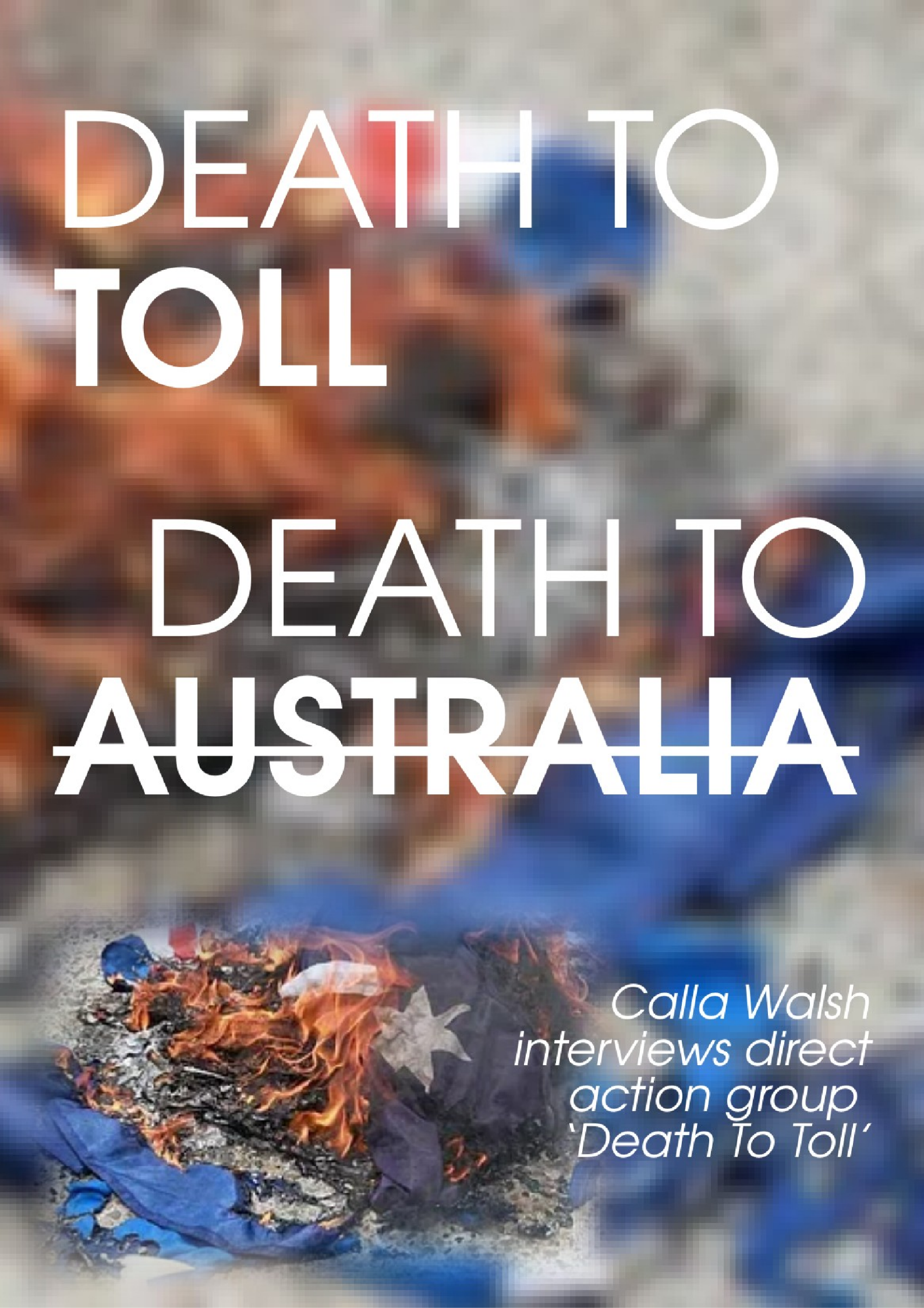




DEATH TO TOLL

DEATH TO AUSTRALIA

*Calla Walsh
interviews direct
action group
'Death To Toll'*

As Burkhard Garweg from the Red Army Faction in Germany once said, “Legal, illegal, don’t give a damn.”

