

On the murder of Abdifatah Ahmed by Victoria Police

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30th April 2025

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Two accounts of a solidarity rally for Abdifatah Ahmed and its aftermath. The GoFundMe for Abdifatah's family is here: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/justice-for-abdifatah-ahmed-support-his-family-s-fight>

‘What does materially acting in solidarity for Black life look like?’

There was a moment of rupture that was defused at the Justice for Abdifatah Ahmed afternoon rally on Tuesday 22nd of April. This is an attempt to provide an account against the lies circulated by corporate media and people propagating counter-insurgent narratives. To be clear, this is written by non-Black settlers, but because these falsities are spreading in our networks, we want to clear them up.

The rally started as a stock-standard community rally affair, initiated by Somali community networks. The anger was subdued but palpable: the cops had murdered 35-year-old Somali man Abdifatah Ahmed the Thursday before near Coles in Footscray. The killer cops according to witnesses acted ‘senselessly’, and immediately saw him as a ‘threat’ to them for having a knife. There was a whole gamut of milquetoast liberal politics at the rally. One speaker even led ‘aussie aussie oi oi oi’; the Mayor spoke (thankfully dressed down for hypocrisy); and there was numerous injunctions to be ‘peaceful’ and report anyone ‘doing anything’ to the marshals in his vis. That said many speakers got to the unjust core: this was an anti-Black, Afrophobic political murder by the cops in a lineage of racist, anti-poor policing. He was abandoned by the system, living on the streets, and there was no mental health support.

After speeches, hundreds of us eventually marched to the Footscray cop shop. The turn-out was multiracial but mostly Black African networks, showing how our non-Black networks devalue Black life. A bit of traffic was disrupted. Some people wanting to act on their anger were counselled by others to not act. It was a contained anger vibe, as the cops stood passively protecting the cop shop or directing traffic. From the start, cops were in small groups, observing but facilitating a planned protest.

After words died down at the cop shop, we were on the way back to Footscray, over the rail bridge on Nicholson St. Some of us heard a clang. A white cop had his baton out and was trying to bash a Black man. The initial context for this is missing, but we heard the man was yelling at the cop before the cop started bashing him. From here about 30 or so members of the crowd rushed the cops who had to retreat along Irving St all the way back to Footscray station.

This moment felt necessary to stop the bashing. It was powerful to see the cops on the back foot. Some people got out some trash and dumped it in the street. Someone threw a glass bottle towards the cops. The Black man who was getting bashed resisted the racist cop further. Meanwhile, some of the bigger part of the crowd back near the bridge obstructed the movement of the highway patrol car trying to manoeuvre to contain the rupture.

Cops had retreated into a formed line near the station. Simultaneously many protest initiators and crowd members quelled the rising anger much of the crowd acted on. They intervened into this resistive moment to defuse its potential. They held people back. They cleaned up the rubbish. They told people to sit down, not stand up. They disowned the Black man resisting the racist cop, as well as other people masked up who were accused of being ‘cops’. It was not what we were here for. Apparently. But what were we here for?

The next day we learned this white cop was wearing a 'Thin Blue Line' patch, signalling his white supremacist politics more explicitly than other cops. Cops had deployed their contradictory 'manage community tensions' strategy. Normal clothes cops in small groups passively policed and facilitated the rally, before some cops escalated things. Meanwhile, there were riot cops out of sight but around the corner just in case things kicked off. They almost were deployed, but things fizzed just as quickly as they cracked open.

After the rally, we noticed many members of our networks spreading this idea that people in 'black bloc' started shit in some fucked way at the rally. We note how similar this line was to how the Herald Scum narrated the brief moment of rupture. As much as it would of great for there to be 30 anarchists there in a bloc, there wasn't. This says a lot about the whiteness of anarchism and antifascism here that a fucked anti-African police murder draws out a trickle of our networks. People there acted with the anger that was electric against the cops, but the spark was extinguished by counter-insurgency.

This whole moment raises many questions. What does materially acting in solidarity for Black life look like? Against how our lives, our networks, through inheritance, gentrification and policing, benefit from ongoing violence against Black people? Why do we seem more prepared to follow and act with those leading with passivity, rather than act with those taking militant action? And why do so many of us rush to believe and spread pre-existing false 'outside agitator' narratives?

