



ISRAEL OUT OF GAZA! STOP THE GENOCIDE!

Israel stands condemned for its brutal aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, and the genocide and scorched earth war against them. The Australian government must cease its support for Israel and respect the rights of the Palestinian people to defend their lands and people in the face of Israeli occupation.

Israel has imposed a full blockade on Gaza, and ordered more than one million fear-stricken Palestinians in the north to leave their homes and flee south. The north includes Gaza City, with 750,000 residents. It also includes the Jabalia and al-Shati refugee camps and Gaza's main hospital, which has been bombed with the loss of hundreds of lives. Nowhere in Gaza is safe.

Israeli military forces are amassed on the border with Gaza in readiness to carry out a ground invasion. The death toll in Gaza is continuing to rise under constant bombardment by Israel. Nearly 600 children are already dead.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was forced to close 14 food distribution centres leaving half a million people without food relief. Hospitals, schools, the headquarters of the Civil Emergency and Ambulance Service in Gaza City, and other infrastructure and homes are amongst the targets. Power and water have been cut by Israel with a blockade preventing the entry of food and medicine. Overcrowded hospitals are running out of fuel for their generators.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

A humanitarian crisis of major proportions is playing out as a result of Israel's attempted genocide.

Apart from the US and its pro-Israel allies, there is strong and growing international condemnation of Israel's declaration of war and subsequent massacre of Palestinian people in Gaza.

Hundreds of thousands of people around the world are holding demonstrations in support of the Palestinian people.

At the same time there is a rise in anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in Europe.

In Australia thousands of people took part in peaceful protest actions with speakers from the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities – all united in opposition to Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestinian lands.

Anti-Semitism was denounced, as was the behaviour of a small group at the Opera House who chanted anti-Semitic slogans. Islamophobia, which is on the rise, was also denounced.

The situation in the Gaza Strip is rapidly deteriorating. Israel refused to open the

border with Egypt to allow the entry of aid or the exit of Palestinians and foreign nationals.

Francesca Albanese, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories – occupied by Israel since its invasion in 1967 – warned that “There is a grave danger that what we are witnessing may be a repeat of the 1948 Nakba, and the 1967 Naksa, yet on a larger scale.”

The Nakba – ‘catastrophe’ – in 1948 saw an estimated 750,000 Palestinians forced from their homes, 15,000 killed by the British and Zionist forces, and the creation of the state of Israel on Palestinian land. More than 500 Palestinian towns and villages were destroyed.

The 1967 six-day war (Naksa) saw further incursions by the Zionist forces who seized the remaining Palestinian territories of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, Syrian Golan Heights, and Egyptian Sinai Peninsula.

Israel has steadfastly refused to comply with UN resolutions calling for a return to the pre-1967 borders and a two-state solution with a Palestinian state based on Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem as its capital.

The major stumbling blocks to carrying out UN resolutions are the US and Zionist Israel.

Palestine is a colonised entity, occupied and blockaded by Israel, and often described as the largest open air prison in the world. Israel is an apartheid state with Palestinians living within its borders denied the same rights as Jewish citizens.

Generations of Palestinians have been subjected to human rights violations and persecution. Armed Israeli settlers continue to drive Palestinians from their homes in the West Bank and Gaza, murdering them, seizing their land, and establishing illegal settlements.

In more recent times Israel has launched four protracted military assaults on Gaza: in 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2021. Thousands more of Palestinians were killed, including many children, and tens of thousands of homes, schools and office buildings were destroyed.

COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT

Hamas' attack killing civilians must be condemned, but it should not come as a surprise. The situation was and remains dire in the occupied territories.

Israel has a record of collective punishment.

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Guardian

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23rd October 2023

Communist Party of Australia anniversary

One hundred and three years of the workers' struggle and counting. 30th October is the anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Australia. On 30th October in 1920, about 13 people met, inspired by the then-recent Russian Revolution. Those people wanted justice, and power for the working people who make up the majority of the population, and produce all of the wealth of the country. That struggle continues today.

There have been many ups and downs since then, and this is no time for a history lesson. There have been a lot of firsts. The Communist Party of Australia was the first political party to commit to full rights for Aboriginal people, and has continued to fight for that cause ever since, as witnessed by our vigorous campaign for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. The CPA was instrumental in the fight against sending pig iron to the Japanese military dictatorship in the run-up to World War II, at a time when Australia was run by Peter Dutton's fascism-friendly predecessor Robert Menzies. The Party also pointed out that the Spanish Civil War was acting as a dress rehearsal for Hitler.

Since that meeting in 1920, communist countries put the first men and women in space, achieved victories against the world's dominant super power in Vietnam, China, Korea, and Cuba, lifted millions out of poverty, and inspired millions more.

The Communist Party of Australia is going strong today. New Party branches have opened in NSW, the ACT, South Australia, and Queensland, and new members are applying to the Party every week.

Party members are active in unions, the Peace Movement, refugee protection, the fight for public housing and for tenants rights, and the environmental movement.

Others are in those movements too. CPA members work constructively with other people for progressive causes, and bring to those causes an awareness of the class nature of Australia. We are informed by Marx's understanding of class relations, and of the nature of capital.

Recently some Party members in Melbourne, campaigning for the Voice to Parliament, were accused by a passer-by of being "authoritarian and utopian." The Communist Party of Australia is neither. We have a vigorous internal discussions in which members have not only the right to their own opinions, but have an obligation to share those opinions. As for being 'utopian,' we are realists, seeing clearly the actual conditions people labor under, rather than being the kind of realists who look at the world as it is in one moment and conclude that nothing can be changed.

103 years is a long time, but the Communist Party of Australia is needed now more than ever. Capital and free markets have had things their way for decades. This means that generations have grown up thinking that a society in which the free market is idolised is the natural state of things. Free market ideology has brought the world to where it is now; with massive inequality, workers casualised and powerless, and with an ongoing Climate Crisis that threatens to make this planet uninhabitable.

Things can be different, and a better world is possible.

In the *Guardian* each week, many of our articles show how people are working to change things. A lot of those articles end with a link to causes you can join or donate to.

As well as those calls to action, there is the Communist Party of Australia itself. Have a look at our website, get informed, get active, and support or join the CPA!

Referendum defeat, a 'sorry day'

Vinnie Molina

Yes campaigner Thomas Mayo said the defeat of the Referendum signalled a "sorry day." Australia voted for the status quo of dispossession, inequality, lack of recognition and the strengthening of colonialism.

It is a sorry day indeed. The results unfortunately, show the kind of society Australians live in. The highly emotional and effective campaign of fear and disinformation carried out by the No campaign won the day.

The Communist Party of Australia, as part of the YES campaign for a Voice to Parliament, had campaigned for a Yes vote in the Referendum to the very last minute since July 2023.

Those who supported the Yes are true supporters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Unfortunately, it shows the real reason the gap continues to be a national disgrace is the lack of political will, policies or compassion to address it.

As the CPA Voice material stated if the NO vote was successful:

- All progress stops for a national treaty, no incentive for further progress on Indigenous rights and truth-telling.
- Conservative forces will see a No vote as a win and will be emboldened to push their objectives against the working class and First Peoples of Australia.
- The Labor Party will not have an appetite to bring up a referendum again at least for the next couple of terms, if they get them, and the Coalition will do nothing (or worse) despite the opportunistic offer made by the leader of the opposition Peter Dutton.
- While the Uluru Statement from the heart was hurt, Indigenous Australians will continue the struggle. The push for truth-telling and a treaty will be the way forward.

The Referendum on the Voice to Parliament for Indigenous Australians was an opportunity for Australians to declare their opposition to the ongoing legacy of colonialism and acts of genocide. A successful vote could have opened up space for progressive change in Australia and declared support for recognition and improvement of the position of First Peoples in Australia.

Let's hope that the 'No' victory will not further create polarisation and division. In the report we heard, particularly evident in the NT, that the Indigenous population voted Yes. Unfortunately, the Australian population have let the First Peoples down.

In the CPA we will continue to accept the invitation to walk with the First Peoples and will look for alternatives to realising the Uluru statement from the heart. We will also continue to work for Land Rights as the means to secure the future of Indigenous Australians.

The CPA calls for unity for all those who were engaged in the Referendum campaign over the past months. Those of us who voted Yes for a Voice to Parliament for Indigenous Australians will need to work harder to bring about justice and a better future for all. In this truth-telling and treaty are essential in the struggle for land rights and equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We feel proud that the CPA mobilised its modest resources for recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and an enshrined Voice to Parliament.

In its campaign the CPA correctly identified that it would be necessary to continue the struggle regardless of the outcome of the referendum.

The Communist Party of Australia will continue to work alongside Australia's First Peoples for justice and closing the gap in unity with non-Indigenous and Indigenous people to build a fairer society for all. ☺

Israel out of Gaza!

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Collective punishment is action taken against a group, in this instance innocent citizens, in retaliation to the actions of others. It is a breach of the Geneva Convention, and a serious war crime.

Israel's responses are way out of proportion to Hamas' actions, as innocent people including children suffer and die and lose everything.

Israel's leaders do not see Palestinians as humans worthy of a life or human rights. Israel's Defence Minister Yoav Gallant calls them "human animals" and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu uses the term "human beasts."

Israeli President Isaac Herzog said "We will break their backbone."

GREATER ISRAEL

Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of US foreign aid and is a nuclear weapons state. Up to February 2022 Israel had received US\$150 billion in aid from the US. At present billions of dollars' worth of military equipment from the US are flowing into Israel.

The US Defence Secretary, during his visit to Israel, told the Israeli Prime Minister: "Make no mistake, the United States will make sure that Israel has what it needs to defend itself." He said the US "will continue to coordinate closely with Israel to help secure the release of the innocent men, women, and children in the clutches of Hamas, including American citizens."

Israel, the most powerful military force in the Middle East, is the military arm of US imperialism in the region.

Israel's extreme right-wing government may well be using Hamas' attack to progress its Zionist policy

of Greater Israel with a full-scale occupation forcing Palestinians from their lands in the north of Gaza and possibly also in the West Bank.

Greater Israel is a one-state 'solution' – a state of Israel and complete dispossession of Palestinians.

Any criticism of Zionism or Israel's actions is portrayed as anti-Semitism by the Zionists. It is not. Zionism is a political ideology that strives for Greater Israel. Anti-Semitism is an attack on Jewish people because they are Jewish. Many Jews have joined the protests in support of the Palestinians. Many oppose Zionism.

