforts to sanction Israel and cut off Australia's weapons trade with Israel.

We also need to demand an end to Australia's military alliance with the US, kick out all US bases and scrap the AUKUS nuclear submarine deal.

Trump's widening war shows the danger that Israel and US imperialism pose to the world.

The US is willing to murder thousands of people and devastate whole countries to boost its power and profits. It has armed Israel's genocide in Gaza which has killed at least 72,000 people and is ongoing.

This is the savage reality of the capitalist system and the brutal imperialism it produces.

The US's desperation to maintain its power in the face of the challenge from China could lead to further bloody conflicts. We need to fight to get rid of the system that produces these horrors.

.....
Albanese is welded to US imperialism through the AUKUS deal

Defiance needed to new laws meant to silence Palestine solidarity

By Luke Ottavi

TWO PROTESTERS in Queensland were arrested for using the slogan “From the River to the Sea” at a rally on 11 March—the day new laws that ban the phrase came into effect. One of them now faces charges which carry the threat of two years’ jail.

The images, beamed around the country, of a young woman with “From the River to the Sea” on her shirt being arrested by a swarm of police have made the ban a national issue.

Queensland Liberal National Premier David Crisafulli’s laws also make “Globalise the Intifada” a prohibited expression, on the false basis that both encourage hate and call for the “eradication” of Jewish people in the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Queensland police are also empowered to stop, detain and search protesters and vehicles without warrants when the police suspect that a person has committed or is committing the offence of using the prohibited expressions.

This is only the latest outrage in an ongoing attempt to silence Palestine solidarity with new anti-protest and anti-free speech laws.

In NSW, Labor Premier Chris Minns is also introducing legislation to criminalise the slogan “Globalise the Intifada”.

Anthony Albanese helped lay the groundwork for outlawing these phrases and criminalising protest. In 2024 he outrageously agreed with pro-Israel former Liberal MP Josh Frydenberg that “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free” is a “very violent” slogan that “has no place in Australia”.

But there is nothing violent about calling for the end of Israel as an apartheid state and its replacement with one democratic state in Palestine for all peoples. This would be a state where Israeli Jews would have the right to live but where there are equal rights for Palestinians and where Palestinians and their descendants made refugees by Israel’s terror would have the right of return to their land.

The movement must defy every attempt to silence the fight for Palestine. This is the only way to push back against government attacks and stop the repression deepening.

The tens of thousands of protesters who rallied against Israeli President



Above: Calling for defiance during the student protest for Palestine in Sydney
Photo: Solidarity

Isaac Herzog massively embarrassed Albanese and prevented his attempts to rehabilitate Israel’s image and build public support for the terror state after the Bondi shooting.

The defiance of thousands of protesters in Sydney against police violence who managed to march down the light rail tracks from Town Hall to Central forced the NSW police to drop the new anti-protest measures that prevent street marches. This shows how protests can beat back attacks on the movement.

More anti-protest measures

Minns’ latest move is the establishment of a new police unit of 250 officers who will carry long-arm weapons like the semi-automatic Colt M4 carbine—the weapon of choice of the US military—operating as a round-the-clock “hate crimes” unit.

Its job will be patrolling and monitoring places of worship and religious events, as well as mass protests like those we’ve seen for Palestine, supposedly in the name of “community safety”.

This makes the police taskforce Operation Shelter, set up after October 2023 explicitly to target “large protests”, permanent.

The unit will also work on “co-ordinated intelligence gathering”, likely through trawling social media posts and protest footage. This will no doubt be used to charge people for using prohibited slogans like “Globalise the Intifada” and other offences

at protests.

We can expect more anti-protest measures targeting the Palestine movement as pro-Israel activists such as Albanese’s antisemitism envoy Jillian Segal seek to use the Bondi attack and the Royal Commission to press for further restrictions.

In WA police can now refuse to give organisers a permit for a protest if they decide it is “encouraging hate”, due to new laws passed by the state Labor government.

A bad political precedent for free speech has also been set by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) in a recent case against protester Hash Tayeh for chanting “All Zionists are terrorists”. VCAT found that while “Zionist does not mean Jew” it carries “a deep connection with Jewish people”, ruling that the chant constituted unlawful racial and religious vilification.

The chant “All Zionists are terrorists” is problematic because it attributes the violence of the IDF and Israeli settlers to any person who supports Zionism. However, while the decision is in a civil tribunal rather than a criminal court, it sets the worrying precedent that protesters can be prosecuted for criticising Israel and Zionism.

Continuing to mobilise for Palestine and collectively defying bad laws will be key to beating back repression. Indeed, we must Globalise the Intifada if we’re to free Palestine from the River to the Sea.

The tens of thousands who rallied against Israeli President Isaac Herzog massively embarrassed Albanese

Why we need to defy ban on Globalise the Intifada

By Adam Adelpour

THE MINNS government in NSW is attempting to ban the phrase “Globalise the Intifada”, with Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan also saying she hopes to prosecute people using it.

In the aftermath of the Bondi terror attack Chris Minns declared the phrase amounted to “hateful, violent rhetoric”. This was a cynical attempt to smear the Palestine solidarity movement and blame it for the Bondi attack.

The slogan bans must be strongly resisted. Queensland has already banned the phrase, alongside “From the River to the Sea”.

Intifada is an Arabic word that means “uprising” or “throwing off oppression”. The word is used to both describe major Palestinian uprisings and celebrate the history of Palestinian resistance to ongoing oppression.

The First Intifada in 1987 broke out after 20 years of Israeli military occupation in Gaza and the West Bank and saw mass protests, strikes and boycotts.

A Minns government inquiry recommended the ban by saying the “Second Intifada ... was characterised by violence” so that, “The slogan ‘Globalise the Intifada’ may therefore be perceived to incite violence against Jewish people.”

In fact it was a response to Israel’s brutal occupation, apartheid and genocide—not something targeted at Jewish people in general.

The Palestine solidarity movement has been staunchly anti-racist. Anti-Zionist Jewish groups have been a consistent part of the fight against Israel’s crimes.

The call for Intifada is a call for mass resistance. The defining image of the Second Intifada is a young Palestinian boy, Faris Odeh, throwing a stone at an Israeli tank. Ten days after the photo was taken he was shot in the neck by an Israeli soldier. Tens of thousands of Palestinians were involved in such acts of defiance.

The main feature of the Intifada was not Palestinian violence but Israeli violence. During the Second Intifada at least 4973 Palestinians were killed by Israel, outnumbering Israeli deaths by around 5:1.

Push back the attacks

Some sections of the campaign—like the Palestine Action Group in Syd-



Above: Rally outside NSW Parliament against the ban on Globalise the Intifada Photo: Solidarity

ney—have so far been reluctant to defend the slogan “Globalise the Intifada” because they say it has not been widely used. But the chant has indeed been raised—and other chants celebrating “intifada” are common at rallies.

Failing to defend the slogan only concedes to the idea that there is a problem with it and means the movement will fail to challenge a direct attack against it. The ban will intimidate people and help silence expressions of support for Palestine.

It is also the thin edge of a dangerous wedge. If the bans succeed, governments will try to push them further.

Israel’s Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar has already praised the Queensland slogan ban and called for other states to follow suit.

In the UK there has been a crackdown on the slogan “Globalise the Intifada” as well as the designation of Palestine Action as a terrorist group. There have been similar crackdowns in Germany where pro-Palestine conferences have been banned and protests restricted.

Globalise the Intifada

The call to Globalise the Intifada is a call for a global movement of solidarity with Palestine to end the complicity of governments worldwide in Israel’s genocide. This means striking, protesting and boycotting, action directed against our own government, with the spirit of defiance shown by the Palestinians.