Kkkops and Kkkompradors

Over the last two weeks my head has been filled with '???' due to the mix of grief, misleadership and possibility in response to the murder of Abdifatah Ahmed by Victorian kkkops. An account of what happened on Tuesday's rally can be found above. Key info is that an African man engaged in heightened conflict (verbal and physical) with police who bashed him with a baton, others came to his aid by rushing the cops, and that rally organisers and others (African and non-African) have since disavowed both the man who escalated and people who showed solidarity by stepping in to defend him.

A detail which I have not seen mentioned elsewhere, is that **key rally organisers work for the cops**. This isn't some 'kill the cop in your head' metaphor. Berhan Ahmed is the CEO of Africause, a non-profit which partners with Vicpol, has a senior Vicpol officer on its board, and recruits African people to become police (or security guards at a company which Ahmed also runs... not like this is a gift or anything). Farah Warsame, another 'leader' of the protest, got given a certificate of appreciation by Vicpol for his 'outstanding contribution to the Police Managers Qualifying Program'.

How can you 'lead' a movement against cop brutality when you yourself are embedded with cops? Why do these people get to tell us what to do?

Well, why indeed. I think many non-African people practise a form of solidarity which resolves into simplistic passivity when confronted with liberals who claim to represent 'the community'. Honestly, I don't know if 'community' even exists among settlers on this continent (white or otherwise). At the rally, I saw an African man in a hoodie expressing strong anger, who was corralled and talked down by several other African people, one wearing a suit jacket (class exists!!). A friend described another incident where a Black man interrupted a speaker out-

side the copshop who was saying “we aren’t here for them, it’s just a few bad cops” with “fuck that! and “nah it’s all cops!”, he was then moved away by a younger Black man and shouted at by members of the crowd.

We also know that in the moments after Abdifatah Ahmed’s death, people spontaneously threw bottles at cops. The busstops on the road near where he was murdered have all been smashed. A handwritten sign near his memorial at the intersection denounced ‘Gestapo Vicpol’ from the perspective of Africans. Afaict, the only person who actively tried to punch on with cops during the rally was the African man who has since been disowned. In what seems like a bizarre inversion of reality, Ninefax—a media company super-friendly to law and order and settler capital – has since interviewed Berhan Ahmed, who told the story of how Abdifatah approached him two years ago to ask for help. Ahmed didn’t find him housing but did buy him a kebab. In other words, a CEO who did not offer a homeless man what he needed, but instead continued working with the institution which eventually murdered him, now gets to narrate the meaning of Abdifatah’s life and death...

Who speaks for a ‘community’?

I myself come from a non-African, non-white diaspora family. There are both colonial collaborators and anti-colonial resistance fighters in my ancestry, but the compradors are closer. This is normal. ‘Australia’ doesn’t give out visas from compassion, but to serve its own colonial, imperialist and economic interests. Just as for whites, all the incentives tend towards collaboration with the violent colonial state, for upward class mobility and personal safety.

I think even many community ‘leaders’ know their words are hollow, hence the use of radical platitudes they don’t act on (this is far from unique to Africans). On Tuesday we walked round the block chanting ‘no justice no peace’, then were told off for not ‘peacefully’ sitting down in front of cops like their deputised marshals told us. How can people be ‘leaders’ if they do not show integrity to their own words?

We have to think for ourselves and be responsible for our own politics. Of course positionality is important—Black anarchists have things to say that are different (and more correct imo) than the white left! But **values informed by positionality** are different from passive deference. Would you obey someone in the Palestinian Authority just because they were wearing a keffiyeh?? Tbh, some of you mfs probably would!!

A Black man- one of those most at risk of cop brutality, as the very nature of the event illustrates—was filled with anger and courage and confronted cops. Others spontaneously rushed to defend him, the cops had to temporarily retreat. These are moments of hope, love and power. When we say ‘ACAB’, we must be in solidarity with people who are living it, not just saying it. I think ‘community’ is what we make when we act our values alongside those who share them.

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<https://antieverthing.noblogs.org/post/2025/04/30/on-the-murder-of-abdifatah-ahmed-by-victoria-police/>

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