RISK OF ESCALATION

There is a risk of the war escalating beyond the present borders into Iran, Lebanon and Syria. Already Israel has fired missiles into Syria and Lebanon.

Iran along with Russia and China are in the US's sights for war. An all-out Middle Eastern war could see the US taking on Iran using Israel as its proxy.

The situation is extremely volatile, and the possibility of nuclear weapons being used is real.

AUSTRALIAN GOVT

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Hamas had committed a "slaughter of innocent people" and declared immediate support for Israel and its "right to defend itself."

What Albanese did not say, is that Israel would not need to defend itself if it complied with international law and UN

resolutions, closed down the illegal settlements in the Occupied Territories, and facilitated the creation of a Palestinian State.

Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong also said Israel has a right to defend itself. Apparently the Palestinians do not have the same right. As for the Israeli government's orders for a total siege of the Gaza Strip she said it was difficult to judge from afar. Distance does not stop Wong from judging Hamas.

The exercise of the right to self-defence should comply with the Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law, including ensuring the safety of civilians and detained individuals.

Chris Hedges writes that Western corporate-state media routinely describe the Palestinian resistance as terrorists while the Israeli system of repression is always cast as defensive. It is not: it is a slow suffocation, by one of the most powerful militaries on the planet, of an indigenous people's rights, hopes, lives, freedoms and future.

The Australian government should call on Israel to cease collective punishment of the Palestinian people and prevent more innocent civilian casualties and the further risk of escalation.

It should press for the opening of borders, and organise medical, food, and other aid to save the lives of the wounded and provide relief to the displaced.

It should recognise the Palestinian state and promote that recognition at the United Nations.

Israel must end its occupation and stop the genocide it is inflicting on the Palestinians. ☺

Obituary: Savvas Lioupas

Floyd Kermode

Community and political activist, union delegate and shop steward, Victorian Party President, ACTU delegate, passionate about family and sport, always a warm, wise, and generous comrade, Savvas Lioupas enriched the lives of family, friends, and comrades.

Savvas Lioupas was born 29th November 1942, in Neo Petritsi, Serres Greece. He left home as a very young man in his teens, and worked in restaurants before becoming a tailor. Savvas joined the Greek Communist Party, the KKE, because he saw a Party newspaper which told his story and that of other young men, moving from villages to towns at a time when life was very hard in Greece.

In Greece, Savvas married Mary Kalaitzis. He was in the KKE at a time when the party was illegal and was operating underground, so at first he didn't tell Mary about his membership, not wanting to endanger her. Savvas fondly remembered the time when she found out and scolded him for keeping the secret!

In 1969, as political activists, Savvas and Mary had to leave Greece and came to Australia to escape the Greek dictatorship and its threats.

Their commitment to workers was as strong as ever, and they soon joined the Greek Democritus Workers' League, and the newly formed Socialist Party of Australia (precursor to the modern Communist Party of Australia, or CPA) in 1972.

In Melbourne Savvas and Mary worked as clothing workers, and both were strong union members. Savvas became a very committed shop steward, working hard to improve his members' wages and conditions. At one point, he successfully negotiated back payment of wages that had been underpaid over a period of 30 years.

Andrew Irving, CPA General Secretary said of Savvas:

"For all of my life in the Party I have known and appreciated the commitment of Mary and Savvas. Mary and Savvas were our senior veterans but never retired, contributing to Party meetings, education,

and organising activists. They were the most reliable and hardworking comrades, a powerhouse in managing the Party's major events. Mary and Savvas were the biggest fundraisers, sellers of function and raffle tickets, *Guardian* distributors and donors. Through all the difficult times for the Party, Mary and Savvas have given long-term leadership, with determination, political commitment, and strength."

To quote another Melbourne comrade: "I've known Savvas (and Mary) for decades but don't know much about him except to say he was an exemplary and dedicated communist and Party member ... Savvas was a leader amongst comrades, especially the Greek comrades. He was intelligent, hard-working for the cause and perceptive – just the kindest and the best person. I admired and loved him dearly."

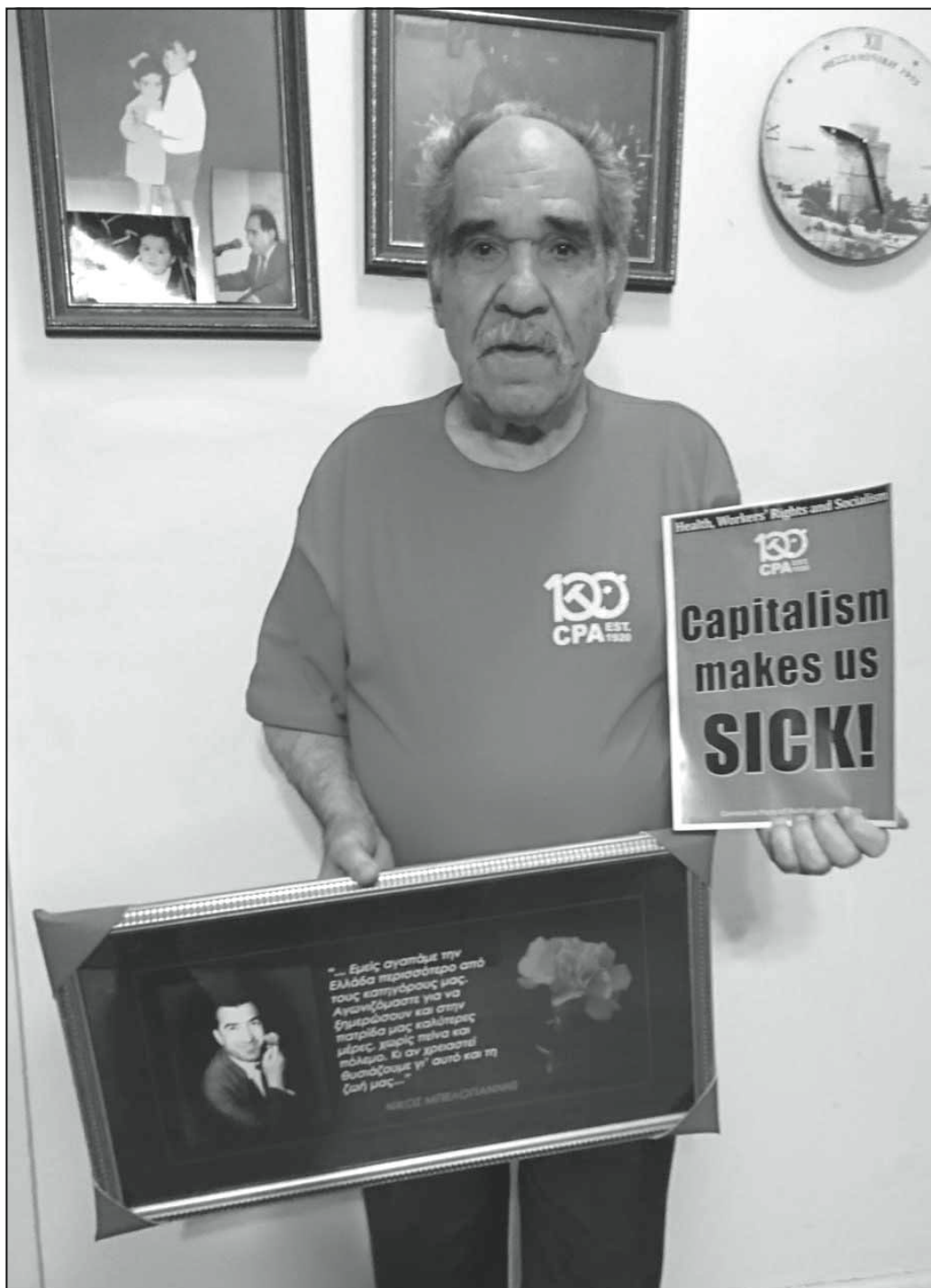
For some time, from 1990 to 2010, Savvas and Mary ran a takeaway shop in Clayton. This meant long hours of hard work, but they were always available for CPA and Democritus functions.

All the while, Savvas always took a strong party position. He successfully sold the *Guardian* at his workplace, and at other workplaces such as the MUA.

Aside from work and Party matters, Savvas was always passionate about his sport and particularly his football teams; PAOK Thessaloniki and Heidelberg United FC. He and Mary always attended Heidelberg home games together, both dressed in their team scarves and beanies.

I met Savvas as Party President, chairing meetings with authority and compassion. He didn't speak a lot at Party meetings then, but when he did, it was always serious and well worth listening to. Savvas was always energetic about the Party, and would insist on passing a cup for contributions at any Party get-together, no matter how small. When I visited his house this year, he would always quickly serve up some Greek coffee and a biscuit, and talk about Mary, his family, and his life in Greece and Australia.

Savvas leaves behind his children: John, Jenny and Adrian, and his grandchildren: Mary, Savvas, Xavier and Portia. ✨



Unions stand with First Nations

In the following statement the Australian Council of Trade Unions has expressed its commitment to justice for First Nations peoples.

The ACTU reaffirms our strong, unwavering support for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and we stand in solidarity with them in their ongoing fight for justice, and against discrimination and profound disadvantage.

The union movement has stood with First Nations peoples throughout this campaign, as we have for recognition of citizenship, an apology for the Stolen Generations, the return of stolen wages, and in struggles for land rights.

We thank First Nations union leaders, and the tens of thousands of union members, from all industries and from around the country who accepted the offer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to walk with them in this campaign.

We acknowledge that as a country we have unfinished business in recognition, respect, and equality for Australia's First Peoples.

The ACTU understands that people voted no for many reasons,

including some wanting more change, those who wanted more information, as well as those opposed to change.

The ACTU also recognises that the outcome of the referendum was set on 5th April, when Peter Dutton and the Liberal Party publicly announced they would campaign against recognition and the Voice, and became the political leaders of the No campaign.

On 5th April, the referendum was turned into a political campaign by Peter Dutton and for Peter Dutton. The Liberal Party stood behind their leader and sanctioned a campaign that promoted fear and division for their own political interests.

ACTU President Michele O'Neil said: "To the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this country, the union movement stood with you during this campaign, and our support does not end tonight.

"Union members have turned up in their tens of thousands to campaign, and those people and their passion will be there tomorrow and in the future for what comes next. We have engaged and enlivened a generation of activists and supporters on this

issue – particularly young people desperate for change. On behalf of our members, across so many industries and in so many places, we offer our continued support to the aspirations and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

"I want to warn those looking for complex reasons – this referendum was lost on 5th April – the day Peter Dutton announced that the Liberal Party would campaign against the referendum.

