

Solidarity

Issue No. 206 / April 2026

\$3/\$5

**Tell Albanese:
Close Pine Gap, Break the US alliance**

STOP TRUMP AND

NETANYAHU'S

BLOODY WARS



RACISM

One Nation fuelled by
Labor's racism and failure

IRAN

Trump's terror
campaign facing defeat

ISRAEL

Israel lobby not the reason
for Western backing

Solidarity **WHAT WE STAND FOR**

Capitalism is a system of crisis and war

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

Workers power and socialism

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

What about elections and parliament?

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

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

We are internationalists

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

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

We oppose imperialism and support all

genuine national liberation struggles. We oppose Australian nationalism.

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

Oppression and liberation

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

Linking up the struggles

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

Educate, agitate, organise

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

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

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

SOLIDARITY MEETINGS AND BRANCHES

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Melbourne

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

I do, because God is good—because God is good and God wants to see people taken care of.

Donald Trump when asked whether he thinks God supports his war on Iran

God does not bless any conflict.

The Pope doesn't agree

Starting last night, and to be completed in a few days in under a week, the two most powerful air forces in the world will have complete control of Iranian skies

US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth on 4 March

And we literally have planes flying over Tehran and other parts of their country; they can't do a thing about it

Donald Trump on 24 March, ten days before two US jets were shot down by Iran

Nobody thought [the neighbouring countries] were going to be hit... They were, I wouldn't say friendly countries; they were neutral. They lived with them for years. There was no expert that would say that was going to happen.

Donald Trump asked whether he expected that Iran would target the Gulf states after the US began bombing

We must dig and we must drill

Liberal leader Angus Taylor goes the full Trump

We don't believe in multiculturalism. We believe in Australian culture... If that upsets you, be upset.

Barnaby Joyce, One Nation MP, showing his racist colours now he's in Pauline Hanson's party

The best path is to let the US President do what he thinks he needs to do in terms of his social media commentary

Federal Labor Resources Minister Madeleine King refuses to criticise Trump's disastrous war

I think ultimately the United States will have to answer for itself

Federal Labor Attorney-General Michelle Rowland takes the same approach

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Australians join new Gaza flotilla

SEVENTEEN AUSTRALIANS have left to join the Global Sumud Flotilla as it attempts to break Israel's ongoing siege of Gaza. They will join thousands of participants on around 100 boats, double the number that set sail for Gaza last year.

Israel has continued to block vital food and medical supplies from Gaza, letting in only around 40 per cent of the trucks that were agreed to in the ceasefire terms. Hospitals continue to lack basic supplies like gauze for treating wounds. Water and sanitation systems are not functioning, and most of the population are still living in makeshift tents.

The flotilla hopes to bring food aid, medical supplies and medical volunteers to Gaza.

Indigenous activists Sam Woripa Watson, Jayden Kitchener-Waters and Ethan Floyd are all joining the flotilla. "As First Nations people, we know what colonial violence looks like—land theft and erasure. Palestinians are facing that same violence now. Standing with Gaza is standing for justice everywhere", Sam said.

They will be joined by climate activist Zack Schofield, Jewish activist Anny Mokotow as well as Juliet Lamont and Surya McEwen, who were both held in Israel's Keziot prison after joining last year's flotilla. Israel intercepted boats just off the coast of Gaza, assaulting crew members.

The new flotilla left Barcelona on 12 April with plans to stop in Italy and Greece on its way to Gaza.

Ben Roberts-Smith just one of many Australian war criminals



Australian soldier in Afghanistan Photo: Defence Department

WAR CRIMINAL Ben Roberts-Smith is in prison and will finally face a criminal trial. This comes after his effort to sue media outlets for defamation produced a finding that he committed war crimes in Afghanistan.

He is charged with five counts of "war crime—murder". But Roberts-Smith is far from the only one responsible.

The investigation that resulted in the charges against him has looked into 53 war crimes allegations during the war in Afghanistan. It followed a report that found "credible information" of 39 murders of Afghan civilians or prisoners by up to 25 soldiers.

Most have only escaped trial due to the difficulty in collecting evidence.

Australia's former special forces commander Jeff Sengelman wrote of "systemic failings across the command" that allowed the war crimes to happen. Those that have come to light are likely the tip of the iceberg.

These atrocities were the result of a larger war crime—the invasion of Afghanistan. US and Australian troops were a brutal occupying force that imposed control through violence and terror.

The regime they put in place was so brutal and corrupt it allowed the Taliban to win back support and eventually drive out the US.

This is the bloody face of Australian and US imperialism—and shows why it can never bring liberation.

Israel's execution law shows open apartheid

ISRAEL'S PARLIAMENT has passed a law requiring the hanging of Palestinians convicted of killing Israeli citizens in the West Bank in a blatant act of apartheid.

It will apply only to Palestinians, since it will operate in the military courts set up under Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory. These run a system of sham justice where 99.74 per cent of defendants are found guilty.

Execution will be the automatic sentence, even where the killing of an Israeli citizen is the result of recklessness rather than intentional, except in extreme situations.

Israeli settlers in the West Bank, who killed seven Palestinians in March alone, are tried in separate civilian courts. And settler violence is already carried out with impunity, with the conviction rate for settler attacks estimated at just 1.8 per cent.

Amnesty International said the law was "another discriminatory tool in Israel's system of apartheid" and "one of the world's most extreme death penalty laws". Such a law targeting one ethnic group is completely without precedent, even in apartheid South Africa.

Israel's far right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir brandished a champagne bottle in parliament to celebrate the law passing, while Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ensured he was present to vote for it.

Robbed by the clock?

Thousands of workers in hospitals, service stations, fast food and warehouses worked an hour for nothing during the change to daylight savings over Easter.

Putting the clocks back an hour at 3am meant Easter Sunday was effectively 25 hours long in every state except Queensland.

Some enterprise agreements ensure workers get paid for the extra hour. But the default arrangement is paying workers "by the clock" meaning workers' pay is determined by the time their shift starts and ends, not the number of hours worked.

NT transit offers armed with guns

OFFICERS ON buses and in public housing in the Northern Territory will carry guns from June. "We know Aboriginal people will be targeted", Independent MLA Yingiya Guyula said on social media.

The new police public safety officers will start work across Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine and Alice Springs after 18 weeks of training.

The officers can already use pepper spray and have arrest powers, but the NT government claims guns are needed for public safety.

But North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency's Ben Grimes said, "Bringing guns on to crowded and confined buses is inherently dangerous and unnecessary".

There are "better ways and more cost-effective ways to address antisocial behaviour", he added, from more support staff to youth drop-in centres.

Millionaire's advice on cost of living

MILLIONAIRE SABRINA Russo says anyone struggling with the cost of living should just get a second or third job.

Telling people not to expect assistance from Albanese's budget in May she said, "Maybe you need a second job. Maybe you need a third job. Maybe you need higher education. Maybe you need to learn AI. The government can only do so much."

Her wealth of \$344 million was all down to hard work, she claims. But it turns out Russo has been taking government money herself. She runs an education and training provider that has taken more than \$1.8 billion in government contracts since 2006.

EDITORIAL

Rise up to punish Albanese for backing Trump's murderous fiasco in Iran

AS *SOLIDARITY* goes to press, Donald Trump has declared his own blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, the strait that is already closed by Iran. No doubt he hopes that this will pressure Iran but oil prices have already jumped again and countries are warning of severe energy and fertiliser shortages.

Trump had threatened to wipe out "a whole civilisation" if Iran didn't surrender.

And with military might the only card that Trump has to play he may still resort to more drastic bombing of power and water desalination plants. This puts the lie to his supposed concern for the people of Iran.

Trump and Israel's war has already compounded the cost of living crisis and had a drastic effect on the world economy.

From Ireland to the Philippines, demonstrations and strikes are demanding government action over fuel and food prices.

Sri Lanka is already on a four day week, with fuel rationing while public transport costs are rising.

While Albanese has acted quickly to cut government taxes on fuel, nothing can hide the fact that he shares the blame for the war and its consequences.

Albanese was among the first world leaders to back the war as it began, declaring, "Australia has had a clear position of supporting this action."

The Labor government sent an E-7 Wedgetail spy plane and missile interceptors to the UAE, while signals from the US spy base at Pine Gap near Alice Springs are used by the US and Israel to target their missile strikes that are killing thousands in Iran and Lebanon.

It was only after European leaders were critical of Trump's threats to "wipe out a civilisation" that Albanese called Trump's statements "inappropriate" and "extraordinary".

Labor is complicit with the Gaza genocide and the war on Iran, and totally entwined with US imperialism.

Albanese visited Trump at the White House last October, declaring there were "no closer friends and allies" than the Australian and US governments.

US bases are being expanded



across Australia, and the government is spending \$368 billion on nuclear-powered submarines and billions more on weapons to fight alongside the US against China.

