



20,000 Palestinians Murdered by Israel



Photo: Anna Pha.

Anna Pha

Almost 15,000 Palestinians have been killed during Israel's genocidal offensive against the people of Palestine following Hamas' raid on 7 October. At least another 6800 are missing and presumed dead under the rubble. The Albanese government and the Opposition stand condemned for their silence on Israel's atrocities as supporters of crimes against humanity.

In Australia tens of thousands of people continue to take part in pro-Palestinian rallies and marches, including strikes by school children. Indigenous Australians, Palestinians, Muslims, Jews, Christians, trade unionists, left parties, members of the Labor Party, the Greens, and many others have joined "Free Palestine," in their call for peace and recognition of a Palestinian state.

Protesters at a blockade of an Israeli ship at Port Botany on 20 November called for an end to the blockade of Gaza. They were forcibly removed by police, with some arrested.

Israel never let up in its carpet bombing of hospitals, housing, UN schools, and essential infrastructure until a 4-day pause was agreed to. The pause commenced on Friday 24 November and was then extended on condition that at least 10 Israeli hostages held by Hamas were released each day in exchange for 30 Palestinians.

The 4-day 'humanitarian pause' saw the release of 50 Israeli hostages in exchange for 150 Palestinian prisoners, and the entry of limited, and inadequate, humanitarian aid. Those released by Israel were mostly unconvicted women and children including minors held in Israeli prisons for as little as throwing stones.

The pause came amidst growing international pressure on Israel from governments and mass pro-Palestinian actions on the ground around the world. Even governments such as Australia and the US were forced to support a pause, but would not back a lasting ceasefire, or peace based on UN resolutions for a two-state solution. A pause is not a solution.

Other deals were also negotiated for 11 dual citizens including three French, two Germans and six Argentinians to be released in exchange for 33 Palestinians being held in Israeli prisons.

Israel has shown blatant disregard for international law; collective punishment of Palestinians is a crime against humanity.

Israel has killed 108 UN staff and at least 53 journalists.

"WAR ON CHILDREN"

"People are so desperate and you can see in adults' eyes they haven't eaten, you can see the children are getting thinner," the UN children's agency's James Elder told Reuters speaking from Gaza City.

"There's just this immense relief," referring to the aid that was let through during the pause. "Literally people as they get water start drinking the water immediately," he said. "They're thirsty. They've been thirsty for days."

"It seems callous and cold to think that we may be getting to the end of those deliveries,

[during the 4-day pause] and hostilities will continue, ... the war, this war on children will continue."


Referring to the pause, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell told the UN Security Council, "this [pause] is far from enough: the war must be brought to an end, and the killing and maiming of children must stop immediately."

"We estimate that 450,000 children in the West Bank need humanitarian assistance. UNICEF and its partners are providing mental health and protection support, water and sanitation services, and remedial education for 280,000 children in the West Bank."

"Turning to Gaza, I have just returned from a visit to the south of the territory where I was able to meet with children, their families, and with UNICEF staff on the ground. I am haunted by what I saw and heard," Russell said.

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Guardian

Issue 2081

4 December 2023

Taking action

Lenin said of the Paris Commune that to Marx it was “more important than hundreds of programs and arguments,” because the Commune was real action, unsuccessful, but inspiring and instructive. There has been a lot of action in Australia recently. The rallies for a free Palestine are in their eighth week, and have expanded to school strikes and actions against ships bringing material to the Israeli apartheid regime. Is action always good? Does it work? What does it mean for action to work?

Obviously mass protest action can be effective. We only have to look at the Albanese Labor government’s recent timid moves towards urging a pause and oh-so-carefully criticising the Israeli Defence Force’s genocidal assault on Palestinians. Inadequate, but arguably steps in the right direction, and things a government this cautious would not have done without a lot of pressure. Stepping back in time, there was the mass campaign against John Howard’s WorkChoices policy, and the mass demonstrations against the war in Vietnam, which probably got Australia out of that war earlier.

Actions can also fizzle out and go nowhere. The Vietnam war demonstrations were dwarfed by massive protests against the disastrous invasion of Iraq in 2003, and made no difference to the war or the lying leaders who promoted it; Howard had some four more years in power, and George Bush and Tony Blair likewise. Action that fails can have the negative effect that the media and leaders start to discount mass action, so the price of change gets higher.

So what’s the magic ingredient that makes action effective? It’s not simply large numbers – although it’s good to have more people at a rally or demonstration, and everyone reading this should turn out for the next pro-Palestine event. The Iraq war demonstrations showed that large numbers aren’t enough.

Is drastic interesting action what’s needed? It’s good to get an issue in the news, but stunts can also make the news all about the thing you’ve done, rather than about the issue.

We are NOT saying ‘stay home,’ and we are NOT saying don’t do stunts. The *Guardian* supports protests in the interests of the environment.

Really effective action is both short-term and long term, and it involves other people. Short term: got off your couch and hit the streets the next time there’s a protest about Palestine or AUKUS. Long term: join a group that will lead to sustained action. The *Guardian* strongly supports Unionists for Palestine, a group of grass-roots union members striving to organise inside their own unions to take their comrades, the people they work with, into the protest against Israel’s occupation and war crimes.

It’s not easy working in unions. You have to talk with people. They don’t automatically agree. You have setbacks, progress, and more setbacks. It’s much easier to just go to a demonstration and write off your union as too conservative or wrong.

The Communist Party of Australia has just recently celebrated the October Revolution, when the whole world knew how powerful the working class can be when it’s organised.

So take action! Take the short-term action and show up to the next demonstration. Take the long-term action, join your union, and work to bring your fellow-workers with you.

As a great man once said, we have a world to win.

Journalists gagged



Photo: Marco Verch Professional – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

Journalists at Nine newspapers, *The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)* and *Age*, have been banned from covering the Israel-Palestine conflict if they signed an open letter criticising the Australian media’s coverage of the war (see page 7, this issue). The letter has been signed by more than 150 media workers including the author of this article and the *Guardian’s* Editor.

“It is our duty as journalists to hold the powerful to account, to deliver truth and full context to our audiences, and to do so courageously without fear of political intimidation,” it reads. “[...] We risk losing the trust of our audiences if we fail to apply the most stringent

journalistic principles and cover this conflict in full.”

“We also call for an end to violence against civilians in Gaza, the West Bank, Israel and Lebanon; the perpetrators of crimes against journalists and civilians be held to account and Australian newsroom leaders to be as clear-eyed in their coverage of atrocities committed by Israel as they are of those committed by Hamas. We stand by our Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, Jewish, and Israeli colleagues during a time that is personally and professionally confronting for them. The rise in both Islamophobia and antisemitism has ripple effects for those communities worldwide.”

“[Editors should] Provide historical context when referencing

the October 7 Hamas attacks on Israel. The conflict did not start on October 7 and it is the media’s responsibility to ensure audiences are fully informed.”

Crikey raises concerns over the “hypocrisy” of Nine media’s decision, when staff who have taken sponsored trips to the area from pro-Israel groups are still allowed to work on coverage, and calls on newsrooms to disclose when journalists have been on sponsored trips to Israel and to reject them in the future.

Israel is silencing media reportage from Gaza. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 46 Palestinian, 3 Lebanese and 4 Israeli journalists have been killed by Israeli forces. ✪

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“The true cost of this latest war in Palestine and Israel will be measured in children’s lives – those lost to the violence, and those forever changed by it. Without an end to the fighting, and full humanitarian access, the cost will continue to grow exponentially.

“The destruction of Gaza and killing of civilians will not bring peace or safety to the region. The people of this region deserve peace. Only a negotiated political solution – one that prioritises the rights and wellbeing of this and future generations of Israeli and Palestinian children – can ensure that.”

WEST BANK

A report released by Palestinian Commission for Detainees and Ex-Prisoners’ Affairs said that of the 3200 Palestinians detained by Israel since 7 October in the occupied West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, 41 were journalists of whom 29 remain in detention.

The number detained since 7 October brings to more than 7000 the number of Palestinians from the occupied territory in detention. That includes more than 200 children and about 78 female prisoners, as well as hundreds of sick and wounded people, some of whom need “urgent medical intervention,” the report added.

It also noted that the recent detentions were accompanied by “widespread raids and abuse, in addition to vandalising and destroying of citizens’ homes, and severe beatings of the families of detainees”, in addition to the shooting of unarmed Palestinians that resulted in deaths.

A PAUSE IS NO SOLUTION

Samer AbdelJaber, the head of the World Food Program (WFP) in Palestine said the current truce between Israel and Hamas does not seek to “solve the conflict, but rather to free the kidnapped people”.

Netanyahu and his ultra-right Zionist government have no intention of letting Palestinians control Gaza, the West Bank or East Jerusalem, let alone the establishment of a Palestinian state in line with UN resolutions. Their aim is Greater Israel (Eretz Yisrael), the political and religious aims of Zionism for the “promised land,” a Jewish state, without Arabs.

Netanyahu has committed to continuing the genocide until Hamas is destroyed. If Hamas is destroyed other resistance movements will rise in its place. The only way Netanyahu can destroy Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation, oppression and control is to depopulate Palestinian lands by genocide or exodus. This is precisely what Israel is attempting to do.

Egypt and Jordan have made it clear that they will not accept any further Palestinian refugees. They support the implementation of a two-state solution as per UN resolutions, not the emptying of Palestinian lands by Israel.

What the Hamas raid and Israel’s subsequent offensive have achieved is a world-wide shift in public opinion. Israel has lost credibility and support. Attention has been drawn to the suffering and plight of the Palestinian people and the urgency of the implementation of the two-state solution as a just and lasting settlement. ✪

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Seven weeks work on no pay

Despite record-low unemployment, Australian employers are still managing to steal more than 280 hours from their employees each year.