"April 5 is the day that turned a positive invitation for change into a political and partisan campaign. This loss belongs to Peter Dutton and the Liberal Party. They will call it a victory, but they turned away from their own commitments, and they put their own political needs before this profound moment for Australia.

"Peter Dutton has shown us what he uses leadership for: to say no, to divide, to offer no solutions and to offer no positive view of the future.

"Again, the ACTU sends its strongest support to First Nations Peoples." ✨

Nine Publishing members win back \$230,000

MEAA (Media, Entertainment, and Arts Alliance) members have recovered tens of thousands of dollars in backpay owed for sixth and seventh shifts worked at Nine Publishing.

Nearly three years after this issue was first raised, all outstanding claims have been finalised and the long-running Fair Work Commission dispute has been closed.

Following action by MEAA, Nine Publishing management conducted a review of backpay owed to

staff who worked six or more days in a week over the last six years.

We are happy to report that these proceedings have led members to recover more than \$230,000 in backpay.

Congratulations to members who stood together to demand action over the underpayment.

It is only through the collective strength of union members that we can ensure workers at Nine Publishing are paid what they are entitled to.

MEAA ✨

Have your say!

Write a letter to the Editor

email: editor@cpa.org.au

Maritime workers and Indonesian community commemorate the 'Black Armada'

At a twilight commemoration on the shores of Darling Harbour, opposite the Hungry Mile where thousands of Australian wharfies and seafarers toiled in the early to mid 20th Century, the Maritime Union of Australia and representatives from the Indonesian community came together to commemorate the Black Armada and unveil a plaque dedicated to the wharfies and seafarers who defied Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia during the late 1940s.

With the end of hostilities at the close of the Second World War, the Dutch government-in-Exile of what was then known as the Dutch East Indies, sought to re-establish colonial rule throughout the Indonesian archipelago.

However, Indonesian leaders rightfully seized the opportunity to resist all imperial or colonial rule, and resisted attempts from the Dutch to re-establish the colonial rule they had ceded to the Japanese. Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta declared independence in August 1945.

Indonesian troops employed by the Dutch in Australia during Japanese occupation of South East Asia refused orders to fight their brothers and sisters in the new Indonesian Republic. Soon afterward, Indonesian seafarers walked off ships refusing to carry troops, munitions and supplies against their own people. The first Indonesian crew strike occurred in Melbourne and the Sydney branch of the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF) was the first to declare black bans on Dutch arms ships.

The first refusal to load cargoes was in Brisbane when the WWF enforced the ban.

They are immediately followed by tug crew refusing to provide tow ropes, and shipyard unions who denied repairs to Dutch ships. Eventually some 31 Australian unions and 4 Asian seafarer unions in Australia (Indonesian, Chinese, Indian, and Malay) also boycotted Dutch ships.

Speaking at the plaque's unveiling in Sydney, MUA National Secretary and ITF President Paddy Crumlin commended the bonds of solidarity and internationalism at the heart of the Black Armada bans.

"When Indonesian seafarers walked off the Dutch arms ships, they were joined by Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese, Malay, and Australian workers on ships and along the waterfront, who all came together in a beautiful expression of internationalism and solidarity with one another against the violence and oppression of colonial rule," Crumlin said.

"The Maritime Union of Australia is proud of the Black Armada union boycott against Dutch arms shipments, and we are proud of our shared struggle against the colonists' attempt to crush Indonesian Independence."

In all, some 559 vessels were black-banned by unions over the course of five years between 1945 and 1949. Eventually, after successive interventions by Australian, Dutch and British governments failed to break the will of the unions' ban, the Australian Government, led by Ben Chifley, directed employers of stevedoring

workers to refuse to provide services to Dutch ships, effectively joining the Commonwealth Government to the bans. The ACTU called for all unions to "refuse to assist in any way whatever the movement of Dutch goods." The Black Bans then became truly international, with fifteen nations worldwide joining in, including China, India, and the USA.

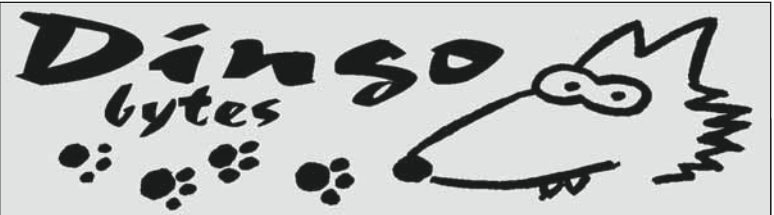
Eventually, by late 1949, the Dutch Government ceded to the newly independent Indonesia.

"Neither Australia nor Indonesia would be the countries we are today, or the friends we are today, without this shared history of struggle, solidarity and commitment to justice through independence for our Indonesian comrades," said Crumlin.

"We also acknowledge the role the Australian National Maritime Museum has played in recording and honouring the full history of Australia's maritime history, including where it intersects with the history of our near neighbours and friends throughout Asia and the South Pacific," he added.

The commemoration ceremony included speeches from the Indonesian Consul-General to Australia, Mr Vedi Kurnia Buana, Professor Heather Goodall from the University of Technology Sydney, Neil Smith, from the Australia Indonesia Association, and Mathias Tambing, President of Kesatuan Pelaut Indonesia (Indonesian Seafarers Union).

Maritime Union of Australia ✪



Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows almost 40 per cent of 16 to 24-year-olds reported experiencing a mental health disorder within the past two years, this is up from 26 per cent in 2007. The ABS study, conducted between 2020 and 2022 and surveying over 16,000 Australians aged 16 to 85, found two in five young women and one in four young men suffered from an anxiety-related disorder.

For the first time, the ABS survey included questions related to gender identity and sexual orientation. People who identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual had nearly three times the rate of mental health disorders at 58.7 per cent compared to their heterosexual counterparts at 19.9 per cent. One in three transgender people reported a mental health disorder over a 12-month span compared with one in five cisgender people.

The results also showed a significant uptick (45.1 per cent) of those with a mental health condition seeking treatment and support from a health professional, up from 12 per cent in 2007. Despite an increase in those seeking mental health support, funding, staffing, and service delivery has not kept pace with demand, with mental health experts and mental health nurses describing the mental health system "as not coping."

Calls have been renewed for state and federal governments to improve targeted funding for mental health services, and for the implementation of transparent and enforceable nurse-to-patient ratios in mental health settings.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is P Dutton and No.

Basically a policy of genocide has been followed. There was the shooting and poisoning of the Aboriginal people by the colonial occupiers, the forcing of the Indigenous people onto reserves when 'protection' was the slogan of the times. The Aboriginal people refused to 'die out' as was intended and the policy of "protection" was replaced by assimilation, the idea being that Australia's First People could be absorbed into the white community and be eliminated that way. Assimilation involved the destruction of Indigenous culture and, of course, the abandonment by them of any claims to their traditional lands. This policy did not work for the ruling class either, although it was accompanied by the destruction of many Aboriginal families and communities by the deliberate and conscious seizure of their children. All of these policies were based on the central idea that the Aboriginal people should be eliminated as a people. It was genocide. There is no other word for it.

Has this objective changed? No, it has not! That is why nothing effective has been done to recognise land rights or alter the basic health and housing conditions of the Indigenous people, or to provide education, jobs, and hope. Unemployment, lack of medical facilities, shocking housing, and of course the racist sentencing laws, all of which come together under the descriptor institutionalised racism.

What is needed is "recognition" – recognition of Aboriginal rights as a national minority in Australia, and above all their right to land. Dutton stands against any such recognition, and for assimilation.

Farm workers' united action

Dairy workers across Victoria are preparing for potential industrial action if major dairy companies don't come to the table with fair wage offers.

Off the back of strong Protected Action Ballot results in late September, delegates from 12 sites across three major companies – Saputo, Fonterra, and Peters – have voted to meet next week with around 1400 members to endorse industrial action.

This proposed action is in direct response to the failure of some of the world's largest dairy companies to offer fair wage increases and improve working conditions in the face of rising cost of living.

"Workers don't make this decision lightly," says Tim Kennedy, National Secretary of the United Workers Union.

"Dairy workers have been grinding day in and day out, especially during the pandemic, where some sites agreed to accept wage offers as low as 1.5 per cent as a favour to the company. Now, as the cost of living soars, these workers are saying enough is enough.

"They're not even asking for a wage increase that matches inflation, just 5 per cent or 6 per cent that gets them a little closer to being able to keep up with skyrocketing costs."

Workers are also asking for personal leave that recognises they work 12-hour shifts, and community

service leave so that regional workers can help fight the fires and floods that are becoming more regular during the climate emergency facing Australia.

Over the last year, the price of milk has risen dramatically, providing an increase to farmers' income that the union has welcomed, as well as boosting processors' profits. However, the workers who actually process the milk have not been given any share of the profits.

David Clement, a worker at Saputo's Allansford factory, said that United Workers Union members were strong supporters of farmers and wanted the best for the industry and their community.

"We want to ensure that dairy farmers continue to have a strong future in Australia. Our relationship is symbiotic, we need them, and we support them. "We are fighting not only for ourselves but for our communities that have backed these companies for years."

A United Workers Union survey involving over 1300 dairy workers revealed only 25 per cent would remain in their community if they lost their jobs at the dairy plant.

"This is more than a tug-of-war over wages; it's a fight for the future of our regional communities. Every dollar these workers earn goes right back into the local economy," said Tim Kennedy. ✪

Adelaide

Join Comrades at Fidel's to Celebrate The Russian Revolution

106 Years of Inspiration for the Workers of the World

2 to 5 pm Saturday 4th November (SA Time)

66 Wattle Avenue, Royal Park

Join an online link-up with Dr Hannah Middleton and the Port Jackson Branch in NSW in conjunction with the Adelaide Central and Port Adelaide Branches in SA. Hannah will be joined by Comrade Sally Mitchell and Comrade Michael Perth who both spent time in the Soviet Union and will share their insights into the benefits of the socialist way of life.

Bar service and nibbles available!

Victorian CPSU goes for 20 per cent, work-from-home, casual rights

The Victorian branch of the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) has officially entered enterprise bargaining season, with a bid for a 20 per cent pay rise over four years and an option of a four-day week, plus a right to flexible work, extra leave and a boost to 17 per cent superannuation.