Pressure on Albanese forced him to call for the Iran war ceasefire to be extended to Israel's bombing of Lebanon with Labor Friends of Palestine, NSW Young Labor, Unions NSW among Labor affiliated groups appealing to Albanese demand that Israel halts its invasion and its bombing.

Trump is now desperate for a way out of the war to avoid economic calamity.

Iran's ability to threaten the global economy through blocking the Strait of Hormuz and targeting Gulf states' economic and military infrastructure forced him to declare a ceasefire.

The war has exposed the limits of the US's military power.

The EU says it will only support diplomatic measures to open the Strait of Hormuz. China has warned that its ships will not be intercepted. But Trump's desperation to "Make America Great Again" makes US imperialism extremely dangerous and unpredictable.

Even if there is a ceasefire in Iran, the effects on the world economy will continue.

Israel continues to bomb Lebanon and continues the genocide in Gaza with impunity. Trump is preparing to

Above: Partners in crime—Anthony Albanese visiting Trump at the White House Photo: Anthony Albanese

strangle Cuba.

New cost of living crisis

Every worker is paying the price for Trump's warmongering. According to the IMF, Trump's war is threatening to tip the world economy into recession. Inflation is expected to rise to at least 5 per cent.

Real wages are already behind inflation. Now every wages struggle will determine whether workers' pay keeps up with the cost of living. The magnificent strike by 40,000 teachers in Victoria has shown the industrial power that is needed to win.

In the US, the organisers of the millions-strong "No Kings" demonstrations are preparing for May Day strikes against Trump.

There are promising signs of opposition to the war from within the union movement. Labor Against War's motion against the government's support for the war and AUKUS has been passed in at least 14 Labor Party branches.

But this passive opposition needs to be turned into action to stop the war in Iran, Lebanon and Gaza, to end Australia's military exports to Israel and to break Australia's ties with US imperialism by closing Pine Gap, scrapping AUKUS and the nuclear submarine deal.

We need more socialists in every struggle to link the struggle against war and imperialism to the cost of living crisis and a fight against the capitalist system itself.

.....
Labor is complicit with the Gaza genocide and the war on Iran, and entwined with US imperialism

Price pain from Trump's Iran war set to continue for months

By James Supple

WORKERS WILL be feeling the impact of the oil crisis produced by Donald Trump's attack on Iran for months yet—even if the ceasefire holds.

Albanese is also to blame—he was one of the first world leaders to give his full support to the attack and has sent missile interceptors, a spy plane and a contingent of Australian troops to the Gulf to assist.

Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz has blocked the transport of 20 per cent of the world's oil and gas supplies.

This has seen the cost of living for working class people jump and threatens global economic chaos—which explains why Trump is so desperate to get the strait open again.

The surge in oil prices has fed a jump in the price of petrol

Some countries in Asia have begun rationing. The Philippines, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have all introduced a four-day work week to save fuel. Laos has moved schools to a three-day week while Pakistan shut them for a fortnight.

Petrol prices here are up at least 20 per cent, even after the government's cut to fuel excise took off 33 cents a litre.

The price of diesel is up 70 per cent. Australia is one of the world's heaviest users of diesel per capita. Farmers rely heavily on it to fuel tractors, harvesters and other vehicles, as do transport companies.

Fertiliser, which is produced from gas, has also jumped in price. Nearly a third of the world's supply comes from the Gulf and Australia is particularly reliant on it. Locally there are shortages.

"Limited or cost prohibitive access to fertiliser and fuel could mean that some growers will not be planting a crop in 2026," GrainGrowers CEO Shona Gawel told the *Financial Review*.

The higher costs and possible food shortages will flow through to higher prices for food and other basic goods for workers too. This means wage rises will fall further behind the cost of living. Inflation is expected to hit 5 per cent or higher by the middle of this year.

Oil economy

The crisis has exposed how reliant the world economy still is on fossil fuels. Oil and gas are used to make an enormous range of products, from plastics



Above: Petrol prices are surging due to the war

to pharmaceuticals and fertiliser as well as helium used in the manufacturing of electronics and technology goods.

Global food production is so dependent on fossil fuels that some have described it as eating oil.

But the risk of disruption to global oil supplies may speed up the use of renewable energy and electric vehicles, as countries look to maintain energy security.

Even if Iran agrees to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and the war comes to a halt, the impact will continue for months.

Iran intends to hold onto its control of the strait and charge tolls of about \$2 million per tanker as a way to get compensation for the destruction caused by US and Israeli bombing.

Oil and gas facilities across Iran and the Gulf countries have also been damaged.

According to JPMorgan "more than 60 energy infrastructure assets in the Gulf have been affected by drone and missile strikes, with roughly 50 sustaining different degrees of damage".

Some will be back online within weeks, others will take longer. QatarEnergy says that repairing its Ras Laffan oil and gas facility will take three to five years.

Economic consequences

The wider economic result will be

higher interest rates and unemployment.

Anyone with a home loan or credit card debt faces increased repayments.

The Reserve Bank has already raised interest rates twice this year, saying inflation is too high.

It's now almost certain to hike them further.

This will increase unemployment and cut economic growth.

The combination of low growth and high inflation raises fears of the "stagflation" that gripped economies worldwide during the 1970s economic crisis—which followed an earlier oil shock.

The IMF is forecasting slower global growth and has warned that a global recession will result if the war continues.

So far the damage to the world economy is nowhere near as deep as in 1970s.

But it hits economies already in weak shape.

The US economy grew at just 2 per cent last year, and in the EU things are worse, with the German economy barely growing at all.

Even in China economic growth has been slowing.

Workers will pay the price through job cuts and further strain on the cost of living—unless we fight back.

We need a union fightback to push up pay and make sure workers keep up with rising prices.

.....
Higher costs will flow through to higher prices for food and other basic goods

Strike for pay to beat war's new cost of living crisis

THE NEW cost of living crisis triggered by Trump's war on Iran means real wages are falling.

Prices across the board are up more than 20 per cent since COVID.

Housing costs are even worse. Rents nationally were up 43.9 per cent in the five years to last September.

Average wages have already been going backwards in real terms.

Inflation was at 3.7 per cent before the war, and is now likely to rise to above 5 per cent this year. The average pay rise in enterprise bargaining agreements finalised between October and December was only 3.7 per cent, meaning many of these workers will be taking a real pay cut.

We need to fight for far more on pay. Council workers in Melbourne, members of the ASU, are demanding an initial 10 per cent wage rise followed by 4 per cent a year, after losing pay in real terms since 2021.

Members of the Healthcare Workers Union in Victoria agreed to pay rises just shy of 5 per cent a year in March. Some members are now saying they need more.



Above: Part of the 40,000-strong march during the Victorian teachers strike Photo: Matt Hrkac

Workers at the ABC settled for 4 per cent this year followed by 3.25 per cent for the next two years after a 24 hour strike in March, the first at the broadcaster in 20 years.

At universities the NTEU has agreed to pay rises of 3.5 per cent a year at Australian Catholic University

and Western Sydney University. With bargaining under way at other universities including UTS and Sydney Uni, staff need to demand far better.

Winning this will require serious strike action. Victorian teachers have shown the possibility of large strikes. Unions need to step up the action.

Capture the rage: Escalate the fight in Victorian schools now!

FORTY THOUSAND Victorian government school staff marched on 24 March, in a sea of red Australian Education Union (AEU) shirts, with tens of thousands more out on strike. It was the first strike since 2013.

Teachers and school staff are outraged by the super exploitation we face, where good educational results depend upon overwork to the point of education workers sacrificing their mental health. Interviews of those marching were very clear: our struggle is both about pay equity and also resourcing schools properly.

AEU placards and home-made signs mocked the State Government's hypocrisy in calling Victoria "the education state" while cutting \$2.4 billion from school funding. The strike received wall-to-wall mainstream media coverage, with even the Murdoch press reporting education workers' views sympathetically because of the strength of the strike.

Our last Agreement in 2022 was accepted without any industrial action. It contained pay rises below inflation, and minor workload improvements. This has reduced unpaid work by teachers from 17 hours to 15 hours per week.

The 24 hour strike on 24 March was a powerful shot-in-the-arm for AEU members

This was not nearly enough to meet workers' appetite for large changes to save people from burning out. Thousands of AEU members resigned in disgust. The agreement received a significant "No" vote against the union leadership's call for a "Yes" vote, but it was not enough to reject the Agreement to fight for something better.

Victorian teachers are now the lowest paid in the country. The AEU is demanding a 35 per cent pay increase over three years, while the government has offered just 17 per cent, in a one-off 8 per cent pay rise followed by just 3 per cent a year. These annual increases would see us again fall behind inflation.

The 24 hour strike on 24 March was a powerful shot-in-the-arm for AEU members. It clearly demonstrated that when teachers move at once, the impact is felt across the state. Hundreds of schools shut down completely, and hundreds more opened their doors but did not offer a program on the day. Over 12,000 members have signed up to the union, including both those returning after resigning in 2002 and new teachers and education workers entering the government school system.