That's the finding of the Australia Institute's 2023 report, *Short Changed*, tracking annual work hours and unpaid overtime for 'Go Home On Time Day' on 22 November. It has also found the average worker is losing out on \$11,055 a year, or \$425 a fortnight, to unpaid overtime.

The Australia Institute surveyed 1640 people between 29 August and 6 September. Of those, 61 per cent were in paid work:

- Employees reported doing an average of 5.4 hours of unpaid work a week overall
- Full-time employees perform an average of 6.2 hours, and casuals or part-timers four hours
- Workers aged 18 to 29 do the most unpaid overtime (7.4 hours) a week
- This 'time theft' equates to 281 hours a year or seven standard 38-hour weeks spent working for free
- Australian employees are losing a cumulative \$131 billion to unpaid work a year
- Nearly half (46 per cent) are not satisfied with the amount of paid work they're doing and either want more or fewer hours:
- A third of all workers want more paid hours (35 per cent), but this rises to 54 per cent for under-30s

- Half of casuals (49 per cent) and of two in five part-timers (40 per cent) would like more paid hours
- Another 11 per cent of all workers would like fewer paid hours.

"This survey shows just how uneven the labour market is. We've got many workers, especially casuals in insecure jobs, wanting more hours. At the same time, employers are more likely to demand long hours, including large amounts of unpaid overtime, from full-time workers," Dr Fiona Macdonald, Policy Director, Industrial and Social at the Centre for Future Work said.

"Record-low unemployment should have pushed both satisfaction with working hours and paid hours higher as employers scrambled to fill labour shortages. Instead, 'time theft' has actually blown out by 57 hours per worker since 2022 and has returned to near pandemic-era levels.

"This dispels simplistic arguments that workers have the upper hand on employers because of recent industrial relations reforms. In fact, we've seen workers agree to more hours due to the cost of living crunch. Perversely, this has resulted in employees giving their bosses a free kick because many of those hours end up being unpaid.

"Providing more protections for workers in these insecure positions, as proposed in the Closing Loopholes legislation currently before parliament, is an important priority for improving Australian labour market outcomes." ✪



Etching: Rini Templeton

New refugee restrictions unfair and harsh

Proposed legislation created to respond to the High Court's ruling that indefinite immigration detention is unlawful will unfairly and harshly punish refugees, many of whom have already spent years in detention.

"Many of the people recently released are refugees who have already suffered years of indefinite detention. Some have committed crimes, but the key point is that they have already served their sentence," said Greg Barns SC, spokesperson, Australian Lawyers Alliance.

"The conditions to be imposed are more severe than those which are imposed on people who are on parole generally. They are, in some respects, unduly harsh. For example, if a visa holder had to travel interstate urgently, according to the government announcement, they will be unable to do so as they need to give seven working days' notice before they undertake travel.

"The proposed curfew, which will require visa holders to stay in their registered address from 10pm to 6am, seems futile. According to the government's announcement, it

will also mean that if an individual has obtained the Minister's approval to work they will be unable to do night-shifts or leave home before 6am for an early shift.

"The legislation must include independent review of the use of any type of monitoring as there will be people being monitored who don't need to be monitored.

"It is discriminatory to introduce laws for this cohort that make it a criminal offence to breach visa conditions. Generally, if someone breaches their parole conditions, it is not a criminal offence, and they

appear before the parole authorities. If someone breaches these new visa conditions, this should be dealt with by an independent review panel rather than making the breach a criminal offence."

The Australian Lawyers Alliance welcomes the fact that immigration detention is, and always should be, an absolute last resort.

"Indefinite immigration detention has no place in the Australian community," said Tony Kerin, spokesperson, Australian Lawyers Alliance.

"The government's detention

policy, which has resulted in hundreds, if not thousands, of people spending years locked up with no idea of when and if they will be free, has had serious impacts on the health of many people.

"This new legislation looks set to unfairly curtail the liberty of refugees who, if they have committed a crime, have already served their sentence, and it is an overreaction to the High Court's decision."

Australian Lawyers Alliance ✪

Mike Pezzullo won't be missed

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) has welcomed the decision to terminate Michael Pezzullo as Secretary of the Home Affairs Department.

The CPSU has consistently expressed deep concern over reports regarding Pezzullo's conduct, labelling his position as untenable from the outset.

Pezzullo, as has been widely reported, was found to have breached the Australian Public Service code of conduct on at least 14 different occasions. Notoriously, he failed to act apolitically by working to cultivate a Liberal Party power broker in order to influence appointments. Pezzullo also used his position to gain advantage for himself.

The CPSU has said that Pezzullo's conduct is incompatible with the principles of impartial and transparent service expected from public servants.

The CPSU acknowledges the importance of APS values and supports measures that ensure the integrity of public service institutions.

The CPSU's National Secretary has said that no matter where in the Public Service someone works, "the APS values apply, and so too should the consequences of not adhering to them.

"Far too often we have seen everyday public servants being held to a higher standard than their bosses. Both Mike Pezzullo and Kathryn Campbell demanded a level of commitment and compliance from their workforce, that they themselves could not demonstrate.

"The CPSU would like to acknowledge the tens of thousands of APS employees who, despite the failures of senior APS leadership, have continued to serve our country with integrity."

Naturally, Liberal leader Peter Dutton, whose authority was hugely expanded by Pezzullo's pet project, the establishment of the creation of Home Affairs, has praised Pezzullo's professionalism. ✪

Find out more about the

Communist Party of Australia

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Beyond Bank

Gap between public and private schools widens

A new report calls for an end to the school funding crisis that has left public schools in every state and the NT underfunded while private schools are overfunded by hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

The report by education economist Adam Rorris found:

- Public schools will remain underfunded by between \$6.2 billion and \$6.5 billion a year unless the Commonwealth, state and territory governments significantly lift their investment in new funding agreements due next year.
- Private schools will be overfunded by almost \$3 billion in the next five years. At an aggregate level, private schools receive more than their public funding entitlement in every state and territory except the NT.
- The richest schools in the nation are among the ones that will be the most overfunded by the federal government in the next five years, including Haileybury in Melbourne (\$19.1 million), Trinity Grammar in Sydney (\$14 million), Ivanhoe Grammar in Melbourne (\$11.5 million), Newington College in Sydney (\$11.2 million), Brisbane Grammar (\$11 million), Loreto Kirribilli in Sydney (\$10 million), Hale School in Perth (\$9.3 million), and Pembroke School in South Australia (\$8.8 million).

The report calls for all public schools to be funded by 2028 to the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), which is the minimum level governments agreed more than a decade ago was required to meet the needs of students.

“Public school systems have been working from a position of extreme underfunding for more



North Brisbane, Woodwork Class, 1951. Photo: Public domain.

than two decades. What is urgently needed is a commitment from governments to end the funding crisis and move Australian public schools to the point where they have the resources needed so they can realistically deliver on the goals for schooling as expected by the Australian community,” the report concludes.

Australian Education Union Federal President Correna Haythorpe said the report exposed the shocking inequity of school funding, with only 1.3 per cent of public schools resourced to the SRS compared to 98 per cent of private schools.

“If governments can afford to overfund private schools by hundreds of millions each year, they can afford to fund every public school to their own minimum standard,” she said.

“Full funding of public schools is the only way to ensure every child gets every opportunity to succeed. That investment will give teachers more time and support to meet the diverse and complex needs of their students. It will also give them the confidence that they can make a real difference without burning out with unsustainable workloads.

“Public school principals and teachers are doing an amazing job,

but they are being asked to do too much with too little. The Albanese government must honour its commitment to full funding and sign bilateral agreements with state and territory governments next year that put an end to the underfunding of public schools by 2028.

“Only public schools in the ACT are resourced at 100 per cent of the SRS and only the NSW government has pledged to fully fund public schools within the next five-year bilateral agreement with the Albanese government.

“The Rorris report makes clear there are few countries in the developed world that have a more inequitable distribution of resources to schools than Australia.

“Closing the resources gap is an essential part of closing the achievement gaps between children from different backgrounds, and it is public schools who educate the vast majority of children with higher needs.

“Full funding will help attract and retain teachers at a time of a critical shortage. It will also have huge benefits for the nation, with a recent report concluding that the economic payoff of fully funding public schools would be two to four times the annual cost.”

Australian Education Union

Public sector workers ‘betrayed’

The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) has issued a largely unchanged “revised” pay offer, maintaining the 11.2 per cent offer while also offering APS workers an additional one-off payment equivalent to 0.92 per cent of their salary.

The original APSC offer of 10.5 per cent was resoundingly rejected by the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) membership. A revised offer of 11.2 per cent over three years failed to get clear support amongst CPSU members in a recent member poll.

Members United is a grass-roots group of CPSU members trying to change the union’s leadership. They calculate that the one-off payment for an average APS5 worker would amount to only \$767 as an addition to a workers’ pre-tax salary in just one pay-cycle.

Issuing a poll to its membership shortly after the announcement, the union leadership is now recommending that members support the latest APSC offer, even though the APSC offer is substantively the same, with a minimal sign-on bonus.

The union leadership’s decision to prejudice the member poll by recommending that members support it is inconsistent with their previous claim that they maintain neutrality in member polls, and is counter to the leadership claim that “members have been in the driver’s seat of this bargaining campaign.”

At the same time, the incumbent CPSU leadership are facing a contest in the union’s internal elections from Members United, a grassroots rank-and-file

campaign that is critical of the incumbent leadership for a perceived weak industrial strategy and being too close to the Australian Labor Party (ALP).

