

# Solidarity

Issue No. 181 / March 2024

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## AS ISRAEL STARVES AND BOMBS LABOR IS GUILTY OF WAR CRIMES



### ANTISEMITISM

Answering the slurs  
against Palestine support

### PALESTINE

Repression, war and  
a new McCarthyism

### IMPERIALISM

US war crimes in  
Fallujah 20 years on

# Solidarity **WHAT WE STAND FOR**

## Capitalism is a system of crisis and war

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

## Workers power and socialism

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

## What about elections and parliament?

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

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

## We are internationalists

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

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

We oppose imperialism and support all

genuine national liberation struggles. We oppose Australian nationalism.

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

## Oppression and liberation

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

## Linking up the struggles

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

## Educate, agitate, organise

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

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

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

## SOLIDARITY MEETINGS AND BRANCHES

### Sydney

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

### Melbourne

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

### Brisbane

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

### Perth

Contact perth@solidarity.net.au

### Canberra

Contact canberra@solidarity.net.au

### Adelaide

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

Or check fb.com/soliaus/events

## CONTACT US

### Magazine office

Phone 02 8964 7116  
Fax 02 9012 0814

### Email

solidarity@solidarity.net.au

### Website

www.solidarity.net.au

### Facebook

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

### Twitter

@soli\_au  
twitter.com/soli\_au

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## Things they say

**I am personally proud of the ruins of Gaza, and that every baby, even 80 years from now, will tell their grandchildren what the Jews did.**

May Golan, Israeli Minister of Social Equality & Women's Advancement.

**Rafael's performance of 2023 has reached heights that we have not expected... Never in the history of warfare have there been so many tanks and APCs involved in such a small and tight ground maneuver**  
Gidi Weiss, Vice President of Strategy, Business Development and Marketing at Rafael, boasting of the Israeli defence company's role in Gaza.

**I'm sorry for those comments, I can't change what I have done... In hindsight they were absolutely racist.**

NT Police Minister Brent Potter apologises for homophobic and sexist Facebook posts made five years ago and earlier

**It gave me a very narrow view of the world**

Potter explaining the posts as a product of serving in the Defence Force. He says he changed since then.

**I've always said that the issue of Australia becoming a republic has got nothing to do with the royal family. I welcome the King coming to Australia. He's our head of state.**

Matt Thistlethwaite, Labor's Assistant Minister for the Republic, having some trouble with logic

**It would be a real travesty for this organisation to be excluded**

NSW Police Commissioner Karen Webb responds to calls for police to be excluded from marching at Mardi Gras after community shock at a police officer killing Jessie Baird and his boyfriend Luke Davies

**If you do not want to see Australian women being assaulted by foreign criminals, vote against Labor**

Liberal Deputy leader Sussan Ley gets right into the gutter, playing the race card in an effort to win votes in the Dunkley by-election

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## Lehrmann inquiry tainted by bias

FORMER JUDGE Walter Sofronoff's relationship with a journalist for *The Australian* was so close it gave rise to an apprehended bias, a court has found.

Sofronoff, who chaired the Board of Inquiry into the prosecution of Bruce Lehrmann, communicated with *The Australian's* Janet Albrechtsen 273 times over seven months about the proceedings. This included 51 phone calls totalling 7.5 hours, huge numbers of text messages and even a private lunch for which Albrechtsen flew specially to Brisbane.

Albrechtsen spent the whole time pumping out articles that were "consistently" critical of former ACT head of public prosecutions Shane Drumgold's decision to prosecute Lehrmann, as the court put it.

"Even before the hearings started," lawyer Geoffrey Watson wrote, "Sofronoff sent Albrechtsen parts of the evidence with comments critical of Drumgold. During the public hearing, Albrechtsen even proposed to Sofronoff that he put particular questions to a witness—and Sofronoff agreed!"

Drumgold ran the prosecution of Bruce Lehrmann over allegations he raped Brittany Higgins in Parliament House. The trial was ultimately abandoned without any verdict against Lehrmann.

Sofronoff's report made numerous findings against Drumgold, saying he had lied to the court, attempted to withhold evidence from the defence and "preyed" on the inexperience of a junior member of his staff. The credibility of those findings are now in tatters.

## AI chatbots show racist bias

COMMERCIAL AI chatbots show a hidden racist bias against African Americans, a study has shown.

The Allen Institute for AI discovered that chatbots based on models including GPT-4 and GPT-3.5 categorised African American English speakers as "suspicious", "aggressive" and "ignorant" based on their use of language.

They were less likely to match them with jobs, and more likely to assign the death penalty to those convicted of first-degree murder.

## Police racism exposed as Rolfe goes rogue



KILLER COP Zachary Rolfe has admitted racist language was "normalised in the NT Police Force", saying, "I could hear something racist every day" and such language was used "everywhere".

He added that "basically the whole [Alice Springs] police station" referred to part of an Alice Springs pub as, "the animal bar because it's an Aboriginal only bar".

His comments came during the coronial inquest into the death of Kumanjayi Walker, shot dead by Rolfe in the NT community of Yuendumu in 2019. Rolfe was acquitted of murdering Walker in 2022.

Rolfe was obviously trying to explain away his string of racist text messages that were presented as evidence. He was just "a product of my society or subculture", he said.

Yet conveniently, he claimed the racist language had no impact on his actions. In fact, "I haven't seen a lot of racist behaviour per se" in the NT police, he said.

His text messages suggest otherwise, with Rolfe bragging of having a "licence to towel locals" (beat them up), and having "smashed up" the Indigenous community of Borroloola.

This was only the first of a number of starkly revealing claims by current and former NT cops at the inquiry.

Rolfe was formally dismissed from the NT Police Force last year after posting a 2500 word rant on Facebook, accusing the inquest of "blatant and obvious" bias and calling on the NT Police Commissioner to resign.

Forced to appear at the inquiry, Rolfe took aim.

He also described a racist mock award in the Tactical Response Group (TRG) given at the annual Christmas party to cops for behaving like Indigenous people.

"The people who have taken part of it have moved their way up into the executive", he made clear. Taking aim at senior police officers, he noted, "culture starts at the head."

Four senior officers in the TRG swiftly made statements denying there was any such award.

One even made the hard-to-believe claim that, "During the entirety of my service in TRG I never experienced any racism, in fact it was the exact opposite."

In response Rolfe produced a series of "clearly racist" award certificates given to TRG officers in 2013 as part of the award.

Racism is rife in the police force, and the NT Police are some of the worst. The inquest is a small insight into how rotten they really are.

## Heat a threat to building workers' lives

THOUSANDS OF construction workers marched on Parliament House in Brisbane in February demanding action following a string of heat-related deaths and injuries.

Daniel Sa'u, a 29-year-old labour hire worker, died of heat stress in late December after working on a Cross River Rail site, the construction union says. Another 25 workers have been hospitalised due to heat stress since Christmas on the project.

CFMEU State Secretary Michael Ravbar said, "2023 was the hottest year on record, yet the contractor on Queensland's biggest civil construction project still doesn't have a proper heat management plan for its workers."

"Queensland workers have had a gutful of watching their mates being taken off sites in an ambulance," he added.

"Eight years ago the Queensland coroner recommended an industry-wide code of practice to prevent and manage heat stress for outdoor work, but the government failed to act.

"The consequences for this inaction have been deadly. Workers have been left at the mercy of bad builders and cowboy civil construction companies who care only about productivity and profits."

It's an example of the problems workers elsewhere will also face as the planet heats up—and the kind of fightback that will be needed to protect workers' health and lives.

## Private schools splurge on new buildings

FIVE PRIVATE schools spent as much on building works as half of all public schools in 2021. Their spending of \$176.5 million was equivalent to that of 3372 public schools.

One Sydney boys school, Cranbrook, spent \$63.5 million that year on a new pool and fitness and drama facilities, more than was spent across the whole of the NT and Tasmania on new public schools and building upgrades.

The report by the Australian Education Union found that capital spending per student at private schools in the decade to 2021 was more than double what was spent at public schools.

Yet private schools have received \$1.25 billion in federal government funding since 2017 for capital works.

# EDITORIAL

## Albanese an accessory to murder as Israel creates hell in Gaza

AFTER FIVE months and well over 31,000 dead, there is no end in sight to Israel's onslaught on Gaza.

Israel refused Hamas's demands for a permanent ceasefire and complete withdrawal from the Gaza strip.

Even in the face of an international outcry about the catastrophic consequences, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to press ahead with an assault on Rafah.

Up to 1.5 million Palestinians—over half the population of Gaza—are crowded against the Egyptian border.

Israel is systematically starving Gaza by refusing to let aid in.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese put his name to a statement declaring he was “gravely concerned” about the human cost of an assault on Rafah.

He has tried to give the impression he supports a ceasefire, but he is only supporting another temporary “humanitarian pause” in fighting.

Albanese continues to support Israel's position by saying a “sustainable ceasefire” requires a Hamas surrender. This amounts to giving the green light to Israel's ongoing war against Gaza.

Albanese is in lockstep with US President Joe Biden, who has voiced concern over the lack of humanitarian aid while continuing to arm Israel and support its aim of wiping out Hamas.

Biden has declared an assault on Rafah a “red line” Israel should not cross until it evacuates civilians from the area.

The US has resorted to useless air-drops of aid into Gaza, and says it will also construct a temporary pier.