But with a Victorian election on the way, it's urgent to escalate the action. A rank-and-file group "Fight The Crisis" leafletted the crowd with a motion for workplaces calling for a further 24 hour stoppage. Disgracefully, the AEU leadership has been bureaucratically blocking this motion at regional meetings, refusing to let it be put to a vote.

The AEU leadership, through Branch Council, has called rolling half-day stoppages and several work bans to keep action going. They have labelled this as "escalating" the action, but in reality it will not have the impact of the 24 hour stoppage and march. If the negotiations drift into the pre-election period in October and November this year, the government will not legally be able to agree to a new agreement in the caretaker period, and whoever comes out victorious at the ballot box may be more confident to take on the AEU. This makes sharp action urgent.

While the memory of the brilliant stoppage on 24 March is fresh members' minds, it is crucial we fight to escalate action and capture the rage and mood to fight.

By a Victorian AEU member

Iran war exposes Australia's military links with UAE

By Tom Orsag

THE ALBANESE Government's rush to give "defensive military support" to the dictatorial United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the Persian Gulf, during the barbarous US and Israeli war on Iran, may appear to have come out of nowhere.

However, the Australian government, arms companies, businesses and the military have been putting down a footprint in the UAE for years.

On 8 March, on the ABC's *Insiders* program, when asked to which country would Australia send "military assistance", Nine journalist Peter Hartcher responded, "I think the most likely candidate is the UAE because the Australia-UAE relationship has very quietly involved military co-operation for a very long time.

"The Al Minhad airbase, which was hit by an Iranian missile a couple of days ago, is where the Australian Air Force operates from in the Middle East."

Indeed six days earlier, Defence Minister Richard Marles was pressed by journalists to admit that Iranian drones had hit the Al Minhad Air Base (AMAB), damaging buildings but with no casualties.

The UAE owns the base but currently hosts the Australian and British military.

Marles said, "We've got north of 100 serving personnel across the Middle East in a range of countries, but most are in the UAE and that base is very important to us."

For more than two decades since 2003, the ADF has had a military presence at the base outside Dubai. At one point it hosted 800 Australian military personnel.

The Nightly reported that the Defence Department said, "Since the 2021 withdrawal of coalition forces from Afghanistan, Australia has maintained a smaller force at AMAB of 50 core ADF personnel and a total of 70 to 80 staff, which is focused on 'strategic access and regional crisis response'."

According to the ADF, "AMAB supports 12 current operations" and "the base remains Australia's only forward-deployed headquarters and maintains strategic relationships within the region, particularly with the UAE".

Australia's military presence has been hiding in plain sight for years. It's taken the US-Israeli war to expose the nature of the Australian base in,



and depth of links with, the UAE.

Strategic partner

The Albanese government's deployment of a spy plane, service personnel and missiles to the UAE builds upon years of Australia building economic and military ties there.

Last October, Albanese visited the capital of the UAE, Abu Dhabi, to sign the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). This signing coincided with the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a Canberra defence think-tank, wrote that the agreement saw "the elevation of the UAE-Australia relationship to a strategic partner". "In 2024, Australia's non-oil trade with the UAE reached US\$4.2 billion."

It continued, "Meanwhile, two-way investment stock stood at \$US16 billion by the end of 2024, with \$US3 billion of direct investment in Australia from the UAE."

The UAE also buys arms and ammunition from Australia as it seeks to become a sub-imperial power in the Middle East.

Last November, *The Guardian* reported, "The UAE is, by far, Australia's biggest weapons export market ... in arms and ammunition being shipped there in the past five years" with total sales of almost \$274.5 million.

In a distant second place in Australian arms sales is Poland with \$95 million while Australian sales to Israel are in 12th place at \$6.5 million.

The UAE's military purchases

Australian personnel at Al Minhad Air Base in 2014 Photo: Australian Defence Force

from Australia may well be finding their way to the struggle for control in war-torn Sudan. Evidence compiled by the UN and Amnesty International have exposed how the UAE has funnelled weapons to Sudan's Rapid Support Forces.

In 2018, Kellie Tranter, a human rights lawyer and researcher, found via FOI requests that Australia had been exporting arms to the UAE and the Saudis from at least January 2015.

From 2016, Christopher Pyne, first as Minister for Defence Industry and then Defence Minister, was a regular visitor to the UAE and Saudi Arabia to meet government officials.

One Canberra-based arms company, Electro Optic Systems (EOS), was named by ABC News as supplying the UAE, from January 2018, with \$410 million in weapons.

A former Labor Senator for the ACT, Kate Lundy, became a non-executive member of the EOS board in March 2018. EOS even received Australian Government "seed capital" for its growth.

Today, EOS, which has research links to Canberra's Australian National University, is also arming Israel.

The UAE is among the corrupt Arab ruling classes that collaborate with Israel. In 2020 it signed the notorious Abraham Accords, becoming only the third Arab country to recognise Israel, acknowledging its already close relationship with the Zionist state and the US. It is also circling Gaza as part of the Trump's ghoulish "Board of Peace".

The Australian government's ties with it should be no surprise.

The UAE also buys arms and ammunition from Australia as it seeks to become a sub-imperial power in the Middle East

Palestine protest slogans target of anti-protest law push

By Luke Ottavi

NSW LABOR Premier Chris Minns' plans to ban the pro-Palestine phrase "globalise the intifada" appears to have stalled due to government concern over whether the attack on free speech would survive a constitutional challenge. It is still legal to use the phrase in NSW.

Legislation to ban it has still not been introduced to NSW parliament, which does not sit again until 5 May, despite claims in January it was "urgent".

NSW Attorney-General Michael Daley admits that the NSW government is watching the recent Queensland laws that ban the slogans "Globalise the Intifada" and "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free".

One Queensland activist has already been charged for saying "From the river to the sea" at a pro-Palestine rally in March. A weekend of action against the ban was set to take place as we went to press.

Another pro-Palestine artist was told by police to remove products from his website that use the phrase. A mural in Brisbane with the words "river to the sea" and an image of John Farnham, referencing his 1988 song *Two Strong Hearts*, was painted over by a vandal, before "river to the sea" was quickly graffitied back onto the mural the next day.

Queensland Labor voted against the Liberals' legislation that banned the phrase, arguing they "believe in the freedom of speech". The same is not true of Minns.

University administrations are also continuing to crackdown on protest and free speech.

Sydney University threatened to defund the student union over a proposed \$500 donation to Gaza Flotilla participant and USyd student Ethan Floyd.

An RMIT student who accused their university of being complicit in genocide in a social media post was investigated by RMIT for potential misconduct allegations before the case was later dropped.

All attempts to silence solidarity with Palestine through government legislation or disciplinary action by universities need to be resisted. By collectively breaking bad laws and defending those who are charged the movement can beat back repression.



Above: Footage released by NSW police of a 5am raid to arrest another protester over the rally against the Israeli President Isaac Herzog Photo: NSW Police media

Cops aim to intimidate with wave of Herzog protest arrests

NSW AND Queensland police are raiding homes and arresting anti-genocide protesters in the latest attempts to scare the Palestine movement off the streets.

Queensland police raided the Dorothy Day House, run by a Christian charity in Brisbane, because the occupants hung a banner with the slogan "From the river to the sea, come and get us Crisafulli" from the building.

At least 30 more arrests over the Sydney protest in February against Israeli President Isaac Herzog's visit will occur during April and May, a senior NSW police officer told pro-Palestine lawyer Nick Hanna. Police have already charged an additional 16 people since the protest, taking the number facing charges to 27.

Last month eight masked and heavily armoured NSW police staged a 5am raid on the home of a 42-year-old woman, smashing through her door to arrest her.

The intent of the raids and arrests is to try and paint pro-Palestine protesters as instigators of a "riot" that threatened the safety of Jewish people. The government and police are trying to justify cracking down on the right to protest and the use of pro-Palestine slogans like "globalise the intifada".

But it was the police who were the instigators of violence.

Minns continues to lie about the protest, claiming that "all of the cir-

cumstances where police are affecting an arrest ... are after protesters attempted to breach police lines twice".

But footage clearly shows the protest crowd simply standing around Town Hall and demanding the right to march by chanting "let us march" and "we will march", before being attacked by police.

Minns justified refusing to apologise to Muslim worshippers who were praying in Town Hall square and aggressively moved on by police, claiming they "were in the middle of riot". But video footage clearly shows the worshippers were far away from police lines and any confrontation.

The police decision to disperse protesters was intended to clear the area so that the 7000 people attending an event with Herzog across town could travel across the city. Minns has claimed that his fear was that if "protesters breached police lines and we had conflict in Sydney streets". Yet the protest wanted to march in the opposition direction to where Herzog was speaking.

The real crime is the police violence against protesters and the attempt to whitewash the destruction of Gaza by hosting the president of an apartheid state who has incited genocide against Palestinians.

Protesting against war criminals and the complicity of our governments is not a crime. Anti-protest laws need to be broken.