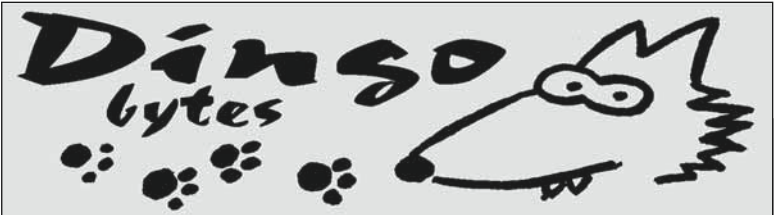
Members United candidates are standing for various elected positions in the CPSU’s democratic structures as part of this election, including the Governing Council, Section Council, and Executive Committee of the union.

The postal ballot, mailed to over 42,000 members, is currently open and closes 6 December.

Members United’s candidate for Deputy National President Bella Devine-Poulos has said “Sector-wide bargaining was supposed to give us the power to reverse a decade of wage cuts and protect members in the cost-of-living crisis. By recommending a below-inflation deal to the membership, the Melissa Donnelly Team are betraying our industrial strategy and the strike actions already planned.”

Members United’s National Secretary candidate Will Mudford has described the leadership team’s decision to recommend a below-inflation pay offer as “the ultimate betrayal of the CPSU membership.” He said that the CPSU leadership’s long-run strategy was “to get Labor into power and a good deal was supposed to follow.”

CPA members and supporters in the public service and community sector are recommended to vote for Members United candidates, and of course, join the CPSU if not already in it!



Lock the Gate Alliance and Central Queensland conservationists have condemned the recommendation that Whitehaven’s Winchester South mega coal mine should be approved. The project will mine 17 million tonnes of thermal and metallurgical coal per annum for 28 years. It will be responsible for 583 million tonnes of greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution – more than the entire annual GHG emissions of Australia now. Winchester South would also be responsible for a host of direct environmental impacts, including, putting already threatened species such as the koala, ornamental snake, and squatter pigeon at further risk by clearing at least 2000 hectares of habitat.

The coordinator general’s assessment identified more koala habitat than Whitehaven originally noted. The mine will drain local groundwater at an average of 155 million litres each year, with a potential maximum rate of 280 million litres each year into the mine pits, and leave three un-rehabilitated pit voids (giant holes where mining has occurred) at the end of the mine’s life. These pits will continue to drain water from the surrounding area and concentrate heavy metals and salts in the voids.

Lock the Gate Alliance National Coordinator Ellen Roberts said, “The Land Court decided new coal mines violated the rights of young people because of the threat of climate change. The Palaszczuk government has decided the youth of Queensland don’t deserve a liveable future.” Roberts said Whitehaven was a recalcitrant environmental vandal in NSW where it operates numerous coal mines already, and there was no reason to expect it would behave any differently in Queensland.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: Australia the big polluter. A new paper by the Climate Council highlights that Australia exports nearly three times as much fossil fuel as the United Arab Emirates, host of the United Nations climate talks this month (COP 28) in Dubai. Senior Researcher at the Climate Council Dr Wesley Morgan said there has been a lot of focus on the fact that the UN climate talks are this year hosted by a major oil exporter, but pointed out that Australia – which has put up its hand to host COP31 with Pacific island countries in 2026 – is also a fossil fuel heavyweight. “Australia must show a genuine commitment to phasing out coal, oil, and gas, and aligning with global efforts to tackle climate change if we are to truly stand alongside our Pacific neighbours knowing we are doing everything possible to protect our communities and region,” said Dr Morgan.

The paper makes it clear that the global energy transformation is well underway, with renewable energy sources like solar and wind becoming cheaper and more accessible around the world, replacing the use of fossil fuels in electricity generation and transportation. Further steps are needed to build on this momentum and accelerate the pace. The Climate Council notes that Australia is one of the sunniest and windiest countries on earth, rich in critical minerals and is ideally positioned to become a major exporter of clean technologies and green metals. As the world moves rapidly towards net zero, these resources could put us at the forefront of meeting the growing demand for sustainable and low-carbon commodities.



Something to say?

Write to the Editor!

editor@cpa.org.au

Scientists call ‘Code Blue emergency’ for Aussie oceans, as off-the-scale marine heat looms



Part of the Great Barrier Reef monitoring program. Photo: Australian Institute of Marine Science.

Australia’s oceans are in crisis, as extreme heat punishes marine life and raises the spectre of irreversible changes with profound consequences for all life on our planet, a new report has found.

The Climate Council’s Code Blue: Oceans in Crisis report reveals the immense amount of climate-change induced heat currently being absorbed by the world’s oceans is equivalent to boiling the Sydney Harbour every eight minutes.

In addition, the Climate Council ran a highly targeted survey of 30 leading ocean scientists across five continents. All were ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ concerned about climate-driven changes to the world’s oceans. Half (53 per cent) said these changes were outpacing scientific predictions.

Overwhelmingly, these scientists agreed ‘rapidly phasing out fossil fuels’ is the single most important action governments could take to address ocean warming.

Report author and the Climate Council’s Research Director Dr Simon Bradshaw said: “The science can’t be any clearer: our oceans are in deep trouble. Today the ocean is absorbing excess heat energy that’s equivalent to five Hiroshima bomb explosions every second, or enough to boil Sydney Harbour every eight minutes.

“As our climate changes, driven by rampant burning of coal, oil and gas, our seas are transforming before our eyes. More frequent and severe marine heatwaves are pushing coral reefs to the brink, ice sheets are melting at an alarming rate, ocean currents are slowing and seas are rising. The climate crisis is also an ocean crisis.

“In hospital emergency rooms, a code blue is called when a very serious life-threatening event is underway. We are calling a code blue for our oceans today, because

this threatens all the species that inhabit them, the people who depend on them, as well as all life on land.

“Over the past few decades as the climate has warmed, the oceans have done an incredible job of protecting us by absorbing CO₂ and an immense amount of heat, but there’s a limit to what they can take and we are close to crossing dangerous tipping points. We must scale up the use of clean energy like solar and wind, backed by storage, as quickly as we can so the use of coal, oil, and gas is phased out. Every step that cuts pollution will help secure our future.”

Ocean scientist Professor Gretta Pecl, Director for the Centre for Marine Socioecology at the University of Tasmania, author of the Australian ocean section of the latest IPCC report and report co-author added: “Make no mistake, ocean scientists around the world are growing increasingly concerned about rapid and intensifying changes to our oceans.

“While much of the worry for the brutal summer ahead is quite rightly about the impact on our iconic Great Barrier Reef, the scientific community is also extremely concerned about the Great Southern Reef. With forecasts of unprecedented and ‘off the charts’ marine heat this summer, these critical marine ecosystems face risk of utter devastation.

“We’re observing the transformation of the oceans in real time, as marine species move to survive. In Australia, at least 200 marine species have shifted since 2003, with the vast majority headed south. As waters warm further south, many will have nowhere left to go.

“While climate change has already caused extensive change to our oceans – and we’ll continue to see devastating impacts for decades – stronger action by governments

to reign in fossil fuels right now can limit future harms and ensure more species and ecosystems are given a fighting chance. Scientists agree: the single most important action we can take now is to leave fossil fuels in the polluting past – and it has to happen this decade.”

Pro-surfer Adrian ‘Ace’ Buchan, Surfing Australia Deputy Chairman, has joined the Climate Council’s call to declare a Code Blue emergency, adding: “Surfers have a deep and spiritual connection to the ocean and we are deeply concerned about the devastating impact the climate crisis is having on our big blue playground. Erosion is threatening our most iconic surfing spots. Our water is being polluted from flood runoff and dangerous jellyfish moving south. Loss of coral reefs and impacts on sandbars, is not just altering where and how waves break, but is also having devastating impacts on marine life.

“This is all terrible news for the millions of ocean-loving Aussies – every one of whom should be concerned and take note. This is a call to action: we must work to draw attention to the ocean’s plight and push for decisive and rapid climate action now.”

Tishiko King, a proud Kulkalaig woman from Masig in Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait Islands) marine scientist and co-author of the report said: “We know what is needed to protect our futures: leaving fossil fuels in the ground, having the resources to adapt to our changing climate and ocean, being able to access funds to address loss and damage.

“We have the opportunity to work together: First Nations, Pacific Island nations, non-Indigenous Australians. It starts by listening, and understanding what we all have in common. The ocean is what connects us all together.”

Climate Council ✪

PEACE NOTES

Reinforcing the imperium: Joseph Gerson on the US nuclear arsenal

Hannah Middleton

Asked about the function of the US nuclear arsenal, Joseph Gerson, President of the US Campaign for Peace, Disarmament and Common Security, told the *Morning Star*:

In addition to providing massive profits to the military-industrial complex, the US nuclear arsenal has two primary purposes: reinforcing the US global imperium and deterring nuclear blackmail or attacks by rival nuclear powers.

The origins of the US nuclear arsenal and the first-use doctrine are instructive. The Manhattan Project was initiated amidst fears that Nazi Germany would create nuclear weapons to be used against the United States and its allies. The idea was to have a US nuclear weapon to deter Nazi use of the apocalyptic weapon.

However, by 1942 US intelligence concluded that Germany would not be able to develop nuclear weapons in time for use during the war. Nonetheless, there was no slackening in the drive to build the US bomb.

It is now recognised that, as US secretary of war Henry L. Stimson said at the time, attacking Japan with nuclear weapons was not necessary to end the war. He explained that Japan was functionally defeated and that Japan’s surrender could be achieved on terms acceptable to the US.

The reason for the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear attacks was to bring the war to an immediate end, before Russia could enter the war and gain control of northern China, Manchuria, and Korea.

It was not nuclear attacks that led Emperor Hirohito to order Japan’s surrender. It was the Soviet Union’s declaration of war against Japan on the same day as the Nagasaki A-bombing.