Twenty years ago, massive street protests against the war in Iraq accomplished nothing. By contrast, people often turn to the anti-Vietnam war movement as an example of ‘success’. But that movement also included riots, firebombings, airplane hijackings: a full spectrum of tactics.

So, we will do what hurts Toll and the ‘australian’ colony the most. Obviously, this includes illegal acts, but we don’t make a fetish out of clandestinity. A legal gathering can turn into a resistance event if people take initiative. A blockade can be spontaneous. Riots can start in broad daylight. Our actions have entailed property damage, vandalism, sabotage and logistical blockades, but also political education and public events....

Historically, successful movements have had both an above and an underground component. The important thing is for people to resist. Do what you are capable of, then take that capacity one step further.”

-- Death to Toll

Most direct action campaigns in the imperial core targeting weapons companies and their supply chains have engaged in property damage using tools like hammers and crowbars, or blockades and rooftop occupations that shut down production for a day and end in arrest.

The campaign in “Australia” to shut down genocide-profiteer Toll Holdings says that tactically, “Everything is on the table.” They have already carried out extensive sabotage and arson against the logistics company. In a recent communique they threatened, “Dear

Toll, You are bloodstained, you will never rest easy. Cease and desist, or violence will continue to escalate against you.”

I was lucky enough to interview the group behind this campaign, Death to Toll. Further information, including footage, can be found at tolldeath.noblogs.org or @forautonomydestroyaustralia on Instagram. As always, feel free to republish and reshare my writing however you see fit.

Here's the interview:

Calla Walsh: Readers can learn much more on your site, but in brief, what is ‘Australia’‘s relationship to US-led imperialism and the zionist genocide in Palestine, and what role does Toll Holdings play in this?

Death to Toll: ‘australia’ supports zionist genocide through its role as a junior partner in US-led imperialism. ‘australia’ sends munitions, i.e. bullets and bombs, to the US where they are used as a second supply line to support ‘israel’s genocidal occupation of Palestine.

Toll Holdings is a logistics company transporting these weapons. Toll has partnered with arms dealers Thales, NIOA and the ‘australian’ Department of Defence to transport ‘Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance’, including 155mm artillery shells. These are horrifying weapons that have been key to the destruction of life in Gaza.

Targeting this supply chain is important because the US and ‘israel’ are running short on munitions. It’s volatile, and the balance between supply and demand changes with the geopolitical situation — one month there will be one kind of weapon that is running low, then later it’s a different one. But because the US is fighting so many wars, it’s overextended itself in terms of

imperialism, and that leads to shortages that have a material effect on their ability to keep prosecuting these wars.

Also, the ‘israeli’ army are cowards. They can’t win a fight against guerrilla warriors from the Palestinian resistance. They have to indiscriminately shell everything — old people, hospitals, kids. ‘israeli’ officials have actually said that they could ‘lose this war’ due to a shortage of ammo.

So Toll is literally driving genocide, and also driving some of the most vicious and cowardly weapons that are key to the ‘israeli’ strategy. And in fact 155mm shells of the kind produced in ‘australia’ have been identified being sent from the US to ‘israel’.

Calla: Militant attacks against Toll so far have included intercepting vehicles in motion to vandalize and barricade them with fire, smashing windows and vandalizing offices with red paint, cutting internet cables at Toll-owned sites, and blockading an international port entrance used by Toll. Colonial police claim they are investigating the incidents, but the media has not reported anyone arrested or facing charges thus far.

What has this campaign learned, and how has it tactically adapted to your context, from other global direct action campaigns like Palestine Action? With this sort of direct action there seems to exist multiple goals — developing actionists’ skills and capacity, exacting material damage and disrupting production and supply chains, while also achieving a propaganda effect, and of course evading capture.