.....
Last month eight masked NSW police staged a 5am raid on the home of a 42-year-old woman

Labor’s ‘progressive nationalism’ only feeds One Nation’s racism

By James Supple

ANTHONY ALBANESE and Labor are embracing so called “progressive patriotism” in response to rising support for One Nation and the far right.

Albanese now constantly appeals to “my fellow Australians” in the hope of connecting with voters.

Labor says it wants a more inclusive nationalism that incorporates multicultural and migrant groups.

South Australia’s Labor Premier Peter Malinauskus celebrated his election win last month by quoting a Henry Lawson poem about welcoming “the new chum” arriving as a migrant from overseas. “Australians should be patriotic and can be proud of what our nation stands for”, he said, pointing to “diversity” as a key part of this.

This follows Albanese’s efforts to claim the government backs “progressive patriotism”.

But Labor’s embrace of nationalism only feeds racist ideas and helps the far right.

Its celebration of diversity doesn’t go very far. Labor continues to demand that migrants show loyalty to Australia’s rulers and accept national institutions.

Labor MP Julian Hill, Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs and apparently part of Labor’s Left faction, set this out in a speech in February. It wants “multicultural communities who love Australia, have integrated and want to belong”, he said. Part of this is accepting “our flag, our national day and institutions”.

Behind this is the idea that there are “good migrants” who are prepared to assimilate and “bad migrants” who won’t. This only encourages the racist idea that there are problems with immigration.

Albanese has stirred racism against migrants through his attacks on protests for Palestine, claiming they were “undermining social cohesion” and demanding “people don’t seek to bring conflict... here”.

Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke railed against “anger and hatred from around the world being imported into Australia”. Progressive patriotism is linked to a conservative push for social cohesion that vilifies Muslims, Arabs, and opponents of Israel’s genocide.

This has fuelled the far right, with the March for Australia rallies demanding an end to the flying of “foreign flags” and speakers declaring the Palestine marches were full of



Above: Anthony Albanese now constantly wraps himself in the flag
Photo: Anthony Albanese

.....
Albanese has stirred racism against migrants through his attacks on protests for Palestine

“foreign protesters”.

The government’s attacks on Muslim “hate preachers” after the Bondi attack fed into the wave of Islamophobia blaming the Muslim community.

Albanese also says that his “progressive patriotism” embraces “Australian values” like kindness and fairness, and claimed these are driving the government’s policies.

But there was no kindness in Albanese’s blunt refusal of any assistance for the former Islamic State wives and their young children in Syria who are Australian citizens.

There was no fairness in passing laws to cancel visas already granted to Iranians to stop them travelling here when the war broke out.

Albanese has also accepted the racist argument that migrants and international students are to blame for the housing crisis.

Australian nationalism will always have a racist core. Its bedrock remains the white Australia nationalism that was based on maintaining the “racial purity” of the white population.

Australia remains an outpost of Western imperialism in Asia built on the dispossession of Aboriginal people. It continues to demand allegiance to the imperialist state.

Nationalism

Australian nationalism is not progressive. Often it is used to call on workers to accept sacrifices and cuts to living standards, as over the oil crisis.

Albanese’s address to the nation saw him appeal to “the Australian way” of helping each other as a solu-

tion. He later said the government was “Putting our faith in the practicality—and patriotism—of Australians”.

Nationalism presents all members of the nation as sharing a common interest. This serves to hide the fundamental class divide.

Australia is a starkly unequal society. The number of people who can afford to buy a home is plummeting, with the gap between incomes and housing prices exploding.

The cost of living crisis has seen real wages drop almost 4 per cent since 2020.

But those at the top of society have seen their wealth soar. The top 10 per cent now get 35.2 per cent of all income and hold 57.7 per cent of the wealth. Australia’s big banks posted profits of \$43 billion last year, while mining companies exported \$130 billion worth of coal and gas.

This comes at the expense of the rest of us. Wage rises for workers or tax increases to fund public services both cut into company profits.

Gas companies are making huge profits on exports. Santos paid no company tax or royalties in the last ten years on \$47 billion in sales. But they are viciously opposed to any tax increase.

Albanese constantly takes the side of business—attacking militant unions like the CFMEU, allowing the expansion of fossil fuel projects on Indigenous land and failing to tax wealthy housing investors or the rich.

He wants to wrap himself in nationalism to cover the class divide. This will only encourage racism and further boost One Nation.

SA election confirms One Nation surge as Labor echoes its racism

By Angus Dermody

RECENT MONTHS have seen a surge in the polls for Pauline Hanson's One Nation. For the first time, One Nation has overtaken the Coalition. The South Australian election, held in March, confirmed what these polls had suggested.

One Nation ended up with 22.9 per cent of the vote and four seats in the lower house. In the upper house, One Nation won three seats, including one for its South Australian leader Cory Bernardi.

One of the most striking features of the election was the collapse in the Liberals' vote, with a 16.8 per cent swing against them that saw their share of lower house seats fall from 16 out of 47 to just five.

It would be wrong to dismiss the rise of One Nation as simply a re-shuffling of votes on the right. In a number of traditionally safe Labor seats there were also swings to One Nation, most significantly in the outer northern suburbs of Adelaide.

In the seat of Light, One Nation gained an extra 27.6 per cent of the vote, mostly from a 20.6 per cent swing against Labor. Similarly, in Elizabeth, a swing of 23.4 per cent to One Nation mostly came from a 15.7 per cent swing against Labor.

While Labor held these seats, and increased its majority in parliament despite a swing against it, the results should be a serious warning about the rise of One Nation and the far right.

During the election campaign, Bernardi endorsed comments made by Pauline Hanson claiming that there are "no good Muslims", stating that he did not want Australia to become "some Middle Eastern kingdom or some backwater where they're still living in the sixth century".

Such a strong vote for this viciously racist party is of real concern.

Major parties response

Federal Liberal leader Angus Taylor has responded with vicious racism against migrants in an effort to mimic One Nation, denouncing "declining immigration standards", claiming migrants are arriving who reject "Australian values", and demanding Trump-style checks on social media accounts of tourists and other arrivals.

But the experience in South Australia confirms we can't look to Labor for an alternative.



Above: Pauline Hanson with former Liberal now One Nation SA leader Cory Bernardi

Re-elected Labor Premier Peter Malinauskas made gestures to the importance of diversity and unity in his election night speech but also took the opportunity to acknowledge One Nation and Bernardi, promising that he was ready to work with them "as long as it is in the interests of South Australians".

Speaking to *The Australian* a few days later, Malinauskas made only mild attempts to respond to One Nation's anti-immigrant racism and nationalism, instead claiming that we need to look at immigration as "an economic question, more than a social one", and that progressives need to be more patriotic, saying, "The cultural question must be top of mind. It comes down to: Are you for Australia?"

Malinauskas' "progressive" Australian nationalism is no counter to the more openly racist politics of Pauline Hanson.

Labor has helped create the conditions allowing the rise of One Nation's vile racist politics.

Since the Bondi attack it has fanned the flames of Islamophobia. Malinauskas himself implied that Palestinian activists were culpable for the shooting when he urged the axing of Palestinian writer Dr Randa Abdel-Fattah from the Adelaide Writers' Festival.

Federally, Labor has moved to block people travelling to Australia from war zones out of a determination to avoid anyone seeking refugee status.

International student visa fees have been increased, with the cost of temporary graduate visas doubling overnight as Labor sets out to cut the number of international students.

This racism comes in the context of the cost-of-living crisis and housing crisis that Labor has presided over. Real household disposable income has gone down since the last federal election and now Trump's war on Iran is sending fuel prices and other costs soaring.

Instead of providing solutions for workers, Labor plans further cuts to services like the NDIS in the budget next month.

While state elections in NSW and Queensland are still some way off, there are concerning signs. In Queensland, Newspoll found One Nation was ahead of both Labor and the Liberals on 30 per cent.

Victoria's state election is in November. Jacinta Allan's Labor government is much more unpopular than Malinauskas' in South Australia.

A former Labor strategist told *Crikey* that the western suburbs in Melbourne are "like a One Nation hunting ground ... These people have gotten almost nothing from us in the past 12 years".

Labor won't stop the rise of One Nation. There must be a concerted anti-racist response to the rise of these far-right politics and a much stronger fightback against the conditions that have allowed them to grow.

.....
It would be wrong to dismiss the rise of One Nation as simply a re-shuffling of votes on the right

Israeli onslaught on Lebanon aims to crush Hezbollah resistance

By Georgie Marks

WITHIN HOURS of the ceasefire announced with Iran, Israel launched its biggest and most destructive assault on Lebanon to date. Over 100 strikes rained down without warning in ten minutes, hitting densely populated areas of Beirut, killing at least 300 people and injuring more than 1500.

Pakistan, which oversaw negotiations between the US and Iran, said the ceasefire explicitly extended to Lebanon. Israel refused to comply, and the US backed its continued onslaught.

The Lebanese Health Ministry says that at least 2214 people have been killed since the war resumed. As in Gaza, Israel has targeted medical workers and journalists.

