



# Palestine: Australia complicit in genocide



Anna Pha

**It beggars belief that Australia has suspended funding to the UN agency providing aid to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. It did so following unsubstantiated accusations by Israel that 12 staff of the 13 thousand of the United Nations agency for Palestinians (UNRWA) working in Gaza were involved in the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023. In suspending funding, under international law, Australia is directly and illegally complicit in the ongoing genocide of Palestinians in Gaza.**

On Friday 26 January the International Court of Justice (ICJ) handed down an interim ruling that South Africa's claim that Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza is plausible.

South Africa brought the case to the ICJ last month, asking it to grant emergency measures to halt the fighting which has now resulted in close to 35,000 deaths including those missing under rubble and tens of thousands more injured. The majority of those slaughtered are children and women. 337 doctors and health workers, 119 journalists and 152 UNRWA employees have also lost their lives.

The situation could not be more dire with more than 85 per cent of the population in the Gaza Strip

displaced, living in the most appalling conditions, including tents flooded with raw sewage, lacking fresh water, food, and medicines.

### ICJ DECISION

To prevent Israel's actions from causing further irreparable harm to the Palestinians in Gaza, the ICJ demanded, in a legally binding order, that Israel and its military, with immediate effect, end all the following acts:

- Killing members of the Palestinian population in Gaza
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to the Palestinian population in Gaza
- Deliberately inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within Gaza.

The Court also demanded that Israel take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to the besieged people in Gaza, and report back on its progress within the month.

"The only way to give full effect to the ICJ's ruling is for an immediate ceasefire so that humanitarian and life-saving relief reaches Palestinians in Gaza who are at risk of mass death from famine and disease," the Australian Centre for International Justice (ACIJ) said.

South Africa's case had the support of many other governments, but not those of Australia, the US, or the UK, and more than 1500 organisations and millions of people around the world who continue to hold demonstrations calling for a permanent ceasefire.

Since the IJC ruling Israel has cut off aid and not let up in its assault on the Palestinian people, flagrantly breaching its obligations under the Genocide Convention to which it is a party.

On the same day as the ICJ decision was handed down, Israel made unsubstantiated claims that 12 UNRWA staff were involved in Hamas's 7 October attacks. Israel claims to have obtained confessions under 'interrogation' of the staff.

### CRIMINAL

Then, within 24 hours of the claim, the governments of Australia, the US, the UK, Canada, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Finland, and the Netherlands announced they were pausing their funding to UNRWA, thus collectively punishing millions of Palestinians throughout the region. These 9 countries provide almost 60 per cent of the agency's funding.

UNRWA has 30,000 employees in total, 13,000 of whom are working in the Gaza Strip. It provides education, healthcare, humanitarian aid, and social services to 5.9 million Palestinians in Gaza, the

occupied West Bank, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

"States, such as Australia, that are parties to the Genocide Convention have legal obligations to ensure the implementation of the provisional measures, to prevent genocide, and to ensure that they are not complicit in genocide," the ACIJ said.

ACIJ Executive Director, Rawan Arraf, pointed out that, "Australia is now on further notice, this time from the world's top court. The government cannot ignore this ruling from the ICJ that the Palestinian people in Gaza are at serious risk of genocide."

"The government must immediately review its economic ties to Israel and impose targeted sanctions. All defence industry partnerships must be suspended, and a two-way arms embargo imposed. This means the government must halt any export of arms and arms components to Israel, including exports being diverted through other countries. Any extant permits must be suspended."

"The Australian government should ensure that any of its citizens serving with the Israeli military are investigated in Australia for any commission of international crimes."

These are obligations under international law.

"Palestinians in Gaza did not need this additional collective

punishment. This stains all of us," UNRWA's head Philippe Lazzarini said.

"It is shocking to see a suspension of funds to the agency in reaction to allegations against a small group of staff, especially given the immediate action that UNRWA took by terminating their contracts and asking for a transparent independent investigation."

"I urge countries who have suspended their funding to re-consider their decisions before UNRWA is forced to suspend its humanitarian response," Lazzarini said. "The lives of people in Gaza depend on this support and so does regional stability."

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres vowed to hold to account any UN employee involved in acts of terror. But he begged donor states to guarantee the continuity of UNRWA operations.

Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur for the occupied Palestinian territories, warned that the decision to pause funding to UNRWA "overtly defies" the order by the ICJ to allow effective humanitarian assistance "to reach Gazans."

"This will entail legal responsibilities – or the demise of the (international) legal system," she wrote on social media.

See page 2 for what you can do. ✪

3  Labor's tax con

6  Invasion Day reports

7  NATO, USA war drills and the threat of war

12  Silencing dissent



# Guardian

Issue 2085

5 February 2024

## Loving whose country?

Around this time of year, the question of liking, loving, or being proud of our country comes up a lot. At Invasion Day events, people all over Australia commemorate the dispossession and genocide that took place (and is ongoing) as part of colonisation. Public figures like NSW Premier Chris Minns feel they have to say something positive. Minns said that Australia is the best country in the world, but of course, didn't explained why all other countries aren't as good. A better question to ask is this: is it really our country?

This is always a good question in Australia, where ownership has been contested for a long time. Technically, the country belongs to the British. That's why we have Elizabeth Windsor's face on our coins, and will eventually have to look at her son Charles' mug every time we use cash. Our soldiers still sign a document showing their allegiance to the Windsors when they enlist.

Really, this land belongs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were here for some 60 thousand years before Europeans. On a day-to-day basis, it feels like the country belongs to all the people who live here – unlike Charles Windsor, we pay taxes and vote here. It feels like our country. Is it?

For a supposedly democratic people, it's amazing how many things Australians, Indigenous or not, have no control over. Every 3-4 years, we have a choice of two major parties to vote for, both of whom want our military to be a working part of the US armed forces. We weren't consulted on US marines being permanently based in the north of Australia. We were not asked if we wanted to spend millions on building a runway strong enough to take B-52, nuclear-capable bombers. Of course the people of this country weren't asked if they felt like spending more money on nuclear-powered submarines than we've ever been spent on anything.