Australia is complicit in the genocide in Palestine and is directly involved in Trump and Israel’s war on Iran. It will require real rebellion to stop the shipments of F-35 parts to Israel, Baisalloy armoured steel going to IDF vehicles, the intelligence sharing with Israel and to cut the campus ties to genocide.

The laws restricting protests, code of conducts restricting free speech and anti-strike laws will have to be broken.

We saw a glimpse of the defiance we need when Israeli President Isaac Herzog visited Sydney. Minns told people not to protest at Sydney Town Hall and banned a march, but up to 20,000 turned out.

Grace Tame defiantly chanted “Globalise the Intifada” from the stage. The crowd chanted, “We will march.” And despite brutal police attacks, the next week protest restrictions were lifted.

As we went to press the law was still yet to be introduced into the NSW Parliament. On 17 March as a new sitting period began around 200 people rallied outside parliament against the ban, defying Minns to chant “Globalise the Intifada”.

NSW Greens MP Jenny Leong reminded the crowd that “Bad laws need to be broken”, while NTEU NSW Secretary Vince Caughley pledged to “without apology always protect the right to speak, the right to protest and to dissent.”

This must be the start of a much bigger fight against Minns’ attacks, for free speech and a free Palestine.

.....

The call to Globalise the Intifada is a call for a global movement of solidarity with Palestine

One Nation threat as right-wing Labor dominates in SA election

By Robert Stainsby

THE 21 March state election in South Australia sees a confident Labor government likely to increase its majority. It is also the first major test of whether Pauline Hanson's racist One Nation can replace a weak Liberal Party as the dominant force on the right.

Hailing from the Labor Right SDA union, Premier Peter Malinauskas strongly supports AUKUS and other "defence" initiatives. He pioneered social media restrictions for teenagers.

His push for the removal of Palestinian-Australian writer Randa Abdel-Fattah led to the collapse of the popular Adelaide Writers' Week festival, as authors boycotted to support her. Promises last election of green hydrogen projects have given way to ensuring a profitable future for Adelaide-based gas company Santos.

However, Malinauskas has made sure to talk about issues such as healthcare, housing and cost of living. He has delivered limited tenant protections and took trains back into public hands. His campaign for re-election promises the removal of public school fees, extended out-of-hours child care and a program of building more housing.

Malinauskas also has Rupert Murdoch's *Adelaide Advertiser*, the state's only daily newspaper, onside. Reporting on a 500-strong Property Council of Australia business lunch on 4 March, the *Advertiser* wrote that Malinauskas, "Was lauded by everyone, from Property Council national chief Mike Zorbas down, for his unbridled efforts to drive state growth, but the Liberal Opposition was castigated as 'anti-development'."

One Nation and Liberals' crisis

The national crisis of the Liberals is particularly marked in SA. The party has seen four leaders since the last election. Ashton Hurn took the job only in December.

One Nation has overtaken the Liberals in polling. On 27 February a Roy Morgan poll put Hanson's party on 28 per cent, well ahead of the Liberals on 16.5 per cent.

Racism remains key to One Nation's support, feeding on the efforts of the major parties to suggest that immigration, rather than their failure to act on investor incentives and to build public housing, are to blame for housing costs.



State leader, former Liberal Cory Bernardi, has backed Hanson's declaration that there are "no good Muslims". The party has promised to repeal SA's state Aboriginal Voice to Parliament.

One Nation is falsely linking energy costs to renewables, promising to abandon net zero emissions targets. Bernardi has defended his previous comments that same-sex marriage would lead to widespread bestiality.

ABC analyst Casey Briggs argues, "The electoral geography of South Australia leaves few opportunities for One Nation to actually gain lower house seats." But it could still win a substantial number of seats in the upper house, which would be a boost to racists around the country.

Malinauskas showed how not to respond to the growth of One Nation, trying to make a case for immigration by asking voters, "Who's going to feed you and bathe you and wipe your bum when you're 90? Because it ain't going to be your kids, because if I get my way, they're going to be working on submarines with high-paying jobs."

This allowed Bernardi to pose as more compassionate, replying "caring for the elderly is one of the most meaningful employment careers that anyone can have".

When One Nation first appeared on the scene in the late 1990s, the major parties united to preference them last, in a stand against their blatant

Above: Protesting against Labor Premier Peter Malinauskas' role in dumping Palestinian author Randa Abdel-Fattah from Writers' Week in Adelaide
Photo: Vicky Dennison

racism. Labor is continuing this approach in this election. However, the Liberals, desperate for every vote they can get, are now directing preferences to Hanson's party above Labor, even though One Nation has refused to reciprocate.

Among left-wing activists, there is much justifiable anger at SA Labor around Palestine, AUKUS, climate and poverty. Three socialist candidates are standing for the lower house and many activists are putting effort into electoral campaigning for them or for The Greens. There are record numbers of candidates in many seats, as both left and right try to pick up some of the discontent with the major parties.

The One Nation vote started rising dramatically alongside the large racist March for Australia rallies in the second half of 2025. We need to build on the counter rallies led by First Nations activists in Adelaide to a much larger anti-racist movement that welcomes disgruntled Labor voters and others beyond the existing left.

There is a real danger of One Nation becoming a more serious force on the right and pulling the discontent over housing prices and the cost of living in a racist direction.

When we vote we should generally put the Greens first, then Labor, and put One Nation last. But the ballot box won't deliver the changes we need. The priority for the left must remain building our strength in the streets and unionised workplaces.

State One Nation leader Cory Bernardi has backed Hanson's declaration that there are "no good Muslims"

Trump's plans for Gaza—occupation and plunder

By Angus Dermody

THE FIRST meeting of Donald Trump's Gaza "Board of Peace" was held on 19 February. It was a sickening gathering of war criminals and plunderers, meeting to discuss their nightmarish plans for a post-war Gaza.

The meeting heard contributions from some of the hideous figures that Donald Trump has appointed to its executive. Tony Blair, former British Prime Minister and butcher of Iraq, praised Trump's plans and highlighted what he saw as the "vast potential" of Gaza—"25 miles of Mediterranean coastline" and "proximity to great regional and global markets".

The Board includes several Arab countries including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, as well as other countries seeking US favours like Indonesia and Argentina. Suggesting something of its true nature, Israel has also joined it.

All its decisions, however, must be approved by Trump. The major European countries, as well as other invited countries including Australia, have refused to join.

Trump himself spoke much of "peace", praising himself for "bringing peace to the Middle East" and declaring that "the war in Gaza is over". This is a far cry from the situation facing Palestinians there. And within weeks he was bombing Iran.

Israeli airstrikes on Gaza continue, as do military operations on the ground, despite the announcement of the "ceasefire" in October. According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, at least 650 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed by Israeli military operations since.

Displaced Palestinians, living in tents and makeshift shelters, have also faced extreme weather in recent months. Over winter, dozens of Palestinians were killed or injured after heavy flooding caused damaged buildings to collapse. Others died of extreme cold.

More recently, the worst sandstorm in five years swept through Gaza, damaging tents and risking further illness.

The health system in Gaza is still in crisis after over two years of Israeli bombardment that included the targeting of hospitals and medical facilities. Earlier this year it was reported that 20,000 Palestinians are on waitlists



Above: The inaugural meeting of Trump's bizarre "Board of Peace"

Photo: White House/
Daniel Torok

for necessary medical treatments unavailable in Gaza.

The World Health Organisation warned in early March that essential medical supplies remain critically low—with needles and gauze having completely run out.

Since the US and Israel launched their murderous assault on Iran, all but one of the border crossings into Gaza have been cut off.