This is another example of Israel's brutal "Dahiyeh Doctrine" practised during the 2006 war on Lebanon, which involved intense bombing including of Beirut's southern area of Dahiyeh inflicting the deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure as an intentional strategy of collective punishment of civilians.

After the November 2024 ceasefire agreement, Israel never stopped bombing Lebanon. During the ceasefire it killed around 400 people in over 1400 military attacks inside Lebanon.

Its new assault is aimed at finally crushing Hezbollah and driving it back far from Israel's border in order to end any resistance to Israeli domination.

This is part of its broader aim to secure regional dominance, or as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu put it, to make Israel a "superpower in the region and globally".

Israel has again launched a ground invasion of Lebanon, declaring the whole area south of the Litani River, roughly 10 per cent of Lebanese territory, a "military zone".

This has forced 1.2 million people, roughly one fifth of Lebanon's population, to flee their homes.

Israel says it intends to set up a new "buffer zone" inside Lebanese territory and keep permanent control of a wide area of territory. Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz has pledged to demolish entire towns "like in Rafah and Beit Hanoun" in Gaza. It has already carried out mass detonations of buildings in the villages of Taybeh, Naqoura and Deir Seryan near the border.

This is designed to permanently



displace residents from these areas.

This campaign is part of a decades long imperialist project that researcher Hassan Nizar describes as "reshaping the demographic and geographic landscape through destruction, displacement, and making areas uninhabitable".

Far right Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has called for extending Israel's border all the way to the Litani River. Since Israel's founding, right-wing Zionist organisations have viewed control of this area of Lebanon as part of a future "Greater Israel".

During the Nakba in 1948, 100,000 Palestinians were violently displaced into Lebanon where they and their descendants continue to live as refugees. Israel has invaded Lebanon six times before, including major invasions in 1978 and 1982 that saw it continue to occupy Southern Lebanon until early 2000.

Lebanese resistance

Hezbollah emerged as a resistance movement to Israel's occupation after the war in 1982.

Although Israel has held direct talks with the Lebanese government it has refused to discuss any ceasefire with Hezbollah.

The new Lebanese government formed in February last year with the support of the US and France is committed to collaborating with Israel and Western imperialism to weaken Hezbollah. After "exploratory" talks in Washington, the Israeli ambassador to the US declared that the Lebanese

Above: Aftermath of the Israeli bombing in Beirut that saw 100 strikes in 10 minutes

Photo: Sipa USA/Alamy Live News

government was on "the same side of the equation" as Israel in seeking to disarm Hezbollah.

Israel's foreign minister has explicitly called for Lebanon to work towards normalising relations with Israel, which Lebanon has never recognised as a legitimate state.

But resistance to Israel and the West's imperialist aims to dominate Lebanon predate Hezbollah. It is part of a broader history of resistance to occupation and western imperial control of the region, reflected in the deep-seated Lebanese solidarity with Palestinians and the resistance to Israel's colonial violence.

This sentiment is seen today in the streets of Beirut where hundreds protested in defiance of the talks and in support of the resistance.

Israeli military operations in Lebanon, Gaza, and Iran are not possible without direct US support.

The US endorsement of continued strikes on Lebanon is part of enabling and legitimising Israel's violence, as part of a broader project to eliminate Iran as a regional counterweight and consolidate Israeli dominance in the region.

The Australian government is a firm supporter of this agenda. The Labor government has only called for a ceasefire in Lebanon as a result of growing pressure. We have to keep demanding sanctions and a complete end to Australian support for Israel, whose expansionism and genocide are the key cause of the violence across the region.

Israel has forced 1.2 million people, roughly one fifth of Lebanon's population, to flee their homes

Trump's failure in Iran is a defeat for US power

By David Glanz

THE US-ISRAEL war on Iran has brought death and destruction to Iranian cities. But it has also humiliated Donald Trump and highlighted the relative decline of American power.

Trump declared that he would settle for nothing less than an unconditional surrender. But in mid-April, his Vice-President, JD Vance, had to fly to the Pakistan capital of Islamabad to negotiate with Iranian leaders—the first direct contact between the two governments since 1979.

The talks failed, with Iran refusing to accept US terms for ending its nuclear program. Far from surrendering, the Iranian regime appears confident enough to stand its ground.

As *Solidarity* went to press, the US navy was beginning a blockade of Iranian ports on the Persian Gulf, an act of war that could break the fragile ceasefire.

Meanwhile, Israel is continuing to wreak destruction on Lebanon, despite Trump saying he'd instructed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to "low key" it.

But for now, the US military has failed. It has badly depleted its stock of anti-missile interceptors, using Patriot and THAAD missiles costing \$6 million each to shoot down Iranian drones costing thousands. A combination of Iranian attacks, friendly fire and accidents has destroyed about 16 US aircraft.

Two US aircraft carriers that were central to projecting US force against Iran have withdrawn, with unconfirmed reports that one had come under Iranian attack.

If the Trump administration thought they would get a quick victory, as they did in Venezuela, they were proven badly wrong. The US still has the most powerful military in the world but it cannot win a war from the air and lacks the political confidence to send 200,000 or more soldiers to invade Iran.

Oil supplies

The US and Israel launched their war on Iran on 28 February, killing Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other senior leaders.

Trump boasted that there would be victory within 48 hours, brushing aside warnings from his military advisers that Iran would respond by closing the Strait of Hormuz.



Above: Damage from an airstrike targeting the University of Science and Technology in Tehran Photo: Tasmin News Agency/Masoud Shahrestani

The war has blown up in Trump's face just seven months before US midterm elections

The war has blown up in his face just seven months before US midterm elections. Iran's control over the Strait has cut off 20 per cent of the world's oil supplies, leading to big spikes in the price of petrol, diesel and liquid natural gas, as well as fertiliser and helium, an indispensable component of advanced semiconductor manufacturing.

The result is certain to be lower economic growth and higher inflation. Workers filling their petrol tanks and farmers planning their plantings are all suffering.

There is a serious risk that food output will fall, spelling higher prices for workers in countries like Australia and potential famine in the Global South.

If the war restarts in earnest, the situation could get much worse.

The economics organisation, the OECD, forecasts, "Higher energy and fertiliser prices could spur increases in food prices, particularly affecting vulnerable households.

"Higher energy prices could also increase the cost for European countries carrying out necessary annual replenishing of natural gas stocks. Financial markets may experience additional volatility."

The economic blowback from the war has seen Trump's domestic approval ratings fall as low as 34 per cent. Some 53 per cent of Americans oppose the war and 62 per cent oppose sending ground troops.

In Australia, a Resolve poll in mid-March showed just 28 per cent in

favour of the war.

Iranian civilisation

With the war unpopular and fuel supplies at risk, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has crab-walked away from his initial enthusiastic support for the US-Israel attack.

He described Trump's threat to destroy Iranian civilisation as ... wait for it ... "inappropriate". And he's claimed that Australia is not involved in the war and would not send troops or ships.

But despite his protestations, Australia continues to be embedded into US war plans. The Wedgetail spy plane sent to the UAE to coordinate "defence" is sharing its data with US commanders. The Pine Gap spy base in the Northern Territory allows the US to track missile launches and pinpoint targets.

And the North-West Cape signal facility in WA was probably involved in sending approval to a US submarine with three Australian service personnel on board to sink an Iranian ship off Sri Lanka.

US and Israeli bombs cannot liberate workers, women and minorities in Iran. And the warmongers are throwing the global economy into chaos, wrecking the lives of workers and farmers everywhere.

The imperialist madness must end and challenging Labor's support for the US and Israel is a first step. That means campaigning to break the US alliance, cancel the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarines deal and close all US bases.

ISRAEL LOBBY NOT THE REASON WEST BACKS THE TERROR STATE

US and Australian backing for Israel is the result of their imperialist interests in dominating the Middle East, not the power of the Israel lobby, writes **Mark Gillespie**

DESPITE OVERWHELMING evidence that Israel is committing genocide in Palestine, the Albanese Labor government, the US and other Western governments continue to back them. Why?

A common explanation points to the influence of the “Israel lobby”. Numerous books and articles argue that pro-Israel lobby groups exercise a corrupting influence over Western governments.

The targeting of journalists, writers and activists by the Israel lobby, often at the cost of their jobs, and the adoption of many of their recommendations in the name of combating antisemitism following the Bondi massacre seems to confirm this explanation.

Socialists, however, reject this analysis. Sourcing the problems back to the influence of the lobby lets capitalism off the hook. Rather than rooting support for Israel in imperialism and the drive for profits, it opens the door to conspiracy theories suggesting policy is driven by manipulation rather than material interests.

It also feeds rotten antisemitic ideas about the supposed influence of Jewish people on governments behind the scenes.

At its core, the “lobby” argument claims that politicians, either in the US, Australia or elsewhere, have been pressured—or even hoodwinked—into acting against their own national interests.

Former Foreign Minister Bob Carr describes the Israel lobby as a “foreign influence operation” that has an “unhealthy” and “extraordinary” influence on Australian foreign policy.