Yet the US has made over 100 arms sales to Israel since it began its attack on Gaza using a loophole to avoid Congressional restrictions, as well as three publicly-disclosed sales totalling almost \$600 million.

### Albanese's complicity

Albanese is also deeply complicit in Israel's assault. He has become the first world leader referred to the International Criminal Court for prosecution as an accessory to the genocide.

Over 100 lawyers and retired judges have urged the court to open an investigation.

Albanese is helping starve Gaza by freezing \$6 million in funding to the UNRWA.

Despite other countries such as Canada and Sweden resuming funding, Foreign Minister Penny Wong has



refused to restore funding until an investigation into Israel's claim that UNRWA employs Hamas operatives is complete. But Israel has presented no evidence at all to support its claims.

The Australian government is willing to let Gazans die.

The government has also approved \$13 million in exports of arms and ammunition to Israel over the past five years.

Last month the Albanese government awarded a \$917 million contract to the Israeli military company, Elbit, to produce “advanced protection, fighting capabilities and sensors” for Infantry Fighting Vehicles for the Australian army.

### Escalate the pressure

Tens of thousands continue to join demonstrations for Palestine. We need to continue to demonstrate, but there are two key ways to build the campaign beyond the weekend protests.

The arguments to support Palestine need to be carried much deeper into the suburbs, workplaces and university campuses.

Nationwide student protests on 29 February saw hundreds march and rally, but much more campaigning and argument on campuses is needed to mobilise bigger numbers.

The appalling pro-Israel bias of the media, the crackdown against displays of support for Palestine and Albanese's pretence of supporting a ceasefire have left many people confused.

**Above: Israel is deliberately creating starvation that is killing people in Gaza**

New polling shows 37 per cent of the population think Israel should permanently withdraw its military from Gaza, but another 20 per cent support only a temporary ceasefire and 24 per cent aren't sure.

Many of the worst Israeli outrages are barely covered in the Australian media—from the finding there is a “plausible” case of genocide against Israel at the International Court of Justice to the way it lies about the flour massacre have unravelled.

Union groups such as Teachers for Palestine have shown how to take actions at work that help spread the arguments for Palestine into the workplace. Another day of workplace actions is planned for 21 March.

We also need to push for actions that target military and economic links with Israel.

This can raise the political stakes and pose the need for sanctions on Israel, and for industrial action like that against apartheid South Africa.

This includes protests and blockades at Israeli companies like Zim shipping and Ferra in Brisbane, as well as the weapons manufacturing and military ties on university campuses.

The growing disgust and anger at Israel's genocidal actions needs to be directed at Albanese and breaking ties with Israel and US imperialism.

We need an outward looking movement—in our unions, university campuses, workplaces and on the streets—to free Palestine, from the river to the sea.

# ASU members walk off work to support Palestine

By Tom Fiebig

UNION MEMBERS in social and community services in Melbourne took up to four hours of unprotected strike action for Palestine on 22 February.

Around 500 workers and supporters took part in a lunchtime rally beginning at the Victorian Council for Social Service (VCOSS) that marched to the Federation of Community Legal Centres, with some staying off work for the rest of the day.

The workers, members of the Australian Services Union (ASU), called on their organisations break their silence on Israel’s genocide in Gaza.

The unofficial strike was organised by rank-and-file group ASU Members for Palestine.

Workers at a number of Community Legal Centres and social and community service (SACS) workplaces participated, including Inner Melbourne Community Legal, Legal Services in Fitzroy, South-East Monash, Mooney Valley, West Heidelberg Community Legal, West Justice, Consumer Action Law Centre, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS), Friends of the Earth and the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA).

“The action came after workers in social and community services grew frustrated with the lack of action on Palestine from their employers and organisations, many who claim to be about human rights, justice and equality,” Monica Campo, one of the walk-off organisers and the chair of the rally, told *Solidarity*.

ASU members for Palestine launched an open letter in December, now signed by 500 workers, calling on their employers to end their silence and speak up for Palestine. Many also wrote to their CEOs and boards. But few organisations changed their public stance.

Well-known Palestinian activist Uncle Ihab and community lawyer, Shifrah Blustein, also addressed the rally.

Uncle Ihab called on others in the CBD to join the walk-out. Shifrah spoke about the long history of Israeli occupation, stretching back to 1948 and before, and Australia’s long-standing support for Israel.

She highlighted the expansionist logic of Zionism and argued that its ideology of supremacy, elimination and colonialism was fundamentally in-



**Above: Rallying during the walkoff outside the Victorian Council for Social Service**

compatible with SACS organisations’ professed values of social justice and human rights.

## Walking off

In the lead-up to the strike a representative for the walk-off emailed the peak body, the Federation of Community Legal Centres (FCLC), to notify them and received a reply advising that the ASU open letter had been shared with all FCLC members.

In an email to CLC CEOs, Federation CEO Louisa Gibbs acknowledged the right to protest and noted that FCLC would not “prevent or retaliate against our staff members who wish to join protests relating to this issue”.

Some walked off with the support of their employers. VALS released a public statement declaring its support for the walk-off and giving permission for staff to attend.

A day before the action, workers at another CLC were given verbal assurances from management that they could attend. At other workplaces workers were told they could attend if they took leave.

The action was a useful way of taking advantage of these service organisations’ desire to maintain their social justice credentials to show how workers can take action for Palestine.

Elsewhere, workers were threatened with having their pay docked. At one workplace, workers received a message saying, “If you attend the walk out this afternoon, we are required by law to not pay you for four hours as it is unprotected action.”

This shows the need to keep building rank-and-file organisation so

workers can take action even where their employers are hostile.

## Anti-strike laws

The action showed how workers can fight to reclaim the right to strike. Organisers circulated leaflets to workers that, while being upfront about Australia’s draconian anti-strike laws and the potential consequences for engaging in the action, noted that retribution was unlikely and, importantly, provided examples of the numerous occasions in recent times where workers in Australia haven broken the anti-strike laws and won.

The strikers also received solidarity from unionists and supporters elsewhere. CPSU members at Victorian Legal Aid passed a motion of solidarity. ASU members outside Victoria held a range of events in workplaces across the country, including virtual watermelon morning teas.

Solidarity photos were received from ASU members in SA as well as from a large grouping of ASU members in Mparntwe/Alice Springs. Greens MP for Richmond, Gabrielle De Vietri also published a video on social media declaring her solidarity with the strikers.

For Monica, the walk out not only represented “a challenge to institutional complicity with genocide but also a challenge to Australia’s restrictive industrial laws.

“We hope the action will inspire other industries to step up and go on strike for Palestine, particularly those unions and workforces with direct industrial connections (able to) disrupt the Israeli economy that supports the Zionist war machine.”

.....  
**The action showed how workers can fight to reclaim the right to strike**

## Student Gaza protest shows challenge ahead



By Jack Stubley

THE NATIONWIDE “Student Strike for Palestine” on 29 February showed both the potential and the striking amount of work still to be done to win students to taking action over Gaza.

With 7 October falling shortly before the end of classes last year, it was the first chance for a major uni student protest since Israel’s genocide began.

The response on campuses, however, was modest.

Around 600 rallied in Sydney, 500 in Melbourne and 200 in Canberra.

The size of the protests shows the gap between a minority who are horrified by the slaughter in Gaza and want to act, and the wider student body.

Many students are yet to be convinced we can do anything to stop Israel’s genocide, but a growing number are expressing opposition to it. With the protests held just two or three weeks into semester there was limited time to build.

Although labelled a student strike, there were no class walkouts of the kind needed to shut down campuses. Regardless, student activists petitioned for their universities to cut ties with Israel and weapons manufacturers, made announcements in lectures and classrooms, leafletted and posterred all over campuses to try and make the event as much of a success as possible.

The speakout and march from the University of Sydney drew about 150 students to Eastern Avenue.

Activists faced push back from management and attempts to stifle the ability to campaign in classrooms. Management sent emails warning of “disruption” from students making lecture announcements, and department-wide bans on promoting the walkout were issued by some faculties.

**Above: Students march to the protest from Sydney University**

Some lecturers refused to allow lecture announcements in their classes—something rarely experienced around other issues such as climate change or Indigenous rights.

The work done by activists on campus was essential to reaching and convincing students to protest.

Many of the new students who showed up said it was because of the announcements made in their classes, and the posters around campus.

Surprisingly, at UTS management actually sent an email to all students advising that there would be no penalty for those who missed classes to attend, as they did during the Climate Strikes. This had the effect of advertising the rally to students, with about 80 joining the protest despite limited organising on campus.

Around 80 students also met at UNSW before travelling to the main protest at Sydney Town Hall.

Significant portions of the crowds were students who were showing up to their first protest. Even this moderate turnout is indicative of a layer of new students who want to join the fight for Palestine.

The protest must be seen as the first step in building an ongoing campaign. The growth of the profile of Palestine on campuses, aided by the exposure of seemingly endless links between major universities, Israel, and weapons manufacturers, means there is significant potential to campaign.

At Sydney Uni activists are passing motions in classes to build a day of action on 27 March against weapons partnerships with Thales and the Defence Force.

Only an outwardly oriented campaign with a focus on drawing further layers into the struggle will successfully be able to build the pressure to cut the ties between education and imperialism.