The latest military news is that Japan wants to test missiles in Australia. The people of this nation are not going to be consulted about that either.

A lot of people are nervous about 'patriotism' and love of country, and with good reason. These concepts have been misused by hate groups for a long time – as we can see in the pretend-rage about 'Australia Day' from opportunistic conservatives, that's still happening. But there's nothing wrong with liking the country you live in, and the community you share it with.

The Communist Party of Australia is working for real sovereignty for this country with recognition of land rights and a treaty. We're working for an independent country, with alliances freely chosen by the working people – the vast majority – of this country. When we campaign against AUKUS and for peaceful relations with other countries, we are campaigning for an Australia we can all really love and be a part of, not the sort of cardboard patriotism that bigots bow to even as they prepare to do the bidding of the USA.

This country is pretty good. Let's make it ours.

# Act now to end genocide!

It seems there are no limits to the depths to which the Albanese government will sink in following the US and Zionist, apartheid Israel and its abominable genocide. Israel's actions are criminal, and the government must be held to account. So much for the ALP's preaching of human rights and 'western values,' when it supports slow and cruel death by starvation and the constant bombing of civilians.

The Albanese government has lost all credibility. The Australian people must speak up.

Australia must carry out its obligations under the Genocide Convention.

### WHAT CAN I DO?

- In particular, you can:
- Write letters to the Editor
- Use social media
- Ring talkback radio
- Join protest actions such as rallies and marches
- Join Unions for Palestine

- Write to your MP and Senators
- Write to PM Anthony Albanese and Foreign Minister Penny Wong
- Explain the situation to your friends, work colleagues and family

### WHY IT WILL HELP

Politicians know that for every person who goes to the trouble of contacting them, ten others who didn't make the effort agree. You're not just one person here! You are speaking for the many who agree with you but don't take that step. Similarly, even if your call doesn't get on the radio, the talkback station will register what your point was. On social media, every use of a hashtag like #FreePalestine is registered. Our politicians keep careful note of these things.

People who know you might only be consuming biased mainstream news from the likes of Nine and Newscorp. If you explain what's really going on, it could open their eyes!

### POINTS YOU MIGHT MAKE:

- Call for immediate and lasting ceasefire
- Call for immediate restoration of funding of the aid agency UNWRA
- Australia should take an independent stand
- End all diplomatic relations with Israel
- Support the creation of a Palestinian state
- Halt all military and other assistance to Israel, including closing the Pine Gap spy station
- Place sanctions on Israel including Israeli companies in Australia.

It's time Australia showed real leadership and made a genuine commitment to international law and human rights.

### Ruling under Article 2 of Genocide Convention (GC2)

- Israel shall take all measures within its power to prevent all acts within the scope of C2
- Israel must immediately ensure that its military does not commit acts within the scope of GC.2
- Direct and punish all members of the public who engage in the incitement of genocide against Palestinians
- Ensure provision of urgently needed basic services, humanitarian aid
- Prevent the destruction of and ensure the preservation of evidence to allegation of acts of GC.2
- Israel will submit report as to how they're adhering to these orders to the ICJ within 1 month

### Article 2 of the Genocide Convention:

Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

**PEACE WALK**  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY  
FRIDAY 8 MARCH 2024

Meet @ 500 pm ~ Walk @ 530 pm  
Wesley Uniting Church 75 William St Perth  
Finish @ 700 pm  
Perth Cultural Centre ~ WA State Library  
Walk - Speakers - Song - Dance

Organised by a fabulous collective of women  
Info: Elly 0421113343

### Memorial service for Joan Coxledge

Pioneering Victorian Labor MP, socialist, friend of Cuba and peace activist, who passed away on 14 January.

(see obituary in Guardian #2085)



2:00 pm

Saturday 24 February 2024

Melbourne Unitarian Church

110 Grey Street East Melbourne 3002

Support the *Guardian* by donating to Press Fund



# Labor's tax con

Anna Pha

**Feeling the heat from millions of Australians suffering a cost-of-living crisis and pressure from within Labor caucus, the Albanese government has succumbed by announcing some tinkering with the previously legislated Stage 3 tax cuts. Labor's amended Stage 3 cuts, if passed by Parliament, will only scratch the surface of addressing people's needs, with those on the lowest incomes not gaining any benefit.**

The Stage 3 cuts are the third in a series introduced by the former Coalition government in 2018 and 2019. If implemented they would have cost the government an estimated \$320 billion in lost revenue over the first 10 years and an estimated \$21 billion in foregone revenue in 2024-25.

Incomes have not kept up with rising costs of food, energy, mortgages, rent, transport, education, and other essentials. The 'relief' offered by Labor's Stage 3 tax cuts fails to address these issues and will still leave workers with a less equitable tax system.

## REGRESSIVE

Over the past 4 decades successive governments have gradually made the taxation system more regressive by flattening marginal rates, and introducing the Goods and Services Tax (GST) which has shifted the burden of taxation onto workers and others on lower incomes.

A progressive tax scale is one where those on higher incomes carry higher marginal rates.

Corporations don't pay GST. The taxation system is used against workers, with wage and salary earners paying the lion's share of direct and indirect taxes. There has been a marked relative decline in taxes paid out of company profits.

Close to 80 per cent of the tax cuts are forecast to benefit the top 20 per cent of Australia's income earners, leaving those earning less than \$40,000 no discernible benefits.

For example, a full-time worker on the current minimum wage of \$45,906 per annum (\$882.80 per week) will receive a miserly tax cut of \$826.65 per annum (\$15.90 a week). This cut is only \$804 higher than the Coalition's.

Someone with a taxable income of \$200,000 or more stands to gain \$4546 from the cuts.

Labor's cuts cost an estimated \$28 billion less than the Coalition's would have. This still leaves a massive shortfall in revenue for a government pursuing a rapidly expanding military budget at the same time as attempting to balance

its budgets. Tax cuts mean loss of income. They have the same impact on a budget as increased spending.