But it is highly implausible that the Australian and US political establishments—comprising experienced politicians and the most powerful military planners, intelligence agencies, corporations and media institutions in the world—could be systematically pushed into acting against their own

interests.

These institutions exist precisely to defend and advance national interests and secure hundreds of billions of dollars in wealth.

Certainly pro-Israel lobby groups exist and are well organised, funded and have the ear of governments. But why do governments listen?

They listen because the interests of the political and economic elites in the US and in other Western nations align with Israel’s interests. Just as mining companies are more likely to win concessions from governments than unions, Indigenous people or environmental groups, so too does the Israel lobby have more success.

Oil, empire and control

To understand Western support for Israel, we have to look at the logic of capitalism and imperialism.

Modern capitalism depends heavily on fossil fuels and, as the current crisis with Iran shows, the Middle East remains central to the global energy system. For decades, US strategy has focused on maintaining dominance over this vital resource.

The US doesn’t need this oil for itself; it is currently self-sufficient. It wants to control its distribution, just as China strategically wants to control the critical minerals market. Controlling the flow of oil gives the US enormous leverage against rivals, especially in times of crisis and war.

History shows how decisive this can be. During the Second World War, control over oil fields and supply lines was a central strategic objective. The Axis powers were ultimately crippled by fuel shortages that undermined both their economies and military capacity.

Today control over energy routes is just as critical. Military planners understand that any major conflict would hinge on access to fuel and the ability to deny it to opponents. The

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The relationship was not the product of exceptional lobbying, it was forged through war

US and other Western powers back Israel because it is critical to their strategy for maintaining hegemony over it.

The ‘special relationship’

US politicians often call their relationship with Israel “special,” shown through massive military aid—including about \$21.7 billion extra for the Gaza genocide—and diplomatic protection.

But this relationship was not the product of exceptional lobbying. It was forged through war.

A turning point came in 1967 during the Six Day War, when Israel defeated the combined forces of Egypt, Syria and Jordan. This dealt a major blow to Arab nationalism, which had emerged as a powerful force challenging Western influence in the region.

At the centre of this movement was Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser, who had overthrown a British-backed monarchy, expelled British forces, nationalised the Suez Canal and called for Arab unity against imperialism.

His ideas inspired movements across the region—from Iraq to Algeria—and posed a direct challenge to pro-Western regimes.

When the US tried to pressure Nasser by withdrawing funding for the gigantic Aswan Dam project, he turned to the Soviet Union for support. He became the West’s enemy number one.

Israel’s decisive victory humiliated Nasser. In doing so, Israel proved its value as a strategic ally. Before this, US support for Israel had been more limited. Washington had imposed an arms embargo on Israel from 1948 to 1961 and opposed its 1956 invasion of Egypt alongside Britain and France, even threatening to kick Israel out of the UN if it did not retreat.

Following the Six Day War, the US replaced Britain and France as

Israel's primary arms supplier and committed to maintaining its "Qualitative Military Edge"—ensuring it retained technological superiority over neighbouring states. This policy has continued for decades and was enshrined in US law in 2008.

The depth of this new commitment was demonstrated by the massive airlifting of military supplies to Israel during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, through to the arming of Israel's genocide in Gaza.

Former US President Joe Biden spelt out the importance of Israel as a regional enforcer, repeatedly saying, "If there were not an Israel, we would have to invent one to make sure our interests were preserved."

Stable and reliable

The US has many allies in the Middle East—Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait among them. Many host US military bases or receive extensive aid. So what makes Israel special?

The key difference is stability. The Arab client states lack the popular support needed to provide long-term stability for US interests. History is full of examples where such regimes have been overthrown—from Egypt in 1952 to the uprisings of the Arab Spring in 2011. Iran, too, was a regional client state until the Shah was overthrown in 1979.

While most Arab regimes were tamed in the 1970s and have since smoked the peace pipe with Western imperialism, the same can't be said about the Arab masses. The Arab regimes are sitting on a powder keg.

Israel, by contrast, as a colonial settler state has no choice but to rely on US protection and to sell itself as a regional enforcer. Living in a highly militarised colonial outpost, and rewarded with higher standards of living, Israel's Jewish population has a profound siege mentality that welds them to the interests of the Israeli state.

A poll in mid-2025 found 82 per cent of Jewish citizens of Israel support "the transfer [expulsion or ethnic cleansing] of residents of Gaza to other countries".

Of course, Israel has interests of its own that it does not share with the US. It annexed the Golan Heights and occupies Gaza, the West Bank and now southern Lebanon. These land seizures are not crucial to US interests and Trump even warned Israel against declaring the annexation of the West Bank.

The US puts up with this some-



Donald Trump with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House Photo: White House/Daniel Torok

times destabilising behaviour, however, as the price of having an ultra-dependable ally in the region.

Australia and the imperialist alliance

Australia's support for Israel follows the same logic. Australian governments back Israel not because they have been misled but because Australia is part of the Western imperialist alliance that includes Israel and has dominated global politics under US leadership since the Second World War. Australia's ruling class are absolutely tied to this alliance.

Being part of this gang allows the Australian ruling class to maintain its dominance over the South Pacific and the security of its trade interests. Any adversary to Australia's imperialist interests in the region knows that standing behind Australia, a middle power, is the US.

Australia's ruling class needs to ensure the US will support them if their regional hegemony was ever seriously challenged. Their strategy is to make themselves indispensable to US interests.

Opening Australian territory for US spy bases, submarine bases and the rotation of US troops through Darwin; signing onto the AUKUS military pact and involvement in joint military exercises and more, is a way of enmeshing the US in the region and solidifying the alliance.

Australia can generally be relied upon to support the US politically and militarily in their ventures abroad. Australia's support for the US alli-

ance also means backing Israel militarily and ideologically. The Australian ruling class are hostile to the movement supporting Palestinian rights because this movement challenges their strategic alliances.

That is why our politicians are all ears when representatives of the Israel lobby come knocking, suggesting ways to demonise and criminalise the movement.

Millions of people have witnessed a genocide in Gaza and now unspeakable violence against the people of Lebanon and Iran. The naked violence of the system is being revealed, no longer able to be covered with platitudes about "international law" and a "rules-based order".

The idea that this violence is the result of lobbying distorts reality. It suggests that the system could function justly if only the right pressures were applied.

But it wasn't the Israel lobby that convinced the US to construct over 750 military bases all over the world or convinced the Australian government they needed nuclear submarines.

Western foreign policy is not benign with the exception of its support for Israel. Across the board it is driven by profit and power and is part of a system in which military force is used to secure economic and strategic advantage.

The task for socialists is to make clear that war, oppression and exploitation are built into the logic of capitalism and that the struggle for Palestine is bound up with the struggle against capitalism and imperialism.

PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE AND THE SECOND INTIFADA

Sophie Cotton looks at what happened in the Second Intifada, why Palestinians have a right to resist and what it means to Globalise the Intifada

THE NSW Legislative Assembly committee that recommended banning the slogan “globalise the intifada” based this judgement on an implicit representation of the Second Intifada as antisemitic violence.

This period of Palestinian resistance from 2000-2005 followed the First Intifada (1987-1991) and has tended to be reduced to a series of 150 suicide bombings by Palestinians.

Even Palestinian historian Rashid Khalidi labels it a “fiasco” and a “set-back for the Palestinian national movement”, arguing that Palestinian violence allowed Palestinians to be portrayed as “irrational, fanatical tormentors”.

But the Second Intifada was a significant return of Palestinian resistance, which kept Palestinian aspirations alive and posed more radical possibilities.

The Second Intifada was born not of irrational hatred but shifts in Israeli occupation following the Oslo Accords.

These accords, signed in 1993 by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel, were a major defeat for Palestinians. Palestinian academic Edward Said wrote in *The Morning After* that the accords were a “moment of Palestinian surrender”. Israeli novelist Amos Oz called it the “second biggest victory of Zionism”.

Israel made meagre concessions, notably that they would “recognise” the PLO in return for a program of “normalisation”. The result for Palestinians, far from a state, was an extension of economic, social, and military oppression.

The West Bank was carved up into separate zones of control, with 60 per cent of the land under complete Israeli military control.

A program of military oppression was expanded, with 1700 homes destroyed between 1993 and 2000. The number of illegal Israeli settlers increased by 58 per cent.

Extreme military and settler

violence continued, including six unarmed Palestinians killed during Nakba Day protests and 29 worshipping Palestinians killed by a US-born settler in Hebron in 1994.

Economic control tightened. Borders into Israel, Jordan and Egypt were controlled by the Israeli army, with restrictions on the export of Palestinian goods.

Unemployment sky-rocketed. The number of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories working in Israel declined from 30 per cent in 1992 to 7 per cent in 1996. During periods of comprehensive closure, unemployment could reach 50 per cent in the West Bank and 70 per cent in Gaza.

By 1999, unemployment in the Palestinian Occupied Territories had dropped from 32 per cent to 24 per cent, but was still much higher than in Israel at 9 per cent.