This means that, at most, only one third of the aid trucks needed are being let in each day. In December, Israel ordered 37 aid organisations to cease work in Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank entirely by March.

Macabre plans

Trump's Board of Peace is a sick farce that has no intention of doing anything for the Palestinians in Gaza. The first meeting made promises of funding, with combined pledges of \$10 billion, but there was no suggestion of providing any of the basic services that people in Gaza so desperately need.

Bizarrely, the President of FIFA (who previously awarded Trump the "FIFA Peace Prize") made an appearance at the meeting to promise funding for five soccer pitches, a training academy and a stadium.

Instead, the Board of Peace discussed market solutions that could help open Gaza up to business.

This is of a piece with the plan for "New Gaza" presented by Board of Peace executive member Jared Kushner in January at the World Eco-

nomc Forum in Davos. This would see Palestinians pushed into even smaller living areas to clear up space for coastal tourism properties and industrial zones.

The lofty promises made at the Board of Peace meeting are just the cover for plans to occupy Gaza and open it up for profiteering. Part of the plan is the establishment of an International Stabilisation Force which would see 20,000 "peace keeping" troops deployed to Gaza.

Indonesia will act as deputy commander of the force and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, who oversees the genocide carried out by Indonesian troops in West Papua, has promised 8000 soldiers to help "make this peace work".

All these plans rely on disarming Hamas, something it continues to refuse to do—as is its right. Yet there is no talk of demanding Israel, which occupies Gaza and is carrying out genocide, disarm.

Last month, Israel's far-right finance minister Bezalel Smotrich warned that if Hamas did not disarm, then Israel would "receive international legitimacy and American backing to do it itself".

Trump's "peace plan" for Gaza is a plan for further entrenching Israeli control and will require armed force to impose it. The task for us remains the same—continuing the fight for real peace and justice for Palestinians and forcing our government and institutions to cut ties with Israel.

.....
All these plans rely on disarming Hamas

UWU members speak out on what's at stake in the union election

Parsa Zaher has been a UWU delegate for casinos in Sydney for the past five years

How did the Members' First campaign start?

Sometime in 2025 some of the delegates got together to write a letter to one of the directors of the union.

We asked to freeze the fees for a few years. Another one was the strike fund. Strike action is one of the most important tools we have in our toolkit. We know that militant unions get the best results.

Another demand was more power to the member councils because the member council was being used as a rubber stamp for the leadership. And we wanted more organisers.

At the same time we had thought, why are we giving so much money to the Labor Party?

When our letter failed [the] election was close, we [wanted] to get the rank and file very organised.

From the outside it seems some of the problems in the union come from divisions between United Voice (UV) and the National Union of Workers (NUW) that amalgamated to form the UWU.

The dynamic is not ex-UV versus ex-NUW. The dynamic is really grassroots.

For example casinos and clubs were UV sites and Logistics and Warehouses were NUW. But Members First has delegates from casinos, clubs, logistics and warehouses. The entire delegate group from my worksite is with us.

The dynamic is grassroots. It's delegates and rank-and-filers versus a top leadership who've been in that position for about 20, 25 years.

It's not [enough to] replace one leader with another.

Members First is a voice to say 'enough's enough' and we need to take control of our union.

What is at stake for union members in this election?

The cost of living is still going up; we have to make sure we are on top of that.

The union is the only way wages are going to be pushed up. If the union's not strong enough to win, wages will keep falling further behind inflation.



Above: Childcare workers take part in one of the UWU's walkouts Photo: Solidarity

Nikki Toupin is a UWU delegate in early childhood education in Melbourne. She's been in the sector for almost eight years.

Our membership is growing but it's slow. That's because the union doesn't engage with members and delegates.

I was growing the membership in 2024 before our planned walkout on International Women's Day for our Multi Employer Bargaining claim.

Then the union cancelled it and people drew the conclusion, why bother being in the union.

They settled the MEB for 10 per cent less than what we were asking for—15 rather than 25 per cent.

What do you think of the two competing tickets?

The United for You ticket stands for the service model that we've seen for the past two or three decades, that's still pushed largely by the ALP.

The Members First ticket is linked to the rank-and-file model which goes back to what actually works—build-

ing power and pushing from below.

I've some confidence that Members First mean what they say. It's a bureaucracy so there are always limitations.

Ironically, we [union activists] get accused of being CFMEU thugs, which is hilarious but it's not so far from what we want to be—militancy is not thuggery but unionism.

What will the election mean for your organising at work?

ECE gets left behind. So rank-and-file members across the country have been talking to decide what we actually want. Higher wages, obviously. But we are concerned about [staffing] ratios.

If United for You wins all this organising will be squashed. The current leadership has blacklisted me as a delegate because they don't want members having a say and who don't play the ALP games.

Members First isn't a perfect thing. [In terms of elections rules] the UWU is not set up for a true rank-and-file ticket.

Hunter is a UWU delegate and health and safety rep at a call centre in the market and social research sector. They also work in hospitality. Both roles are casual.

At the call centre we have a union dues level that's tied to income—1.5 per cent of our wage is paid through wage deduction.

It makes a massive difference when it comes to unionising our industry.

In call centres, our workforce

is heavily casualised and we should be able to transfer to permanent part time.

There are laws that say you can convert but management makes you jump through hoops and the union is not giving us enough support to fight for PPT.

We don't get penalty rates. Some of us are cold calling people on a Sunday afternoon and we don't get any extra to cop abuse.

We hear unions won the 40-hour week and penalty rates and so one but

Which way forward for the UWU? 'We need to take control of our union'



By Ian Rintoul

The first contested election for Australia's biggest blue-collar union, the United Workers Union (the ballot opens 30 April), has become the focus of an intense debate about the way forward for the union.

The outcome of the election will have implications for working class struggle and Labor Party politics over the next few years.

The UWU was formed in 2019 from the amalgamation of United Voice and the National Union of Workers. The union, with around 150,000 members in 45 industries, covers warehouses, casinos, call centres, aged care, early childhood education and more.

Two tickets are contesting the election, Members First headed by current national secretary, Tim Kennedy (previously national secretary of

we don't get them.

What will the election mean for your organising at work?

If Members First wins they will need to follow through with their promises.

I hope we see more organisers. I'm hoping to see a shift to an organising model rather than a service model.

If we stick together then management are afraid of you rather than us being afraid of them.

Above: United Workers Union members in logistics from Coles Smeaton Grange on strike Photo: Solidarity

the NUW) and United for You headed by Jo Schofield, the current UWU national president and previously national secretary of United Voice.

Hundreds of union members have attended enthusiastic Members First launches in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane.

Although the tickets are headed by the previous national secretaries of the amalgamated unions, what's at stake is not just a bureaucratic power struggle.

Kennedy says, "Members First is committed to rebuilding rank-and-file industrial capacity by investing in delegates, strengthening workplace organisation and putting decision-making powers back with members ...

"Without industrial power, political gains are fragile and short-lived. The history of labour movements internationally has shown that power in the workplace is not gifted by sympathetic governments but sustained through constant collective struggle."

Schofield stresses the value of political campaigning, pointing to school cleaners who the NSW Labor government agreed to directly employ and the \$3.6 billion in federal funding from Labor for a 15 per cent pay rise for childcare workers.

Lobbying Labor

But militancy is a real question. Schofield told the *Financial Review*, "If you're a disability worker you aren't easily able to walk off the job because there are people you are caring for."

United for You stresses lobby-

ing Labor in its election material. Treasurer Jim Chalmers, Queensland Senator Murray Watt, responsible for imposing government Administration onto the CFMEU, and Health Minister Mark Butler are among the Labor MPs backed by UWU.

But there is considerable disquiet that the emphasis on lobbying Labor comes at the expense of organising industrially.