Something has to give. Tax cuts for the rich, billions of dollars on nuclear submarines and missiles, and rising subsidies for fossil fuels can only mean less money for health, education, the NDIS, social security payment, and community services.

That's not to mention an estimated \$57 billion increase in interest repayments, with the increase in government debt resulting from the tax cuts if expenses stay the same.

## HIDDEN TAX RISE

One issue receiving little attention is the abolition of the low-and-middle income tax offset (LMTIO). This tax offset of up to \$1,500 depending on taxable income was abolished at the end of June 2022. The net result is that many workers are worse off and will continue to be out of pocket under Labor's (or the Coalition's) Stage 3 cuts.

Someone with an income of \$45,000 has lost an offset of \$1275 but will only receive a tax cut from Labor of \$804, leaving them \$471 worse off!

The full \$1500 was wiped on a taxable income of \$50,000. Labor's tax cut for that income is \$929, leaving those workers \$571 worse off.

## MISS OUT

"[T]his revised package does not yet help people on the lowest incomes facing the most severe crisis: people whose incomes are below the tax threshold and pay no income tax," Australian Council of Social Services CEO Cassandra Goldie said following the release of Labor's tax cuts.

"It also is yet to address our revenue challenge, which remains. Australia is already the 9th lowest taxed amongst 40 OECD countries.

"People receiving income support payments are worst affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

"Right now, we're hearing about people sleeping in tents, regularly skipping meals and going without essential medication. Last week, I spoke to a woman who has saved money to buy camping equipment because she is facing imminent homelessness. She will see no benefit from tax cuts, and faces losing her home.

"JobSeeker and related payments must be urgently raised and without further delay. Our unemployment payment is just \$54 per day, or \$19,000 per year. The government must not leave behind the people already in poverty.

"It is wrong for one of the world's wealthiest nations to continue condemning people on low incomes to poverty," Goldie said.

## Marginal tax rates explained

Marginal tax rates refer to the percentage rate of tax you pay on different portions of your taxable income. For example, the current tax rate on income on or below \$18,200 is zero. Nobody pays tax on their first \$18,200 of income, no matter how much more they make on top of that. The tax rate on income between \$18,200 and \$45,000 is 19% or 19 cents for every dollar in that tax bracket. Someone with a taxable income of more \$200,000 would pay 45 cents in the dollar on their income over \$200,000 and also the tax on tax brackets below that level. They receive the tax cuts of workers on lower incomes.

	Taxable income	Marginal tax rate
<b>Current</b>	0-18,200	0.0%
	18,200+	19%
	45,000+	32.5%
	120,000+	37%
<b>Coalition Stage 3</b>	0-18,200	0.0%
	18,200+	19%
	45,000+	30%
	200,000+	45%
<b>Labor Stage 3</b>	0-18,200	0.0%
	18,200+	16%
	45,000+	30%
	135,000+	37%
	190,000+	45%



Photo: Timothy Krause – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0).

## WHAT LABOR SHOULD DO

The Turnbull coalition government's Stage 3 tax cuts should be abolished. Instead, there should be an extensive overhaul of the system to make it more progressive with much higher rates for those on higher incomes, far above the current 45 per cent.

The present tax-free threshold of \$18,200 has been in place since 2012-13 – just over 10 years. This must be increased as it affects part-time, gig and casual workers – usually most highly exploited – who do not gain a single cent from the Stage 3 tax cuts.

All social security payments should be increased to at least the poverty line. It is criminal that

Labor continues with the punitively low unemployment, Austudy, and other social security payments. These increases could be funded by abolishing the tax cuts on higher incomes, fossil fuel subsidies, and by slashing military spending.

Tax taxation is a class question. It is about the distribution of wealth produced by workers and should serve the interests of workers. ✪

## CPA Statement on Palestine and the ICJ's interim decision and orders

**The Communist Party of Australia welcomes the International Court of Justice (ICJ) interim decision and orders, and sees them as a framework for activists to continue their campaign for a permanent ceasefire, the end of the occupation and the creation of an independent Palestinian state.**

Israel is committing genocide. The ICJ has ordered Israel to cease actions that lead to further actions of genocide.

We stand with the principled decision by South Africa to take Israel to the ICJ for the alleged crimes of genocide. The world's demand for a permanent ceasefire needs to be met.

The Albanese government support for the genocide and atrocities Israel is committing against the people of Palestine is unspeakable and must be condemned.

It is bad policy by the Australian government to join a handful of rich western

nations to pause funding for the UNRWA solely on unsubstantiated allegations made by Israel. The Palestinian authorities deny the allegations and condemn the termination of workers contracts.

The Australian government decision contrasts with the fact that more than 27,000 Palestinians have been killed in this genocidal war, among them health workers, journalists and UN personnel. The victims overall are children, women and the elderly.

Unfortunately, these facts have not been enough for the Australian government to condemn Israel for war crimes.

We call on all people to continue the campaign for a permanent ceasefire, expulsion of Israeli diplomats, and sanctions on Israel until the occupation ends!

Shame on the Australian government!

**Central Committee  
Communist Party of Australia  
27-28 January 2024.**



# Scrapping investor handouts could fund half a million social homes and bring down housing costs

**Amidst a historic cost-of-living crisis, Everybody's Home is calling on the federal government to scrap tax concessions for property investors and build social housing across Australia.**

The call follows the campaign's release of *Written Off*, a report showing that housing affordability has crashed because the government is subsidising the private market instead of directly building homes.

## THE REPORT SHOWS:

The budget is expected to lose almost a quarter of a trillion dollars (~\$228 billion) to negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions between 2010-33.

The cost of investor tax breaks over the next decade could build more than half a million (549,301) social homes.

Tax breaks for investors have outstripped federal spending on social housing by at least five times.

In 1982, the government spent about \$164 per person on public and community housing. By 2022, that number had shrunk to \$61.

Everybody's Home spokesperson Maiy Azize said: "In the midst of a major cost-of-living crisis, the federal government is spending record amounts on housing to line the pockets of investors. That has made renting and buying homes more expensive than ever.