Victorian public servants are seeking a “20 per cent pay increase over life of the Agreement, structured as four annual pay increases (7 per cent, 5 per cent, 4 per cent and 4 per cent) to recognise current cost of living crisis.”

In addition, the CPSU is seeking a “four-day work week across different Victorian Public Service (VPS) worksites within the life of the Agreement, based on the 100-80-100 model: 100 per cent of pay, 80 per cent work hours, 100 per cent production.”

Also included in the claim is an “additional week of annual leave, i.e., 5 weeks, or 6 weeks for eligible shift workers” plus “pro-rata additional leave for any Sundays that are worked above 10 Sundays a year.”

“In the event that a four-day work week is not achievable for shift workers, an additional week of annual leave should be granted,” the claim by the Victorian branch of the CPSU says.

On the flexible work front, the CPSU’s claim essentially mirrors that successfully sought by the federal branch, at least if an agreement can be made. In essence, where practicable for both parties, work-from-home becomes a right rather than a privilege.

The first biggy is an extension as per the Fair Work Act to “extend specific circumstances to include pregnancy and family and domestic violence.”

Then there’s a claim to create an “explicit right to flexible work arrangements for workers, instead of right to request,” plus a confirmation that the “onus is on [the] employer to demonstrate why work cannot be performed flexibly.”

“What constitutes reasonable business grounds” in terms of denial is also on the table as is a specific right to flexi-time “unless operationally cannot be provided.”

On the overtime front, casuals are a strong focus.

The Victorian CPSU is going for a tighter definition of overtime for casuals plus a reduction in “time worked before double-time overtime is paid from three



hours to two” and the creation of a “new payment to compensate workers where overtime is cancelled at short notice” and “an additional meal payment for every five hours worked.”

For parental leave, there’s a bid to increase this to 26 weeks plus an “additional week of pre-natal leave for supporting partner” plus a move to “ensure paid leave reflects pay inclusive of shift penalties and allowances, not just base rate of pay.”

In May, the Victorian CPSU publicly slammed then-premier Dan Andrews and the Labor government for resorting to a mass cull of public service jobs to pay down state debt incurred under COVID, saying the retrenchments defeat the very purpose of borrowing money to save jobs.

The VPS faces the loss of 4000 ‘back office’ staff to save \$2.1 billion. ✪

Coercive control laws unfair impact on First Nations domestic violence victims

Coercive control is defined as behaviour used by an abusive person to gain or maintain control over another person. It’s more subtle than physical or verbal abuse, but can be just as harmful. Abusers use tactics like monitoring communication, or limiting access to money as ways of controlling people.

When NSW introduced coercive control laws in 2022, Indigenous groups flagged that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims would not be afforded protection by the legislation. In fact, they would be squarely targeted.

Dr Buxton-Namisnyk is a researcher at UNSW Sydney whose 2021 analysis found almost one-third of First Nations women killed in domestic violence homicides had previously been identified by police as domestic violence perpetrators.

Her research also found police were likely to describe First Nations women as “uncooperative” or “unwilling” to work with police. In many cases, police used this language to justify their decision not to provide protection or assistance for First Nations women when they experienced abuse.

In both NSW and Queensland, First Nations women have argued that Indigenous victim-survivors of domestic violence could be further criminalised, and have even more trouble speaking up and reporting domestic violence.

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal service has said that “Aboriginal women are also more likely to be misidentified simply because they are Aboriginal, as a result of racism and bias among police and service providers.”

Experts have said that courts and police need resourcing and

training to look at a history of events rather than just responding to a particular incident. They’ve also described the risk of ‘systems abuse,’ which happens when perpetrators use laws to set up victims to be treated like abusers.

As the Institute for Collaborative Race Research and Sisters Inside have said, “Not only will Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls not be afforded protection ... they will be squarely targeted.”

Sisters Inside has long argued that while coercive control is serious, it is a mistake to deal with it by focusing on imprisonment-based ‘solutions.’

Rather than prioritising being “tough” on domestic violence, governments should empower and listen to Indigenous women. ✪

PEACE NOTES

Dying for inches

Hannah Middleton

This issue of Peace Notes is from a recent article by Caitlin Johnson “People are dying for inches in Ukraine, the ‘world’s largest arms fair.’”

“The reason the map of gains and losses is so heartbreaking is because so much has been given up for so very, very little. At least tens of thousands have died in this war with hundreds of thousands wounded, all for those teeny, tiny little blips on the map. Ukraine is now freckled with more landmines than anywhere else on earth, which experts say will take decades to clear. This giant deathtrap is exacerbated by the cluster munitions that are covering the land with greater and greater frequency, which will go on to detonate and kill civilians (mostly children) for years to come. The mines and artillery fire on the frontline of this war are reportedly creating tens of thousands of amputees, numbers comparable to what was seen in World War I.

“War is the worst thing in the world. The suffering, trauma and loss of mass military violence is too much to comprehend, even for people who are right there experiencing it. And the only thing worse than a war where one side gets completely steamrolled by the other is one in which people keep killing each other and killing each other over tiny gains and losses on the battlefield without an end to the nightmare anywhere on the horizon.

“And now we see western officials and media outlets telling us all to prepare for this war to drag on for years, potentially into the 2030s. This nonsensical violence, which even the head of NATO now admits could have been avoided by simply ceasing to amass a western military threat on Russia’s doorstep, is scheduled to drag on as long as possible for no grander reason than the advancement of US strategic interests.

This news from *The New York Times* comes out at the same time as a *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) article subtitled “Arms makers are getting orders for weapons being put to the test on the battlefield.”

“The Panzerhaubitze howitzer is part of an arsenal of weapons being put to the test in Ukraine in what has become the world’s largest arms fair,” writes WSJ’s Alistair MacDonald. “Companies that make the weapons being used in Ukraine have won orders and resurrected production lines. The deployment of billions of dollars worth of equipment in a major land war has also given manufacturers and militaries a unique opportunity to analyse the battlefield performance of weapons and learn how best to use them.”

This is one of those things that just sounds a bit uncomfortable at first, but if you really sit with the words and deeply contemplate what’s being said here it will show up as so deeply evil it will give you nightmares. The fact that weapons systems are being tested on human bodies to the immense benefit of war profiteers over a completely avoidable and deliberately provoked war is one of the most depraved things you can possibly imagine, and is a clear sign that we are living in a profoundly sick society.

This is so, so ugly, and it’s slated to get even uglier – these freaks haven’t even gotten started on China yet. “The sooner this monstrous power structure can be brought to its knees, the better it will be for everyone.”

caitlinjohnstone.com.au



Non-mainstream news on Sunday mornings at 9:15. Available via podcast. 3CR.org.au.

Multiculturalism and class

Marcus Browning

There are two faces of Australian society. There are those who embrace difference and diversity who want to live in peace with their neighbours. That is the face of multiculturalism which recognises and enjoys the culture of other nationalities who have made Australia home but continue to practice the culture of their former homelands.

They freely offer their rich culture to all Australians.

The other face is that of the likes of Peter Dutton. Theirs is a mean, weasel-minded, militarist, racist face that wants to build a wall around Australia.

Dutton and many other members of the Coalition have never supported multiculturalism. They wrap their ideas in an Australian flag and depict them as 'patriotic' and as having 'pride' in Australia.

But real patriotism can never be associated with racist and intolerant attitudes towards others in the community and hostility to other countries – even to the point of invading them and attempting to impose the Australian government's economic, political, and social policies. This is what is being attempted in the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, East Timor, Fiji, and not long ago, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

These policies are not in the interests of the people of Australia – neither of the working class nor of the wider community.

Because all workers are part of the one class, whose level of material existence depends largely on the effectiveness of their struggle against the common capitalist exploiter, the need for unity is not just a philosophical notion but a vital necessity.

The Communist Party unites in its ranks all people irrespective of national origin who accept the ideas and ideals of Marxism and are prepared to work for a socialist change.

Just as in the process of nation formation, the development of a wider economic community led to the development of ethnic ties into new national traits and awareness, so the economic and social (class) integration of migrants creates the basis for their integration into the Australian nation and the consequent expansion and enrichment of the national life and culture. The process by which the culture of the countries of origin of and the culture of the Australian nation are both developed to the fullest is the democratic and effective basis for the



Photo: Kate Andrews – flickr.com (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 Deed).

unity of the Australian nation and for the development of an Australian culture which genuinely reflects the multicultural nature of the Australian nation.

The central, most important, the underlying idea of the Party's attitude to this question is the acceptance of a single working class within one country and one party expressing the interests of the working class.

The CPA supports the view that Australian society is multilingual and multicultural in its composition. It is comprised of all the diverse elements from many different backgrounds, but there is, nonetheless, a single working class with a single ideology.

Similarly, there is a single Australian nation with a common territory and a common language, notwithstanding the diversity of linguistic elements.

Within the confines of the single Australian nation, ethnic groups of migrant backgrounds go through two processes.

They undergo a process of social

integration as a result of their participation in social production and class relations based on the mode of production and their consequent common class interests with people of other cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Flowing from this social integration, ethnic groups also go through a slower process of national integration, gradually developing a consciousness of being part of the Australian nation.

It is this second, slower process which can be assisted and consolidated by the purposeful activity of progressive migrants and the whole working class and democratic movement towards the development of a unified, progressive, new Australian culture.

The CPA extends solidarity to the people of every country in their struggle against imperialism, for national liberation and social progress. It extends solidarity to all the socialist countries, above all in the common struggle against the threat of a nuclear war. This is the Party's internationalist duty.

The struggle against imperialism is taking place on a world-wide scale. The Australian working class has a particular struggle against imperialism in its campaign against US bases in Australia and the AUKUS alliance.

This means organisational and political unity of the working class within each country and international solidarity between parties and other working class organisations of different countries.

The important fact is that post-war migration and the new reality which was created in Australia have, at the same time, created the objective conditions reflecting the multicultural character of the country.

It is vital to defend multiculturalism. It means friendship, respect for the differences of others and the emergence of an Australian culture based on the interaction and interconnectedness of all that is good and progressive in the cultures now to be found in Australian society. ✪

Global capitalism; sclerotic but still 'limping on'

William Briggs

IMF Chief Economist, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, on the eve of the Marrakech meeting of the World Bank and IMF, described the global economy as "limping along." Newly elected Presidents and Prime Ministers like to tell us that "our best days are still ahead of us." They won't be quoting Gourinchas any time soon.