Nikki Toupin, a Victorian early childhood education worker and UWU delegate, told *Solidarity*, "I was growing the membership in 2024 before our planned walkout for our multi employer bargaining claim.

"Then the union cancelled it and people drew the conclusion, why bother being in the union. They settled for 10 per cent less than what we were asking for—15 rather than 25 per cent."

Now Labor's much-vaunted 15 per cent pay increase for early childhood workers is set to expire in November. Unless federal Labor includes the pay increase in the May budget, childcare workers are facing a pay cut of up to 6 per cent.

Nikki is supporting Members First. "This election defines what unions should be in the 21st century. The United for You ticket stands for the service model that we've seen for the past two or three decades, that's still pushed largely by the ALP.

"The Members First ticket is linked to the rank-and-file model which goes back to what actually works—building power on the ground and pushing from below."

Parsa Zaher, a UWU casino delegate in Sydney told *Solidarity*, "The dynamic is really grassroots.

"It's delegates and rank and filers versus a top leadership who've been in that position for about 20, 25 years."

Hunter, a UWU delegate at a call centre in Melbourne and a hospitality worker, is hoping a Members First win means more organisers to back up rank-and-file organising.

"If they win they will need to follow through with their promises. They are a bit like politicians and we need to see them act," they warned.

Solidarity would welcome a Members First victory. But no matter who wins, it will be workplace organising that will be crucial for UWU members to fight, independently of the leadership, if necessary, to take the struggle up to the bosses and the Labor government, to win real wages, staff ratios and permanency, in the struggles ahead.

Far right gains in France as mainstream parties blame the left for fascist's death

By Thomas Foster

MAINSTREAM AND far right politicians are painting the left in France as violent after the death of a far right activist.

The anti-racist movement responded with a huge demonstration in Paris on 14 March, with over 100,000 people marching. They were joined by thousands across France with over 100 protests taking place.

Quentin Deranque died as a result of injuries sustained in a fascist attack on a meeting in Lyon addressed by Rima Hassan. Rima is a member of the European parliament for the left wing LFI party, led by Jean-Luc Melenchon.

Fascists have targeted the offices of the LFI. There was a bomb threat against its national headquarters.

Far right organisations held tributes to Deranque in several cities.

In Paris, elected officials from the fascist National Rally (RN) attended one of these tributes. Dozens then walked through a left wing neighbourhood with Nazi signs.

On 12 February, a handful of activists from the fascist group Nemesis mobilised to disrupt the conference where Rima was speaking.

Students confronted the far right, chanting anti-fascist slogans.

Nemesis leader Alice Cordier said that the group had organised a security team to “intervene” if the group was confronted by anti-fascists.

She claimed this security team was “lynched by an armed militia”, and blamed the anti-fascist group Jeune Garde—Young Guard—which was dissolved last June.

But her account is contested. An anti-fascist student told the *Mediapart* newspaper that a group of fascists “jumped on them” as they were leaving. Videos of the attack appear to show the Nemesis “security group” launching the first projectiles and assaults.

There was a confrontation and other footage has circulated online of a group of individuals violently beating three men.

One of the security guards, Deranque, was taken to hospital and died from a severe brain injury.

The far right is now on the offensive. Fascist mobs have rampaged through the streets, sometimes in groups hundreds-strong.



Over 3000 joined a far right march in Lyon in February, with Nazi salutes, racist insults and homophobic chants on display.

And the fascist National Rally (RN), led by Marine Le Pen, is topping opinion polls and looking to make gains in the local elections next month.

Mainstream feeds the far right

Marche Des Solidarites (MDS) organiser Denis Godard told *Socialist Worker* UK that “All the mainstream media and parties, including part of the left, are attacking the anti-fascists and the LFI as murderers”, he said.

A spokesperson for France’s centrist government attacked the LFI as “encouraging a climate of violence”. She said there is “a moral responsibility on the part of LFI” for the attack.

The French parliament even held a minute of silence for the fascist activist, paying tribute to the death of a neo-Nazi.

French politicians have sometimes talked about a “cordon sanitaire”, where mainstream conservatives refuse to work with fascists.

Now, Denis said that “there are many calls for a cordon sanitaire against LFI”.

Politicians and the media have focused heavily on LFI MP Raphaël Arnault, who was previously a spokesperson for the anti-fascist collective Jeune Garde—Young Guard.

The Labor-type PS party was part of a New Popular Front alliance with the LFI and others in 2024. It now

Thousands at a solidarity march in January for El Hacem Diarra who died inside a police station after a violent arrest
Photo: Marche des Solidarites

says it won’t ally with the LFI due to its links with the Young Guard.

Denis said this legitimises the fascist RN. It pushes their idea that “the danger is not the fascists but the left”.

Denis said the far right “are rejoicing and celebrating the situation”.

“They are not just attacking migrants. Now they are doing what they wanted to do for a long time—attack the left. This is the core nature of fascism,” Denis said.

A group came back from a rally organised by fascists went into a liberal bar in Toulouse and went on the attack with knives and batons.

He said we should remember that Deranque “was a street fascist involved in street violence for months”.

Denis said there is a “division of labour” between street fascist groups and the RN—but they do coordinate.

“The last time Nemesis organised a press conference, it was at the office of the RN. Many of the parliamentary assistants of RN MPs come from street and student fascist groups,” Denis explained.

The far right has been emboldened by the racism of the government.

“Mainstream figures call migrants terrorists and delinquents and call Muslims dangerous,” Denis explained.

It is in this context that polls report that the RN would win the next parliamentary election or the presidential election set to take place in April 2027. The next test is the local elections in March.

Socialist Worker UK

The French parliament even held a minute of silence for the fascist activist

Trump's imperialist strike on Iran risks backfiring

By James Supple

DONALD TRUMP'S bombing of Iran was supposed to demonstrate the US's military might, through punishing or even bringing down the Iranian regime.

Instead it is exposing the limits of US power. The US and Israel have done serious damage in Iran, assassinating Supreme Leader Mohammad Khatami and other senior figures, and bombing military installations and infrastructure at will.

But Iran has managed to damage radars and missile defence systems at US bases in six of the nearby Gulf states and closed the Strait of Hormuz, which normally carries one fifth of the world's oil supply.

The US has discovered there is little it can do to stop this, short of a major escalation of the war. Trump has called on allies to provide warships to re-open the strait. It's a humiliating admission that the US is not all-powerful. So far, no country has accepted the invitation.

Trump has tried to reassure financial markets that the war will be over quickly to prevent a surge in global oil prices and major economic turmoil. But Iran has no reason to agree to this. So the US now faces the prospect of a humiliating backdown to cut a deal with Iran.

Some say that Trump's decision to launch the war was a result of following Israel and its Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's agenda.

But in June last year Trump had no trouble ending Israel's assault on Iran, phoning Netanyahu to order him to turn around bombers and blurting out to reporters that "they don't know what the fuck they're doing".

Trump's decision to attack Iran was made with the US's own interests in mind.

Trump wants to reassert US power globally. He has adopted a policy of brazen imperialism, using military force to grab control of resources and profits for US companies. He has launched air strikes against seven countries in the past 14 months and used the threat of force to extract concessions in Greenland and Panama.

Trump was emboldened by the success of his attack against Venezuela in January that saw the kidnap of President Nicholas Maduro.

The leader who replaced him, Delcy Rodríguez, has been far more



Above: Donald Trump is threatening to escalate the war against Iran as he searches for a way out Photo: White House/Daniel Torok

accommodating to US demands, including over the country's oil.

But Iran's regime has held together far better. There is no obvious figure willing to give in to Trump's agenda and the powerful military factions within the regime have shown no desire to capitulate.