What do your actions prioritize, or how do you balance all of the above?

Death to Toll: We are deeply inspired by Palestine Action. We wouldn’t exist in the form that we do if not for them. However,

attempts to replicate their strategy of largely above-ground actions have not worked in other contexts, including ours.

For a long period while Palestine Action UK was starting up, Elbit didn't press charges, enabling the organisation to build momentum. The above-ground nature of the actions also enabled people to do a lot of damage, standing there plugging with a sledgehammer rather than having a few hits and running off.

This legal context does not exist in 'australia' or the 'US' (as you have found), so this necessitates an evolution in strategy. It's also relevant that police in 'australia', unlike in the UK, routinely carry guns. There is a level of militarised policing (flashbangs, pepperballs, capsicum spray, rubber bullets) now often seen at protests in Naarm (so-called 'melbourne') which is quite different from what comrades over there have described.

We have to do material damage while avoiding arrest, which in turn requires us to develop our technical skills so that the damage is significant. We have to maintain security, but at the same time, we have to make our actions known in an inspiring way, so we can grow our network and pose a real threat to Toll. We prioritise everything. It is a work in progress.

There's a quote from the Red Army Faction, that the success of an action is not just the action in itself, but also the level of resistance it enables in the future. Propaganda is a big part of that — letting people know what you have done and why it's important. There's also a quote from the Palestinian resistance, that a successful strategy has to walk a line 'between significance and precautions'.

What this looks like is different in different contexts (eg Gaza versus the West Bank), including the choice of whether and how to film. Palestine Action really broke new ground for the use of footage in direct action in the West, but in a more repressive

context, people having their faces out and id'ing themselves for the camera doesn't always work.

What the Palestinian resistance does with film is obviously incredible. It's amazing how these different symbols (the red triangle, red paint from the extinguisher that Palestine Action pioneered) have been taken up in different contexts.

We want to learn from everything and we want people to be able to learn from us as well.

Calla: As it explains on your site, Toll is an 'Australian' company but it also has significant Japanese private investment and some Japanese government ownership, so there are prospects for globalizing this campaign. Can you explain this relationship more? How can people in other countries support the campaign or directly partake in it?

Death to Toll: Toll is a wholly owned subsidiary of Japan Post, which itself is part-owned by the Japanese government. The history of that ownership is directly linked to Japan's far-right and to that country both avoiding responsibility for its imperialist crimes, including past atrocities in Asia, South-East Asia and China, and perpetuating genocide in Palestine today.

Toll was an 'australian' company acquired by Japan Post in a project driven by Shinzo Abe, the far-right former prime minister who supported re-militarisation of Japan. Japan Post wanted a logistics business to expand into Asian markets. It was thought that people would be wary because of the history of Japanese militarism during World War 2. Many people in Asia suffered horribly from this, and Abe even glorified imperial Japan through his visits to the Yasukuni shrine housing war criminals. So it was thought that fronting with an 'australian' company would be a good way to deflect.

Toll also has a lot of Singaporean Chinese employees. It was believed this would enable the company to acquire a foothold among ethnically Chinese people, including those in Singapore and China – who would otherwise be hostile to Abe's and Japanese involvement because of, again, Japan's imperial crimes.

This is incredibly relevant because we're talking about a company which is literally driving bombs. It is a military contractor masquerading as a civilian delivery firm. We're not just talking of atrocities from the past, we're talking about people who have fascist ideologies gaining access to the flow of military hardware.

We think this information about Toll is relevant around the world, not just in 'australia'. As Toll pursues Asian and global markets, there is scope for all kinds of pressure. Whether that's boycotts of Japanese goods and companies, especially those linked to Japan Post or the Japanese government; protests against the Japanese embassy; or hits on Toll locations in your country.

We are inspired by comrades in Malaysia who threatened to boycott the Japanese company Itochu because it collaborated with Elbit, after which that contract was dropped; and by those who organised protests in solidarity with T. Hoxha, the Palestine Action prisoner who was on hunger strike.