The IMF forecasts for the global economy show a 3.5 per cent growth in 2022, a 3.0 per cent growth for 2023 and a 2.9 per cent growth rate in 2024.

This is hardly encouraging news, especially as IMF growth forecasts are routinely revised downward as the year progresses. The IMF is still predicting a five per cent growth for China. Without this input, the 'limp' would become a terminal stagger.

Global capitalism is in deep crisis. The term 'polycrisis' has become a fashionable term to

describe the depth of the problem facing capitalism and by implication, the working class of the world.

The Marrakech meeting came close to acknowledging the life-threatening nature of this crisis in its call to "secure transformational reforms" and in admitting the seriousness of "crisis upon crisis." The inability of capital to resolve its fundamental problems was shown in the IMF's plaintive call to 'reinvigorate global cooperation.' How this can be achieved in a world of competing capitalist states and the drive towards economic nationalism led by stalling economies like the USA remains a mystery.

The United States, and other economies' shift towards protectionist policies has had devastating effects on global trade. The former 'Asian Tiger' economies of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong are recording their lowest growth in 50 years.

The crisis that is engulfing the capitalist world can be seen in stagnating and declining wages

in OECD states. Economic insecurity is at its highest in decades. Poverty levels within states and across the world are spiralling. The IMF reports a general decline in global poverty, but this is a wildly distorted analysis, given that China has brought 900 million people out of poverty. The fact that today there are 600 million people in the world chronically malnourished and that 2.4 billion are experiencing food insecurity shows just how deep the problem runs.

Then there is the crisis of climate and its growing impact on the capitalist economies and the people who make those economies work. The International Energy Agency has called for fossil fuel use to decrease by 25 per cent by 2025 and by 80 per cent by 2050. At the same time, subsidies to coal, oil and natural gas companies now equal 7.1 per cent of total global GDP. This is equal to the global education budget, or two-thirds of the global health budget. It is estimated that \$4 trillion dollars

are needed on an annual basis to fix the problem, but only \$803 billion have been pledged!

The next meeting of the G7, or G20, or the next IMF gathering will predictably speak of finding ways to invigorate the global economy, or to build economic resilience. Runes will be pored over and entrails poked to see a future for capitalism. Bourgeois economists and national treasurers will cling to these predictions, but the downward trajectory will not change.

To further exacerbate the problem facing global capitalism is the tendency, as elaborated by Marx, for the overall rate of profit to fall. Numerous studies have shown Marx's theory to be correct. The most recent of these described a period of prolonged stagnation in the US economy. In the 1950s the overall rate of profit in the US was 19.3 per cent. By the 1970s it had slipped to 15.4 and today, in the once unchallenged powerhouse of capitalism, it has reached an historical low of 14.3 per cent.

It is foolish to expect capital to be able to fix any of these problems or to attend, in any meaningful way to the crisis that threatens it and the world. After all, it is a crisis of capitalism's making. That we are witnessing this death spiral should come as no great surprise. The system is built on one premise. Profit must grow and capital must expand.

Money is no object. Total global wealth stands at \$360 trillion. It is a macabre tribute to capitalism's capacity to accumulate wealth. This capitalist 'miracle' also sees just 26 individuals with as much wealth as 3.8 billion people.

In the meantime, and in the immediate future the global economy and by definition, global capitalism will 'limp on.' But as it limps, its pain will continue to be felt most acutely by those whose labour allows it to go on limping. ✪

Our silent skies

Graham Holton

Over the past fifty years modern intensified agricultural has used new technology and mechanisation, changes in farming practices and operations and agrochemical inputs – weedicides, insecticides, and pesticides – to increase global food production. The consequences have been a devastating loss and degradation of habitat from deforestation, grasslands converted to cropland, drained wetlands.

Urbanisation and climatic changes have helped to create a severe loss of avian biodiversity. As temperatures recently rose across Europe cold-preferring bird species numbers diminished by 40 per cent, with a loss of 550 million birds. Birds associated with farmlands and grasslands in North America, Europe and Australia have suffered a severe decline over this period. According to “State of the World’s Birds,” in the *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* (2022) bird populations are facing a staggering decline.

Rachel Carson warned in her *Silent Spring* (1962) that if the US kept spraying DDT, it would greatly reduce, not only insects, but bird numbers at an alarming rate. DDT effects a bird’s physiology with birds laying brittle shelled eggs causing a massive loss of chicks. Raptors, eagles and hawks were in steep decline in the 1960s, due to DDT. Banning the insecticide in the 1970s helped bring back their numbers.

Other insecticides continue to have a devastating impact. Tim Halliday in *Vanishing Birds: Their Natural History and Conservation* (1978) describes how the pesticide DDD (Dichlorodiphenyldichloroethane) wiped out the Grebe population on Clear Lake in California. Neonicotinoid, a class of neuroactive insecticides used against sucking and chewing pests, is linked to adverse ecological effects, including the decline of populations of insect-eating birds.

Despite these negative findings, President Donald Trump eased bans on some neonicotinoids. The insects that survived these poisons develop a resistance, creating a further insect plague. Birds control insect populations, pollinate crops, distribute seeds, are food for predators, and perform myriad services to enrich biodiversity in our ecosystems.

Modern intensive farming relies on insecticides which have had a devastating impact on bird populations. Research in Germany,



Willie Wagtail, Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve, NT. Photo: Geoff Whalan – flickr.com (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 Deed).

published in *Nature* (2017), found that 77 per cent of their insect populations has disappeared since 1989. In 2019 research published in *Science* found that migratory songbirds that had eaten seeds with sub-lethal doses of insecticides delayed their migration thereby lowering their breeding success.

The present global bird population collapse will have an irreparable impact on food production. Conservation scientist Ken Rosenberg of the Cornell Lab (retired) writes: “Because birds are highly visible and sensitive indicators of environmental health, we know their loss signals a much wider loss of biodiversity and threats to human health and well-being.” The International Union for Conservation of Nature’s *Red Data Book* reports the population changes among the world’s 10,824 bird species. Worldwide, 48 per cent of bird species have undergone major population declines.

In the United States the Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects migratory birds, and the Endangered Species Act protects the habitat

of rare birds. Even so, two thirds of North America’s bird species are facing extinction, with there being 29 per cent fewer birds than in 1970. According to Brooke Bateman, director of climate science at the National Audubon Society, since the 1970s the number of birds of breeding age has declined by 3 billion in North America.

When the first European explorers travelled across Australia, they were shocked at the sheer size of our bird population. It was not uncommon for a single flock of birds to take three hours to fly overhead. These birds had evolved to survive in huge flocks, so when the bird numbers in these flocks diminished, the bird population dramatically crashed. Today, according to a study by The University of Queensland, Charles Darwin University, WWF Australia and Australian Wildlife Conservancy, 70 per cent of Australia’s threatened bird species have disappeared since European colonisation. Dr Michelle Ward said, “A whopping 69 per cent of the country is missing some of its most enigmatic bird species. And 10 birds have become locally extinct from 99 per cent of their historical habitat, with their remaining habitats having become much more fragmented.” Once common birds such as Willie Wagtails, Brolgas, Boobook Owls, and Magpies have now largely disappeared from our cities.

There are 1300 bird species in Australia and its territories that face extinction. The most vulnerable is the *Mukarrthippi grasswren* which has only two or three breeding pairs. Australia’s rarest bird of prey, the red goshawk, could soon be extinct. The Cape York Peninsula, Queensland is the only place known to support breeding populations. In 2016 thousands of emperor penguin chicks drowned when their sea-ice breeding ground was destroyed in severe weather in the Weddell Sea in Australia’s Antarctic Territory. The colony on the Brunt Ice Shelf has shown no

sign of recovery. Of the 216 Australian bird species at risk of extinction: 23 are critically endangered; 74 are endangered; 87 are vulnerable; and 32 are near-threatened.

In the last three decades Australia has one of the highest deforestation rates in the world, with Queensland being the worst, clearing 296,000 hectares of bushland in 2013-14. Land clearing in rain water catchments that drain onto the Great Barrier Reef constituted 35 per cent of total clearing. The Moreton Bay Council in Brisbane has allowed the building of a 3000-unit marina complex in Australia’s most important site for eastern curlews. The National Science Programme’s *A Threatened Species Index for Australia Interim Report* (2018) estimated that there has been a 25 per cent reduction in threatened and near threatened birds since 1980.

Currently there is no fully effective means to report on changes in Australia’s overall biodiversity. More detailed information is required to determine trends in threatened species numbers. Such information will greatly improve the evaluation of large-scale programmes, such as the Australian government’s Threatened Species Strategy, which will aid in identifying priorities for further investment. Our laws need to be toughened to stop land clearing which destroys sensitive habitats. By doing so our native bird populations will have a chance to recover. The organisation Birdlife Australia sees the main solution is for the Australian government to enforce national standards that protect critical habitats from destruction.

An independent National EPA (Environmental Protection Authority) would enforce regulations and stop the legal loopholes that favour destructive land development. Over the past decade positive results have been produced by habitat restoration and conservation, with 23 bird species becoming less threatened. ✪

Global bird population collapse will have an irreparable impact on food production.

Suck it up, Summers!

FJK

One response to the Hamas attack on Israel and the ongoing atrocities Israel is committing in retaliation has been to try to close down criticism of Israel in any form. In Australia, Peter Dutton has done his bit by darkly implying that demonstrators who support Palestine are foreigners who should be deported, while the

NSW police have been making noises about stopping and searching demonstrators, as well as threatening to use the powers they have to close down entire suburbs. In Melbourne, police labelled ‘Evidence Gatherers’ have been intimidating demonstrators by ostentatiously recording peaceful protests.

In the USA, Former US Treasury Secretary and current

Harvard University President Larry Summers has had a public sulk about student groups at the prestigious US institution exercising rights that US citizens are supposed to take for granted. A lot of Harvard student groups have been describing Israel’s role in the events leading up to the occupation, and Summers wants the university to condemn them for, as he puts it, “blaming all the violence on Israel.”

The Harvard Palestine Solidarity Groups have put out a joint statement saying that the events of the Hamas attack “did not occur in a vacuum” and that they hold Israel “entirely responsible for all the unfolding violence.”

As Australian satirical website *The Chaser* put it, “Hamas launches ‘completely unprovoked attack’ (if you ignore 50 years of occupation).”