Contest with China

The US is a superpower in decline. Its once globally dominant economy faces increasing competition, most importantly from China.

Trump's actions in Latin America aim to reverse China's growing economic influence there, with his National Security Strategy late last year declaring that, "We want a Hemisphere that is free of hostile foreign incursion or ownership of key assets."

In the Middle East, Iran is not just the state most hostile to US interests. It has also forged a close partnership with China. Due to US sanctions, Iran exports almost all its oil to China. It has also received limited military exports from China and uses Chinese surveillance and satellite technology.

It's true that, as academic John Calabrese put it, "Iran has long needed China far more than China has needed Iran." China gets more oil from both Russia and Saudi Arabia than it does from Iran.

But weakening Iran would cement US dominance of the Middle East and send a message to China, as well as

other states considering defying the US.

The US itself does not need Middle East oil. But the war has highlighted how Asian nations, including China but also US allies Japan, South Korea and the Philippines, rely on oil shipped through the Strait of Hormuz.

The current onslaught is a continuation of Israel's wars since October 2023 against Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Iran. These have significantly altered the balance of power in the region to the US's advantage through weakening Iran and its allies.

This is why the US arms Israel and guarantees it a "qualitative military edge" over all the other states in the region. For decades Israel has served as an attack dog advancing US imperialist control in the Middle East.

Trump and Israel's killing spree is being backed by other Western states including Australia. The Albanese government is still allowing the export of weapons parts to Israel, including for its F-35 fighter jets, and supplying military intelligence through Pine Gap and other US bases in Australia. It has sent a surveillance aircraft and missiles to the UAE.

Imperialism is a product of capitalism and the competition between the world's most powerful countries for power and profit. The US's desperation to maintain its position is making the world a much more dangerous place.

.....
Weakening Iran would cement US dominance of the Middle East and send a message to China

WHY US BOMBING WON'T BRING DEMOCRACY TO IRAN

By Ian Rintoul and James Supple

DONALD TRUMP has denounced the Iranian government as “evil”. But US bombing and war will not bring democracy to Iran.

The Iranian regime is brutal and authoritarian. Many times the people of Iran have risen up against the theocracy. In 2022 the Woman, Life, Freedom protests erupted across Iran after the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a young Kurdish woman, who was arrested by the religious police for not wearing her hijab properly.

In January this year, the regime massacred as many as 30,000 people after mass protests took to the streets calling for the overthrow of the regime. Trump said he was going to help but there was no help.

Now that Trump and Israel have started bombing he is calling on Iranians to rise up. But Trump can't be trusted. Trump says he wants “regime change” but he has called on “the IRGC and Iranian police to join ‘Iranian patriots’ to change the government”. But the IRGC (Revolutionary Guards) are the elite troops who killed protesters in early January.

Imperialism

Trump has no concern for democracy or the Iranian people, he simply wants the kind of regime change that the US forced on Venezuela. This has left the regime intact and seen a new leader take over who is more compliant with the US.

In Iran too, Trump just wants a compliant regime. Trump says he wants the Kurds in the north to take up arms against the Iranian regime. But only last month Trump announced the withdrawal of the last US troops in northern Syria to allow the Syrian government to take control over the Kurdish autonomous area.

The US wants to boost its own power and make the Middle East safe for US imperialism. It has approved and enabled Israel's genocide in Gaza. It is backing Israel's bombing of Lebanon.

US imperialism has never brought peace and democracy. The US talked about bringing democracy to Iraq when it invaded and occupied the



country to topple Saddam Hussein in 2003.

But there is no democracy in Iraq. The country was left in ruins, with hundreds of thousands of deaths in violence resulting from the war and bitter sectarian divisions stirred up by the US in its attempt to control the country through divide and rule.

The US and its western allies (including Australia) invaded Afghanistan in 2001 with promises to bring liberation. But their brutal occupation boosted support for the Taliban, who eventually drove out the US 20 years later.

US President George Bush Senior called on the Kurds and Shia in southern Iraq to rise up against Saddam Hussein in 1991 but then did nothing when they did revolt and were suppressed by Saddam.

The Iranian regime must be overthrown. But real change will only come from the independent struggle of the Iranian people themselves.

Some say that the Iranian regime is too repressive for ordinary people to topple it. But brutal dictatorships have been brought down by popular revolt many times in the past.

Last year mass protests as part of so-called Gen Z revolts brought down governments in Nepal, Bangladesh and Madagascar. In 2011 the wave of Arab revolutions toppled dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt.

The Stalinist dictatorships in Eastern Europe came down in 1989

Above: Residential areas in Tehran destroyed by the US and Israeli war
Photo: Avash Media/
Wikimedia Commons

as a result of popular revolt, with the Berlin Wall demolished by ordinary people in East Germany.

Iran has its own history of mass revolt. In 1979 Iran witnessed one of the most far-reaching popular revolutions of recent decades, overthrowing the dictatorship of Shah Reza Pahlavi. The Shah ran a brutal regime, with a notorious secret police force, SAVAK, that tortured and imprisoned opponents of the regime.

His regime too was prepared to shoot protesters off the streets, killing hundreds at a time.

But opposition groups continued to organise against the regime. When mass demonstrations erupted again in June 1978 it led to repression that fuelled further protests.

Crucially this triggered oil workers' strikes, shutting down the industry the government relied on for revenue. When these spread across the country, it signalled the end of the regime.

Islamic clerics led by Ruhollah Khomeini managed to put themselves at the head of the movement and establish an Islamic regime, repressing workers and the left and crushing the hopes for democracy and liberation.

But the outcome of any mass revolutionary movement is not decided in advance. This depends on the strength of socialist and working class organisation.

It is only the struggles of ordinary people in Iran against the regime that can win real freedom.

IRANIANS SPEAK OUT AGAINST WAR AND THE REGIME

Solidarity spoke to a young Iranian activist about the war

What do you think about the US bombing?

I'm very much against it. First of all, the bombing campaign is not going to bring regime change. The other option would be boots on the ground and that is going to be infinitely more devastating.

The priority of the US is never bringing democracy. For them it's about getting what they want out of Iran.

The main problem that we're facing right now is the monarchists really want to make this a binary, you're with the Islamic Republic or you're with [the old Shah's son Reza] Pahlavi and the monarchist side. We reject that completely. We think change from within is possible.

They want to point to the protests that happened about two months ago and say it shows that you can't have change from within. But they had no plan or organising [on the ground]. Pahlavi just told people to get out into the streets and start taking over institutions. That is not how a revolution works.

What do you think about the regime? You're critical of it?

Very much. Quality of life has gone down. There's a portion of it that can be blamed on US sanctions.

But there's also economic mismanagement and there are incredibly high levels of inequality.

I came to Australia around 2018, after Donald Trump's economic sanctions and his "maximum pressure" campaign.

I hadn't been to Iran up until seven months ago in July, about two weeks after the 12 Day war. I saw incredibly high levels of inequality. Roughly around the mid-1990s up until now the regime privatised everything. Even though the economic sanctions have caused hardship, economic development is concentrated in the hands of a few people—the oligarchs, we call them. They have very close ties to the regime.

Is there anything you can share about what people are feeling inside Iran about the bombing?

We saw in the 12 day war and we see it here again, when people are under the threat of bombs, they see the regime as the only saviour in terms of

“When people are under the threat of bombs, they see the regime as the only saviour in making the bombs stop”

making the bombs stop. Iranians are very nationalistic. They're very proud of their nation.

The more it continues, it's just going to drive more and more people towards the regime.

Is there much of a difference between the message you get out of Iran and the diaspora here?