Comrades in Japan obviously have proximity and leverage, and we're inspired by the history of solidarity between Japanese and Palestinian anti-imperialist movements, including the Japanese Red Army.

Toll has contracts with the 'US' Department of Defense, including providing military support for AFRICOM and CENTCOM.

And finally, Toll has locations in the UK and in Europe. We're particularly interested in those comrades in and around Palestine Action in the UK, who maybe less active than they'd like to be while the movement adjusts to proscription.

Ultimately in an era of multi-national supply chains, there is lots people can do, so get busy everyone.

Calla: As you center in the campaign, 'Australia' is as genocidal and illegitimate of a settler colonial entity as "Israel" and the "United States," and the struggle to dismantle these entities, and US-led imperialism as a whole, are all one and the same. Can you give us some more insight into the history and present of settler colonialism and Indigenous resistance in 'Australia,' and why dismantling the settler state there is a core part of your political strategy?

Death to Toll: 'australia' is a genocidal, exploitative and soulless entity. On purely aesthetic grounds it should be wiped out but the levels of evil perpetuated against First Nations people, historically and in the present, are unreal.

Here is one interlinked story: this white police officer shot dead an Aboriginal teenager, Kumanjayi Walker — a colonial murder. It turned out that Zachary Rolfe, the killer cop, had been mentored by Ben Roberts-Smith, the most decorated soldier in 'australian' history. Roberts-Smith has himself committed war crimes including shooting an Afghan teenager in the head.

Neither Rolfe nor Roberts-Smith was ever convicted of any charges. In fact no agent of the state has ever been convicted of killing an Aboriginal person despite hundreds of deaths in custody, though Roberts-Smith has received considerable financial backing from wealthy corporatists including one of the richest media-owners in the country. However, the person who gave evidence of

the atrocities Roberts-Smith committed, David McBride, is still in jail for supposedly leaking military secrets. And after Kumanjayi Walker's murder, hundreds of members of the public wrote in to nominate Zachary Rolfe as 'police officer of the year'.

This is just one story among many, but it gives a sense of how police, the state, corporations, the imperialist machine and popular will amongst settler-colonials reproduce the entity that is 'australia'.

On a moral and a legal level, 'australian' settler-colonialism is analogous to 'israel' and the 'United States'. Sovereignty has not been ceded by First Nations people.

This is an illegitimate occupation. But on a material level, colonisation and imperialism are intertwined. It is the same bullets, the same corporations and even the same individual people.

In the case of Toll, we've discussed how the bullets and bombs go to 'israel' via the 'United States'. The navy ship we photographed being refueled by Toll, inspiring us to later attack a Toll fuel truck, was the HMAS Arunta – previously deployed in the imperialist war against Iraq. HMAS Arunta has also targeted boat people, and as you know, 'australia's border policy is a white supremacist inspiration round the world, including for Frontex in Europe. The 'australian' navy has also been responsible for severe PFAS pollution in Wreck Bay, poisoning Aboriginal peoples, lands and waters, causing cancer and other fatal diseases.

When you specifically look at munitions, Toll has contracted with NIOA to transport 155mm artillery shells. But also, as at 2017 NIOA produced 70% of ammunition used by the 'australian' police — including, quite possibly, the bullet that killed Kumanjayi Walker.

Even if we were single-issue anti-Zionists, if you want to seriously attack the flow of munitions to 'israel', it's not possible to not attack the settler-state of 'australia'.

Calla: I noticed, of course, that you quoted the Red Army Faction in that other interview you did. RAF conducted many joint military operations with the Palestinian resistance, and they still have members underground evading capture to this day. To me they are a key reference point for anti-imperialist militancy in the imperial core, along with guerrilla groups like the Red Brigades, May 19 Communist Organization, Black Liberation Army, Japanese Red Army, etc. Do any similar historical reference points exist in 'Australia'? What can people in the anti-imperialist movement today learn and apply from these sort of groups?