The Harvard student groups have called on the Harvard community to “take action to stop the ongoing annihilation of Palestinians.” Larry Summers would rather the venerable university took action to condemn its students for speaking up. ✪

Communist Party of Israel and Hadash 'Netanyahu's fascist government bears full responsibility for the dangerous escalation'

In a statement concerning the rapid escalation of military confrontation between Hamas and Israeli forces, the Communist Party of Israel (MAKI) and Hadash blame the criminal occupation policy of the far-right Netanyahu government, underlining the grave dangers that it poses for the peace in the region.

"The fascist right-wing government's crimes to perpetuate the occupation are leading to a regional war that must be stopped. Even in difficult days like this – we repeat and voice an unequivocal condemnation of any harm to innocent civilians, and call for their removal from the bloodshed. We send our condolences to all the families of the victims of the occupation, Arabs and Jews alike," the statement reads.

MAKI and Hadash put the full responsibility on the fascist right-wing government for the sharp and dangerous escalation, that cost the lives of many innocent citizens.

"At the end of a shocking week in which the settlers ran amok throughout the occupied territories under the auspices of their government, desecrated the Al-Aqsa Mosque and carried out another pogrom in Huara, we woke up this morning to a very serious escalation, which endangers the entire region in a regional and dangerous war – which the right-wing government has been fuelling since its first day.

Today's events show in what dangerous direction the Netanyahu government and the Hilltop youth are leading the entire region, and emphasise once again that there is no

way to manage the conflict or resolve it militarily – there is only one solution: strive to end the occupation and recognise the legitimate demands and rights of the Palestinian people. The end of the occupation and the establishment of a just peace are a distinct and common interest of the two peoples in this country".

MAKI and Hadash express "deep concern about the use of recent developments by the Netanyahu government to carry out a vengeful attack on the Gaza Strip and call on the international community and the countries of the region to intervene immediately to silence the drums of war and initiate moves that will lead to the promotion of a political solution."

MAKI and Hadash warn of revenge activities against the Arab citizens of Israel, and especially the residents of the mixed cities and the unknown villages in the Negev – who have already paid a high price due to the neglect of their lives by the state and the lack of infrastructure in the settlements. In this reality, it is the duty of the sane forces in Israel, Arabs and Jews alike, to raise a sharp and clear voice against any attempt to incite against entire populations or to take the law into one's own hands, and to promote joint activity, which signifies the aspiration for a normative life without occupation, discrimination and supremacy – a life of peace, equality and true democracy for all.

In Defense of Communism
(edited for reasons of space)
Hadash is a left political coalition in Israel. It includes the Communist Party of Israel ✪



Photo: Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign – flickr.com (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 Deed).

Socialism 'the only possibility'

Hundreds of left-wing activists gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa, for the third Dilemmas of Humanity international conference said that socialism "is the only possibility" for progress.

National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) general secretary Irvin Jim told the conference: "The capitalist system attacks not only work, but also our lives. Capitalism is incompatible with life.

"The working class must build its own organic and intellectual detachment that subordinates itself to the pursuit of socialism."

Organised by the International Peoples' Assembly and hosted

by NUMSA, the Residents of the Shacks and the Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party of South Africa, the conference was opened by a panel that included Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine member Leila Khaled and South African foreign minister Naledi Pandor.

Khaled said: "We are a people of strength, of will, of dignity, of humanity. We are defending humanity in Palestine. If Palestine is occupied, there is no peace in the world. Palestine is not only for Palestinians, it is a human cause."

Pandor said: "For 16 years, the Gaza Strip has been under siege, with its people struggling to survive.

"Palestinians are denied exit and entry. We also had to enter separate entrances here in South Africa. We went through that too."

She said: "Beautiful speeches are no use. I may feel good, but if the next day my rhetoric does not lead to action my speech is useless."

Daniel Jadue, the mayor of the Recoleta municipality and a member of the Communist Party of Chile, said activists needed to remember that "socialism is not just a possibility, it is the only possibility" available to humanity.

Morning Star, edited for reasons of space. ✪

Greek election results

B Saltis

The regional elections in Greece were held over two rounds on the 8th and 15th of October.

On the results of the first round Dimitris Koutsoumbas, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Greece (recognised in leftist circles world wide by its Greek acronym – KKE) expressed satisfaction. "Although the correlation [of forces] remains very negative, it has become stabilised and there is a growing current of questioning of the reigning policies, of their class character in favour of capitalist interests," he said.

He drew attention to the rise in the percentages for the candidates fielded by the "Laiki Sisirosi" (People's Coalition). In the 13 regions it reached over 10 per cent compared to 6.86 per cent in the previous regional elections.

In the first round the People's

Coalition elected one mayor in the municipality of Ikaria, the Aegean island which has the reputation of consistently electing communists and consequently earning the nickname "the Red Island."

People's Coalition candidates in five other municipalities were among those who reached the right to go into the second round and they were victorious in all of them.

The victorious teams and their supporters celebrated their triumph with song and dance, but not before all the mayors elect reminded them that the really hard work now lies before them. General Secretary Koutsoumbas, who dropped in on the headquarters of the four victorious teams of the municipalities in the city of Athens, reinforced this message by telling them, "You, and not the so-called centre-left parties in Parliament, are the real opposition to the conservative government." ✪



Sydney Vigil

STOP USA BLOCKADE ON CUBA

Join us in Sydney to demand that the USA stops the blockade on Cuba with the right to self determination. Also stop Venezuela & Gaza blockades.

4:15 pm Friday 17th November – 50 Miller Street North Sydney

cpa.org.au/shop

Israeli Apartheid



Perth rally.

Graham Holton

While the world was shocked at the recent Hamas attack, the Western media has given little analysis to the background of for the attacks on 7th October. To acknowledge that the Hamas attack was the result of 75 years of Israel's apartheid policies would mean facing up to what Israel has been doing in the Gaza Strip.

In its first week of retaliatory attacks on the Gaza Strip, Israel levelled 1300 buildings and killed over 2200 Palestinians.

King Abdullah of Jordan wants an end to the "War on Gaza." The attacks have ended any promise of recognition for Israel by Saudi Arabia, which now calls for an urgent meeting of foreign ministers from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The Secretary-General of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) is calling for an immediate ceasefire.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said the world "bears responsibility for the war crimes" committed by Israel. Ghazi Hamad, a member of the Hamas Political Bureau, condemned the Israeli attacks on Gaza.

Western media regards the Hamas attacks as cold-blooded murder committed by "terrorists."

The prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, called the Hamas fighters "human animals" and announced that he would crush Hamas, adding that it was the "biggest loss of Jewish life since the Holocaust."

For decades Israeli politicians have condemned Palestinians in the vilest manner. Golda Meir, former Israeli Premier declared that: "There is no such thing as Palestinians ... they do not exist."

Moshe Yaalon, Israeli Defence Minister until 2016 said: "The Palestinian threat harbours cancer-like attributes that have to be severed. There are all kinds of solutions to cancer. Some say it is necessary to amputate organs but at the moment I am applying chemotherapy."

Eli Yishi, Deputy Prime Minister (2006-2013), urged the army to "send Gaza back to the Middle Ages."

During a televised debate in 2010, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said to Palestinian lawmaker Ahmad Tibi: "When you were still climbing trees, we had a Jewish state here." In 2013 at a parliamentary debate on releasing Palestinian prisoners, Bennett said: "If we capture terrorists, we need to just kill them. I've already killed a lot of Arabs in my life, and there is no problem with that."

Israeli journalist Haggai Matar said: "The responses we are hearing from many Israelis today – of people calling to 'flatten Gaza,' that 'these are savages.'"

There has been no outcry by the West against the language used by Israelis in attacking Palestinians.

Anti-Palestinian prejudice is a hate crime which remains largely unrecognised in the West. Palestinian academic Edward Said wrote in *The Question of Palestine* (1979) that to merely "mention the Palestinians or Palestine in Israel, or to a convinced Zionist, is to name the unnameable, so powerfully does our bare existence serve to accuse Israel of what it did to us."

"Digital apartheid" is the censorship of pro-Palestinian voices on the internet. Since the attack on Gaza, many pro-Palestinian websites are now blocked.

Palestinian dispossession is a fundamental pillar of Israeli apartheid. Amnesty International's 2022

report, *Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime against Humanity*, lists the seizures of Palestinian land and property, unlawful killings, forcible transfer, drastic movement restrictions, the denial of nationality and citizenship to Palestinians. Under international law these are components of a system of apartheid, which is a crime against humanity as defined by the Rome Statute and the Apartheid Convention.

Apartheid is any serious human rights violation perpetrated by a regime of systemic oppression and domination by one racial/ethnic group over another. The Palestinian foreign ministry welcomed the report, saying it was a "detailed affirmation of the cruel reality of entrenched racism, exclusion, oppression, colonialism, apartheid, and attempted erasure that the Palestinian people have endured."

All pro-Palestinian protests have been banned in France, and in NSW there has been pressure on pro-Palestinian demonstrators. Yasmin Catley, NSW Police Minister, told 2GB: "I don't want to see protests on our streets at all, from anybody." The NSW police announced Operation Shelter, designed to guide police responses to potential pro-Palestinian rallies. Police have threatened to use special stop-and-search powers on anyone attending a pro-Palestinian rally, while Peter Dutton has demanded deportation of demonstrators.

As Amal Nasser, co-organiser of Sydney's pro-Palestinian rally told Maeve McGregor of *Crikey*: "This is a strategic political campaign to silence anyone that doesn't fit the status quo and the state's interest." ❄️

"... entrenched racism, exclusion, oppression, colonialism, apartheid, and attempted erasure ..."



Global Briefs

MALAYSIA: Thousands of people gathered near Malaysia's National Mosque in Kuala Lumpur carrying Palestinian flags and chanting 'Free Palestine.' Strict security measures were in place, with Malaysian security forces accompanying the demonstrators in the streets. Several politicians, including former prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin, also attended the protest. Similar demonstrations in support of Palestine were held in Indonesia. Those demonstrations were only a small part of the millions-strong actions across the world.

LEBANON: The Lebanese Council of Ministers confirmed that a missile had struck the headquarters of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). At least 16 people were reported killed. UNIFIL is deployed in the south of Lebanon and consists of 10,000 peacekeepers from 49 different countries. Spain is currently in command of the peacekeepers.

NEW ZEALAND: The National Party of New Zealand led by Christopher Luxon has won the general election. The National Party received 38.95 per cent of the vote, the Labour Party was second with 26.9 per cent, the Green Party got 10.77 per cent of the votes.