In the diaspora, the dynamic was very different than inside Iran. After the revolution in 1979, a lot of people went into Western countries, Europe, America, Canada, Australia, and created their own communities. These used to be people who were the upper middle class, who used to benefit from the old corrupt system of the Shah.

There's also the fact they live here. They don't experience the bombings.

I still do think Pahlavi and the monarchists have a base of support in Iran, I don't know how much, but I think it's 10 to 15 per cent, who hold the same opinion as these people do. Here they're the majority of the Iranian community.

Then I think there's 20 per cent to 25 per cent in Iran who are supportive of the regime. And there's 50 to 60 per cent in the middle who want a free republic and social democratic reforms or reforms inside the system. The unfortunate thing is these 50 to 60 per cent in this war are probably going to be pushed more towards the Islamic Republic.

Freedom must come from below

I OPPOSE the Islamic Republic because it is a capitalist regime built on repression, inequality, and the denial of basic freedoms. But I am also opposed to imperialist war against Iran.

At the moment trade unions are banned and there are no free elections. Political parties have to be free to act. The thousands of political prisoners must be freed.

I write this not as a distant observer, but as someone whose life has been shaped by Iran's struggles for freedom. I am an Iranian Marxist activist, a former political prisoner of the Islamic Republic, and someone who participated in the mass movement during the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

The Islamic Republic today faces one of the deepest crises of legitimacy in its history. Over the past decade Iran has experienced repeated waves of mass protest.

In November 2019 protests triggered by government increases to fuel prices spread to more than 190 cities. Security forces killed between hundreds to over 1000 protesters.

In September 2022, the death of Mahsa Amini after her arrest by the morality police sparked nationwide protests. The movement became known as the Woman Life Freedom movement. Many workers across the country joined, hundreds were killed and thousands arrested.

Last year in December continuing in January a massive nationwide wave of protest erupted and more

than 6000 people were killed and tens of thousands arrested.

Some argue that foreign military action could weaken the regime and accelerate democratic change. This ignores historical experience.

Iranians remember the devastation of the Iran–Iraq War from 1980, which killed hundreds of thousands and allowed the regime to consolidate power by militarising society and suppressing political opposition. Authoritarian governments often benefit from external threats. War allows them to portray themselves as defenders of the nation. Bombing Iran will not strengthen democratic movements, it will weaken them.

According to the limited voice messages and reports from inside Iran anger toward the US and Western intervention is once again intensifying among ordinary people.

When a nation is placed under siege, people often close ranks against external aggression.

Some argue that the Iranian people cannot overthrow the regime without outside intervention. This view underestimates both Iranian society and the power of collective struggle. In 1979, millions of people brought down the monarchy through strikes and demonstrations.

Today Iran remains a society with powerful traditions of resistance. Workers organise strikes, women lead acts of civil disobedience, students challenge repression, and activists continue to build networks of solidarity despite enormous risks.

Rouzbeh Abadan

IRAN—HOW WORKERS’ REVOLUTION WAS THWARTED IN 1979

Mike Grewcock reviews a new book that looks at how workers played a key role in bringing down regimes in Iran, Poland and South Africa, but then lost out to other forces

AS I read this book in January, mass protests were erupting across Iran. Censorship by the regime and the delusional focus by much of the Western media on the possible return of the Shah’s son, Reza Pahlavi, made it difficult to assess exactly what was happening.

But it was clear the protests included widespread strikes and that the regime was losing popular support.

However, the Israeli-US invasion physically threatens a genuinely democratic popular uprising and gives the regime an excuse for further repression in the name of national unity. This raises urgent strategic questions about how to push the mass movement forward, while opposing the bloody carnage wrought by US imperialism.

The starting point is to look back to the revolution of 1979.

That revolution provides one of the four case studies in this important book. In each case—Iran in 1979, Poland in 1980-81, South Africa and Brazil in the late 1980s—“independent workers’ movements played a decisive role in removing tyrannies” only to lose the political initiative and the possibilities of workers carrying “forward the political struggle in their own interests”.

All of them were mass upheavals that demonstrated the power of working class action to paralyse key sections of society through mass strikes, as well as the potential to overthrow capitalism itself. But in each case, potential revolutions were thwarted.

In Iran, that potential rested in the massive strike wave, especially in the oil industry, that helped bring the Shah’s brutal pro-Western regime to its knees between 1977 and 1979.

“By late October 1978, oil workers strikes were closing down oil production [and] raising openly political demands: end martial law, release political prisoners, Iranianise the oil

industry, dissolve SAVAK [the secret police], end discrimination against women employees.”

Most of these demands were met but more importantly, the strike movement gave rise to independent democratically elected workers’ councils, the shoras. Rose recounts how:

“The councils by their nature were democratic, grass roots organs. Their executive committees were directly elected and were subject to recall, at any time, by the members ... Almost all workers in a unit would attend meetings in which heated debates would take place on issues concerning the running of the workplace

“The day-to-day activities of the shoras ... had a dramatic effect on the way the workers conceptualised society, authority and their social position in the society at large ... the workers were involved in a learning process.”

Rose highlights the potential of the shoras to provide a political challenge to Khomeini and the Islamists, who had widespread support especially among small business owners and the majority of workers still in small enterprises.

Tragically, this potential was never realised.

From the mid-1960s, the persecution of Khomeini and the Islamists by the Shah enabled them to promote Islam as an ideology of the oppressed:

“Islam belongs to the oppressed ... not to the oppressors

Islam represents the slum dwellers

... not the palace dwellers

Islam is not the opiate of the masses

The oppressed ... of the world,

unite

Neither East nor West, but Islam

We are for Islam, not for capitalism

and feudalism

Islam will eliminate class differences

In Islam there will be no landless

peasant.”

In Iran a massive strike wave, especially in the oil industry, helped bring the Shah’s brutal regime to its knees

By the time Khomeini returned to Iran from 15 years of exile in February 1979, his popularity was so great, he was able to call on the support of the army. A ruthless, Western-installed monarchy disintegrated in days, opening up a struggle for political power and enormous opportunities and challenges for the Left.

But the radical appeal of Islam meant the Left—mainly the Fedayeen and the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party—needed to build an independent revolutionary socialist movement within the working class that could challenge the developing theocratic state.

Crucially, this meant working to extend the influence of the shoras, which were exclusively workplace based, unable to relate to the majority of workers and urban poor often organised in mosque-based neighbourhood committees and heavily influenced by Islamist politics.

It also meant trying to ally the shoras movement with vital political struggles to defend women’s rights and the rights of national minorities, such as the Kurds.

Rose discusses in detail how the Left, to its own cost, failed or was unable to do this in a consistent and principled way. The Fedayeen’s focus on urban guerilla campaigns at the expense of building a base in the working class meant its cadre were in a much weaker position than the Islamists as the revolution unfolded.

This was exacerbated when a majority of the Fedayeen split to ally with the “anti-imperialist wing” of the regime. Similarly, the Tudeh Party, following the Soviet Union’s desire to normalise relations with the new government, sought alliances with the Islamists, even collaborating in the repression of the opposition.

Khomeini consolidated his rule through reforms that brought significant material benefits to working class

families and the Islamisation of state and public institutions.

He mounted a systemic ideological campaign against secular politics, won overwhelming support to replace rule by monarchy with an Islamic constitution, positioned himself as anti-imperialist through confiscation of US assets and supported the occupation of the US embassy in Tehran from November 1979 to January 1981.

He achieved this while winding down the shoras and engaging in bloody repression of the Left and other political opponents, which accelerated during the 1980-1988 war with Iraq. This hardened the core of Khomeini's supporters and severed any lingering ties between the religious populists and secular radicals.