Not to be missed was President Truman’s diary entry that with the A-bomb he would have “a hammer over those boys” – the ability to terrorise Soviet leadership.

US secretary of defence Harold Brown once testified that with the US nuclear arsenal our “conventional weapons” become “meaningful instruments of military and political power.”

Noam Chomsky explained that means that the US nuclear arsenal allows the US to “sufficiently intimidate ... anyone who might help to protect people we are determined to attack.”

Daniel Ellsberg, who was once the lead author of the US nuclear war-fighting doctrine, taught that during many US wars and international crises, the US prepared or threatened to initiate nuclear attacks.

A partial list includes the 1948 Berlin blockade, Eisenhower’s 1953 nuclear threat to win the armistice agreement with North Korea and China, and again in 1955 and 1958 during the Taiwan crises.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy thought that the odds that the US would resort to nuclear attack was between a third and a half.

President Lyndon B. Johnson threatened the use of nuclear weapons during the Six-day and Vietnam wars.

We had President Richard Nixon’s “madman” nuclear threats mobilisation against Vietnam. In the 1973 October war [the Yom Kippur war], Henry Kissinger prepared for, and threatened the use of nuclear weapons.

The post-cold war era included such threats and preparations during the wars against Iraq (including a 1991 threat by [British] Prime Minister John Major) and against North Korea.

US post-cold war nuclear threats were made in the run-up to the 1991 and 2003 wars against Iraq to ensure that US and allied troops being assembled in the Middle East for those wars were not attacked.

Today, as we face the danger of the Gaza war becoming a regional war including Iran, we can be sure that Iranian policymakers are well aware that in a worst-case scenario, the US or Israel (which threatened the use of its ‘Temple Weapons’ during the 1973 October war) could respond to attacks with tactical nuclear weapons or use precision and devastating ‘conventional’ weapons in an effort to destroy Iran’s nuclear infrastructure.

Morning Star (edited for reasons of space)

Centrelink call wait times worse than ever

If you've tried to call Centrelink in the last year, this will come as no surprise

Last week Services Australia released their 2022-23 Annual Report. This comes after media attention around a significant blowout to wait times, with only 23 per cent of calls to Centrelink making it through to a service representative in July and August this year. That means less than 1 in 4 calls were answered.

Medicare and Centrelink both come under the Services Australia banner, as do several other important social programs.

Many services can be accessed online through MyGov, but for some that isn't an option. Not all of us live close to a service centre or have the means to travel. Many have a hard time using online services, or have accessibility needs that mean telephone contact is a necessity.

As always, it's the people who most need government services that have the hardest time accessing them.

Services Australia's annual report is creative in its performance measures – there is a self-identified target of serving 70 per cent of customers within 15 minutes. Overall, only 60 per cent of customers received support in this time, and only 36 per cent of callers who were seeking information on social security and welfare. The report classifies this as 'partially achieved.'

This does not measure the full length of transferred calls, nor does it include calls that were terminated by customers after a long wait.

This also ignores customers who receive a congestion message

that dumps them out of the call queue, advising them to use online services instead. Around 9 million callers received this treatment last year. If you call again during a high volume call period, the system will recognise your number, categorise you as a repeat caller and in many cases, continue to drop your call. Has Services Australia truly learned their lesson after the Robodebt saga? Automated systems cannot replace people, especially not when it comes to working with vulnerable people. There is also a target of 90 per cent of work processed in a timely manner, which was achieved less than 70 per cent of the time. Again, this is considered 'partially achieved.'

It does make one wonder if it's possible to fail.

With all of this said, it has been announced that there will be a \$228 million boost to help Services Australia deal with call wait times, allowing an additional 3000 staff to be employed. Of course, it will take some time to recruit and train this many new staff and in the meantime it is more difficult than ever to speak with a person. This leaves millions of people with unanswered questions and unprocessed claims.

It has been reported that nearly 20 per cent of Services Australia staff plan to leave in the next year, and up to 180 staff are leaving each month. It's apparent that current staff shortages are taking a toll on everyone involved.

Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association (CPSA) ✪



Photo: David Jackmanson – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

Heat Map shows rental crisis

Research from Anglicare has shown that essential workers can't afford rent in any part of the country. The charity has put out a 'heat map,' showing affordability around Australia. Green is for affordable, dark red for unaffordable. Every part of the country is a shade of red.

"Essential workers are the backbone of our communities, yet they cannot afford to rent. These maps show that more and more essential workers are being pushed

into serious rental stress – and being forced out of their local communities," said Anglicare Australia Executive Director Kasy Chambers.

"So many essential industries are facing workforce shortages with workers unable to afford to stay or move to parts of the country where these shortages are at their worst. These numbers help explain why.

"Virtually no part of Australia is affordable for aged care workers, early childhood educators, cleaners, nurses, and many other essential workers we rely on. They

cannot afford to live in their own communities.

"Our own services employ many of these workers, and have been struggling to help them find affordable places to live."

Chambers said that the best way to tackle the rental crisis is to build social and affordable rentals.

"We already know that the private market is failing people on the lowest incomes. This Snapshot shows that it's failing people on average incomes as well, including those in full-time work.

"Even though Australia has built a record number of homes over the last ten years, rents keep soaring. The best way to make rentals more affordable is to build social and affordable homes. Building general homes and hoping affordability will trickle down just isn't working.

"We need to build affordable housing for those who need it, including essential workers. We need better protections for renters, including an end to no-cause evictions and limits on unfair rent increases. And we need tax reform

to put people in need of homes, not investors, at the centre of our system.

"We're calling on the government to take action – and make sure everyone has a place to call home," Chambers said.

Editor's note: While housing which is affordable is better than housing that is not affordable, 'social and affordable' housing is all too often the private market by another name. The Communist Party of Australia calls for Public Housing; owned and run by the people. ✪

Refugee activists win fines case

Police have dropped charges against eight Refugee Action Collective Vic (RAC) activists who were fined for taking part in a car cavalcade on Good Friday 2020.

Refugee supporters had formed a COVID-safe motorcade to show support for Medevac refugees held inside the Mantra Hotel in the northern Melbourne suburb of Preston.

RAC spokesperson Lucy Honan said, "These fines should never have

been imposed in the first place. They were part of a draconian and authoritarian reaction to the pandemic that saw the quashing of protest and dissent.

"Refugee supporters argued consistently that the health and wellbeing of refugees in detention could not be ignored until the pandemic was over.

"Our protests, including the cavalcade, were always COVID-safe. And our campaign was justified, with the Morrison government

eventually freeing all refugees from hotel detention.

"Our only 'crime' was to show solidarity with the refugees. It's a disgrace that the fines were imposed and that it's taken three and a half years for the police to drop the charges. But today we stand vindicated."

Honan said the police had charged about 30 people with not having a reasonable excuse to be outside the hotel even though the refugees were saying they were in

urgent need of community support. Some activists had paid their fines while others were put on diversion orders with no fines after guilty pleas.

She added, "There is a growing trend by governments across Australia to attack the right to protest and to stand up for solidarity and human rights.

"Our victory today shows that protest is legitimate and necessary. The shocking moves by the Albanese government to undermine

the High Court's ruling to abolish indefinite detention is just the latest indication that Labor wants to keep every facet of the Liberals' inhuman anti-refugee policies in place.

"RAC will continue to be on the streets arguing for permanent visas for the Medevac refugees and for all victims of Australia's cruel border control policies." ✪

Letter from journalists to Australian media outlets

(Editor's note: attached is an open letter from Australian journalists. It has been signed by just under 300 journalists so far. Disgracefully, Nine, which publishes the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* newspapers has told its staff that anyone who signs the letter will be "unable to participate in any reporting or production relating to the war.")

Israel's devastating bombing campaign and media blockade in Gaza threatens news gathering and press freedom in an unprecedented fashion. Newsrooms around the world have a duty to cover these events with integrity, transparency and rigour.

As of November 23, more than 14,000 Palestinians have been killed – including roughly 6,000 children – by Israel's bombardment of Gaza since the October 7 Hamas attack that killed 1,200 Israelis. Included in the mounting death toll are at least 53 journalists – 46 Palestinians, 3 Lebanese and 4 Israelis – according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, which it says is the deadliest conflict for journalists since it began tracking deaths in 1992.

As reporters, editors, photographers, producers, and other workers in newsrooms around Australia, we are appalled at the slaughter of our colleagues and their families and the apparent targeting of journalists by the Israeli government, which constitutes a violation of the Geneva Conventions.

We join hundreds of our colleagues in the US, Reporters Without Borders, the International Federation of Journalists and others in calling for an end to attacks on journalists and journalism itself. We also call for an end to violence against civilians in Gaza, the West Bank, Israel and Lebanon; the perpetrators of crimes against journalists and civilians be held to account; and Australian newsroom leaders to be as clear-eyed in their coverage of atrocities committed by Israel as they are of those committed by Hamas. We stand by our Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, Jewish, and Israeli colleagues during a time that is personally and professionally confronting for them. The rise in both Islamophobia and antisemitism has ripple effects for those communities worldwide.

It is our duty as journalists to hold the powerful to account, to deliver truth and full context to our audiences, and to do so courageously without fear of political intimidation. Audiences are viewing much of this war through the lens of social media, fuelling suspicion of the mainstream media's ability to properly inform audiences of events on the ground. We risk losing the trust of our audiences if we fail to apply the most



An armoured Land Rover used by Reuters for reporting in Palestine. Photo: Mx. Granger – flickr.com (CC0 1.0)

stringent journalistic principles and cover this conflict in full.