USA: General Laura Richardson, the commander of the US Southern Command decried the fact that "In Latin America we have over 31 million followers with Sputnik, Russia Today Espanol and teleSUR." She spoke at an event organised by the Foundation for Defence of Democracies (FDD). The stated mission of that organisation was "to provide education to enhance Israel's image in North America, and the public's understanding of issues affecting Israeli-Arab relations." FDD was identified as part of Israel's lobby in the USA. The US Commander's remarks were part of a conversation focused on the US response to China's growing involvement in Latin America and the Caribbean. Southern Command is one of the six Pentagon geographic commands that operate contingency plans in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Venezuelan Foreign Minister described the remarks as 'simply unacceptable,' and an attempt 'to inhibit the free flow of information.'

RUSSIA: Russia exported a total of 18.18 million tons of grain in the months of July-September, boosting its supplies to the global markets by 61 per cent compared to last year's figures. Egypt was the top buyer of the wheat, followed by Turkiye and Iran. The other Russian grain importers included Saudi Arabia and Libya. The western sanctions to hamper Russia's ability to export grain and fertilizers haven't worked so far. Now Iran stands ready to help Russia export its grain supply by creating a new transport route providing its territory as a corridor for the export of Russian grain to third countries.

USA: In 1972 US Admiral Elmo Zumwalt designated 13th October as the official founding day of the US Navy. "Happy 248th Birthday to the US Navy! From the early days of the American Revolution to today, the Navy stands strong, defending our freedom and protecting our seas. Thank you to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve our great nation!," US Congressman Cary Mills said in his congratulatory message to the Navy. The picture that accompanied the message was a tad embarrassing however. It was a picture of Russian battleship *Pyotr Velikiy* (Peter the Great). Oops!

Letters to the Editor
The Guardian
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Surry Hills NSW 2010

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Dear editor,

The attack on Israel, from what one observer has called "the largest open air prison in the world," that is the virtually Israeli occupied Palestinian Gaza strip of land, has shocked us all, but for different reasons. The media response to the attack was quite

surprising. In all the Western world's media these heroic fighters have been labelled 'TERRORISTS.'

I was struck by the striking unison of this response. It seemed to me that the text had been prepared and agreed to earlier in expectation of just such an attack. I see it as an increase in the cunning of the brainwashing people are being subjected to by a galaxy of Western nations which are in agreement on how to prepare their citizens to get their support for reactionary agendas.

And it raises questions about possible preparations to use the term more widely. Should we expect to have striking workers called terrorists?

The Greeks endured 400 years of bondage under the Ottoman Turks. They never ceased to resist. When they finally rose together to throw off the Ottoman yoke, England, France, and Russia organised support. At school we young Australians learnt that Lord Byron gave much aid to the Greek fighters.

In every free country of the world the Greeks were considered heroes, not terrorists. I am of Greek heritage and have learned through song and story of their resistance and their final victory. I praise my forbears and carry that heritage through to this homeland where my mother bore me.

What a blatant disregard for human psychology and history to claim that the Palestinian people who have been living for 75 years under occupation are terrorists because they rise up in protest against the atrocious conditions forced upon them by Israel the occupying power. The evidence appears to support the charge that the aim of the overwhelming Israeli response is to force the Palestinians to leave their homeland; that is, an act of brutal, ruthless ethnic cleansing.

In my book the Palestinians are not terrorists; they are an heroic people rising up legitimately against tyranny.

Bob Saltis
Adelaide



Something
to say?

Write to
the Editor!

editor@cpa.org.au

A memorandum addressed to friendly parties about the war of annihilation practiced by the Israeli occupation in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian territories

Dear comrades,
Militant greetings

Since 2007, the Gaza Strip has witnessed a severe and illegal siege in which the occupation imposes complete control over land, sea, and air crossings, causing a severe humanitarian crisis. The occupied Palestinian territories are witnessing an unprecedented escalation of the occupation's crimes, which included repeated incursions into Jerusalem, the Palestinian West Bank, and Palestinian Islamic and Christian holy sites, which led to cold-blooded killings of civilians, arbitrary arrests of children and women, home demolitions and confiscation of land, in addition to increasing the pace of settlement and continuing the siege of the Gaza Strip.

Now the residents of the Gaza Strip, inhabited by more than two million Palestinians who suffer from deteriorating living conditions, are being exposed, as a result of an ongoing Israeli siege, to a horrific crime that amounts to war crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity, in which entire residential neighbourhoods containing thousands of homes and residential towers were demolished, and massacres of murder were committed.

Hundreds of Palestinian families, and about half of Gaza's population was displaced from their homes.

While the Israeli occupation forces had killed thousands of citizens in Gaza during five multiple and successive wars on the Strip (2008-2014-2018-2021-2022).

So far, they have killed more than 3000 Palestinians in Gaza, including about 500 children and 9000 wounded.

It continues to bomb civilians, public and private property, and infrastructure, as well as cutting off supplies of water, electricity, food, and other basic facilities to the Strip.

The Israeli occupation in the West Bank killed more than 54 Palestinians in one week and wounded more than 1100.

Today, the Israeli entity has revealed an old-new plan aimed at displacing our

people in the Gaza Strip towards Egypt in a transfer process and a major crime that brings to mind the Nakba of 1948, but our people will remain committed to their land and resist the occupation by all means and forms, and if anyone is to leave the land of Palestine, it is the Zionist occupation.

The Israeli occupation and some Western countries, led by the United States of America, are carrying out a systematic and widespread media campaign to deceive world public opinion and falsify the facts about what "Israel" is carrying out in terms of a war of genocide against Palestinian civilians.

They portray the Israeli entity as a victim and being subjected to killing at a time when their deceptive methods have been exposed by publishing pictures of wounded children from Gaza as Israeli children, to make it clear that they do not have any evidence that the Palestinian resistance killed Israeli children.

The Al-Aqsa Flood operation came in response and in defense of the rights and dignity of our people, who are suffering from the longest occupation in history, and who are exposed every day to terrorism, murder, and arrest at the hands of war criminals in the Israeli enemy entity.

The Al-Aqsa Flood battle confirmed the fragility of the occupation forces, which have lost their prestige before the entire world.

Our people demand that all free and honourable people in the world intervene immediately and seriously to stop the Zionist crimes against the civilian population in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories.

We also call for exerting maximum pressure on the occupying entity to lift the siege on the Gaza Strip, release prisoners, stop settlement activity, and stop the war of extermination and mass massacres that occupation forces are practicing.

We demand that full protection be guaranteed to the Palestinian people in accordance with international law and the Geneva Conventions.

We also call on international courts, especially the International Criminal Court,



to open an investigation into the crimes committed by the occupation authorities.

We call for exposing the Israeli propaganda that receives support in Western media circles, and we call for the refutation of the deceptive narratives of the Zionist media and some journalists and media professionals in many Western countries who promote the false Zionist narrative of the truth.

Our steadfast people on the land of Palestine today face a war of extermination carried out by the Israeli occupation forces,

supported by the United States of America, which has become a partner and party leading this aggression, which is also blatantly supported by some Western countries that seek to protect the Zionist entity and its continued occupation of our land and our country.

Our heroic people, the people of the free and the martyrs, will not kneel or retreat, and will continue the struggle and resistance until their full inalienable national rights are restored and their independent state is built on the land of Palestine.

Stopping the Zionist aggression, the war of extermination and population displacement is the duty of all honourable and free people in the world.

We are confident that you will support our people and our just cause.

With our deepest regards.

Popular Front for
the Liberation of Palestine
15th October 2023

Our people ... will not kneel or retreat

Colombia: The war on drugs failed

WT Whitney

Colombian President Gustavo Petro insists that the “war on drugs has failed,” and is pushing for an approach he calls “phased decriminalisation.” His government is prioritising the initiative, which is part of its far-reaching program for social and political reforms – all of which face strong right-wing political opposition.

At a big 3rd October meeting of mostly small farmers in El Tambo, in Cauca, where “the coca economy is the main way of life for thousands of peasants,” Colombia’s first progressive president ever presented his government’s National Drug Policy for 2023.

The drug plan attends to some of the main features of Colombia’s longstanding social disaster. They include: dispossession leading to consolidation of large land holdings, agricultural underdevelopment, migrations leading to precarious lives often in cities, widespread lethal violence, and great wealth accumulated by top-level distributors and their financial backers.

The government’s new plan promises much, especially to working people both in Colombia and abroad. Freed of the monopolisation of illegal drug production and commercialisation, rural areas might shift to diversified agricultural production and expanded support systems. Prospects for community development programs might improve, and those rural Colombians forced into cities might return.

Government spokespersons focused on the program’s two pillars. One of them, called “oxygenation,” supports those “territories, communities, people, and ecosystems” adversely affected by drug trafficking. It would support the transition to legal economies and reduce “vulnerabilities of regions and populations.”

Measures would be taken that advance “environmental management and climate action toward ...restoring regions” adversely affected by the narco-economy. The personal use of “psychoactive substances” will be dealt with on the basis of public health and human rights.

The other pillar, called “asphyxiation,” targets “the strategic nodes of the criminal system that generates violence” and “profits most from this illegal

economy.” The object would be to interfere with the “capacities and income” of the strongest drug-trafficking organisations and to do so “systematically” and with consideration “of their complexity and relation with other economies both legal and illegal.”

Persons involved in production and trafficking would benefit from de-stigmatisation and social justice.

The new plan has a slogan: ‘Sewing life and burying narco-trafficking.’ The aim is to remove 222,400 acres from coca and marijuana cultivation, reduce cocaine production by 43 per cent, and block at least \$55 billion in illegal financial gains. The plan would interfere with irregular banking and financial manoeuvres and reduce both deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions.

Petro’s new drug policy is significant mostly because it pursues the objectives of the 2016 Peace Agreement that ended the armed conflict between Colombia’s government and the FARC insurgency. Important parts of the new drug plan coincide with major provisions of that Agreement that were never implemented.

Agrarian reform matches with improving rural life generally. Solving the illicit drug problem was a goal of the Peace Agreement and now is the essence of Petro’s plan. The guarantee, under the Peace Agreement of safety for former combatants never took root. The attacks against them are largely related to drug trafficking, and now that will be dealt with.

Violence has been, and remains, pervasive. During just 13 months of the Petro government, assassins have taken the lives of 198 community and human rights leaders and 43 former combatants.