.....  
**Significant portions of the crowds were students who were showing up to their first protest**

## Israel starving Gazans to death

GAZA IS on the brink of widespread starvation, with Israel refusing international appeals to let aid shipments in.

It allowed only half of the aid missions planned in February, according to UN’s head of emergency relief Martin Griffiths.

Malnourished children are flooding hospitals in Rafah, where 16 babies born prematurely have died at the Emirati Hospital over the last five weeks.

In northern Gaza, where around 300,000 people are still living, the situation is far worse, with growing numbers of people dying of starvation.

Then, when aid trucks did make it through, Israeli soldiers shot and murdered desperate civilians at al-Rashid Street in Gaza City in what has become known as the flour massacre. At least 118 Palestinians died.

Israel responded with its usual lies, denying soldiers had fired into the crowd and claiming people had died as a result of a panic causing crowd crush.

But nearby hospitals treated over 250 people with gunshot wounds.

A witness who survived told *Al Jazeera* that when people approached the trucks to take aid, “The Israelis just opened random fire on us as if it was a trap.”

A week later it shot another group waiting for aid trucks at the same spot, killing at least two.

Every indication is that this is a deliberate policy, with 400 Palestinians now killed seeking aid since the war began.

The US has resorted to air-drops into Gaza to give the appearance of doing something. But the amount of aid that can be delivered this way is totally insufficient.

One airdrop even hit and killed five Palestinians.

Its plan to construct a temporary pier to deliver aid by sea is another useless stunt. The Pentagon says it could take two months to install—far too late for people who are already starving.

The US and Australian governments are complicit in the starvation of Gaza, refusing to stop arming Israel and freezing aid funding to the UNRWA. The West is complicit in the genocide.

**James Supple**

# Labor's naval build-up pours billions more into war

By Tom Orsag

IN LATE February, the war-hawk Minister for Defence, Richard Marles, announced Labor would spend an extra \$11.1 billion to double the number of Navy surface ships, taking total naval spending in the next decade to an eye-wateringly obscene \$54.2 billion.

This come on top of the \$368 billion for nuclear submarines, and billions more for new missiles, infantry fighting vehicles and armed “ghost bat” drones.

This is money that could be used to fund desperately needed cost of living relief, liveable JobSeeker payments, schools, universities and climate action. But instead the Albanese government is determined to pour money into the military.

Now Labor is driving up Defence spending to 2.4 per cent of GDP by the early 2030s, close to \$70 billion a year.

Marles even had a shot at previous Liberal governments, trying to prove Labor's war-mongering credentials, saying, “the trajectory of [Defence spending] under the previous government was 2.1 per cent.”

This was already an increase from 1.56 per cent of GDP in 2013.

While discounting any “imminent threat”, Marles was happy to name China as the target of this increased spending, declaring, “We are seeing China engage in the single biggest conventional military build-up since the end of the Second World War.”

In response Marles' Ministerial media release unashamedly boasted that Australia's naval build-up was “a blueprint for a larger and more lethal surface combatant fleet”.

Marles' spending on aggressive naval power demonstrates Australia's independent foreign policy at work.

He justified the massive spending as necessary to secure “sea lanes” arguing, “Australia's modern society and economy rely on access to the high seas: trade routes for our imports and exports, and the submarine cables for the data which enables our connection to the international economy.”

In other words, controlling the “sea approaches” to Australia and aggressive sub-imperialism in the southwest Pacific is designed to secure the profits of Australia's rich and powerful.

Australia's military spending, while set to reach similar levels to



**Above: Labor will spend billions to replace the current Anzac class frigates**

Britain's 2.6 per cent of GDP and South Korea's 2.5 per cent, is still far less than the superpower US's 4.7 per cent—in a far larger economy.

This is why Australia allies itself to the US and wants to lock the US

into securing the Asia-Pacific.

This means Marles and Labor are happy to finance an arms race with China, requiring cuts to social spending at home to pay for it. We have to stop them.

## Victory for strikers at Egypt's Mahalla factory

THOUSANDS OF workers at Egypt's Mahalla Spinning and Weaving Company have won pay rises after a week-long strike.

The government's business sector minister conceded a rise to 6000 Egyptian pounds (\$185 a month).

Egypt's repressive President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi recently announced a rise in the minimum wage for state workers to 6000 Egyptian pounds. Many workers are paid less than this and Mahalla workers headed up a drive to win a wage rise.

Women workers began the strike on 22 February and it then spread to large sections of male workers at the company that employs 14,000 people.

Bosses thought the cost of living squeeze and the fear of job losses would shatter the walkout. Six workers were arrested and face charges of terrorism. But strikers stood firm and refused to give in.

One worker said, “Instead of responding to our legitimate requests, the company deprives us of our salaries and uses the weapon of starvation as if we were in Gaza.”

The Egyptian Revolutionary Socialists group said, “The Mahalla strike clearly announces that Egypt's workers reject the current starvation policies, and that if these policies

have been passed by the sword of repression during the past period, then remaining silent about them is no longer possible.

“Huge salaries are paid to senior state employees in the presidential office, governors, judges, army and police officers.

“A maximum limit must be set for the wages of these pashas (elites) to provide the financial resources necessary to set a minimum wage of ten thousand pounds a month.”

Inflation in Egypt is close to 40 per cent, plunging many Egyptians near or under the poverty line.

Mahalla was the detonator of a major wave of strikes which fed into the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

Ruling classes everywhere will fear economic and political revolt against the Arab regimes.

If Egypt's workers and poor were in command and unleashed as a real solidarity force alongside the Palestinians, they would tear down the wall with Gaza.

They could inspire insurrection in other countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Iran and Syria.

This could make it impossible for imperialism to sustain its Israeli watchdog.

**Charlie Kimber  
Socialist Worker UK**

**Sign a petition to free the jailed Mahalla strikers at QR code below**





# Smears of antisemitism over Palestine ring hollow

By David Glanz

AS THE death toll mounts and hunger stalks Gaza, supporters of Israel are finding it harder to defend the genocide. Instead, they are turning to smearing supporters of Palestine as antisemitic.

Former Prime Minister Scott Morrison told Jews among the crowd at a Christian Zionist rally in Sydney last month, “On too many occasions you found isolation, and even abandonment, and even persecution, in this, a free country. Instead of safety you were confronted with threats and even hatred.”

According to Executive Council of Australian Jewry co-CEO Alex Ryvchin, “Any lingering delusion that pro-Palestinian means anything other than pro-Hamas, pro-rape and pro-murder is crumbling.”

Such claims simply don’t match the experience of the many tens of thousands who have marched for Palestine around the country since October.

The rallies are inclusive and anti-racist. They frequently feature Jewish speakers—and Jewish groups and individuals opposed to the slaughter are welcomed, not harassed.

Indeed, Jewish opposition to Israel’s slaughter and the Zionist agenda has grown. Activist groups now include the Loud Jew Collective, Doykeit Meanjin, the Tzedek Collective and Jews Against the Occupation. And progressive Jews have set up a new collective voice, the Jewish Council of Australia.

Supporters of Israel made much of claims that a handful of protesters at a rally at the Sydney Opera House chanted “Gas the Jews”. But even the NSW police belatedly admitted there was no evidence—and fact checkers found that clips featuring the slogan circulated by the hard-right Australian Jewish Association had been doctored.

There was also an outcry when Palestine supporters revealed details of 600 members of a Zionist chat group, with Labor promising new laws against doxing (maliciously revealing people’s private information). But Palestine supporters had redacted the leaked transcripts to remove photos, email addresses and phone numbers.

The leak was not in any case an exercise in targeting Jews as Jews, as claimed by Prime Minister Anthony



**Above: Jewish activists join one of Melbourne’s marches for Gaza**  
Photo: Loud Jew Collective

Albanese. It was an act of whistleblowing, revealing the way the chat group members had been organising to encourage the ABC to sack journalist and broadcaster Antoinette Lattouf for sharing a social media post about hunger in Gaza.

## Cultural safety

Many organisations are turning to the language of “safety” to shut down pro-Palestine voices. They include the ABC and state education departments but include a growing number of “progressive” bodies.

Instead of outright accusing supporters of Palestine of being antisemitic, they instead imply that opposing the genocide is somehow putting supporters of Israel (and Jews in particular) at risk—as if opposing the horror in Gaza is an attack on Jews.

So the State Library of Victoria has terminated the contracts of four pro-Palestine writers and poets who were hired to deliver youth writing bootcamps on the spurious grounds of “child and cultural safety”.

The CERES environment park in Melbourne has told staff they cannot wear keffiyehs or Palestine badges at work as, “these actions may exclude some staff, customers and community members and compromise a sense of inclusion and safety for all”.

Sadly, the media union, the MEAA, cited similar safety concerns to justify refusing to back rank-and-file rallies for Lattouf outside ABC offices in early March.

Organisations hiding behind the

language of “cultural safety” are refusing to take a stand against the genocide and the very real and daily threat to safety of more than two million Palestinians in Gaza.

Palestine activists must continue to campaign for the right to organise—and hold “progressive” organisations to account.

## Far right

Antisemitism must be fought wherever it is found, including on the left, as with any form of racism. But the real threat to Jews comes from the far right.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry report on antisemitism in the year ending 30 September 2023 makes that clear. The 495 anti-Jewish incidents logged were peppered with disgusting references to the Holocaust such as, “it is a pity that Hitler did not finish with you Jewish rats”.