We – journalists from across the Australian media landscape – call on Australian newsrooms to undertake these steps to improve coverage:

1. Adhere to truth over 'both-sidesism.' Both-sidesism is not balanced or impartial reporting; it acts as a constraint on truth by shrouding the enormous scale of the human suffering currently being perpetrated by Israeli forces. The immense and disproportionate human suffering of the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza should not be minimised.

2. Centre the human tragedy in the coverage of the conflict. Human-focused coverage can include, as examples, daily updates on the civilian death tolls, sharing the profiles and stories of the lives lost, and highlighting the humanitarian catastrophe.

3. Apply as much professional scepticism when prioritising or relying on uncorroborated Israeli government and military sources to shape coverage as is applied to Hamas. The Israeli government is also an actor in this conflict, with mounting evidence it is committing war crimes and a documented

history of sharing misinformation. The Israeli government's version of events should never be reported verbatim without context or fact-checking. This is our basic responsibility as journalists.

4. Give adequate coverage to credible allegations of war crimes, genocide, ethnic cleansing and apartheid, and don't avoid using the term 'Palestine' where appropriate.

5. Provide historical context when referencing the October 7 Hamas attacks on Israel. The conflict did not start on October 7 and it is the media's responsibility to ensure audiences are fully informed. Important contextual references include:

a. the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their native lands in 1948 to make way for the state of Israel

b. the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel since 1967, including that the UN deemed Gaza an Israeli-occupied territory even after Israel's withdrawal from the enclave in 2005

c. the roughly 5,000 Palestinians held in Israeli jails, including around 150 children, thousands of whom are held without charge and many of whom are tortured

6. Provide full and fair coverage of

Australia's growing anti-war movement, including the large weekly protests in capital cities, and the traumatising impact of the conflict on Arab, Muslim, and Jewish communities.

7. Be transparent about journalists who have been on all-expenses paid trips to Israel organised by pro-Israeli government groups. It is essential for audience transparency that reports include disclosures of a journalist's participation in all-expenses paid trips to Israel. We also urge all Australian journalists from hereon to reject offers of paid trips to the Middle East.

8. Trust Australian journalists of Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and Jewish backgrounds to do their jobs. Diversity is an asset in newsrooms and should be harnessed to enrich coverage. Journalists with identities that intersect with a live issue bring insights and perspectives otherwise unattainable from a disconnected, privileged vantage point.

Signed,

.....

Good Housing: A Human Right for all Australians

Ron Hall

Residents of the remote community of Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) in the Northern Territory have just won their right to enjoy safe and healthy housing, along with compensation for unacceptable delays and treatment that they had to endure in a drawn-out process.

Amazing levels of determination were required by this small "Top End" community of First Nations people to achieve what is a common expectation for most Australians, although good housing is becoming a diminishing reality in a profit-motivated society. Indeed, the perseverance of this remote Indigenous community and their success could have implications for renters in particular across the nation.

Recent increases have doubled rents for two thirds of remote Indigenous tenants,

regardless of how dilapidated a dwelling might be as a result of government neglect. The NT government needs to set a much higher standard as a provider of accommodation, especially for those in disadvantaged situations.

In a society that supposedly recognises no divisions, why should remote Indigenous communities be subjected to such a systemic failure that has taken years to resolve? In more recent development in Western Australia a class action probe into public housing is now underway seeking to have dilapidated housing repaired and brought up to standard. Repeated requests to authorities fall on deaf ears.

No Australian should need to take a case to the High Court of the nation merely to have long overdue repairs made to their accommodation; even less so when it is government owned.

"The NT government's neglect of remote

housing impacts communities across the territory ... and all tenants across the country," claimed Dan Kelly, solicitor for the community, from Australian Lawyers for Remote Aboriginal Rights.

As we approach the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, commemorated on 10 December, we need to contemplate how well capitalist Australia is meeting the challenges presented by what is arguably the most significant document of the 20th century, despite its somewhat chauvinistic mode of expression. Given the current rates of homelessness in prosperous nations like Australia and the issues faced by tenants, Article 25, Part 1 of the Declaration has become especially relevant, as quoted below with the writer's emphasis.

Article 25

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and

well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, **housing** and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Only under a socialist system can the highly vaunted Australian dream of occupying and possibly owning a habitable residence be shared by all. In fact, having a good home remains not just a human right but a benefit for the nation as a whole. Better health outcomes and employment prospects, along with safer family situations, are among the many substantial gains from a successful national housing program.

Ron Hall: Secretary, Aboriginal Advancement League, South Australia 🇺🇦

Israel surrounds Indonesian hospital in Gaza with tanks, kills at least 12

On the 45th day of its war on Palestinians in Gaza, on 20 November, Israeli ground forces attacked another hospital in northern Gaza, killing at least 12 Palestinians and injuring several others, including doctors and patients.

Israeli tanks surrounded the hospital and buildings in its vicinity in the morning and started shelling the area. The attack also targeted a nearby Kuwaiti school where hundreds of people had taken shelter since the beginning of the Israeli airstrikes.

The strike, which targeted the second floor of the hospital, also destroyed the main operation room. According to reports, the staff of the Indonesian hospital are using cooking oil as an alternative to fuel to operate electricity generators.

Images and videos circulating on social media show the destruction done to the hospital and how

health workers are forced to treat patients on the ground with mobile torches.

At least 150 severely wounded patients, 100 staff members, thousands of relatives of the patients, and displaced Palestinians taking shelter inside the hospital are now trapped due to the attacks from Israel.

The head of the Orthopaedics Department at the Indonesian Medical Hospital, Dr. Adnan al-Barsh was also injured in the Israeli attacks on the Indonesian hospital.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza stated that despite the Israeli attack, the medical staff decided to stay back to provide treatment to the patients. A spokesperson for the ministry said that it fears the Israeli military "will repeat what it did to Al-Shifa Medical Complex" last week, *Quds News Network* reported. ✪



Photo: John Englart – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Far-right Libertarian Javier Milei is the next president of Argentina

Javier Milei, the candidate of the Liberty Advances far-right libertarian party, was victorious in the second round of presidential elections in Argentina held on 19 November. With 99 per cent of the votes counted, Milei had scored 55.69 per cent of the vote, while his opponent, Sergio Massa of the center-left Union for the Homeland coalition, trailed with 44.3 per cent. Milei will take office as president on 10 December.

In his victory speech, Milei told supporters, "The situation in Argentina is critical. There is no space for [gradualism] nor for lukewarmness or ambiguities ... If we don't advance rapidly with the structural changes that Argentina needs, we will face the worst crisis in our history."

Massa addressed supporters at the Union for the Homeland bunker after congratulating Milei. He stated, "There were two paths.

We chose to promote and defend education and public health, security and the state, the national industry, work, [small and medium enterprises], workers with their rights, and national unity. I continue to believe that Argentina needs to agree on state policies."

Milei's victory has sent a shockwave across Argentina's left, which fears that many of the country's hard-won victories like free health care and higher education will be

attacked by a Milei government. Furthermore, they worry that Milei's determination to cut public spending in addition to his promise to dollarise the economy and dissolve the central bank, will send Argentina's struggling economy into a tailspin. In 2022, Argentina registered over 100 per cent inflation. The poverty rate currently stands at 40 per cent. *People's Dispatch* ✪

French unions call for ceasefire in Gaza

French Trade union body the CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail, or General Confederation of Labour) has called on workers and the general public to keep up the pressure on the government by gathering and demonstrating en masse on 2 December for a ceasefire, after large demonstrations on 22 October this year.

The CGT has described Israel's collective

punishment of the inhabitants of Gaza as "unacceptable" and as a humanitarian catastrophe, and is calling on all 700,000 members and supporters to hit the streets and demonstrate to pressure the French government into demanding a proper ceasefire.

According to the CGT statement: "The Israeli government is once again flouting international law, having done so for decades with the occupation of Palestinian

territories by Israeli settlers. This government, dominated by the extreme right, openly pursues a policy of apartheid and inexorably continues the colonisation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, in defiance of all international decisions, closing the door more and more to any peace process, while Benjamin Netanyahu and his political allies call for the razing of the cities of Gaza."

The first French rally since 7 October

drew 30,000 marchers. On 18 November thousands marched in both Paris and Marseilles in support of the Palestinian people. The latest rallies attracted thousands more in both Paris and Marseilles. French President Macron has urged Israel to stop killing women and babies, as well as calling for a ceasefire, and describing Israel's attack as having "no legitimacy."

CGT ✪

Deadly diseases stalk millions in war-torn Sudan

As the war in Sudan continues into its eighth month with no ceasefire in sight, cholera stalks millions in Africa's third-largest country. The nation's already fragile healthcare system has all but collapsed due to attacks and shortages.

The most vulnerable to this deadly water-borne disease is the displaced population which is "surviving in overcrowded camps, schools, dormitories, and mosques," said medical-lab technician Rawia Kamal, with the People's Health Movement.

With little or no drinking water supply in these shelters, refugees must buy water carried in on donkey carts, although the vast majority of these refugees live below the poverty line. Those unable to access or afford it are forced to drink from irrigation wells or rivers whose waters have been contaminated by defecation and washing in their streams. There is an

absence of sufficient toilets and bathrooms for the displaced, she explained.

Kamal is one of the six million people who have been displaced so far by this war which started when the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, formerly ruling partners in the military junta, began fighting each other on 15 April 2022.

Over one million of the displaced have fled to neighbouring countries. The remaining 4.8 million remain displaced within national borders, adding to the 3.7 million Internally Displaced People uprooted from their homes in the previous conflicts before this war. This makes Sudan "the country with the largest number of displaced people," according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

People's Dispatch ✪

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Cuba pays tribute to its historical leader Fidel Castro

The father of the Cuban Revolution and founder of the first socialist state in the Eastern Hemisphere remains an inspiration for the people.

With multiple tributes all around the country the Cuban people have remembered the legacy of the historical leader of the Revolution seven years after his death.