Much is at stake as a government undertakes to control and end the production and marketing of illegal drugs. According to the UN’s Economic Commission for Latin America, “Problems associated with the production, trafficking, and consumption of drugs in Latin America affect the population’s quality of life, contribute to forms of social exclusion and institutional weakness, generate much insecurity and violence, and corrode governance in some countries.”

People’s World
(edited for reasons of space) ☒

Public is best

Half of all front-line health and care sector workers around the world have considered quitting, according to a new survey published by a global union body.

The survey by Public Services International (PSI), issued ahead of the organisation’s world congress in Geneva, said the possible mass exodus of workers raised concerns about the sustainability of health and care services across the world.

More than half – 58 per cent – of respondents said the main reason for wanting to leave their roles was low pay and staff shortages leading to increased hours (49 per cent).

Many said they have seen patients in their care die due to a lack of adequate staffing.

PSI said it wants to see stronger public investment from government, rather than market-based or private healthcare provision.

Assistant general secretary Daniel Bertossa said: “Just a few years ago, we celebrated our health workers as heroes. Now, the vast majority of these professionals feel

betrayed by their leaders. Insufficient public investment in our healthcare systems is creating life-threatening risks for both patients and staff.

“Skilled workers like these take time to train. We are perilously close to not having enough skilled staff to train the new staff we need. As shortages become more profound, the failures of band-aid solutions will become more acute,” he said.

Gita Devi Thing Paudel, a community health worker from Kathmandu and president of the Nepal Health Volunteer Association, said: “My patients have waited for doctors, but there are no doctors there, only auxiliary nurses.”

Fernanda Boriotti, a biomedical health worker from Rosario in Argentina, said: “Our health centre has been without water for more than a month.

“We workers really can’t continue to provide healthcare in this way. We are exhausted.”

Bill Muriuki, a doctor working in Nyeri, Kenya, said: “I have seriously considered quitting my job

after feeling that I was really not able to do enough for my patients.”

Responding to the PSI research, director-general of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said: “Health and care workers protect us day in and day out.

“Whether in local health centres, care facilities, fighting disease outbreaks or in emergency responses to conflict and climate-related disasters, they face major challenges that demand a major response. We owe them our gratitude and duty of care.”

The WHO estimates the world now faces a deficit of a staggering 15 million health workers.

Morning Star ☒

The Guardian

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WEASEL WORDS

Risky

Michaelia Cash repeatedly described a proposition for Indigenous people to have a democratically elected body that could represent them, aka the Indigenous Voice to Parliament, as “risky.” Michaelia Cash was fine with the ruinously expensive and dangerous AUKUS subs deal, and was part of a Coalition government that worked hard to make Climate Change worse, and stuffed up vaccine delivery, so we’ll take our advice on what is and isn’t risky somewhere else thanks.

Cuteness

Normally a way of describing kittens, puppies, and grandchildren, ‘cuteness’ in the hands of Peter Dutton seems to mean ‘facts that make Peter Dutton look bad.’ Australia’s ASIO boss, Mike Burgess has called for restraint by public figures, not long after Dutton – reaching for his trusty dog-whistle, implied that all pro-Palestine demonstrators are undesirable foreigners. Dutton has called for an end to the ‘cuteness.’ Presumably Burgess should come out with it and say that Dutton is a dogwhistling bigot, or just be quiet about any facts which make his former boss look bad.

Hateful

Protesting against war crimes in Palestine is ‘hateful’ according to Peter Dutton and Sussan Ley. Credit where credit is due, after implying that all Black Victorians are gang members and making unsubstantiated allegations of child abuse in the Northern Territory, our Opposition Leader definitely knows one end of a hateful statement from the other.

Humanitarian crisis

A humanitarian crisis sounds very matter-of-fact. It’s also what language buffs call ‘passive voice,’ something that just happens without the speaker having to name the person causing it. So it’s weaselly to talk about the ‘humanitarian crisis’ in Gaza as though there’s a hurricane or an earthquake there. What’s happening in Gaza is a crime against humanity and there is definitely a responsible party.

Stability (the rock of)

Keir Starmer, the British UK Labour Leader has asked if Labour can deliver the “rock of stability” people need to move forward in their lives. It’s hoped that if he gets into power he’ll be less spectacularly incompetent than the British Tories have been. The weaselly use of ‘stability’ is that it can be another way to say that ‘none of the bad things are going to change.’ This is the sort of stability Australians were treated to when their nice shiny new ALP government delivered massive tax cuts to the well-off, and an insane nuclear submarine agreement.

Virtue Signalling

This is a meaningful term. It’s used when someone does a thing that shows concern for an issue, but they’re doing it to just to show that they’re a good person. Really they don’t care about the issue at all.

From this definition, you can see that Virtue Signalling is a loaded word – it depends on assumptions about what’s going on the mind of the person who is accused of doing the signalling.

The weasel use of ‘Virtue Signalling’ occurs when someone does that mind reading. I have a ‘Vote Yes to the Voice’ bumper-sticker on my car. Was I genuinely concerned about Indigenous people, and sincerely convinced that the Voice was a good idea, or did I just want to seem nice? Does my mental state even matter, if I’m promoting a good idea?

The weasel use of Virtue signalling happens when someone who knows it’s a bad look to be publicly bigoted complains about virtue signalling instead of coming out and saying they don’t like Black people getting something good.

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Freedom for Palestine rally: Boorloo/Perth

Richard Titelius

Following the attacks by Hamas forces on Israel on 7th October, after years of constant attacks on the Palestinian people, Israel began its brutal retaliation against the people of Gaza.

The Israeli state led by far-right Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that this would be a long war and announced a sealing off of Gaza, and shutting off supplies of water, electricity, and fuel to all the people of Gaza on the pretext that it was not possible to distinguish the people of Gaza from Hamas.

Consequently, the world, including Australia, has erupted in support of the Palestinian right to resistance. On Friday 13th October Friends of Palestine WA organised a rally attended by over 1000 people. MC, Nick Everett, of Friends of Palestine said this latest attack by Israel is a continuation of the 1948 creation of the State of Israel or what the Palestinian people call, El Nakba – the Catastrophe.

Hannah, a young Palestinian rapper spoke passionately about the resistance to, “unliveable” conditions with Palestinians existing with up to 20 hours of darkness, little or no clean water and checkpoints in their own land. It is worse than an open air prison. Prisoners have been convicted, know why they are there, and most can foresee an end point to their conditions. Hannah said the Palestinian people don’t stand for violence; they stand for resistance. She said those who seek to crush the Palestinians are using illegal weapons such as white phosphorous bombs. They know Israel doesn’t want peace, as it seeks to expel every last Palestinian from Palestinian lands.

Another Palestinian speaker, Amon, who visited his family in Palestine in 2021, said his mother spoke of the constant bombing of Gaza, where even hospitals and other health care facilities have been targeted. Injured people are now being brought into the remaining hospitals mostly without electricity or water. Amon

spoke of the constant campaign by the Israeli government and many sections of the Western media to dehumanise the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people are only seeking freedom and a life of dignity.

Another speaker Amar, a software student at UWA spoke of the stifling occupation, of 5000 Palestinians being held in administrative detention without charge, and Israel having its most right wing conservative government ever. The hope is that systems of oppression cannot last forever as they rely on coercion to maintain their rule. Mr Ibrahim of the Islamic Council of WA referred to Israel’s tactics over recent years as amounting to ethnic cleansing.

The world is characterised by hypocrisy, when the world media calls out the deaths of Israelis but rarely those of Palestinians, when victims are labelled as terrorists and the perpetrators of this violence are glorified. Children in Palestine bear the trauma of this war and 50 per cent of those children suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). There is an unfolding humanitarian disaster in Gaza as a consequence of the latest assault by Israel. However, even before 7th October 2023, due to the ongoing 16 year long blockade of Gaza, half the people in Gaza suffered food insecurity.

Palestinians have a right to defend themselves and Ibrahim urged all the people at the rally, “Do not let this message die here, go and tell everyone.” The organisers of the rally said that though the police had given them a permit to assemble they were not allowed to march.

Another march is planned for 12 pm Saturday 21st October in Borloo/Perth’s Murray Street Mall.

The Communist Party of Australia opposes the occupation of Palestinian land by Israel and supports the right of the Palestinian people to defend their land and people. The CPA calls on all members and supporters to attend the rallies around the country. ✪



Friends of Palestine WA organised a rally on the 13th October attended by over 1000 people.



2000 - 3000 people showed solidarity for Palestine in Adelaide on 15th October.

Freedom for Palestine: Naarm/Melbourne

DC

On Sunday 15th October, thousands of Victorians from all walks of life gathered in front of the State Library of Victoria in one of the country’s biggest shows of solidarity towards the Palestinian people.

One scan of the crowd would reveal flags from all across the Middle East: Turks, Lebanese, Syrians, Pakistanis, Kazakhstanis, Omanis, and many others came to show solidarity for their Palestinian brothers and sisters who are facing one of the worst man-made

atrocities in human history. Socialists, Aboriginals, gay rights, and trans rights activists were also on the scene to demonstrate that they would not tolerate Israel’s crimes, and that Palestinian rights are human rights.

The speakers were also a mix of Palestinian, Jewish, Socialist, and Aboriginal veterans who all made it expressly clear that Australia and the West’s collective response to the war in Palestine in the past week has been absolutely revolting. One Palestinian survivor spoke of the horror she has felt seeing how eagerly the Australian media has

jumped to label Palestinians as terrorists and unprovoked war criminals, all the while her people have been raped and murdered for decades. Indigenous activist Gary Foley emphasised that what the Indigenous people of Palestine are suffering through now, is appallingly similar to what our government is guilty of having done to its people. As victims of an exterminatory genocide in our own lands, the Aboriginal activists present warned us all not to make the mistakes of the past once again.

There were no cries for genocide against Jews, as much as Israel

apologists would love to conflate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. In fact there were Jews speaking and present at the rally, and they were adamant in declaring that Israel does not speak for them or the Jews of the world. They urged an end to the Apartheid state of Israel and the acts of terrorism it has committed. This was a rally in solidarity with the victims of genocide, not a rally of hatred against any particular ethnicity.

The Communist Party of Australia does and always has recognised the Palestinian people’s right to sovereignty and liberation

and it will continue to do so for as long as they are made to suffer under the boots of imperialism and colonialism.

A worrying sign, and echo of the police intimidation at similar events in Sydney is that police labelled ‘evidence collectors’ were everywhere, recording all attendants exercising their right to peaceful protest. ✪



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