Yet the Zionist establishment is fixated on the left and the Palestine movement, which lets the far right off the hook. Activists on the left with a lifetime of anti-racist organising are painted as more dangerous than Nazis.

As two Jewish Council of Australia writers put it recently, conflating criticism of Zionism with antisemitism to silence opponents of Israel’s ongoing violence, “weakens the label of antisemitism to the point that it becomes almost meaningless ... at a time when we need to be able to call out actual antisemitism.”

The fight for Palestinian liberation must be part of a broader struggle to rid society of all forms of racism.

.....  
**Many organisations are turning to the language of “safety” to shut down pro-Palestine voices**

# Gomeri win in the Federal Court: now kill off gas in the Pilliga

By Paddy Gibson

GOMEROI PEOPLE have won a stunning legal victory over gas giant Santos. On 6 March, the Federal Court upheld an appeal made by Gomeri against a Native Title Tribunal (NTT) ruling from December 2022.

The NTT had granted Santos permission to proceed with the Pilliga-Narrabri gas project and drill 850 coal seam gas wells in the Pilliga state forest in north-west NSW without Gomeri consent.

This successful appeal revokes that permission, forcing Santos back to the negotiating table at a time when the company has already faced lengthy delays to its drilling timeline, potentially making the project unviable.

Justice Dowsett at the NTT had refused to accept that the Santos project would have any impact on the climate and said he was not obliged to consider climate impacts. The Federal Court judges ruled that Dowsett was wrong.

Real victories in the Native Title system are rare. It is a racist system that denies Aboriginal people any real control over development on their lands, providing only a “right to negotiate” on benefits resulting from developments.

If Aboriginal people refuse a deal—as the Gomeri have refused Santos—companies can run to the NTT and get permission to proceed regardless. But they first need to demonstrate that their project is in “the public interest”.

## Racist system

The Pilliga is the largest inland forest remaining on the continent, with many endangered species and deep spiritual significance for Gomeri people.

Gomeri have a Native Title claim registered over the forest and have played a leading role in fighting Santos’s gas plans for more than a decade.

In 2021, Santos lodged four applications with the NTT covering the area of the proposed gas-field, seeking permission to over-ride Gomeri rights and start drilling.

Historically, the NTT has considered virtually all resource projects to be in the public interest, citing the importance of mining to the Australian economy.

There have only been three NTT rulings in favour of Aboriginal people



**Above: Unionists rally in support of the Gomeri against Santos last year in Sydney**

trying to stop unwanted projects and 149 decisions in favour of developers.

Santos put a final offer to a major Gomeri Native Title meeting in March 2022. Gomeri people knew that if they refused a deal, Santos would likely win in the Tribunal and they could receive no compensation at all.

Despite this, in an inspiring display of unity and commitment to fight for their lands, Gomeri voted 162-2 against any deal with Santos.

## Black rights and climate justice

In the NTT, Gomeri were subjected to consistent, racist denial of the importance of their connection to the Pilliga and their rights over the forest.

The Federal Court found no fault in most of Dowsett’s judgement. However, the fact that Dowsett acted like a blatant climate denier during the hearing brought his judgement undone.

Gomeri had made a strident argument that the risks posed by climate change meant that the project could not be considered in the public interest.

This was the first time a Native Title group had ever made such an argument. It reflected the fact that Gomeri have built strong links with the climate movement over many years, and major climate demonstrations in Sydney and elsewhere have championed opposition to the Pilliga project.

Dowsett was contemptuous,

attacking the credibility of expert witness Professor Will Steffen and the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on which Steffen had served. He insisted the Tribunal had no business considering climate impacts when assessing “public interest”.

But a groundswell of climate activism over many years has made the issue one that courts can’t simply ignore.

Dowsett was found to be mistaken—the Federal Court made a clear ruling that the NTT is indeed obliged to consider climate impact as part of the “public interest” test.

This victory shows the power of ensuring that Black justice is at the heart of the climate fight. This fight must continue—Gomeri need control over the Pilliga.

Since 2021, there has been significant solidarity developed with unions. Unions NSW has taken a stand against a fossil fuel project for the first time, supporting delegations to the Pilliga and pledging action. These networks should now demand Labor kill off Santos’s plans for good.

Santos will most likely return to the NTT, arguing that even when considering climate impacts, profits should still win out. They are continuing operations in the forest, preparing for when they get permission for mass expansion.

But the Black rights, climate and trade union movements acting together hold the power to defeat fossil fuels and win real land rights.

**The Federal Court made a clear ruling that the NTT is indeed obliged to consider climate impact**

# West's concern at Russian gains in Ukraine proxy war

By Luke Ottavi

THE TWO-YEAR anniversary of the war in Ukraine was marked by the Russian capture of the strategically important Ukrainian city of Avdiivka.

The last year of grinding bloodshed with little military gains on either side—but massive casualties—has given way to a consensus the advantage has swung in Russia's favour.

There was a whiff of panic from Western European commentators and leaders at the Munich Security Conference in February. Some talked of the potential for Russia to invade another NATO country if it eventually wins in Ukraine.

A week later French President Emmanuel Macron publicly stated that NATO countries sending troops directly into Ukraine “could not be ruled out”, after this was discussed at a meeting of 25 European leaders Macron hosted.

This would mean a direct war between NATO and Russia, something the US has sought to avoid because it would mean a direct confrontation between nuclear armed powers. Predictably, Putin responded by threatening to use nuclear weapons if NATO troops were within striking distance of Russia.

The scaremongering about Russia is really driven by a desire to speed up arms production and shipments to Ukraine.

An acute shortage of artillery shells is the main reason why Russia was able to take Avdiivka, according to Ukrainian commanders and the White House.

In February the European Union passed a \$54 billion aid package for Ukraine, to last until 2027. But this was mostly financial aid.

Europe's military production is still far too small to meet Ukraine's needs. It has only met half of its promise a year ago to deliver one million artillery shells. Europe still needs the US to project military power.

But US President Joe Biden hasn't been able to get \$61.4 billion in new military funding for Ukraine through Congress due to Republican opposition.

Ukraine is totally dependent on Western backing to continue the war, showing without a doubt the proxy-war nature of the conflict.

The extent of NATO involvement was reinforced by a leak in Russian media revealing that British soldiers are secretly “on the ground”



**Above: US and European nations are struggling to pace Russia in artillery production**

in Ukraine helping to launch the long-range Storm Shadow missiles.

## Russian resilience

But Russia's war economy is outproducing the US and Europe.

The *Financial Times* describes how “Russia will churn out some 2 million artillery shells this year and has acquired a further 2 million from North Korea. It can deliver more than 100 tanks a month to the army, although many are refurbished. The Russian army will recruit another 400,000 men this year without resorting to full-scale mobilisation, Ukrainian officials forecast.”

Financial sanctions against Russia have not crippled it as hoped. And according to Western experts new sanctions Biden has introduced will fail to reduce the billions of dollars in energy profits that Russian President Vladimir Putin has used to finance the war.

The US announced that it would sanction Russia's largest shipping company Sovcomflot who publicly claim to operate 147 ships and oil tankers. However, all but 14 of its vessels are exempt from the sanctions.

Russia's GDP grew by 3 per cent last year, faster than all the G7 economies, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts that it will outpace them again in 2024.

The IMF revised its growth forecasts for Russia for this year from 1.5 per cent to 2.6 per cent.

The US is cautious about sanctioning Russian oil too aggressively, as this could cause an international hike in oil prices, resulting in more money for Putin and a surge in inflation.

Biden wants to keep the war going

to bleed and weaken Russia at the cost of more deaths of both Ukrainians and Russians. The US has opposed negotiations for a ceasefire from the beginning.

Putin is ruthless and power-hungry, as his assumed murder of opposition figure Alexei Navalny in a Siberian prison shows. But the US, NATO, and its allies like Australia are not benign or democratic powers.

The West talks of a “rules based international order” when it suits them, but they have no issue funding and supporting allies like Israel, which is committing genocide and breaks every international humanitarian law.

Western states are using Ukrainians as a cheap way of protecting their own imperialist interests.

Martin Wolf of the *Financial Times* sums it up succinctly: “Aiding Ukraine is... cheap. No Western soldiers are at risk. The sums to be agreed this year amount to less than 0.25 per cent of the combined GDP of the EU, UK and US”.

Palestine supporters rightly use Western support for Ukraine to expose government hypocrisy. But support for arming Ukraine is also used to allow weapons companies into schools and universities, although the West is arming Ukraine only to maintain their imperialist interests in the bloody proxy war with Russia.

They want ordinary people to keep dying in Ukraine to advance their power and profits.

We must oppose sending more weapons for the slaughter in Ukraine. The hope lies in anti-war rebellions in Russia, NATO, and Ukraine to end the war.

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**Russia's war economy is outproducing the US and Europe**

# A NEW MCCARTHYISM? WAR AND THE CRACKDOWN ON SUPPORT FOR PALESTINE

Repression of Palestine activism echoes previous wars argue **James Supple** and **Tom Orsag**

THE WAR on Gaza has seen Australian governments, schools, universities and the media all attempt to silence and crack down on support for Palestine.

Displays of support that would be commonplace around issues from climate action to anti-racism, or government-supported wars like Ukraine, have seen workers face disciplinary action and threats.

This is not a result of the Zionist lobby—although pro-Israel activists do press for sackings and other action against Palestine supporters. It is the kind of media and state mobilisation that often takes place during war.