"Tax handouts for investors will be a quarter of a trillion dollar mistake if the government doesn't change tack. Giving money to investors is a choice. If the government wants to make housing more affordable and fairer for all Australians, it can choose to put money into homes instead of investor profits.

"The government must scrap negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions, and use the revenue savings to build hundreds of thousands of social homes. This would help end Australia's massive social housing shortfall, and help reach the goal of another one million social homes within the next 20 years.

"Federal governments have walked away from supplying social housing. Instead they have prioritised the profits of property investors, pushed up the cost of housing, and made wealth inequality worse.

"The government must take action to make housing affordable. We're calling on them to use this week's talks to abolish unfair tax handouts and build the homes we need."



## EXAMPLE:

To show how much support is going into the private rental market, we have created a hypothetical scenario based on average figures.

Jane is a pensioner who rents from a private landlord. She has been on a waiting list for social housing for six years.

She receives the full rate of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA), \$184.80 per fortnight. Like half of all CRA recipients, she remains in rental stress after getting the payment.

The total cost of CRA payments to Jane will be \$4,804.80 over the year.

Jane's landlord Michael claims negative gearing tax deductions each year. He will receive a benefit of \$13,810 from these deductions in 2023-24.

When he sells his investment, he will be eligible for a Capital Gains Tax discount. That discount is worth \$10,200 for 2023-24.

This year, Jane's home and Michael's investment is expected to cost the federal budget \$28,814.80 in direct payments and forgone revenue.

Everybody's Home

## Repeating employment failure

**Anglicare Australia has called for an overhaul of Australia's employment system. The call is made as Anglicare Australia releases *Repeat Failure*, which shows that the system is failing people who are out of work.**

Released January 30, the report finds that:

- Even though unemployment is low, long-term unemployment has barely budged
- People out of work are spending an average of five years looking for work
- These Australians need entry-level roles, but jobs are disappearing
- Government strategies ignore these people, focusing on short courses and mutual obligation instead of building long-term skills.

"Anyone who wants help to look for work should be able to get it. The quality of that help should be guaranteed, and the system should be about supporting people," said Anglicare Australia Acting Executive Director Maiy Azize.

"But this report shows that people are being churned through the system without getting help they need. They are running a gauntlet of interviews, reporting, and training courses that aren't leading to work. Private providers are being paid millions of dollars to run this system without delivering results.

"Lynchpins of the system, like Work for the Dole

and the BasicsCard, have repeatedly been shown to fail – and they waste millions of dollars a year.

"This isn't a surprise. Anglicare Australia agencies work with people caught up in this system. They tell us that it is stopping people from finding work, causing harm, and driving some to despair.

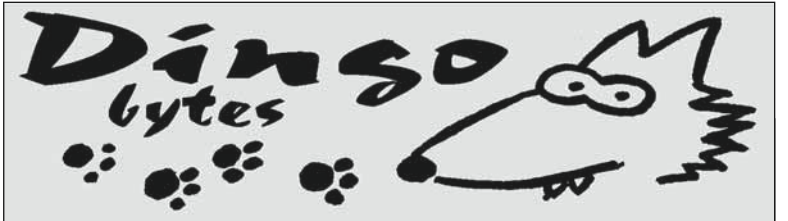
"The Government has committed to keeping this system. But our report shows that if we keep doing the same things, we will continue to get the same results.

"We're calling on the government to change things for the better. We need to create entry-level job opportunities that people are qualified to apply for, and give them the opportunity to gain real qualifications – instead of churning people through low-quality courses.

"We need to stop paying private providers to punish people without delivering results. And we need to end failing programs like Work for the Dole and the BasicsCard. "We are asking the government to listen to the evidence and join us in fixing the system once and for all. It's time to build a safety net that actually helps people instead of punishing them," Ms Azize said.

Anglicare.

Editor's note: The Communist Party of Australia supports employment services being back in public ownership. Bring back the CES!



Among the many aspects of Israel's aggression against the Palestinians is the claim by Israel that resistance forces such as Hamas will not acknowledge Israel's 'right to exist.' The criteria for statehood are laid out in the 1933 Montevideo Convention, namely: a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, and capacity to enter into relations with other states. While Israel is a state and has been recognised as such by many other states, it should not be forgotten that there is a fundamental distinction between the act of recognising a state and the mere fact of being of a state, or a state's 'right to existence.'

Recognition of a state is accorded under international law by way of two processes, namely recognition on the basis of objective criteria and explicit recognition by other states. Explicit recognition is not necessary if the first factors (criteria for statehood) exist, though it obviously carries political significance.

This was illustrated by the Peoples Republic of China, a state of considerable size and stature, whose recognition was blocked by Western powers led by the US, so that China was only able to join the UN in 1971.

Many states, members of the UN, have also refused to recognise Israel, or have withdrawn diplomatic relations, for political reasons. In 1975 the UN General Assembly approved a resolution declaring Zionism "a form of racism and racial discrimination."

Recognised 'existence' carries with it many obligations, including the obligation to treat the inhabitants of territories under its control (occupied or otherwise) in accordance with human rights and humanitarian law. This includes respect for the rights of minorities, no discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or national origin and full and equal participation of all its citizens.

Further, a 'right to existence' for a state is not an esoteric right; it must materialise within a clearly defined territory. Although this 'right to existence' is intrinsically connected with the issue of borders, the fact is that the borders of Israel remain undefined.

**PARASITE OF THE WEEK:** Serco, the company given control of the NDIS. Serco started life in 1929 as the British division of the Radio Corporation of America. It was eventually listed on the stock exchange, and began its inexorable rise as a result of the Blair government's privatisation binge. It has not looked back. It runs prisons in the UK and the US. It runs border security services and is building military hospitals in Germany. It offers an 'information management system' to upload all the data required by the British government's name-and-shame school reporting system. It runs Britain's Skynet military communications network. It even runs buses in Adelaide.

The secret to Serco's success is no secret. It steps in to administer services for governments wanting to downsize and ultimately abandon their social functions. Savings are achieved by skimping on standards and safety, and by screwing workers. This is the company that was chosen to manage the Villawood immigration detention centre which in response to rooftop protests, placed protestors in maximum-security isolation as punishment, sparking a hunger strike. The NDIS was set up to fail.