The regime that has developed since continues both to present itself as anti-imperialist and crush internal dissent. It is also thoroughly capitalist and unable to provide solutions to a deepening economic crisis, exacerbated by sanctions and now, military invasion.

The recent protests were a response to this crisis and seriously challenged the government. However, the Iranian Left is fragmented and there were few signs of shoras re-emerging or that their potential provides a strategic focus.

Soviets

This reflects a fundamental problem Rose raises at the beginning of his book: the general dismissal of the significance and potential of the 1917 Russian revolution.

That revolution rested on the power of the soviets, the network of democratically elected workers' committees and councils. Like the shoras, they were based on workplaces and the power of the organised working class. But, unlike the shoras, they were also able to lead the mass of the peasantry and rank-and-file soldiers through a successful alliance.

As a result, the soviets played an important role in the wider community through, for example, "the creation of cultural enlightenment commissions".

"The Putilov works committee encouraged evening classes with an appeal to gain scientific knowledge ... At the Baltic works, the education commission sponsored theatre, arranged for women workers to be given some teaching by women students, gave financial help to the apprentices' club and for a school to soldiers and sailors. At the Sestroretsk works the commission gave the house



Above: A mass demonstration held in Tehran in January 1979, the month the Shah fled the country

Photo: Mohammad SayyadWikimedia Commons



Revolutions Thwarted: Poland, South Africa, Iran, Brazil and the Legacies of Communism, by John Rose, Bookmarks 2025. Available from Solidarity branches.

and garden of the former director to local children as a kindergarten."

Rose's detailed descriptions of the soviets give a real sense of what workers' power might look like and how a socialist society could be built.

But he emphasises that the fight for political power also required a revolutionary party, the Bolsheviks, which over many years before 1917 brought together a cadre of the most militant and politically committed worker activists able to carry forward the arguments for socialist politics and ultimately the case for revolution, in their workplaces and wider community.

The isolation and defeat of the Russian revolution led to a "brutal caricature of real communism", a system of bureaucratic state capitalism, in which the working class had no active role, emerging as the everyday understanding of Marxism.

This badly distorted the politics of Communist parties and much of the Left. Instead of communism resting on workers' power, organised from below, it was associated with an authoritarian state-run economy, put in place primarily by military struggle or invasion.

The collapse of the Soviet Union further challenged the viability of any regime describing itself as communist and "easily flowed over into a demoralising sense that the original socialist revolution in ... 1917 was itself flawed".

In his case studies, Rose examines how this absence of vision and influential revolutionary organisations

like the Bolsheviks were an enormous obstacle to challenging capitalism when workers' councils or other forms of organisation emerged at the heart of opposition movements.

And failure to recognise or develop the potential power of workers' organisations not only halted the prospects of genuinely radical change but opened the way to repression and the consolidation of neoliberalism.

This is a complex book that draws on interviews with dozens of activists from the struggles Rose describes. It applies Marx's concepts of revolution to the late 20th century and combines hard-headed political analysis with a sense of the courage, ingenuity, excitement and optimism of radical political movements.

"Demands for workers' control of production surfaced in all four cases ... Workers' leaders, potential worker-intellectuals, with deep roots in the mass movements, emerged, perfectly capable of becoming political leaders. One of 1968's greatest slogans, 'self-management', resounded across four continents. Alas, they were ideologically and organisationally disarmed and blocked at critical moments when circumstances created openings that might have thrust them forward."

The common thread across the four very different case studies is that the working class has the power to challenge capitalism, and the proliferating social and political crises we face, but revolutionary socialist politics and organisation are required to bring this to fruition.

DEFYING REPRESSION AND POLICE VIOLENCE: LESSONS FROM THE 1978 MARDI GRAS

Jean Parker looks at how the first Mardi Gras led to a campaign that won the right to march, as well as victories for LGBTIQ+ rights

WHEN GENOCIDAL war criminal Israeli President Isaac Herzog was escorted through the streets of Sydney, the Minns Labor government banned street marches and unleashed indiscriminate police violence in an effort to suppress the Palestine movement.

In the aftermath the movement is asking how we can win justice for those brutalised and arrested, and how to defend civil liberties in order to build the movement in solidarity with Palestine.

The lessons from the movement born out of the violent repression of the first gay and lesbian Mardi Gras in June 1978 are more relevant than ever.

The Sydney Mardi Gras has grown into a massive corporate tourist event, but its origin was in the struggle for gay liberation that was built by the radical left in the 1970s.

The movement was led by socialists who saw the oppression of homosexuals, gender non-conforming people, and women as fundamental to the capitalist institution of the nuclear family.

They organised under the banner of “gay liberation” (the term gay at the time encompassed a broad struggle for sexual and gender freedom) echoing the struggle of the National Liberation Front that led armed resistance to US imperialism in Vietnam.

International solidarity was at the heart of the radicalisation of the 1960s and 1970s.

In fact the first Mardi Gras was organised after Ken Davis—a young gay Trotskyist at the University of Sydney—responded to a letter from San Francisco gay and lesbian socialists calling for international action on the anniversary of the Stonewall riot in 1969, as a way to build solidarity against the upsurge of the Christian Right in California.

Ken and others organised a march

of 500 people on Saturday 24 June, followed by a public meeting in the afternoon. They also organised an evening street celebration—a Mardi Gras—where LGBTIQ+ people could come out in costumes under the cover of darkness and express themselves without being photographed and “outed”.

Starting with 200 people at Taylor Square at 10.30pm, the Mardi Gras marched down through the emerging gay bar strip behind a ute blaring music. They chanted “Out of the bars and onto the streets”.

This call worked, and by the time people approached Oxford St near Hyde Park the parade had swelled to around 2000.

Under the NSW Summary Offences Act (1970) protesters had to ask for a permit from police to march on the streets.

Lance Gowland (a member of the Communist Party of Australia) had sought and been granted a police permit to parade from Taylor Square to Hyde Park. But as the numbers swelled, police revoked the permit and pushed the crowd down Oxford Street to prevent a growing street party.

Cops then seized the truck and PA and detained Lance Gowland, the driver.

This enraged the participants and unleashed an exhilarating and rebellious mood of defiance.

Rebellion

As police blocked the entrance to Hyde Park, someone on the megaphone called “to the Cross” and the crowd marched up towards Kings Cross, which was both the historical centre of the LGBTIQ+ community and also the notoriously brutal and corrupt Darlinghurst police.

From a celebration, the event had turned into a rebellious and angry protest with people chanting “Stop

.....
Rather than driving the movement off the streets, the repression galvanised it

police attacks, on gays, women and blacks!”

In the Cross more people joined in. But the police had trapped them—kettling participants on all sides and shining their headlights on them with endless police wagons waiting down every alley.

Just like in the Stonewall riot in New York in 1969, this became a watershed moment of resistance, of shaking off the shame and fear of homophobia—an intifada. Lesbians, gays, trans people, sex workers and others fought back—successfully de-arresting many people from the back of police cars.

Onlookers threw bins of rubbish at the cops from surrounding windows. Police were completely unprepared for the spirit of defiance from some of society’s most oppressed and outcast. Eventually 53 people were arrested, most taken to the brutal and corrupt Darlinghurst police station.

Even then the protest didn’t stop, as people marched to the police station and stayed on the street all night demanding the release of those arrested and organising bail and medical support.

Inside some protesters were savagely beaten, with cops inflicting life-changing injuries, while others were denied legal and medical support.

The following Monday 26 June, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published the names, ages and addresses of the 53 arrestees.

Teachers were sacked—it was then illegal to teach in any school as a homosexual—others were thrown out of rental properties and cut off from their families. Lesbian mothers lost custody of their children. Some people later committed suicide.