Meanwhile, figures connected to the main PLO faction, Fatah, now administered Israeli rule in the West bank, with Palestinian police retreating to make way for Israeli military incursions or cooperating to isolate Palestinian protest.

Everyday life for Palestinians reflected a brutal regime of oppression and a new complicit elite—all the result of the betrayals of Palestinian resistance by the Oslo Accords.

Intifada

A new round of resistance was sparked by a provocative visit of Likud party leader Ariel Sharon to the Haram al-Sharif, known to Israelis as the Temple Mount, in September 2000, flanked by 1000 Israeli police. This holy site in East Jerusalem was illegally occupied by Israel in 1967.

In response, thousands of Palestinians protested. They were met very quickly with disproportionate violence. Tanks rolled into the West Bank. Seven Palestinians were killed by tear gas and rubber bullets at the

The Second Intifada was born not of irrational hatred but shifts in Israeli occupation following the Oslo Accords

initial protests. One was Mohammed al-Durrah, a young boy photographed immediately before and after being shot to death by Israeli snipers.

September and October saw resistance from Palestinians within the 1948 boundaries of Israel, including a general strike. Twelve Palestinians were killed. Israel fired rockets into Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat’s residential compound in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Eyewitnesses reported the use of chemical weapons, particularly in the Gaza city of Khan Younis. Palestinian leaders were assassinated. In early 2001, a Jewish settler who bludgeoned a Palestinian child to death with a rifle was sentenced to six months of community service.

This contributed to a deep and accumulating anger among Palestinians. The climate also handed Likud a landslide in the Israeli presidential elections in 2001. Escalation, reprisals, repression and resistance continued throughout the period.

In 2002, Israel invaded the Jenin refugee camp, which was besieged by hundreds of tanks, Apache helicopters and bulldozers.

In the words of one Israeli soldier, “I found joy with every house that came down, because I knew they didn’t mind dying, but they cared for their homes. If you knocked down a house, you bury 40 or 50 people for generations.”

That year, Israel embarked on building what would become a 600-kilometre wall or “security fence” running through the West Bank. In 2003, a bulldozer crushed American activist Rachel Corrie.

Suicide bombings

One feature of the intifada were the suicide bombings, many of which targeted civilians, and which claimed about half of Israeli lives lost.

It is dangerous to represent these attacks as inexplicable and irrational

violence. These deaths are a brutal consequence of Israel's regime of social, economic, political and military oppression of the Palestinians.

As long as there has been imperialism, colonialism, slavery and apartheid, there has been resistance, including in some cases resistance that targets civilians.

Representations of bombings as gruesome competition between Palestinian factions tend to downplay the pressure that led Palestinians to take up bombing. While there were isolated cases of blackmail by Palestinian factions, bombers were generally motivated by Israeli state violence.

Bader Araj from Birzeit University interviewed the families of 42 suicide bombers during the intifada, considering different religious, economic, social, mental and exploitative motivations. Two in three bombers were primarily motivated by state repression while just under one in four were motivated by religion.

One such story is narrated in the documentary *Arna's Children*, which follows young boys in a drama club in Jenin refugee camp. One boy explains how another had become motivated to be a suicide bomber following the invasion of Jenin.

After tank shells killed a girl in the school, his friend tried to save her but she died in his arms. "From then on he never stopped talking about her. Something inside him was hardened. There was no more laughing."

The father of one suicide bomber told Reuters, with pride and sadness, "The Palestinians have no alternative to these (bombing) operations. We have no alternative way to reply to the Israeli aggression against our people."

In their submission to the recent NSW Legislative Assembly inquiry, the Union of Jewish Students explained, "Ordinary routines were overshadowed by constant fear and anticipation of sudden violence."

The everyday life of Palestinians under 50 years of Israeli rule had been reflected back on Israelis. Alongside 1083 Israelis killed in the ten years from the start of the intifada, the Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem estimates 6371 Palestinians were killed.

Palestinian resistance was not just suicide bombing. There was armed resistance to combat Israeli military invasion and defend those fleeing it. Just under a third of the suicide bombings targeted military targets.

Nonviolent resistance and protest marches continued throughout. Major demonstrations in Budrous village in



Above: Palestinians flee as Israel demolishes homes in Gaza during the Second Intifada in 2001

Photo: UNRWA

the West Bank succeeded in stopping bulldozers and pushing the border wall to the 1949 green line in 2003. Another demonstration in Biddu in 2004 saw over 500 Palestinians injured and one killed.

The most famous image associated with the Second Intifada is that of Faris Odeh throwing a stone at an Israeli tank.

Palestinian journalist Ramzy Baroud interviewed one man in a hospital bed in Jordan. After being shot in the neck and losing the ability to speak, travelling 22 days through 22 Israeli checkpoints to get to Jordan, he scribbled on a piece of paper with difficulty what he would do when he got out, "I want to go back and fight for Jenin."

The Second Intifada represents more than anything the tenacity of the Palestinian resistance, which after decades of occupation continues to struggle for justice.

Strategies for change

It also revealed three political paths in the Palestinian movement.

The first was that of capitulation and collaboration. The Fatah majority collaborated in military and policing operations in the West Bank. Others connected to the Palestinian Authority profited by providing cement to build settlements and the border wall.

This strategy has been discredited, with Fatah reduced in the 2006 elections from over three quarters to a third of seats in the Palestinian legislative council.

The second political path was armed resistance. This was the strategy followed by Hamas, Islamic Jihad and parts of Fatah led by Marwan Barghouti.

But while Palestinians have a right to resist, armed resistance by Palestinians alone cannot defeat a state armed to the teeth by the United States and Western imperialism. The ongoing popularity of this strategy is a barrier to the growth of an alternative.

But a third political strategy was also posed by the resistance: a revolutionary movement capable of taking on imperialism in not only Israel, but Jordan, Egypt, Iran and beyond.

Solidarity campaigns spread across the Arab working classes. When Israel attacked Arafat's compound in 2002, Arafat called for "a million martyrs for Jerusalem" as images of Palestinians being killed were broadcast.

The bankruptcy and empty words of the Arab rulers had been made clear, and a fire was lit under the working classes.

There were street occupations in Beirut. In Cairo, students protested, were pushed back by the regime, then returned and pushed the movement further. They called for real solidarity with Palestinians, ending oil supplies and material support for Israel.

In Alexandria, thousands marched on an oil executives' conference and were suppressed by Egyptian military police. These actions helped coalesce networks that would contribute to Egypt's Arab Spring.

This possibility of the Second Intifada is what needs remembering. Not senseless violence but a significant though bloody episode in the Palestinian resistance.

And it is this revolutionary strategy that "globalise the intifada" symbolises: shaking off the chains of imperial oppression in Palestine, Egypt, Iran, Australia and the United States.

NATIONAL LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM IRELAND'S 1916 EASTER RISING

Ireland's uprising against British rule in 1916 was designed to strike a blow against Empire and war. **Liam McMullen** looks at the attitude socialists took to it.

THE EASTER Rising of 1916 was a pivotal moment in the struggle for Irish national liberation against British colonial rule and sent shockwaves around the world of empire.

Despite decades of conservatism, a radical Irish Republican tradition lives on, encapsulated by rap trio Kneecap and their staunch anti-imperialism in the face of the West's role in the genocide in Palestine.

Despite the so-called "ceasefire" in Gaza, the genocide continues. The US and Israel have bombed Iran and provided Israel with a pretext to re-occupy southern Lebanon.

As Kneecap's Mo Chara put it recently, "For as long as there is oppression, there will be resistance."

The German revolutionary Frederick Engels described Ireland as "England's first colony" whose conquest in the 16th century brought devastation.

In 1874 Tory Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli admitted Ireland was "governed by laws of coercion that do not exist in any other quarter of the globe".

The occupation's savagery provoked a succession of armed nationalist movements. The Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), or Fenians, formed in 1858 in the aftermath of the famine when Britain allowed the death of more than one million people.

Empire and war

In 1914 the bloodbath that was the First World War began, as European powers fought over the division of the globe.

With the outbreak of war moderate Irish nationalists encouraged enlistment, receiving vague promises of Home Rule from Britain in return.

Enthusiasm for the war waned quickly and the IRB Military Council saw the strain on the British empire as a major opportunity.

On Easter Monday, 24 April 1916,

insurgents commandeered a tram and detonated a bomb, blocking Sackville (now O'Connell) Street in Dublin.

The Rising caught the empire by surprise as 1300 insurgents seized key locations in central Dublin and held back 20,000 troops for six days.

Its crescendo was the seizure of the General Post Office and the declaration of an Irish republic.

The British authorities' response was savage. In the aftermath of the uprising's defeat 15 leaders were executed, including James Connolly and Patrick Pearse, 3500 people were arrested and 1867 deported.

This produced a surge of support for Republicanism that less than three years later led to what is known as the War of Independence. This was much more than a guerilla struggle against the British. The armed national liberation struggle spilled into a wider social revolt.