[www.cpa.org.au](http://www.cpa.org.au)



# Playing with your money

## A Guardian exclusive

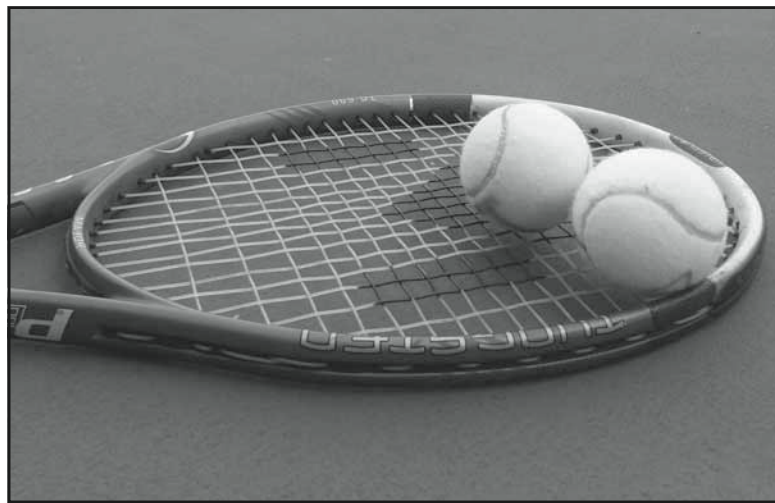
The Australian Open feels like a juggernaut these days, with a remorseless publicity pile-on and a lot of media attention. Melbourners can't go far without seeing a bus, tram, or billboard reminding them that the Open is on and is apparently very exciting.

Lecturer in Sport and Australian Studies at Monash University, Dr Tom Heenan spoke with *Guardian*. He says the Open is a financial juggernaut too, leading to a wholesale handover of public money and land to private developers, and an attack on job security.

Dr Heenan has researched blockbuster sporting events for some time, looking at the Olympics, the Commonwealth Games and the Grand Prix, and he's noticed some common patterns.

One is the appropriation of land that supposedly belonged to the people of a state – as with a large park in Albert Park being handed over to the Grand Prix association.

Tennis Australia is set to get control of the whole of the publicly-owned Olympic Park area in Melbourne. "What comes next" says Dr Heenan, "is usually retail and apartment blocks." He cites the example of the Los Angeles Olympics,



which led to the corralling of poor people and the redevelopment of the downtown area blocks away from Skid Row, the poorest part of California.

Financially speaking, Tennis Australia is doing very well for itself on other people's money. The sports organisation got \$103 million in two lots from the Victorian State government. Now \$43 million of that has been waived by the Victorian government, after the head of Tennis Australia met with state treasurer Tim Pallas.

Total expenditure on Victoria Park comes to one billion dollars expenditure for a two-week event.

The publicity "taps into a sense that we're a natural tennis playing nation – we're not actually that good" explains Dr Heenan. He also says that large sporting events can lead to massive casualisation in work – what he calls "a barista economy." Most of the people employed by Tennis Australia for the Open won't have jobs two weeks later. ✪

## Injured workers front up due to lack of paid leave

**52 per cent of workers in insecure jobs – including fixed-term and independent contractors, casuals, and gig platform workers – reported to have continued working while ill or injured due to the absence of paid leave, according to new data from the ACTU's Work Shouldn't Hurt (WSH) Survey.**

While 18 per cent of injured workers in secure jobs reported being unable to take time off due to lack of paid leave, in comparison, this jumped to half of all workers in insecure work.

Another alarming finding was that people in insecure work were more likely to experience physical injuries than those in secure employment, with 7 per cent of secure workers reporting a physical

injury compared to 11 per cent of insecure workers. Mental injuries for those in insecure work also rose from 13 per cent in 2021 to 20 per cent in 2023.

The WSH findings support a 2023 survey by McKell Institute, the TWU, and TEACHO which showed that more than half of transport gig workers experienced work-related stress, anxiety, and mental health issues, and 56 per cent of food delivery riders reported feeling pressure to rush and take risks on the road to earn enough money and avoid deactivation for being deemed too slow.

The data comes as Parliament is set to debate the remaining parts of the *Closing Loopholes Bill* next month, which would close loopholes that big businesses exploit to reduce the pay and conditions

of working people in casual work and gig platforms.

ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien has said:

"No one should have to go to work when injured or ill simply because their job lacks the most basic of protections. Under the current law, if you're a casual or gig worker and are injured or ill you're forced to make the difficult decision of either taking time off with zero pay or going to work and likely worsening your condition.

"Parliament has the power to help these vulnerable workers by passing the remaining parts of the *Closing Loopholes Bill*, which guarantees these workers basic rights that other workers are entitled to."

ACTU ✪

## Price gouging – new inquiry

**The ACTU has welcomed the Albanese government's announcement that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will be directed by the Treasurer to conduct an inquiry into supermarket prices.**

In his speech to the National Press Club, Prime Minister Albanese highlighted the discrepancy between the pricing of products offered by farmers relative to the prices that consumers are charged by supermarkets.

The year-long inquiry will also examine how online shopping, loyalty programs, and changes in technology have shaped competition in the supermarket industry.

The announcement follows the final stage of the Inquiry into Price Gouging and Unfair Pricing Practices chaired by Professor Allan Fels AO, which will release its final report in February, and which provided its findings on the supermarket sector to the Treasurer.

Since its creation in August 2023, the Inquiry into Price Gouging and Unfair Pricing Practices has conducted 5 public hearings, received over 750 public submissions, and more than 20 detailed contributions from experts, think tanks, unions, businesses, and their representatives.

The ACTU has called the ACCC inquiry "an opportunity to examine how the major supermarkets are setting prices and the extent to which ordinary Aussies are being ripped off at the checkout."

The ACTU Price Gouging Inquiry has heard "harrowing stories from hundreds of working people, from farmers and small businesses who have been rorted by the supermarket duopoly."