But the defiance experienced in the Mardi Gras had been a turning point. Rather than driving the movement back into the closet and off the

streets, the repression only galvanised it.

Two days after the Mardi Gras police blockaded the Liverpool Street Courthouse to stop protesters entering to observe the hearings of those arrested. In response 300 protested and seven were arrested.

Drop the charges

A mass meeting was called for a week later to organise a “drop the charges” campaign. Organisers contacted civil liberties groups and unions.

On 15 July, only three weeks after the Mardi Gras assaults, 2000 people retraced the route of the Mardi Gras—the biggest LGBTIQ+ protest in Australian history to that point. Chants of “Gay rights now!” and “Stop police attacks, on gays, women and Blacks” again rang out. Another 14 people were arrested.

The “drop the charges” campaign held weekly meetings of 60-80 people in the Tin Sheds gallery at Sydney University and the CAMP rooms in Glebe.

Activists drew in allies from unions, progressive churches, and the ALP, even with an ALP State Government in power. The Redfern Legal Centre and the NSW Council for Civil Liberties fought to defend all those arrested.

The Fourth Homosexual Conference was held in Paddington Town Hall on August 25-27. Reactionary Christian Democrat Fred Nile organised an anti-homosexual, anti-abortion “Festival of Light” rally at Hyde Park.

The Homosexual Conference plenary voted to march to confront the bigots, without a police permit. Chanting “Get your laws off our bodies” and “Not the Church, not the State, Women must decide our fate” 300 marched, linking arms, to Hyde Park. There were 104 people arrested when police again kettled protesters at Taylor Square.

By the end of 1978 a further 125 people had been arrested protesting against the attack on the Mardi Gras, taking the total to 178. But the militancy and unity had put gay rights and civil liberties onto the mainstream agenda. Most of the charges were dropped and the police “lost” many other files.

Winning the right to march

The repression had backfired. Probably the biggest victory from the whole campaign came in May 1979 when the NSW Summary Offences



Above: Police arrest an activist following the first Mardi Gras in 1978

Act (1970) was repealed.

This law had suppressed street protests on every issue, so its repeal was a major win for the right to protest and march in NSW.

It had also been the law that was used to target Aboriginal people on the street, sex workers, displays of same-sex affection, and to allow police to entrap gay men in beats.

The repeal of the Act led to the right we have today in NSW to march, giving seven days notice to police (via a Form 1) to exempt ourselves from traffic infringements. If the police want to stop a march they have to take us to the Supreme Court. This replaced the need to apply to police for permission to march.

The Public Assembly Restriction Declaration (PARD) that Chris Minns rushed through parliament after the Bondi killings was the first time since 1979 the rights won through the Mardi Gras were suspended.

Our defiance, pushing for a mass march against Herzog and many thousands marching on the night, has seen off the PARD this time.

But the lesson of the Mardi Gras is that we need to keep on the front foot in defending the rights won in the past.

The other legacy of the Mardi Gras is of course the winning of LGBTIQ+ rights and acceptance.

In 1982 the NSW government created world-leading amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act that made it illegal to discriminate against homosexuals in employment, education, and provision of goods and services.

Then in 1984 the Crimes Act was amended to decriminalise consenting sex between adult males.

Shamefully it wasn't until 2003 that the age of consent for gay male sex was equalised to that of heterosexual sex.

In June 1979 the Gay Solidarity group led another Mardi Gras. Despite opposition from police, gay businesses and the gay press, this time 3000 paraded, in a sign that gay and lesbian struggle would not be bashed off the streets.

The NSW government is harnessing Trumpism in its attempts to scare the Palestine movement off the streets, to criminalise protest slogans and activism in schools and universities, writers' festivals and in the arts.

At the same time Donald Trump's reactionary attacks on trans people are an attempt to push back gains won by the movement represented in the Mardi Gras. By sustaining the defiance of the anti-Herzog protest and finding allies across society we can win change just like those who stood up in 1978.

LABOR FANS ISLAMOPHOBIA AS ONE NATION SURGES

By David Glanz

ONE NATION is surfing a wave of anger and disillusionment with the major parties. Much of that momentum is fuelled by the cost-of-living crisis—but the party is also fomenting Islamophobia to harden up its supporters.

Leader Pauline Hanson spelled it out, saying, “You say, ‘Well, there’s good Muslims out there.’ How can you tell me there are good Muslims?”

Having created the media furore she was hoping for, Hanson followed up with a classic non-apology, saying “sorry” if she “offended anyone out there that doesn’t believe in sharia law, or multiple marriages, or wants to bring ISIS brides in, or people from Gaza that believe in a caliphate”.

But she added, “In general, that is what they want—a world caliphate. And I am not going to apologise ... I will have my say now before it’s too late.”

Sentiments like this are leading to frightening levels of abuse and assault aimed at Muslims. Even before One Nation’s rapid rise, Islamophobic incidents—including physical attacks, verbal harassment, people being spat on and rape threats—had more than doubled in two years.

Muslim communities around the country are now reporting racist incidents at an alarming rate.

Lakemba mosque in western Sydney received three threats in the run-up to Ramadan in February. Gamel Kheir, the secretary of the Lebanese Muslim Association, which operates the mosque, told media, “This is the most alarming situation we’ve ever had since Cronulla.”

Later that same month, two mosques in Western Australia were identified as targets in a foiled terrorist attack.

The Islamic Council of Victoria had to close its mosque in West Melbourne on 6 March because of a suspicious package, which turned out to be safe but Islamophobic. In the Victorian city of Ballarat, a Muslim community dinner was attacked on 8 March by a far right supporter shouting “fuck Allah, fuck Islam”.



Above: Marching against racism and the far right last year Photo: Solidarity

It’s in this context that One Nation is soaring. The Roy Morgan poll on 10 March showed One Nation on 23.5 per cent just behind Labor (26.5) and ahead of the Coalition (22.5).

Labor stokes racism

Labor has only itself to blame. It has taken Australia to war in the Gulf and continues to be complicit in the genocide in Gaza. It has cancelled electricity subsidies that took the edge off household bills. It is threatening cuts to services—but not the military—in its budget in May.

With its dominating majority it could announce a windfall tax on the liquid natural gas exporters who stand to make huge profits as gas prices soar because of the war.

Instead, in a cheap bid for popular support it turns to racist measures that disgust many of its voters and give legitimacy to One Nation’s agenda.

So NSW Labor Premier Chris Minns refused to apologise to Muslims beaten up by cops while they prayed at the end of the anti-Herzog rally.

The day after Hanson made her “no good Muslims” comments, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese declared that 34 so-called ISIS brides and their children would get no help to return from Syria and would face “the full force” of the law.

When the Prime Minister implies

that children are a threat because they’re Muslim, it’s a free gift to Hanson.

Then just days after granting asylum to Iranian women footballers, Labor rushed through legislation to bar the arrival of people with valid temporary visas if they come from designated war zones.

This simply reinforces the idea that people from Iran, Gaza or Lebanon—mostly Muslims—are a threat.

But anti-racists are getting organised. In Melbourne, the Refugee Action Collective held a forum to unite against the racist agenda from Labor, the Coalition and One Nation.

Two hundred people packed Trades Hall to hear Senator Lidia Thorpe, refugee and migrant speakers, Jews and Muslims, the state secretary of the CPSU SPSF and state Labor and Greens MPs.

The meeting voted to endorse broad-based mobilisations against the far right when they call street rallies. And it endorsed a RAC rally at the State Library at 2pm on Saturday 21 March, the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

It’s important that anti-racists challenge One Nation. But a fight against racism has to start with taking on Labor’s racist agenda that fuels the rise of the far right.

Muslim communities around the country are now reporting racist incidents at an alarming rate

Solidarity