With his inspiring work and his infinite faith in human beings, in the Cuban Revolution and in the best possible world, for which he still continues to fight: said the Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel on social media.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla posted that “[Castro] guided us along the path of unity, social justice, independence, socialism, and loyalty to the Revolution.”

With cultural acts, books, presentations, concerts and other popular public events, the people of the Caribbean Island have honoured their Chief Commandant.

In other countries like Azerbaijan, Venezuela, and the Cuban medical mission in Maldives, people have paid tribute to Fidel Castro, as have communities of Cubans living abroad.

As founder of the first socialist state in the Eastern Hemisphere Fidel is also an example for social justice fighters in Latin America and the world.

Castro also promoted the battle of the Third World on a global scale against the current world economic order, in particular external debt, the waste of resources through military spending, and neoliberal globalisation.

Telesur ✪

US global grip: American military bases around the world

From Norway's northern borders to the shores of Australia, over 900 US military bases across the globe underscore the pervasive reach of Washington's military influence and an oppressive foreign policy.

The US global footprint not only exemplifies the logistical capabilities of the US military but also serves as a tangible representation of its hegemony.

By establishing bases in nations from Greenland to Japan, the US maintains a persistent presence, enabling the rapid deployment of forces and threatening the whole world. This inescapable control is one of the reasons why more and more countries are realising the value of sovereignty and taking steps to avoid American domination.

Sputnik ✪

Where did the US set up its military bases?

Over 900 US bases worldwide



American Samoa	Guam	Peru
Aruba	Greece	Philippines
Ascension Island	Guatemala	Poland
Bahamas	Honduras	Portugal
Bahrain	Hungary	Puerto Rico
Belgium	Iceland	Qatar
Belize	Iraq	Romania
Bulgaria	Ireland	Saudi Arabia
Burkina Faso	Israel	Senegal
Burundi	Italy	Singapore
Cambodia	Japan	Slovakia
Cameroon	Johnston Atoll	Somalia
Colombia	Jordan	South Korea
Costa Rica	Kenya	Spain
Cuba	Kosovo (Serbia)	Suriname
Curacao	Kuwait	Syria
Cyprus	Latvia	Thailand
Diego Garcia Island	Luxembourg	Tunisia
Djibouti	Marshall Islands	Turkey
El Salvador	Netherlands	UAE
Estonia	Niger	UK
Gabon	Northern Mariana Islands	Virgin Islands
Georgia	Oman	Wake Island
Germany	Palau	
Ghana	Panama	

Sources: public sources

SPUTNIK

‘Don’t be misled,’ Communist Party of Ireland calls for solidarity

Migrant workers and asylum-seekers are not responsible for crises in Ireland’s health service, school overcrowding or failing local services, the Communist Party of Ireland has declared as it called for community solidarity following far-right riots in Dublin on 23 November.

In a statement the party said that the retreat of organised labour from working-class communities

was “leaving them open to the siren calls of the far right.

“In previous generations in many working-class communities, trade unions and their activists would have been central to self-organising and building support networks within and between working-class communities.

“As the trade union movement has been increasingly assimilated by the state and has abandoned any concept of class analysis and

working-class interests, its political and organisational influence has declined,” the party charged.

It issued an appeal to Irish youth to “turn your anger at those who are responsible, not our brother and sister migrant workers. Don’t allow yourselves to be misled by those who wish to steer your anger against other workers.”

Morning Star ✪



Global Briefs

NETHERLANDS: Populist right-wing politician Geert Wilders and his Freedom Party (PVV) claimed victory in the Dutch general elections. The result was described as ‘shocking’ and ‘surprising’ by the media. Geert Wilders is well-known for his extreme anti-immigrant views; he is promising to take the country out of the European union and cut aid to Ukraine. The shift to the right in Europe has been developing for some time due to the worsening economic situation, unresolved migrant crisis, and so-called Ukraine fatigue. Italy had a right-wing swing last year when Brothers of Italy party led by Giorgia Meloni came to power.

EUROPE: A survey by the French via Voice Institute indicated that Marine Le Pen’s right-wing National Rally party is supported by 20 per cent of respondents compared to 15 per cent supporting president Macron’s liberal Renaissance. The leftist coalition NUPES received 14 per cent support, while conservative Les Republicans had 13 per cent. In Germany right-wing parties have seen a spike in popularity as well. Slovakia was an exception with a recent win of left-wing SMER. However, it seems to be an exception to the general rise of the right in Europe. Next year is an election year for the European Parliament scheduled for 6 to 9 June. European politics is facing tremendous challenges and questionable ability to deal with complex economic and social problems.

ITALY: Hundreds of thousands people marched in Rome on Saturday 25 November, in the biggest of multiple demonstrations across Europe against violence against women. ‘Rome has been invaded – we are 500,000 strong,’ declared feminist organisation Non Una Di Meno ‘not one less’. Large rallies took place in other Italian cities as well as in Paris and Madrid as feminists marked the International Day Against Violence Against Women. The Italian Interior Ministry says 106 women have been killed in Italy so far this year, 55 allegedly by a partner or former partner.

FRANCE: In Paris, tens of thousands marched, many wearing purple. Placards read ‘Protect Your Girls, Educate Your Boys’ and ‘One Rape Every Six Minutes’ in France. France has recorded 121 femicides so far this year, more than the 118 last year.

RUSSIA: Russian embassy in London asked to clarify the role Britain had in disrupting peace talks with Ukraine in the spring 2022. David Arakhamia, a senior Ukrainian lawmaker made a statement recently claiming that it was the former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson in 2022 who had told Kiev not to negotiate with Moscow and continue fighting instead. Arakhamia was a chief negotiator with Russia at the time.

Sydney Vigil

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Book Review by Graham Holton

Neither Confirm nor Deny

How the Glomar Mission Shielded the CIA from Transparency

M Todd Bennett

In the 1970s scientific journals such as *Scientific American* had numerous articles on the mineral bonanza being recovered from the deep ocean floors. In 1975 I attended a talk delivered by a geologist from the CRA Mining Company on how the CIA had used the cover story of mining deep-sea mineral nodules to hide its recovery of ballistic missiles from a sunken Russian submarine in the north Pacific. Later I met the engineer, Major John Buchan, who had designed the submersible system that recovered parts of the submarine. He confirmed that the CIA had paid for stories of deep-sea mining to cover up its clandestine activity. Deep-sea mining was fake news.

Now, M Todd Bennett reveals the politics behind the clandestine venture in *Neither Confirm nor Deny: How the Glomar Mission Shielded the CIA from Transparency* (2023). The CIA contacted the American billionaire Howard Hughes to build the *Glomar Explorer*, a 188-metre length ship, designed ostensibly to pick up magnesium nodules off the Pacific Ocean floor. In reality the CIA wanted to retrieve the ballistic missiles from a sunken Soviet submarine, to see how advanced their missile guidance system was. When confronted by the press with the project's real purpose the *Glomar*'s response was: "We can neither confirm nor deny." Todd uses recently declassified CIA documents on how it used the media, including scientific journals, to cover-up its activity. The operation was a major geopolitical coup for US intelligence.

The Soviet Golf-II class submarine *K-129* sank on 8 March 1968, northeast of Hawaii. The wreckage

was located by the US Navy using sonar technology. It lay on the seabed at a depth of 5 kilometres. A salvage operation at that depth was technically impossible at the time. The US government wanted to recover a ballistic missile from the sunken submarine, along with valuable intelligence information. The CIA convinced President Richard Nixon to approve a secret operation to attempt to raise the vessel from the ocean floor. The CIA contacted Hughes to use his Hughes Tool Company to convert the *Glomar Explorer*, the world's most advanced deep water drilling ship, for the mission, code-named Project Azorian. In 1972, construction began in a Delaware River dry-dock, Philadelphia, at a cost of US\$350 million (equivalent to US\$2.37 billion today).

To hide from the USSR the real reason for the *Glomar Explorer*, the CIA invented the cover story that the ship was carrying out deep-ocean mining. The well-publicised story described the process of harvesting magnesium nodules from great depths on the ocean floor with a custom-built ship that pushed marine engineering technology to its limits. The scientific community and international mining companies fell for the cover story. The deep-sea "magnesium mining vessel" secretly raised part of the 2000-ton *K-129* through a hidden well opening in the hull with a 'claw' of mechanically articulated fingers that used sea water as a hydraulic fluid.