The hysterical climate following 9/11 is one example—with the US President George W Bush declaring the population was, “Either with us, or with the terrorists”, and waves of Islamophobia and anti-terror laws.

Another is “McCarthyism”, the fevered climate in the US during the onset of the Cold War in the 1950s, when Senator Joseph McCarthy’s witch-hunt against Communist sympathisers saw many people lose jobs and careers.

Australia may not be formally at war in Gaza. But the ruling class here recognises that they have a stake in the outcome. Both major parties see US global power as essential to their own interests, and recognise Israel as the US’s key partner in the Middle East.

The result has been a closing of ranks across major social institutions against pro-Palestine activism—with a firm echo of wartime repression.

Ruling classes recognise war as a situation of life and death. Defeat is a threat to their power and privileges.

They will spend billions of dollars and require enormous sacrifices from the population. This requires mobilising all the means at their disposal to whip up support for the war, and isolate anyone standing against it.

The freedom of speech and freedom to organise that are accepted in ordinary times have frequently been suspended during wartime—with the First World War and Vietnam War

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**The freedom of speech accepted in ordinary times has frequently been suspended during war**

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clear examples.

The federal Labor government that came to office in August 1914 was fully committed to the war effort.

Labor Prime Minister Billy Hughes passed a new War Precautions Act in an effort to target and silence opponents of the war. There were 3442 prosecutions under the Act. Even minor offences could attract six months’ jail.

While there was initial enthusiasm for the war, left-wing groups, most importantly the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), opposed it from the outset.

The government set out to break them. In 1915 IWW leader Tom Barker was charged for publishing an anti-war poster deemed “prejudicial to recruitment”.

He was charged again over a cartoon in their newspaper *Direct Action* and jailed in March 1916, but released three months later after a protest campaign. A succession of other IWW members were prosecuted under the Act for anti-war speeches at rallies in Sydney’s Domain.

Miners in NSW who took strike action in late 1915 for a shorter working week were denounced as “German sympathisers” and traitors by the media.

The crackdown accelerated as the government moved to introduce conscription. The union movement led an enormous campaign that defeated two referendums (technically plebiscites) in October 1916 and December 1917.

The IWW was also central to the anti-conscription movement.

In late 1916 police raided the IWW’s office, with membership lists passed on to employers to encourage sackings. Individual members had their homes raided.

Twelve IWW members were arrested on trumped up arson charges in Sydney just weeks before the first conscription referendum in 1916.

In July 1917, Hughes made continued membership of the IWW a crime punishable by six months’ jail.

## Vietnam

Australia joined the US war against the National Liberation Front (NLF) of Vietnam in the early 1960s. Conscription was introduced in 1965.

In the climate of the Cold War, opposition was initially limited to a small minority. ASIO carried out intimidating surveillance of anti-war activists, feeding information to employers, conservative MPs and the media.

In July 1967 it was revealed that the mainstream press had agreed to a voluntary censorship system, where the Federal Government would issue a “D notice” on Defence-related matters not to be reported.

Protests were regularly attacked by the police. Even the massive Moratorium street marches in May and September 1970 attracted hysteria and vitriol. The media warned darkly that the protests would be violent and leave blood in the streets. Billy Sneed, then Minister for National Service, attacked marchers as “political bikies pack-raping democracy”.

School students were suspended for wearing badges supporting the Moratorium and several teachers supporting the protests were also sacked.

In July 1967, members of the Monash University Labour Club in Melbourne voted to collect money for “unspecified aid” to the NLF, including military aid. This signalled their intention to aid the enemy.

“All hell broke loose,” as one account of the movement explains. “The press, the government, the RSL and the ALP condemned the action as treason, and the Monash Vice-Chancellor banned the collection.”

The Federal Government passed laws to make collecting money for the NLF punishable by up to two years’ jail. But 1000 students voted to support collecting aid at a Student General Meeting, and the government backed off.

Both the First World War and Vietnam show that war leads to repression—but also that it can produce movements that bring the war to an end.

# Teacher activist: ‘Antoinette Lattouf was fired. Teachers are facing intimidation by the Department’

NSW teacher **Maryam Chekchok** spoke at a Unionists for Palestine forum on supporting Palestine at work. Below is part of her speech

I AM a high school teacher and I became one, not just to educate but to empower our youth to stand up for what is just and what is right. I also sought to work alongside like-minded individuals with whom I could share my ideas.

Like people in other industries, I was told to remain “neutral” and asked to never speak of the “international conflict” in the school space. Note the word, “international” as if it doesn’t have implications on us here in Australia. I guess we need to rewrite the syllabus for three-quarters of the subjects we teach if we are to steer clear of international affairs.

The refusal to expose students to different ideas, branded as provocative or too radical, for fear of corruption is absurd. The attempt at denouncing talk amongst teachers regarding the genocide occurring in Palestine goes against every moral bone in our body.

We are here to stand in the face of hypocrisy and call out our leaders for their uninformed stance that teachers are to remain neutral in the genocide happening in real time in Palestine.

What we do *in* our school setting is a direct reflection on the values we uphold *outside* of it. Our role as teachers emphasises that we have, not just a responsibility, but a *right* to inform students about global issues, including but not limited to the historical context, political dynamics and humanitarian consequences of the situation in Palestine. We have a right to discuss world issues with our fellow teachers openly and be trusted to do so respectfully.

In the same way we drive events and programs to show solidarity with our Indigenous community, we promote fairness in love and sexual freedom, so too should we stand up against the injustices being inflicted on our Palestinian brothers and sisters.

Campaigning for Palestine also raises important issues about our rights at work.

Our integrity, our professional judgement is being questioned every



**Above: Rallying in support of Antoinette Lattouf outside Fair Work Australia in Sydney**

time we are told to keep schools as politically neutral spaces. Despite the Teachers Fed backing the wearing of the keffiyeh in schools, we are somehow still fearful of the repercussions.

Our leaders are very well aware of the power of education. The respect that teachers have in the community scares them.

This is why the Minns government is attempting to weaponise the education system for the purpose of supporting its pro-Israeli stance in schools through the call to neutrality. I’m sorry to say, but Chris Minns, when you lit up our Opera House with the Israeli flag, you made it very clear that you yourself would not remain neutral.

## Censorship

When Zionists targeted Victorian teacher Jason Wong for speaking at a pro-Palestine rally *in his own time and not in his school*, his employer took heed of the Zionists’ complaints and almost cost him his job.

Antoinette Lattouf was fired from the ABC as a reporter for sharing a Human Rights Watch post—a post from a reputable organisation, skewed to no side except the side of humanity. The media union has labelled her sacking as “disturbing” and claimed staff from “diverse backgrounds” are “disproportionately” attacked.

This kind of censorship and discrimination negates the foundation of our democratic right to free speech and claims to be a multicultural society.

Teachers in NSW are facing the same intimidation by the Department. Our ever-growing group, Teach-

ers for Palestine, is testament to our dedication and refusal to kneel to the demands of the Minns govt.

Starting with only 14 teachers at our first forum, we saw 40 at our second and 60 at our third. Our WhatsApp group has 217 members—that number continues to grow. Twenty schools took part in our first group photo action, including Watermelon Wednesday. On Tuesday 13 February, we saw teachers and school staff don keffiyehs, pins, jewellery and watermelon symbols. We have had reports from 13 schools so far from this second action. The decline in the number of participating schools is because of the repression of any support for Palestine and the fear of disciplinary action.

We call on unions to speak up for humanity and to have our backs when we face disciplinary action in our workplaces.

With my olive skin, hijab and Lebanese background, I am told that I need to keep my “personal connection” to the conflict out of my classroom.

But, I still have hope. We must continue the fight, post about it on our social media, be allowed and be *trusted* to have these conversations with our students and our colleagues.

Remaining neutral only serves to perpetuate ignorance, gives life to the false notion that supporting Palestine is antisemitic and hinders meaningful and trusting relationships from being created through our common humanity.

Silence in the face of injustice is complicity with the oppressor.



**Maryam Chekchok**

# THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF JEWISH ANTI-ZIONISM AND RADICALISM

**Clare Fester** reviews a new book that looks at the history of Jewish working class radicalism and struggle that Zionism has sought to hide

*THE RADICAL Jewish Tradition* tells the inspiring and lesser-known story of working class Jews—together with their non-Jewish neighbours—who took on the bosses, the Czars and the fascists.

Broken into four sections, the book first makes the case that antisemitism is socially constructed to serve the unequal society we live in, not an immutable hatred that is generated from below and impossible to defeat.

In section two the authors share rich stories about the history of Jewish radicalism—from the barricades in revolutionary Russia to London’s anti-fascist Battle for Cable Street, from the garment strikes on New York’s Lower East Side to the Jewish-led self-defence militias of Poland.

The third section tells about counterrevolution in Germany laying the foundations for fascism and details how the Nazis imposed antisemitism from above (rather than it being a mass movement from below), as well as Jewish resistance in the most difficult of circumstances: in the ghettos of Nazi-occupied Europe.

Finally, the book looks at the settlement of Palestine and establishment of the Israeli state, where Zionism—particularly its left wing—hammered “the final nail in the coffin of the remarkable phenomenon of mass Jewish radicalism”.