ACTU (edited for reasons of space) ✪

## PEACE NOTES

Hannah Middleton

At a recent Gaza solidarity rally in Sydney, Communist Party of Australia members collected over 160 signatures on letters to Australia's Future Fund chair Peter Costello. The letters demanded that the Future Fund stop investing in Israeli arms corporation Elbit Systems Australia.

Elbit is deeply involved in Australia's military and intelligence systems, making major profits while undermining our independence and sovereignty.

In November 2017 SBS reported on the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Australia and Israel to enhance defence industry co-operation.

This would allow Australian police, paramedics, firefighters, and Defence personnel to learn new methods of protecting buildings, carrying out surveillance, and using biometrics from Elbit experts.

An Australian government media release in September 2018 reported that Elbit Systems of Australia had been chosen to deliver a cyber training range for the Department of Defence under a three year contract to boost Australia's cyber security capability.

Then Minister for Defence, Christopher Pyne, said Elbit would provide a cyber range, network design and build, cyber range training, and teaching materials.

And in July last year it was revealed that Israeli military corporation Elbit's cyber arm had been selected to train experts from Australia's cyber intelligence agency, the Australian Signals Directorate.

Elbit Systems is Israel's largest privately-owned arms and security company which produces 85 per cent of the drones and land-based equipment used by the Israeli military. It is a major arms exporter which sells its weapons as being 'field tested' which refers to the Israeli Defence Force's extensive use of Elbit weaponry in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and in Gaza.

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions has called on all Australians to oppose and take action to stop arms deals and any research and training agreements with Elbit.

In another example of the increasing US hold over the Australian Defence Force, in June 2022 Congressman Joe Courtney, who is the founder and Co-Chairman of the US AUKUS Working Group, introduced the *Australia-US Submarine Officer Pipeline Act*.

The bill provides for US-based training of officers for Australia's future fleet of nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS alliance. Three Royal Australian Navy officers have already graduated from the US Navy's Nuclear Power Training Unit

Courtney stated: "The AUKUS alliance is the most important security partnership that America has entered into in decades, and at its core is the creation of an Australian fleet of nuclear-powered submarines ... we need to be sure our partners are ready to pilot them expertly.

"Our bill authorises an education and training program for Royal Australian Navy submariners to receive formal training right alongside our own US Navy submariners, which will maximize efficiency down the road when we're working together beneath the waves."

The Guardian now has a podcast  
Search for "Communist Guardian Podcast"



# Invasion Day reports

## SUNSHINE COAST

Members of the Sunshine Coast branch attended this year's Invasion Day rally around the Cotton Tree, Maroochydore area. We were very pleasantly greeted by a crowd of more than 400 people, gathering in Foundation Square; a sea of Yes Campaign shirts, face paints, and traditional smoke.

Many people approached us wanting to take photos of our flags and the sign I made, thankful for our presence at such an important event. After a moment of silence for the indigenous lives lost last year there was a speech from a Torres Strait Islander man explaining that bigotry is still ever present in the coast, retelling an anecdote of how a woman who recently moved to the area approached him personally crying, as she just couldn't believe the hatred and ignorance that surrounded her.

Racism and reactionary politics/opinions are unfortunately a constant of the Coast, and many people, this writer included, Indigenous, immigrant and LGBTIQ+ have been harassed or attacked for not falling in line with the white conservative majority.

After this sombre note, we were reinvigorated when the march began. Cries of "Not the date to celebrate," "What do we want? Land rights! When do we want them? Now!" and "The people, united, will never be defeated," echoed throughout the coastal city. The positive energy is rather therapeutic, marching not just with my comrades, but the sight that struck me most was a family wheeling a loved one in a wheel chair holding hands with a child marching cheerfully alongside. These rallies are important for Indigenous rights and as a community event of bonding of survival and respect for the oldest existing human culture, encompassing everyone with no boundaries.

The Communist Party's presence was extremely well received with constant cheers and attention of other attendees with us featuring prominently in their own media/footage of the event. This year's rally was bigger than 2023, and we hope it grows even further for 2025. At all times we will never forget to show solidarity and support First Nations custodians and their culture on the Sunshine Coast. The Communist Party of Australia was the first political party in Australia to recognise Aboriginal liberation as a priority, and we shall always pursue it as a core value.

Report by Che Janz.

## NAARM/MELBOURNE

Comrades in Naarm rallied for the Invasion Day event held by the Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance (WAR), taking part in the rally both by acting as marshals and as participants. As in previous events, the rally was well attended and overwhelmingly positive. An estimated 35,000 people gathered at Victoria's Parliament house to hear speakers including Professor Gary Foley.

## FREE PALESTINE – BOORLOO/PERTH

In the same week Israel was found to have a case to answer after being charged with genocide in the International Court of Justice, rallies continued around the world in support of Palestine, including in Perth (Boorloo), Western Australia.

The rally in Forrest Place was organised by Friends of Palestine WA, and the MC for the event, Vashti, reminded the thousand supporters and activists who attended that it was the fifteenth week of demonstrations against the bombardment, killing and maiming of the Palestinian people of Gaza and the West Bank.

On Invasion Day, and again at this rally there were speakers from the Noongar Aboriginal people who showed their solidarity and support for the fight against the colonial oppressor. Fabian Yarran noted that the intergenerational trauma and foetal alcohol syndrome caused by the actions of the Australian state needed to be addressed first before the funding of prisons, housing and education as when the mental health issues are addressed, much other issues become more manageable or fall away.

Des Blurton who performed the Welcome to Country reminded the rally that the colonial oppressors often targeted the warriors who were able to resist the violence as well as the women and children to diminish the indigenous race while those that remained often ended up in, "concentration camps called missions", where they were subjected to attempts to wash them of their culture, language and way of life – similar to what is occurring in Palestine at the hands of the Zionist Israeli state.