On 7 February 1974 investigative reporter Seymour Hersh who had won the Pulitzer Prize for exposing the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, broke the story: "CIA Salvage Ship Brought Up Part of Soviet Sub Lost In 1968, Failed To Raise Atom Missiles." With its cover blown, the *Glomar*

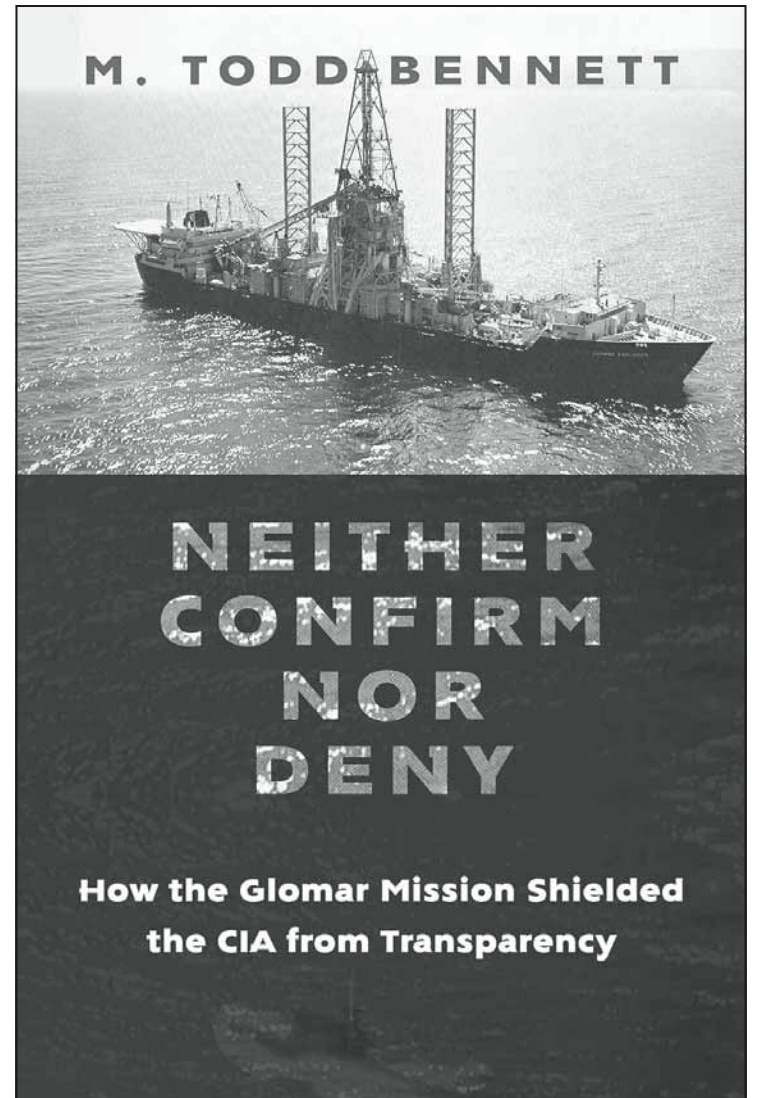
Explorer was transferred to the Navy in 1976 for an extensive US\$2 million preparation for storage in dry dock and spent almost two decades mothballed at Suisun Bay, California. London-based Global Marine then converted the vessel for commercial use. Having outlived its usefulness, the CIA's *Glomar Explorer* ended up in a Chinese scrap yard in 2015.

The CIA proudly tells the story behind the clandestine project on its website. On 4 July 1974, the *Glomar Explorer* began its two-month-long covert salvage operation, all the while allaying suspicions of curious Soviet ships nearby. The CIA recognised the intelligence potential of recovering the submarine and embarked on a six-year mission, code-named Project AZORIAN. "AZORIAN, set against the backdrop of the Cold War, was a critical endeavour that married the ingenuity of the CIA with the expertise of private sector engineers." An oil painting of the *Glomar Explorer* is displayed with a placard that reads: "We are only limited by our imagination."

The book has been criticised for prioritising excitement over criticism of the agency's use of its 'imagination.' The *Glomar* carried out its mission barely a year after the CIA-backed coup in Chile which led to death and torture for thousands, and the same sense of Cold War competition that inspired the submarine salvage has led 'the Agency,' with Australian help, to whip up the hatred behind the mass killings of at least 500,000 people in Indonesia in 1965-66; two episodes not commemorated with oil paintings.

Neither Confirm nor Deny originally published 2023.

Seymour Hersh of the *Los Angeles Times* revealed the clandestine project on 7 February 1974. ★



WORTH READING: Australia

The Split: Australian Labor in the Fifties

Robert Murray

Robert Murray's *The Split: Australian Labor in the Fifties* concerns the split in the Labor Party over the Communist Party's growing influence in the era. Yes; they split over us. You'll have to get this from the library because it isn't widely available. It's

fascinating insight into how Labor became a largely reactionary party led by right-wingers dedicated to the destruction of communism. It may come as a surprise to some readers what a political force communism once was in Australia, and if you read it a certain way, why communism ought to be a bigger force than it currently is. Published 1970.

On Australia's Constitution

EG Whitlam

What was Whitlam's model of governance? What was the good of it, and what should we discard? This is a collection of Whitlam's speeches. If there's anything to keep from it, try his 1961 lecture "Socialism Within the Australian Constitution." Of interest here are several passages on pioneering state-owned enterprises and international law, which remain relevant today as to how Australia could theoretically build a national economy. But throughout we find Whitlam too much trusts that the bourgeois liberal-democratic model can deliver. We know now, this long after his dismissal, that it cannot. The Australian constitution has become harder to change and less dynamic than ever before. Published 1977.

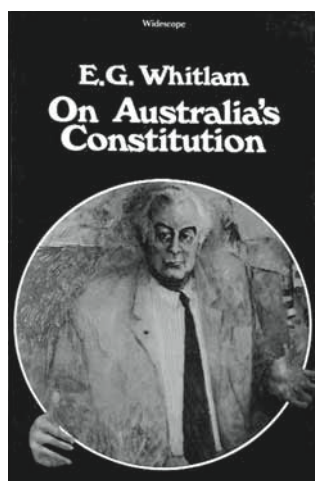
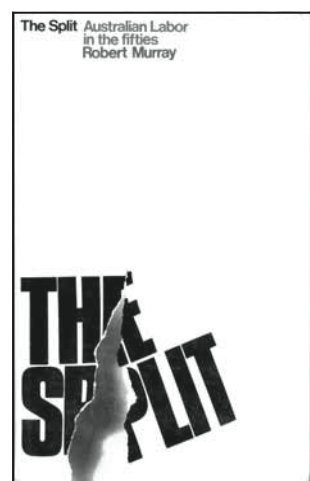
Straight Left

Katharine Susannah Prichard

Straight Left, by Katharine Susannah Prichard, is a collection of her articles and addresses on politics, literature and women's affairs over almost 60 years: from 1910 to 1968. If you can get a hold of it, *Straight Left* is worth reading because it gives you a great sense of how

one of Australia's most famous novelists was able to bring together literary and communistic political work. Prichard delivers criticism of other writers, appraisal of Australian socialist literature, and addresses many themes, including Aboriginal affairs, nuclear testing, and the importance of international proletarian solidarity (especially with the Soviet Union at the time). Published 1982.

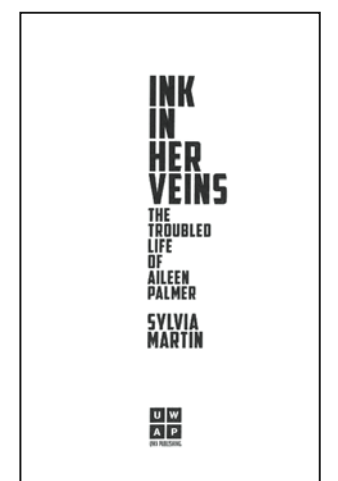
descent into mental illness. A beautiful and detailed portrait of Palmer, it reminds us how many great and extraordinary people have dedicated themselves to the communist cause in Australia, the Party cause, and why we need to build on the work of those who gave their lives to our cause. Published 2016.



Ink in Her Veins: The Troubled Life of Aileen Palmer

Sylvia Martin

Aileen Palmer was the eldest daughter of two famous Australian communists, Vance and Nettie Palmer. She too was a communist, fighting in the Spanish Civil War and translating the work of Ho Chi Minh (his *Prison Diary*, and his poems). Palmer led a difficult life. Martin's account covers Palmer's



Gaza, trauma and you

A lot of people are involved in support for Palestinian people on the West Bank and Gaza in Australia, with ongoing attendance at rallies, lobbying politicians to speak out more forcefully, and donations (the Communist Party of Australia recommends the Australian union aid organisation APHEDA*).

People living in Australia with connections to Gaza are also affected, so The Guardian interviewed Professor Susan Rees, a senior academic and researcher in psychiatry and trauma at the University of NSW to see what people here can do to help.

Guardian: Which people in Australia will be most affected by the attack on Gaza?

Rees: People with family and friends in Gaza are most impacted in terms of their mental health. We have documented accounts of extreme fear and anxiety experienced by Australians who have been unable to contact family members in Gaza. There are also those whose family members have been killed or injured. These people will require skilled intervention and support.

Others impacted have previous exposure to any war particularly but not only in the broader region, for example from the Middle East including Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. What's happening in Gaza will make some people experience severe traumatic responses and memories of past bombing, having to flee their homes, having homes bombed or burned, and extreme fear. Women and young people are more likely to have more severe traumatic experiences following direct or indirect exposure to war and conflict.

Guardian: Are there degrees of these things – are some people only slightly traumatised?

Rees: Some people are more

resilient than others, and despite having the same level of exposure or connection to the trauma, they may respond better than another person. Factors such as the severity and duration of the traumatic event, prior trauma, gender, young age and preexisting mental illness could make a severe response more likely.

Guardian: What can people do to help affected Australians with links to Palestine?

Rees: It is useful to acknowledge and validate someone's experience of the traumatic event and reassure them that feelings of sadness, anger, fear and anxiety, for example, are normal in the face of the horror and injustices they are witnessing. Show understanding and encourage them to seek professional support if they are not coping well or are having concerning symptoms, which are not normal.

Encourage them to be informed about what is happening, but avoid being exposed to images and accounts of the war for long periods in each day, or before bed because it can interfere with sleep and make life worse. Urge them to seek help and stay connected with supportive family, friends, or their community. Reassure people they are not alone with how they are feeling.

Keeping physically active is a part of good mental health. Social action such as rallies and vigils can also be helpful because people emotionally connected to the geographically distant war can otherwise feel extremely powerless. Taking social action and feeling the sense of unity that accompanies social action, can be empowering and therefore beneficial for mental wellbeing.

It is important to stress that expression of anger (no matter how legitimate) can lead to aggression and violence in groups; and that can

be extremely harmful to physical and mental safety and wellbeing.

Guardian: What sort of actions should community organisations like schools and hospitals be taking?