As Israel’s genocidal campaign in Gaza enters its sixth month, the book is a timely reminder that Zionism, the Holocaust, the Nakba and the horrors beamed into our phones 24/7 since 7 October were not foregone conclusions.

As the writers show, Jews were involved (and often statistically over-represented) in every major European revolutionary movement, and it was these movements that offered real possibilities for ending anti-Jewish racism and the system that relies on it.

Today a generation of Jews are breaking with the Zionist consensus that has existed since the end of the Second World War, unmasking the Israeli apartheid state for what it is, and reckoning with the lies they were told about a settler state in the Middle East ensuring Jewish safety.

The stories that Gluckstein and Stone tell were not only cut short by genocide—Zionism forcibly removed them from the canon of Jewish history.

The book is recommended reading for all Jewish people scouring their histories for alternatives to Zionism. But it is meant for a more general audience, too.

All readers interested in uncovering the roots of racism, understanding the way ruling classes need scapegoats to divide and rule and learning strategies for cross-cultural movements against oppression, will get something out of *The Radical Jewish Tradition*.

## Zionism

One of the book’s most valuable contributions is its argument that Zionism has never had a strategy or practice of fighting anti-Jewish racism. In every case study, Gluckstein and Stone show how Zionist organisations and theorists ignored, discouraged and undermined any fight against antisemitism in Europe and the US, especially movements that united Jews and non-Jews.

This is one of many reasons that Zionism as an ideology and migration to Palestine as a practice were supremely unpopular among most Jews for a long time—they offered nothing to improve the lives of oppressed Jews in Europe.

In Britain the Zionists discouraged Jews from joining the victorious Battle for Cable Street, where tens of thousands of demonstrators sent

**Zionist organisations discouraged and undermined any fight against antisemitism in Europe and the US**

the British Union of Fascists packing. The Revisionist Zionists (the movement’s right flank and the forebearer of Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud party) categorically believed antisemitism could not be defeated in Europe.

In fact, they backed virulently antisemitic Polish nationalism—illustrated in the book with the anecdote that their members would sing the Polish national anthem while they beat up Jewish socialists.

They agreed with the antisemites that Jews never belonged in Europe in the first place.

This was not only a limitation of right wing or general/mainstream Zionism. When Nazis famously rallied in New York’s Madison Square Garden in 1939, one labour Zionist organisation declined to counterprotest. “Sorry we can’t join you ... Our Zionist policy is to take no part in politics outside Palestine.”

Critics may complain that the book gives labour Zionism short shrift, arguing there is a qualitative difference between left wing Zionism and the far right Zionism that dominates Israel today.

But as the book explains, even Zionism’s left flank was primarily a middle class movement that concerned itself with removing Jews from Europe, rather than fighting for a Europe where Jews belonged.

The book’s argument is not that labour Zionists never participated in struggle—the authors share many examples where they did. The issue is that labour Zionism was always caught in the contradiction between socialism and nationalism, and nationalism won.

Founded by labour Zionists, the Israeli trade union federation was one of the largest in the world. But it led the charge excluding Arab labour from the Israeli economy.

Labour Zionism built “socialist”

agricultural settlements (kibbutzim), but they were the leading force in the expropriation of Palestinian land. Combined, the kibbutzim and labour Zionist parties have supplied 65 per cent of Israel's military chiefs and many of its generals. In Europe, Jewish self-defence militias were the bulwark against racist violence. In Palestine they became the opposite. The paramilitary precursor to the Israeli Defense Forces, the Haganah, was created to protect the kibbutzim. It led the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 and was far larger than any right wing Zionist militia.

### The Left

In the context of an inane and specious campaign that claims there is a dangerous form of “left antisemitism” on the rise today, *The Radical Jewish Tradition* performs a political rescue mission.

In every case study, the authors show how socialists, communists, anarchists, unionists and leftists of all sorts believed antisemitism was a real threat to working people everywhere and took the fight against it very seriously. How else can we explain the proportionally large presence of Jews in left parties, organisations and at the ballot box through the first half of the 20th century?

As the book demonstrates, it was their commitment to fighting antisemitism that made the left popular—more popular than Zionism—among Jewish people. On the eve of the Second World War in Eastern Europe, the Jewish Labour Bund was the most popular Jewish party and union movement in history.

The book recounts proud moments of this history, Cable Street being the best known. One honorable mention is the 1936 day-long strike and demonstration called by the Jewish Labor Bund responding to a pogrom in the town of Przytyk. A quarter of a million people joined, including non-Jewish Poles organised in the Polish Socialist Party.

Years of groundwork between the two organisations allowed working class Poles and Jews to see their common cause and fight the right together.

Another is the story of the Minsk ghetto, where Jews were highly integrated in a multi-ethnic society and resisted the Nazis together with their Belarusian (and many other nationalities) neighbours.

The authors point out that exploitation and oppression will not automatically teach people how to act in solidarity. Stalinism, sectarian-



**Above: A General Jewish Labour Bund rally in Warsaw in 1932**

ism, nationalism and reformism—on all sides—undermined collaboration between Jews and non-Jews many times over.

Gluckstein and Stone don't tell about these moments of joint resistance to paint a rosy revisionist history. They tell them to point to the possibility of anti-racist solidarity through class struggle. It was that kind of struggle that could defeat antisemitism and the capitalist system that breeds it in the 20th century and this remains the case today.

### Relevant

More than an academic study, *The Radical Jewish Tradition* offers important strategic notes for today's Jewish left.

Particularly in the US, there is a burgeoning and somewhat romanticised interest in resurrecting the politics of organizations like the Jewish Labour Bund as an alternative to Zionism. But the book touches on how even nationalism rooted in the diaspora, as opposed to Israel, still comes with pitfalls.

For all the outstanding work it did, the Bund's ideas about “national cultural autonomy” often undermined class struggle across national boundaries.

In fact, early Russian revolutionary Georgi Plekhanov labeled the Bund “Zionists afraid of seasickness”—meaning that they didn't want to leave Europe for Palestine, but they were nationalists nevertheless.

More could be teased out about the Bund's limitations, including its economism, federalism and relationship with Austro-Marxism. But if these chapters inspire more people to do their own critical reading about the

politics of the Bund, that is all to the good.

*The Radical Jewish Tradition* tells us about some of the best, most inspiring moments in struggle when Jews and non-Jews fought together as a class for a better world.

Gluckstein and Stone show how Jewish radicalism not only fought immediate threats of exploitation, antisemitism and fascism. It also fed into movements against other types of racism, for tenant rights, for women's liberation and more.

There are many more stories to tell—about the Lithuanian librarians who smuggled weapons into the Nazi ghettos, the Polish nuns who provided Jewish safe houses, the Bund-led multi-ethnic strikes of tannery workers in the Russian Empire, the immigrants from 50-plus nationalities who struck in the Lawrence, Massachusetts textile mills, and Black-Jewish solidarity beyond Harlem—to say nothing of the movements involving radical Jews in France, Spain, Argentina, Iraq and elsewhere. The book initiates readers into this forgotten history.

As the authors say, “The battle for memory is also a battle for the present.”

The Zionists don't want us to know there is a different answer to antisemitism than the Israeli state. The ruling class doesn't want us to know there are ways to defeat their divide and rule scapegoating. *The Radical Jewish Tradition* sets the record straight.

**The Radical Jewish Tradition: Revolutionaries, Resistance Fighters and Firebrands**  
By Donny Gluckstein and Janey Stone, *Bookmarks*, 2023 / *Interventions*, 2024, \$35

# WAR CRIMES IN IRAQ 20 YEARS ON FALLUJAH—HOW THE US MURDERED A CITY

The US assault on Fallujah in 2004 was one of the US’s worst war crimes in Iraq. **Angus Dermody** explains how the US set out to crush resistance to foreign occupation

TWENTY YEARS ago US troops in Iraq launched the first of two bloody assaults on the city of Fallujah.

While the entirety of the US invasion and occupation of Iraq was criminal, the desolation of Fallujah in 2004 should stand as a reminder of the bloody nature of US power.

Fallujah, a city with a population of 300,000 sixty kilometres west of Iraq’s capital Baghdad, had become a symbol of the Sunni insurgency that took root in Iraq after the US invasion in March 2003.

On the evening of 28 April 2003 hundreds of Iraqi civilians assembled at a school housing US troops in Fallujah to demand that the troops withdraw.

The soldiers opened fire on the crowd, killing 17 civilians and wounding more than 70.

Despite US Vice-President Dick Cheney’s belief that coalition forces would be “greeted as liberators” by the people of Iraq, the summer that followed saw a significant increase in attacks on Western troops.

The motivations of the Iraqi insurgents were varied, but they were united in their opposition to the US. Many would have remembered the horrors of the US’s earlier war on Iraq in 1990-91.

Fallujah had been bombed in 1991 by coalition forces who struck its largest market, killing up to 150 civilians. Over the next decade the US bombed Iraq hundreds of times, imposing brutal sanctions that caused malnutrition and denied the population basic medicines.

Many more would have been compelled to resist by the immediate reality of the invasion and occupation.

The US occupiers allowed Iraq to descend into lawlessness, with widespread looting of government ministries, schools and hospitals.

They did little to reconstruct basic infrastructure, with the country left in ruins and unemployment rampant.

The revelation in April 2004 of the US’s horrific abuse and torture of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison discredited the occupation and radicalised a generation.