Zena, a Palestinian spoken word poet, rapped about the 112 days of collective punishment meted out to the Palestinian people, of the many babies who won't live to see their first birthday, of the 36 hospitals deliberately targeted and destroyed while aid workers are called terrorists, where the cargo of ships in the Red Sea are worth more than the lives of Palestinian babies, while international law is important to everyone except the oppressors.

Greens WA Senator and Foreign Affairs spokesman Jordon Steele-John spoke next to say we will call out those who seek to demonise people who seek justice. Steele-John called on the Australian government to support the Interim Ruling of the ICJ, to speak out against the Israeli war cabinet and for Australians to remember the positions which the major parties took on Palestine and their support of Israel come election time and vote them out. Dorinda Cox, another Greens Senator from WA and also a Noongar Yamitji woman spoke of having to listen to the vile language of members of the two major parties when parliament is sitting in Canberra with regards to their unwavering support for Israel and their weasel words on a lasting ceasefire in Gaza. Cox called on the people at the rally and around Australia to remember their actions on this important humanitarian issue at election time.

The rally marched to take the message to the streets of Boorloo/Perth and vowed to return the next week to rally, where the theme would be the calling out of those corporations who benefit from their support of the state of Israel in their oppression of the Palestinian people.

The Communist Party of Australia calls for the implementation of a permanent ceasefire, restoration of funding by Australia to the UNRWA on Palestine and withdrawal of Australian government support for Israel's war on the Palestinian people.

Report by Richard Titilius.



Sunshine Coast.



Brisbane.



Naarm/ Melbourne.

## Australia rewards alleged torturer

**Australia wants to increase its clout in the Pacific to counter the dreaded influence of China in a part of the world which Australia has taken for granted and treated as a colonial backwater for decades.**

Part of the official argument

for Australia trying to assert its 'leadership role', as the Department of Foreign Affairs has called it, is 'values'. Australia has nice democratic values of course.

An interesting example of how those values work in practice has just come to light from the *Fee*

*Grub* blog, citing a report in *The Australian* newspaper, which has revealed that a Fijian Colonel, Penioni Naliva, recently appointed deputy commander of the Australian Army's 7th Brigade has also been accused of carrying out acts of torture. Naliva isn't just any Fijian

colonel. He has been described as a former right-hand man to Frank Bainimarama, one-time Fijian Prime Minister and coup leader. In one of several cases Naliva was involved in during the coup, a UN Special Rapporteur mentioned Naliva's involvement in a beating

that left a businessman in Suva unable to walk.

No doubt this appointment will thrill Fijians when they're looking to Australia for inspiration when it comes to human rights. ❌



# NATO, USA war drills and the threat of imperialist war

William Briggs

**The next three months will see NATO forces flexing their muscles in a provocative set of war games and manoeuvres in Europe. 90,000 troops will take part. US military forces will be bolstered by 20,000 UK, 15,000 Polish, 10,000 German and 5,000 Dutch troops. Fifty ships, 80 aircraft, and 1,100 combat vehicles will be used in these drills. The intent is to threaten Russia and project a sense of power in the face of the disaster that has been NATO's war on Russia; its proxy war that has devastated America's client state in Ukraine.**

The lengthy series of 'drills' will raise the level of threat perception in Moscow. A key factor that led to war in Ukraine was the breaking of a promise made in 1991, that NATO would not move one inch eastwards. The result of the American refusal to abide by anything resembling international law is on show for all to see.

The language employed by NATO when announcing its 'Steadfast Defender 2024' exercise is designed to further raise that threat level. It speaks of a preparation, or rehearsal, for a conflict with a 'near-peer adversary' by the USA, if it were required to 'reinforce' its allies on NATO's 'eastern flank.'

A largely compliant bourgeois media has interpreted the term 'adversary' to mean Russia and it is obvious that imperialism will continue to have Moscow in its sights. NATO has, however, made no bones about its intention to move into the South China Sea to play its part in encircling and threatening China. The USA and its allies, in the face of a weakening of power and influence, and a threat to its hegemony both economic and military, is showing every sign that it is preparing to campaign on more than one front. It is making the claim to be confronting two 'near-peer' adversaries, where, in reality no actual adversaries need exist.

At the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, NATO Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg was unambiguous about imperialism's two-front offensive. Speaking in a panel discussion he said that 'we will remain a regional alliance. But the transatlantic region faces global threats. Security is no longer regional; security is global ... China's heavy investments in modern military capabilities, including war and more advanced nuclear weapons,



NATO's headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. Photo: NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization – flickr.com (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0).

China's way of behaviour especially in the South China Sea, and the way China is actually violating core principles for NATO democracy ... all of that matters for NATO.'

He was speaking among 'friends.' No one took him to task for the fabrications and distortions of reality with which he engaged. The Western media largely chose to ignore his comments that "this is not about NATO moving into Asia, but instead about the fact that China is coming close to us. We see them in Africa. We see them in the Arctic, we see them trying to control critical infrastructure. Not so many years ago, I had a big discussion about 5G and many Allies said this is only a commercial issue. No, it's also an issue about our security."

A country engaging with other countries, through trade and diplomacy, according to such as Stoltenberg, threatens NATO security. None of this was questioned. It cannot be questioned because the USA and its NATO allies are engaged in a Cold War struggle against socialist China, and so the media must remain solidly anti-Chinese.

Because the battlelines have so

clearly been established, Stoltenberg was emboldened to utter the ludicrous line that "the more success Putin has in Ukraine, the more likely it is that Beijing will use force. So we have to have a global approach even though we are regional countries, regional organisations. The world is interconnected. And of course NATO has taken the consequences of that." It certainly has.

NATO as Beijing observed, has demonstrated its role as a 'strategic tool of the US.' Canute-like, the forces of imperialism seek to 'contain' the rise of China. The US has been spectacularly unsuccessful in this not-so-grand endeavour, but has brought regional allies further into its dangerous orbit. Japan has announced that it is purchasing Tomahawk cruise missiles which all but ends its military policy of self-defence. From Japan to Australia the ring of missiles is closing around China. NATO is now seeking to open an 'office' in Tokyo, thereby establishing itself in the region. The UK navy has become more closely engaged in the region.