Death to Toll: The history of militant anti-imperialist resistance in 'australia' is mostly Indigenous resistance. The first prison in Naarm (so-called 'melbourne') was burned to the ground by an Woiwurrung elder, Tullarmareena, who then went on the run. That was resisting the extraction of wealth from his land that was being expropriated back to Britain. Pemulwuy, a Bidjigal warrior in what is now 'sydney', led an Aboriginal insurgency in the late 1700s/early 1800s that gave a bunch of British colonisers what they deserved. There were also two white settlers, William Knight and Thomas Thrush, who actively joined Pemulwuy's resistance.

These kinds of joint operations were and are the exception rather than the norm, but they did occur. Maybe what we can learn is that revolutionary defeatism is never a popular position, but it is always possible.

In terms of settler-led anti-imperialist resistance, there has historically been some riotous street activity (e.g. throwing rocks at the 'US' consulate during the Vietnam war). Students also

donated money to the National Liberation Front (NLF) of North Vietnam. It didn't reach the extent (that we are aware) of people arming themselves and going underground as with the groups you mention.

Anti-imperialist action here has often taken the form of clashes at military expos or events, such as at Land Forces in 'melbourne' last year or historically at AIDEX in Canberra in 1991. Or, blockades including environmental protests such as those against the Jabiluka uranium mine in 1998. It tends to be above-ground with a large NVDA (Non Violent Direct Action) component and also currents or undercurrents of people who want to turn up the temperature.

Perhaps 'australia's biggest contribution to imperialism is through mining, fossil fuels and climate change. We are a junior partner to the 'US' in terms of militarism, but the belly of the beast in terms of fossil capital. In fact one of the Toll divisions which does the most military work, Toll Remote Logistics, also services mining — that's the division that has the contract with CENTCOM. Also, 'australia' just made a deal with Trump to become a supplier of critical minerals for the US military.

We have no knowledge of the case apart from what has been reported, but two 'australians' have been accused of trafficking weapons to the West Papuan independence movement. The West Papuan National Liberation Army has called for 'international advocacy support' for their 'immediate release'.

Calla: Besides some coverage from enemy zionist media like The Jerusalem Post, which is obviously a badge of honor, your campaign hasn't received much media attention outside of your Instagram account, despite it being, in my opinion, one of the most exciting and militant direct action campaigns we have seen inside the imperial core. There is certainly an aversion from the

“movement” and its aboveground formations to use their platforms to even acknowledge or uplift militancy, even if we do not expect them to directly partake in it themselves. I am curious how yall think we can develop more censorship-resistant mechanisms to widely propagate direct action and militancy.

Death to Toll: Indeed, sometimes it feels like the enemy is more interested in us than our own side — which as you say is a badge of honour! The fascist and tabloid press in ‘australia’ has hyperventilated over our campaign, including front-page coverage and national TV, but somehow much of the ‘movement’ has missed the memo. This is as we expected.

We submit our actions anonymously to a number of Instagram accounts. Some of these have been reliable in sharing and uplifting, for which we are grateful. But as you say, the above-ground has been reticent.

Instagram is obviously enemy-owned, but it’s where people are at, so we maintain a presence. We also maintain a site, tolldeath.noblogs.org, it has less immediate reach but it’s less susceptible to censorship. We have a YouTube channel. We do graf! We distribute print media and have submitted anonymously to community radio. Paul Gregoire, a great independent journalist, has covered our campaign.

We try to be everywhere so if one channel is cut off, there are others.