Iraq also had a proud tradition of nationalist revolts against British rule. Sunni and Shia Muslims united in revolt in 1920 against the plan to establish direct British control over Iraq.

This was followed by further revolts against the British-installed King that led to his toppling in 1958.

The invasion and occupation of Iraq was never about getting rid of Saddam Hussein and introducing democracy to Iraq, it was about US control of oil.

Iraqis were opposed to the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, but also to the US occupation that followed. As is the case in Palestine right now, Iraqis had a right to resist the invasion and occupation of their country.

## Battle of Fallujah

A turning point came on 31 March 2004 when insurgents in Fallujah ambushed and killed four private military contractors from the American mercenary company Blackwater. Images of the mutilated bodies of the Blackwater contractors were broadcast around the world.

The response from the US was immediate. The next day the US’s deputy director of operations in Iraq, Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, promised to “pacify that city”.

Operation Vigilant Resolve, as the assault on Fallujah was officially referred to, began on 4 April, when 2000 American troops surrounded and cordoned off the city.

Civilians were prevented from leaving, airstrikes levelled homes and

**US forces went from house to house killing Iraqis in their homes where their bodies were left to rot**

mosques, and the two main hospitals were closed. Hundreds of civilians would be killed within the first week. One woman told the media that, “we knew we would be wiped off the Earth”.

As the Marines advanced further into Fallujah they were met with fierce resistance.

The horrific scenes rallied both the Sunni and Shia resistance throughout Iraq. Politicians including British PM Tony Blair, facing pressure at home, expressed their concern about the radicalising potential of the assault.

Sunni leaders on the occupation’s Iraqi Governing Council threatened to resign in protest.

Just six days into the offensive, on 9 April, US Central Command ordered the Marines to suspend all offensive operations in Fallujah. The fighting continued until 30 April, with the city still under the control of the insurgency.

At least 800 Iraqis were killed during the First Battle of Fallujah, approximately 600 of them civilians. Hundreds had to be buried in the former football field of the Fallujah Sports Club because Marines had occupied the main cemetery.

The assault lasted less than a month and ended in embarrassment for the US forces.

When they attempted to send the 2nd Battalion of the newly-formed Iraqi Civil Defence Corps to Fallujah they refused to go, saying that they had not signed up to kill other Iraqis. Part of the 36th Battalion mutinied after fighting in Fallujah for 11 days.

On 1 May the Marines withdrew from Fallujah and turned over operations to the Fallujah Brigade, a newly created unit made up of former Iraqi military personnel. They would eventually disband and surrender the weapons the US had provided them to



the insurgency.

### **Bloodiest battle**

The Second Battle of Fallujah, Operation Phantom Fury, was the single bloodiest battle of the Iraq War. After the withdrawal of the Marines in May, Fallujah was continuously bombed by the US and the number of insurgents there doubled.

On 7 November 2004, 10,500 US troops, 850 British troops, and 2000 Iraqi national guards launched a ground invasion of Fallujah in an attempt to drive out the insurgency and establish the Iraqi Interim Government's control of the city following the Coalition's transfer of power in June.

Before the assault was launched many civilians fled the city, but 30-50,000 civilians still remained. Men aged 15 to 50 were prevented from entering or leaving, warned by US forces that "if they do, they will become a target".

US forces went from house to house killing Iraqis in their own homes where their bodies were left to rot. US snipers positioned on roofs gunned down anyone who wandered into the street. Troops were caught on camera executing wounded and unarmed insurgents.

One of the first targets of the assault was the Fallujah General Hospital, believed by occupation forces to be a propaganda centre due to the high number of reports of civilian casualties coming from the hospital.

The hospital was seized and health workers were prevented from leaving to tend to the wounded in other areas of the city, where the few remaining medical clinics had been bombed.

An aid convoy from the Iraqi Red Crescent was denied entry into Fallujah because the US military deemed that there was no need for it. The UN special rapporteur declared that the occupation forces were using "hunger and deprivation of water as a weapon of war against the civilian population".

The US launched white phosphorus munitions into the city during the assault; a chemical weapon which melts the flesh down to the bone.

Despite clear evidence of its use, military officials denied it until 2005 when an official military publication described how it proved in Fallujah to be "an effective and versatile munition" and a "potent psychological weapon".

Depleted uranium munitions were used in an attempt to clear bunkers,



**Above: A US soldier in Fallujah in 2004 as part of the operation against the city**

contaminating drinking water, food and soil. In total 1200 tonnes of depleted uranium were used on Iraq by the US following their invasion in 2003.

One eyewitness described a sickening incident where the Iraqi National Guard directed families to leave their homes bearing white flags and gather at a mosque, only for US troops to open fire from the nearby rooftops, killing many of them.

At least 800 civilians and up to 2000 insurgents were killed by the time the occupation forces withdrew from Fallujah on 23 December 2004.

When Doctor Salam Ismael visited the city the following month, he reported that, "A wave of hate had wiped out two-thirds of the town... in most of the houses, the bodies were of civilians.

"It became clear to us that we were witnessing the aftermath of a massacre, the cold-blooded butchery of helpless and defenceless civilians."

### **City of ghosts**

Fallujah had been referred to as the city of mosques. After 2004 it became a city of ghosts. Two thirds of Fallujah was made uninhabitable; as many as 36,000 of the city's 50,000 homes were destroyed.

Entire neighbourhoods were bulldozed to cover up the crimes committed by the occupation forces. In some areas US forces were reported to be removing the soil and hosing down the streets to hide the use of chemical weapons.

While the US and British governments denied that they used depleted uranium, or that it could cause long-term health risks, its impact was clear.

In the years that followed, 14.7 per cent of all babies born in Fallujah had birth defects and the rate of leukaemia increased by 2200 per cent, significantly higher than the worst of the lasting effects in Hiroshima.

Babies were born with missing limbs, multiple heads and heart defects.

Nobody responsible for the crimes committed in Fallujah has been brought to justice.

Australia was directly implicated, with Australian general Jim Molan serving as Chief of Operations for the coalition forces in Iraq, and responsible for planning the Second Battle of Fallujah and the war crimes that resulted.

As a reward for his role in the butchery of Fallujah, he received the Distinguished Service Cross and was hand-picked by former PM Scott Morrison to serve as a Liberal senator in 2017.

The armed resistance movement that grew out of the despair of the occupation and the assaults on Fallujah humiliated the West.

But it was unable to grow into a unified national movement, and the West responded by creating divisions between Sunni and Shia Muslims to stoke sectarianism.

A unified movement from below could have driven the US out of Iraq and put a stop to the horrors of the occupation.

The horrific scenes that played out in Fallujah in 2004 are being repeated right now in Gaza, with the same forces backing it. Stopping the slaughter for good means building the sort of fight that can smash the imperialist system.

# THE FIRST INTIFADA: WHEN PALESTINIANS ROSE UP AGAINST ISRAEL

The Palestinian Intifada that began in 1987 exposed the brutality of life under occupation and how Palestinians have no choice but to organise resistance, writes **Maeve Larkins**

THE MEDIA presents the Hamas 7 October attack as the sole reason for Israel’s genocidal onslaught on Gaza. This erases decades of Israeli occupation and violence against the Palestinians, depicting Palestinian resistance as inexplicable and irrational.

But there is a long history of Palestinian resistance to Israeli colonisation. The mass popular uprising known as the First Intifada is one of its key moments.

By 1987, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza had been suffering 20 years of occupation, following Israel’s seizure of the territories in the Six Day War of 1967.

Like now, it was a life of brutal, daily oppression. Palestinians were forcibly removed from their land to make way for Israeli settlements. Israeli troops decided who could leave and enter, patrolling refugee camps and towns.

Any kind of resistance, like waving a Palestinian flag or forming a union would result in prison, beatings, and torture.

The First Intifada exploded from years of frustration with the occupation. The initial spark came on 8 December 1987, when an Israeli truck crushed and killed four Palestinians on the Gaza border. Their funerals in the nearby Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza became mass demonstrations against the occupation.

The Israelis responded brutally, using live ammunition on crowds, killing and injuring further Palestinians. Mass protests spread across Gaza and the West Bank.

Within weeks, activists formed local committees, eventually spanning practically every village, town and camp of the occupied territories. These formed a Unified National Leadership to coordinate the struggle. This Unified Command organised

general strikes and other efforts to disrupt Israel economically. Palestinian workers would refuse to work inside Israel. Palestinian shops would close on specific days and refused to sell any Israeli goods.

Israel responded with an “iron fist” approach. They closed schools and universities and imposed strict curfews. By 1988, Israel was sending 10,000 troops every day into the West Bank and Gaza, using more soldiers than in their conquest in 1967.

They used mass arrests, torture and severe beatings to try to quell the protests.

By the end of 1988, more than 30,000 Palestinians had been detained and hundreds killed. In 1989, Israel outlawed the wearing of a keffiyeh, with a punishment of death.

But the protests did not stop. Over the next five years, Palestinians maintained the uprising in the face of extraordinary repression.

The Unified Command issued appeals for Popular Committees to be formed to coordinate food distribution, produce goods locally, run independent classrooms out of homes and form new trade unions and women’s committees.

One factor in this resilience of the movement was its youth. In Gaza, almost half of the population was younger than 14. This new generation was less traumatised from the defeats of the past and had spent their entire lives under an oppressive Israeli regime.