It is helpful for hospitals and schools to be trauma-informed, and that means being mindful of the mental health impacts of the current war on people in their communities, knowing how to identify those at greatest need for mental health support, and how to intervene, including where to refer them for professional support. Places for counselling and referral can include mental health helplines.

Try to find services that also offer support in their first language. It is useful for organisations such as hospitals and schools to use messaging to their respective communities about the widespread psychological impact of trauma from this war, and where individuals can seek confidential support.

Guardian: What sort of signs of trauma should we be looking for?

Rees: Trauma related to war can manifest in different ways. Symptoms to look out for include having trouble coping with daily activities, feeling excessively anxious, nervous, angry, and/or having trouble sleeping. Some people may feel more enervated and depressed. PTSD symptoms are common in those who have been previously exposed to war or stories of war from family members. These symptoms include intrusive thoughts or memories of the trauma, nightmares, being easily startled, or having greater than usual problems with concentrating.

Interviewer: Floyd Kermode

*apheda.org.au

For helplines and information, go to healthdirect.gov.au/mental-health-helplines



Rally for Palestine in Boorloo/Perth on Sunday 26 November 2023.

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The Guardian

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Published by
Guardian Publications Australia Ltd
74 Buckingham St,
Surry Hills, 2010

Printed by
Spotpress
24-26 Lillian Fowler Pl
Marrickville 2204

Responsibility for electoral comment
is taken by **T Pearson**,
74 Buckingham St,
Surry Hills, 2010

WEASEL WORDS

Exchanges and debates (valuable)

Former Australian PM Tony Abbott, always in search of far-right figures to be relevant to, has dropped in on the 'Danube Institute' in Hungary, funded by the Hungarian Orban government. Abbott will contribute to the *Hungarian Conservative* magazine, and will be a guest speaker at the Institute, a place he describes as where "valuable exchanges and debates" take place. We can look forward to the man who described Aboriginal people living where they've always lived as "a lifestyle choice" really getting into a debate with a Hungarian PM who has spoken out against "mixed race" countries.

Personal agendas

Like 'ideology,' and 'regime,' personal agendas are those bad things that only other people have. I have ideas (good), you have an ideology (bad). We have a 'government' (good), you have a 'regime' (boo). I'm just doing my job with no ideas at all, like a zombie, and you have a personal agenda. How dare you!

Nine newspapers executive editor, Tory-by-name-and-nature McGuire, has explained that staff who have signed an open letter calling for fair reporting on Gaza and Palestine, won't be allowed to write on the topic because she doesn't want their "personal agendas" influencing their writing. If you're a Nine journalist and your "personal agenda" includes disliking both-sidesism and the murder of other journalists, you're out of luck.

On the other hand, if your 'agenda' is at all affected by having been on one of the junkets to Israel often bestowed on Australian journalists, and you have not signed a letter calling for reporting that adheres to truth, you're laughing.

Political

The Victorian Liberal Party, who are to the Victorian Labor Party as the Hooley Dooleys* were to the Wiggles, are worried about children. No, not about underfunded high schools, guess again. Overfunded private schools? Don't be silly.

What's on the mind of the professional politician who hopes to be Minister for Education one day, is that a large group of Victorian students took a half day off to attend the Schools Strike for Palestine. As well as being divisive (see previous Weasel Words for how that word is used to attack democratic expressions of opinion), the Schools Strike for Palestine is political, and Jess Wilson, MP for Kew, and full-time politician isn't having a bar of it.

*early 2000s pop group for children. More likeable than the Victorian Liberal Party, but about as successful

Traditional American* values

Nick Bryant, who used to describe Australia to the the BBC's online audience as though the *The Australian* newspaper is an unbiased source, and as though Sydney is Australia, has said that the US Ambassador to Australia Caroline Kennedy promotes "traditional American values." Bryant doesn't spell out what these values are, but Kennedy has reassured some of the local warmongers that the ruinously expensive AUKUS submarines are on track. You don't get more traditionally USA than that.

*sic. We know that the Americas includes more countries than the USA, but we're quoting Nick Bryant, who probably doesn't.

Ambitious

Penny Wong has described Australia's role in promoting nuclear disarmament as "ambitious." That's a fair description if you completely ignore our cooperation with the USA's submarines and bombers, and our very polite refusal to ask if there are any nuclear weapons onboard; and if you use the sense of 'ambition' of thinking something would be nice, then doing nothing about it. The next time you decide to sleep in, just tell yourself you're ambitious about getting up, then carry on snoozing.

COP28 and China's gift to the world

William Briggs

The United Nations Climate Change Conference/ Conference of the Parties, better known as COP28, has convened, but there is nothing to celebrate. It is a grim time for the planet. Delegates have assembled in Dubai in a world that is closer to the brink than it has ever been. Samantha Burgess, of the Copernicus Climate Change Service reminded the world that 2023 will be the hottest on record and that the "sense of urgency for ambitious climate action going into COP28 has never been higher."

Despite this, China offers hope by deed as well as word.

Very few countries will bring serious 'gifts' to the conference. International Monetary Fund (IMF) figures show that 7.1 per cent of total global GDP is still spent on subsidies to the major emitters. One hundred capitalist concerns produce 70 per cent of all emissions. China is bringing a gift to the conference and to the world in the shape of an astonishing and rapid reduction in its carbon emissions.

It has engaged in a massive greening of the country. To give one example, it has invested \$42 billion in Green Hydrogen and there are currently 57 Green Hydrogen projects up and running. A concerted effort has been waged to 'green' 700,000 square kilometres of land in 2022. This is almost the size of New South Wales. That is only the tip of the iceberg.

The world has become aware of the strength of China's solar industry. Solar exports grew by 64 per cent in 2022, despite

trade war conditions. China now accounts for 80 per cent of the total global solar market.

The Gobi, Ordos, and Tengger deserts in China are now home to a network of clean energy bases. Millions of solar panels are used in conjunction with 'wind parks,' and are powering cities and industries across China.

China has announced that it will add 210 GW of solar capacity in the next year. This is more than the entire output of US solar industries to date. By 2025 the total Chinese solar output will reach 1000 GW.

The growth in battery capacity and production is even more stunning.

It is true that China is opening new coal stations but these are, as Chinese coal experts describe, designed to be buffers to the growing renewables and are intended to be predominantly idle. It is estimated that coal usage will significantly fall and that increasingly the coal that is burnt will come with carbon capture. There is already a project underway that will use CO2 to make carbon nanotubes that will be used to boost lithium batteries in electric vehicles.

By 2025, 50 per cent of all car sales in China will be EVs. More than half of all EVs in the world are now on Chinese roads. Currently China accounts for 35 per cent of global EV exports.

China's economic rise has been a consistent feature for decades. Many Western commentators have made the claim that this has been at a cost to the environment. It is a fact that the country is a major emitter of carbon. It is equally true, although barely admitted, and then only grudgingly, that it is doing so much to solve the crisis that is facing the world.

The fact is that China is now on track to meet its 2030 emissions target seven years early. It had declared that it would be carbon neutral by 2060. This date is also being significantly revised. It is now accepted that the country will achieve its target much earlier and possibly before Europe, and the USA, which is a remarkable achievement.

The question that needs to be considered is just how such a dramatic turnaround could be possible, given China's poor starting point. To achieve real change is an extremely costly business.

It has been estimated that China would need to invest between \$14-17 trillion to achieve its 2060 target, and yet it is set to become carbon neutral a decade early. The investments speak for themselves. In 2022 the Chinese government spent \$546 billion on sorting out the problem. The European Union committed \$180 billion, and the USA, the most powerful economy on earth, spent \$141 billion. Whether the EU and the USA can continue to spend even these amounts, given the global economic crisis is debatable. It is less an issue of debate with China. Why?

For China, it is not a matter of balancing economic gain *against* climate action. China, despite the problems of a threatened global recession, is growing its economy and developing a 'green GDP.' The colossal spending on the environment is seen as an investment and it is already proving to be a good investment.

The success is also a clear indication, perhaps the clearest indication that can be shown, of China's socialist transformation.

The beauty of a socialist government is its capacity to make long term plans and to

integrate its efforts with fewer contradictions than are so evident within the anarchy of free-market capitalism.

Energy conservation and emission reduction are not separate from economic development, but have been integrated into China's economic development agenda. The state has been moving away from polluting, energy-intensive industries to high-tech industries that will provide the base for sustainable economic growth. Again, it is not a choice between this or that; between one or the other. A green economy can still be a growth economy. By the same token, a growth economy can be socialist.

China's path to a fully developed socialist economy is very much on track. It has set a goal of achieving 'socialist modernisation' by 2035. This will mean, in part, doubling the per capita GDP to \$20,000, which requires an annual GDP growth of 3.5 per cent. This is being achieved and explains some of the anguish on the part of bourgeois economists who read the runes in vain for a failing Chinese economy. The Chinese have also set a 'second centenary goal' of achieving a powerful, fully developed socialist country, by 2049, the anniversary of the coming to power of the CCP in 1949.

COP28 is being held against a backdrop of climate destruction. It is a destruction that is the product of a rapacious and anarchic capitalist world order. The future for the planet looks bleak. China has offered hope, but even so, the planet will continue to warm. The world needs many Chinas if it is to survive. China's gift to COP28 is real and lasting. ✪

Palestine rallies: CPA members show support

With the brief truce in Gaza, Australian political leaders being weak on the topic, and most Australian media 'both-sidesing' a mass-murdering assault on Palestinians as though it were a war between two equal sides, there's a lot to protest about. Communist Party of Australia members turned out in Borloo/Perth and Naarm/Melbourne to support Palestinians and show support with the CPA's new banner, which has been sent to all Party branches. ✪



Naarm/Melbourne.



Borloo/Perth.



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