Now that repression is intensifying in ‘australia’, we hope to cultivate more solidarity across borders. Principled support from people like yourself means a lot, it’s also harder for the ‘australian’ state to crack down on. It feels strange that in the 1970s, there was all this international collaboration, with Black Liberation Army members going to Algeria, Aboriginal communists traveling to

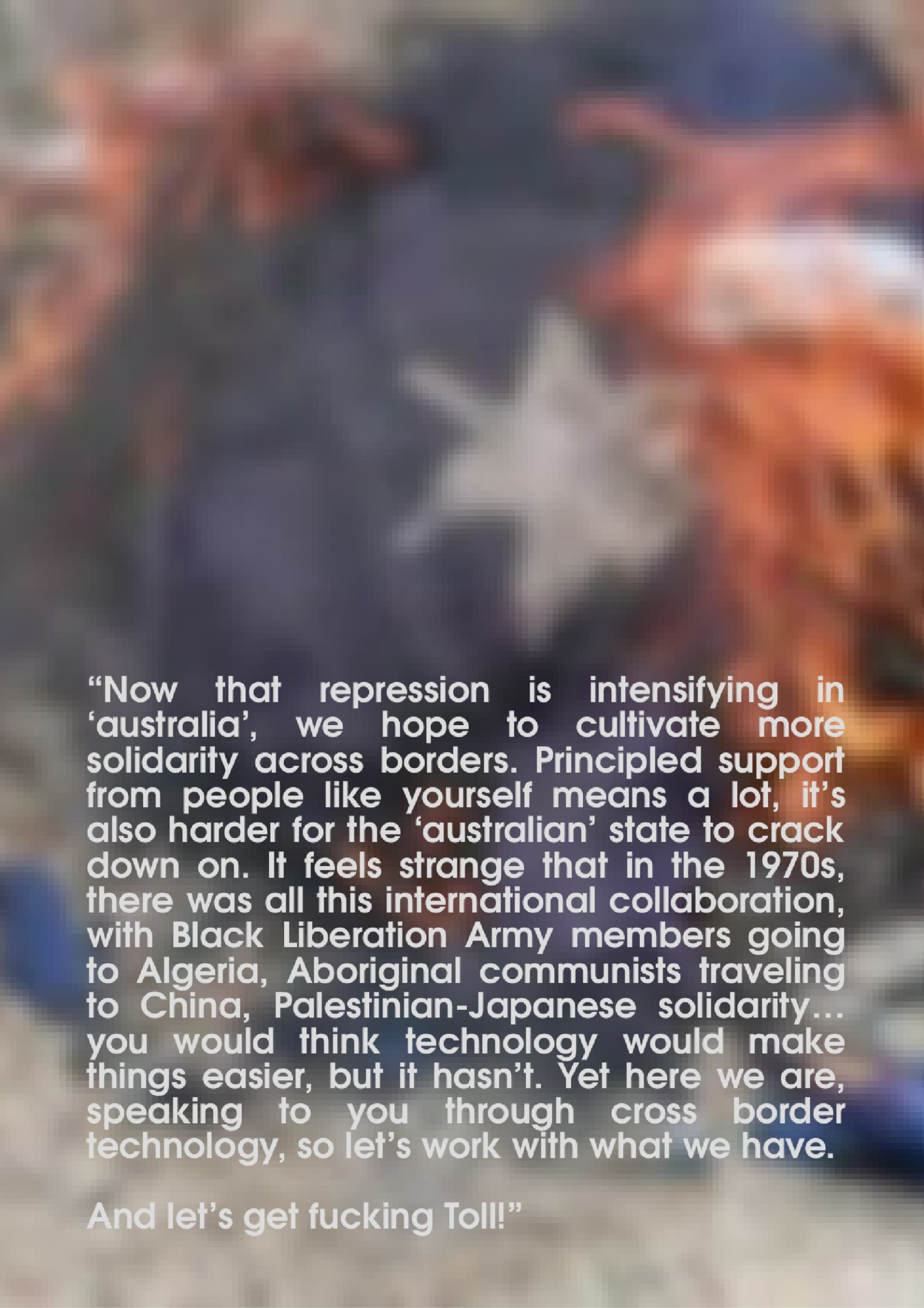
China, Palestinian-Japanese solidarity... you would think technology would make things easier, but it hasn't. Yet here we are, speaking to you through cross border technology, so let's work with what we have.

And let's get fucking Toll!

Follow the campaign at tolldeath.noblogs.org or
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Text from calla.substack.com

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