One such Palestinian was quoted as saying, “Do not feel sorry for us. We are not starving people. We do not want your food. And we are not afraid. No one is afraid of their guns anymore.”

Another factor was its mass involvement.

The Israelis had thought that

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**The Intifada was a new form of Palestinian resistance— involving those under occupation rising up in large numbers**

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Palestinian resistance was finished. The First Intifada followed the defeat of Palestinian resistance fighters organised by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Lebanon in 1982.

For decades, the PLO had waged guerilla warfare against Israel from neighbouring states like Jordan and Lebanon, where Palestinians expelled from their homes in 1948 lived crowded into refugee camps.

After Israel invaded Lebanon, the PLO was defeated and driven into exile in Tunisia.

But the First Intifada was a new form of Palestinian resistance—involving those living under Israeli occupation rising up in large numbers.

The movement was overwhelmingly non-violent, with its leadership urging all Palestinian factions to avoid armed actions against Israel.

The IDF, however, had no issue with murdering unarmed protesters. It was Israel’s brutal repression and the feeling that the Intifada had not succeeded that saw the Palestinian resistance resort increasingly to armed struggle after the end of the First Intifada.

## **The Intifada spreads**

Despite the courage and resilience of the movement, the Intifada lacked the power to defeat Israel on its own. After the first year the strikes of Palestinian workers and boycotts of Israeli goods had caused only a 15 per cent reduction in Israeli business activity.

This was enough to rattle Israel’s economy but nowhere near enough to cripple it.

Israel received massive amounts of aid from the US and the West, and ensured the core of its economy relied exclusively on Jewish labour.

Palestinian workers within Israel

constituted just 11 per cent of the total labour force and were mostly confined to low paid “dirty jobs” in agriculture and construction.

In response to the strikes during the Intifada, Israel shipped in migrants from Lebanon and Portugal on special working visas.

Similarly, while the IDF was frustrated by its inability to crush the stone-throwing Palestinians, there was no chance of it being routed.

But the impact of the Palestinian uprising did not remain contained to just the West Bank and Gaza.

There is enormous support for the Palestinian cause among the mass of the Arab population.

Just a few weeks after the Intifada began, more than 10,000 protested in solidarity in Lebanon. In Jordan and Bahrain, planned demonstrations were suppressed by the regimes. In Syria, Tunisia, and Kuwait, state-sponsored protests in support of Palestine were quickly overrun by grassroots mobilisations, which were brutally repressed.

Despite Kuwait’s government initially committing \$5 million to support the Intifada, it used tear-gas and batons to suppress a pro-Palestinian demonstration of more than 300,000.

In Algeria, the Intifada provoked strikes across its largest factories demanding better wages. The strikes spilled into street riots demanding an end to soaring prices brought on by the regime’s privatisations.

Youths fought police with stones, some wearing keffiyehs as a show of unity with the Palestinians.

Support for the Palestinians threatened to spill over into revolts against the surrounding Arab regimes, destabilising the whole Middle East.

For the Arab masses, the Intifada was an inspiration not only as a movement of resistance to Israel, but also in the fight against the inequality, poverty and brutality of life under their own oppressive regimes.

The rulers of Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf States had carved a place for themselves in the system of global capitalism and imperialism, making their peace with Israel and the US. And regimes like Iran and Syria, while antagonists of the US, aspired to boost their own power in similar ways.

### Peace talks

This impact across the region explains why the US began to push for a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians.

The US reached out to Yasser Arafat, the head of the PLO, and offered to facilitate peace talks, on the



**Above: Palestinians protest during the First Intifada**

condition that the PLO revoked its commitment to armed struggle and recognised Israel as a legitimate state.

Arafat conceded. Previously, the PLO had maintained a commitment to liberating the whole of historic Palestine and instituting a single democratic state with equal rights for Jews and Arabs.

Now the PLO backflipped, aiming simply to establish a state within the occupied territories of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. This meant abandoning the possibility of Palestinians returning to the lands they were brutally expelled from in 1948 when Israel was created.

The PLO’s capitulation was a product of desperation, following its defeat and exile in Tunisia.

Its strategy of armed struggle had always involved looking to the Arab rulers for support in achieving a Palestinian state.

However, maintaining this support meant the PLO turning its back on resistance within the Arab states from workers and the poor—the key force capable of challenging Israel and Western imperialism.

The PLO had long held a “non-interference policy”, forbidding any involvement in the internal politics of the Arab states. During the Intifada, the PLO instructed its members not to join or issue any leaflets or statements that supported the protests against the regimes in Jordan and Kuwait.

They feared doing so would jeopardise the possibility of international

legal recognition. Just three months after Intifada began, PLO leader Basam Abu-Sharif argued, “The US must be made to feel that it is in her interests that an independent Palestinian state be created ... A Palestinian state in the Middle East will be the safety valve in the region.”

The result of the First Intifada was a peace process that would culminate in the Oslo Accords in 1993. But a Palestinian state was never delivered.

Instead the PLO was effectively integrated into the Israeli occupation. It was given control of the Palestinian Authority as a police force to suppress Palestinian resistance in the face of the encroachment of Israeli settlements.

Palestinian academic Edward Said rightly called the Oslo Accords, “An instrument of Palestinian surrender.”

Since 1989, Israeli settlements in the West Bank have more than doubled in size. Border checkpoints and Israeli security forces there have massively expanded.

Frustration with the dead-end of the Oslo Accords would later boil over into a Second Intifada in 2000.

Palestinian liberation and an end to Israel’s occupation can come only through a revolt across the region that topples US-backed regimes like Jordan, Egypt and the Gulf States.

The only force with the power to achieve this is the working class of the region. The real hope for Palestinian liberation lies in building a socialist movement committed to a revolution to smash imperialism and the capitalist system behind it.

# ALBANESE EMBRACES OFFSHORE DETENTION

By Ian Rintoul

WHEN 39 asylum seekers were discovered at Beagle Bay, 150 kilometres north of Broome on 19 February, Opposition leader and former offshore detention jailer Peter Dutton thought he was on a winner for the approaching Dunkley by-election.

Dutton went feral hoping to play the refugee card once again. Dutton warned darkly, “we’ll end up with an armada of boats”.

Dutton claimed that Labor had slashed the budget for Operation Sovereign Borders, and that Anthony Albanese is, “a weak Prime Minister being tested by people smugglers” and that Operation Sovereign Borders was not the same, “as we knew it when the Coalition was in power.”

The tragedy is that Operation Sovereign Borders is exactly the same as when the Coalition was in power.

Labor’s Home Affairs Minister Clare O’Neil bragged that Labor’s commitment to Operation Sovereign Borders “is absolute”. “Every person who has attempted to reach Australia by boat since I have been minister is back in their home country, or in Nauru,” she said.

Anthony Albanese responded to Dutton, “I’m very comfortable that the Operation Sovereign Borders has been put in place. It’s the same system that operated before... Our position on Operation Sovereign Borders is very clear, and people who attempt to arrive here by boat will not settle here.”

The February boat was the third group of asylum seekers to be taken to Nauru since September last year. Eleven people were transferred in September, and another 12 who were also found on the Western Australian coast were transferred in November.

There are now about 54 asylum seekers being held on Nauru, after eight asylum seekers (including a child) who were taken there last September returned to Sri Lanka.

But at least four people on Nauru have been found to be refugees. They face the same fate as the refugees sent to Nauru in 2013—years and years



**Above: Asylum seekers who arrived by boat in WA in February**

stuck there. Labor has no resettlement options. New Zealand’s offer to resettle 150 people a year from Nauru does not apply to people who have been taken there after June 2023.

Labor is spending \$420 million to contract the US company notorious for detention abuses, MTC, for garrison support services on Nauru to September 2025. All the indications are that the refugees are being held in closed detention in RPC1, which has been the administrative centre of detention on Nauru.

The Albanese government is also denying permanent visas to the more than 1000 refugees who were transferred from Nauru and PNG on medical grounds between 2014 and 2023.

Around 52 refugees that Australia sent to PNG in 2013 are still there. Labor continues to deny responsibility for refugees in PNG after their services have been cut since October last year.

## Abuses

All the contradictions of Australia’s discrimination against boat arrivals are back on display. While Labor will continue to take asylum seekers who arrive by boat to offshore detention, last year 22,916 people who arrived by plane made an onshore protection

claim, and if found to be refugees will get permanent visas.

Now, despite the horrors in Gaza, Labor is denying consular assistance to many refugees, although consular assistance is needed for refugees to actually get through the Rafah crossing and out of Gaza, even though the government has issued them tourist visas to get to Australia. Some of the tourist visas are expiring before they can be used to get out of Gaza.

With every denied visa and every asylum seeker transferred to Nauru, Labor digs itself deeper into a ditch of human rights abuses.

Labor easily won the Dunkley by-election. Its embrace of Operation Sovereign Border has got nothing to do with Dutton’s scare-mongering, it is part and parcel of Labor’s shift to the right, to govern from the centre. Albanese is “comfortable” with offshore detention.

To end Operation Sovereign Borders, we will need to build a movement strong enough to make Albanese very uncomfortable indeed. Rallies around Australia on Palm Sunday, Sunday 24 March, will be demanding the closure of Nauru, an end to turnbacks, the evacuation of refugees from PNG and permanent visas for all refugees.

**There are now about 54 asylum seekers being held on Nauru**

**Solidarity**