The Russian socialist Vladimir Lenin welcomed the 1916 uprising as an example of the way "the flames of national revolt [had] flared up both in the colonies and in Europe" because of the war.

This response was not universal within the socialist movement. Polish socialist Karl Radek said that Easter 1916 was nothing more than a "putsch", a diversion from "real" working class struggle.

Lenin countered that, "Whoever expects a 'pure' social revolution will never live to see it." Revolutions involve a whole range of struggles against national oppression that socialists should support—even when not led by the working class.

Socialists are obliged to support the right to self-determination of oppressed nations because "without this there can be no internationalism", Lenin wrote.

The nation state and the ideology

The Russian socialist Vladimir Lenin welcomed the 1916 uprising

of nationalism are foundational to the system of capitalism. However, there is a gulf between the nationalism of dominant imperial powers and the revolutionary nationalism of the oppressed—which can ignite struggles to break free of an imperial power.

Lenin saw that only through winning workers in imperialist countries to supporting the right of oppressed nations to self-determination was there the potential to break the national chauvinism which bound them to their respective ruling class.

He wrote, "To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts of small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses ... to imagine all this is to repudiate social revolution."

Lenin argued for unconditional but critical support for national liberation struggles.

While revolts against national oppression would not end the imperialist system, they were an expression of the oppressed that could weaken the grip of the imperialist state and spark mass revolutionary change.

Lenin was clear that being on the side of an imperialist oppressor is never an option. But forging a temporary alliance with the bourgeois leaders of national liberation movements in an oppressed country against foreign domination is sometimes necessary.

At the same time socialists are critical of the leadership and strategy of national liberation struggles, recognising that the only social force that can smash the imperialist system is the organised working class.

He stressed that workers' movements and national liberation movements had different aims and that so-

cialists and the working class should not dissolve themselves into the latter.

Independence struggle

The experience in Ireland bears this out. The Rising was a turning point in the struggle for Irish freedom and was followed by six years of revolt.

The years following it were marked by waves of strikes, workers' occupations, land seizures, boycotts and the establishment of an underground rebel state known as "The Republic".

It was a revolutionary period which saw a general strike that stopped the British imposing conscription in 1918, the declaration of the Limerick soviet in 1919, and coordinated workers' action which severely limited the mobility of the British war machine for six months.

But, as socialist Kieran Allen writes in his book *1916: Ireland's Revolutionary Tradition*, "The Irish Revolution was defeated because there was no political force that could combine aspirations for national and social freedom."

For the most part the Republican leadership saw class struggle as a distraction from the struggle for national self-determination.

However, James Connolly, Ireland's pre-eminent revolutionary socialist, had argued to link together the nationalist movement and the working class movement.

Connolly opposed the idea of a "union of classes" to win national liberation. In *Labour and Irish History* he illustrated how the wealthy Irish "were tied by a thousand strings in the shape of investments binding them to English capitalism".

He argued that the struggle for Irish freedom needed to culminate in a workers' republic, not "simply be a change from the devil [the Irish workers] do know to the devil they do not".

He saw a socialist solution to Ireland's national question as crucial for smashing the sectarian divisions in the Irish working class. Connolly foresaw that partition of Ireland would bring a "carnival of reaction".

Despite the political concession he made in allying with republicans to stage the Easter Uprising, Connolly's lifelong commitment was to socialist and working-class politics.

In the period following the Rising, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) waged a courageous struggle against the superior British Army.

Their decision to limit themselves to waging an armed conflict instead of appealing to workers and peasants' demands meant the IRA was unable to



Above: A mural depicting the Easter Uprising in Belfast. James Connolly is seated on the floor with his wounded leg
Photo: Jodi Marr/Flickr

mobilise the social power of the working class and necessarily compromised with the system of capitalism and imperialism.

Britain paired repression with the endorsement of partition between the Unionist statelet in the North and a Free state in the South, negotiated with the conservative elements of the republican leadership.

This created two deeply conservative, sectarian states that repressed all revolutionary aspirations for decades to follow—the "carnival of reaction" Connolly had predicted.

Ireland's national liberation struggle led to the consolidation in power of a local Irish ruling class.

This is not a unique phenomenon. The result was the same throughout the wave of colonial independence struggles through the 20th century.

These movements were often led by elements of the local ruling class against the colonial power that held back local economic development and humiliated and oppressed national cultures and groups.

They were prepared to lead a mass political movement against national oppression, typically with a strategy that combined mass action and armed struggle. But they almost always made compromises that betrayed the radical hopes generated through the struggle.

These aspiring ruling classes were ultimately willing to come to terms with the system of capitalist states and dominant powers within that system.

For example, the First Intifada in Palestine that began in 1987 was a

mass uprising that shook the US and Israel. However, it ended with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) signing a compromise in the form of the Oslo Accords that betrayed the aspirations of the mass uprising and accepted the illusory promise of a two-state solution.

The decision saw the PLO become collaborators with Israel's occupation in exchange for limited powers through the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Gaza.

The lessons of the Rising and its aftermath are crucial to guiding the left's approach to national liberation struggles today.

It is crucial that we unconditionally support the right of Palestinians to resist Israel's occupation and their right to self-determination. To do otherwise is to accept Israel's "right" to wipe out resistance and to side with Western imperialism.

At the same time, armed struggle in Palestine cannot defeat US imperialism and the Zionist occupation.

The Irish revolutionary tradition, the First Intifada and the Arab Spring show us hope lies with mass movements and the organised working class. Without the support of mass workers' struggles across the region, the Palestinians will never win liberation.

Only a workers-led revolution can do away with the system that necessitates national oppressions. A revolutionary socialist party is key to building the kind of struggles that can win real liberation.

OPEN THE BORDERS: OPPOSE LABOR'S REFUGEE VISA BAN

By Ian Rintoul

THE US and Israel began bombing Iran on 28 February, killing its Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei. A few days after the Iranian women's soccer team arrived in Australia. On 2 March, after the Iranian players remained silent during the Iranian anthem, they were labelled "traitors" by the Iranian government.

This was followed by days of demands that the Australian government grant the players asylum in Australia. After an extraordinary media commotion, the Australian government granted asylum to five members of the Iranian women's soccer team on 10 March.

Photos of a beaming Home Affairs Minister, Tony Burke, posing with the footballers were plastered across the media, as the government rode a wave of sympathy for the footballers facing danger from US bombs (backed by Australia) and potential persecution by the Iranian government.

But the warm glow was short-lived. Labor's welcoming gesture to the footballers was followed by the government rushing new laws through parliament to give the Home Affairs Minister power to prevent temporary visa holders from specific countries from entering Australia.

No prizes for guessing that the visa ban law was aimed at preventing Iranians, like the footballers, from entering the country and claiming asylum.

True to form, on 26 March, Tony Burke imposed a six-month ban, preventing Iranians with visitor visas from entering Australia.

The ban immediately affects around 7200 Iranian visa holders who could have travelled (or be on their way) to Australia. The ban can be extended further in six month blocks.

The blanket ban is an extension of the government's quiet, but ruthless, practice of cancelling the visa on arrival of anyone they suspect might claim asylum after they arrive. Just before the bombing started, an Iranian mother, whose daughter was due to give birth, was deemed to be an



Above: Refugees marching for permanent visas from the Labor government in 2022

The visa ban law is another brick in the wall of Labor's "Fortress Australia" anti-refugee policies

asylum risk, detained on arrival and deported to Iran.

The visa ban law is another brick in the wall of Labor's "Fortress Australia" anti-refugee policies; an extension of the infamous "Detain, Deter, Deny" slogans that described the anti-refugee policies of the Liberals under John Howard and Philip Ruddock.

The new law allows the Home Affairs Minister to place the ban on any country—Lebanon and Myanmar are also likely targets.

Iranian refugees

There are around 82 Iranians in detention in Australia, many of them earmarked for deportation and indefinite detention on Nauru.

There are also hundreds of Iranian asylum seekers trapped in Indonesia by Australia's 2014 ban on accepting refugees processed in Indonesia.

Iranian refugees sent to PNG in 2013 are still being held there, while scores of Iranians who were held on Manus and Nauru are being denied permanent visas in Australia.

As on so many other occasions,

Labor is putting people directly in danger by refusing them asylum.

In 2003, the Australian government denied permanent visas to Iraqi refugees in Australia because it was part of US imperialism's "Coalition of the Willing" invasion of Iraq that was supposedly going to introduce democracy there.

Boats of Tamil asylum seekers were turned around (and are still being turned around) because successive Australian governments are more concerned about their relationship with dictators in Sri Lanka than with the human rights of refugees.

Meanwhile the secretive ASIO adverse security assessments that were used to deny protection visas to Tamil refugees are again being used to deny visas to Palestinian refugees.

A Palestinian father of five became the latest victim when his visa was cancelled and he was detained in Villawood detention centre after Easter.

The refugee and anti-war movements must demand Labor open the borders and provide protection for Iranians, Palestinians and for all refugees.

Solidarity