NATO exists as a regional military alliance. It was founded as the

Cold War against the Soviet Union was being launched. The Cold War ended but NATO's expansion did not. Today it exists as an armed alliance to support the requirements of the USA, while also promoting European imperialist agendas.

Its expansion into Asia simply confirms this simple truth.

None of this augurs well for peace in the region or the world. But even as the dogs of war have all but been unleashed, China continues to grow, strengthen its defensive capacities, and expands its economic and diplomatic influence around the world.

The sabre-rattling and war-mongering have been an intensely one-sided affair. China has not been in the business of parking its fleet off the shores of America. It has not ringed the USA with missiles. It has not threatened anyone. Its only threat to the USA has been an ideological one.

Truth, however, has no place in the designs of capital and imperialism. Its core business is expansion and survival. This is why the US and its loyal henchmen in NATO are actively contemplating war on two fronts. The desperation that

accompanies loss of empire is so patently obvious. The same tired phrases 'defending democracy,' or 'maintaining the international rules-based order,' or 'standing up to authoritarian regimes' are bandied about.

The USA and NATO's deployment of 90,000 troops and materiel in Europe in the next months is designed to threaten Russia and to warn China of what might await them. It is also being used in a clumsy manner to show that their adventure in Ukraine still has some potential to achieve imperialism's goals.

There is a problem with such thinking. It shows the rest of the world that things are not working to plan. Russia is not facing defeat. China continues to strengthen. Stoltenberg and his ilk may speak of "steadfast defence" but what they are seeking to defend is imperialist power, domination and subjugation of the world. The world, and the interests of billions of people are not being served by militarism and threat. ❌

## Lenin on anti-semitism

**Anti-Semitism means spreading enmity towards the Jews. When the accursed tsarist monarchy was living its last days it tried to incite ignorant workers and peasants against the Jews. The tsarist police, in alliance with the landowners and the capitalists, organised pogroms against the Jews. The landowners and capitalists tried to divert the hatred of the workers and peasants who were tortured by want against the Jews. In other countries, too, we often see the capitalists fomenting hatred against the Jews in order to blind the workers, to divert**

**their attention from the real enemy of the working people, capital.**

Hatred towards the Jews persists only in those countries where slavery to the landowners and capitalists has created abysmal ignorance among the workers and peasants.

Only the most ignorant and downtrodden people can believe the lies and slander that are spread about the Jews. This is a survival of ancient feudal times, when the priests burned heretics at the stake, when the peasants lived in slavery, and when the people were crushed and inarticulate. This ancient, feudal ignorance is passing away; the eyes of the people are being opened.

It is not the Jews who are the enemies of the working people. The enemies of the workers are the capitalists of all countries. Among the Jews there are working people, and they form the majority. They are our brothers, who, like us, are oppressed by capital; they are our comrades in the struggle for socialism. Among the Jews there are kulaks, exploiters and capitalists, just as there are among the Russians, and among people of all nations.

The capitalists strive to sow and foment hatred between workers of different faiths, different nations and different races. Those who do not work are kept in power by the

power and strength of capital. Rich Jews, like rich Russians, and the rich in all countries, are in alliance to oppress, crush, rob and disunite the workers.

Shame on accursed tsarism which tortured and persecuted the Jews. Shame on those who foment hatred towards the Jews, who foment hatred towards other nations.

Long live the fraternal trust and fighting alliance of the workers of all nations in the struggle to overthrow capital.

VI Lenin

From a speech recorded in 1919 on 'Anti-Jewish Pogroms.' ❌



# Standing Together

## The peace movement inside Israel

Uri Weltmann reports on the biggest demonstration since the beginning of the war on Gaza that defied the police and brought together all those calling for a ceasefire on the streets of Tel Aviv

**On 18 January more than 2000 people marched through the streets of Tel Aviv, calling for a ceasefire agreement that will end hostilities in Gaza, in the biggest peace demonstration inside Israel since the war began.**

The march and rally were endorsed by more than 30 groups, and organised jointly by Standing Together and Women Wage Peace.

"We are all in pain over the harsh reality we are living. The pain of the bereaved families, of those kidnapped, of the people we were uprooted and forced to leave their homes. We are all horrified when we hear about civilian casualties, including children, in the Gaza Strip and in the Gaza Envelope," read the statement calling for the march.

"For many, it is now clear: only a ceasefire agreement can return the hostages alive to their families and stop the killing of innocent people.

"But in the extremist government of Netanyahu, Ben Gvir and Smotrich, they are pushing towards the other direction: they talk about population transfer and 'voluntary migration,' they reject the possibility of diplomatic negotiations with the PLO and the Palestinian Authority, and they promise us nothing – except many more years of war and suffering. For us, the people who live in Israel, there are two

options: either Israeli-Palestinian peace or an eternal war."

The protesters – both Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel – convened in the centre of Tel-Aviv, near Dizengoff centre, and marched through the streets chanting in Hebrew and Arabic: "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies," "Peace, equality, social justice," "In Gaza and Sderot, children want to live," "Our answer to the right wing: Israel and Palestine." They were holding bilingual signs that read "Only peace will bring security," and "The majority demands a ceasefire agreement."

Originally planned to take place the week before, the police ordered the protest to be cancelled, citing "concerns over possible incitement" as the official reason.

The organisers from Standing Together and Women Wage Peace were supported by the legal department of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, threatening the police with legal action at the supreme court. Eventually, because of public pressure, the police allowed the demonstration to take place.

Standing Together leaders note encouragingly that those parts of the peace movement that until now were hesitant to come out in the open calling for a ceasefire agreement or to question the objectives of the war, have now officially joined the protests in the streets, reflecting a broader shift in the public opinion inside Israel.

The march ended in Cinematheque Square, where several Jewish and Palestinian speakers addressed the crowd.

"I survived the horrors, but far too many of my friends did not," said Neta Peleg, from

Kibbutz Beeri, which was taken over by Hamas militants on 7 October, and in which more than 90 civilians were murdered.

"I am incredibly angry at our government for betraying us, for sacrificing us. Every day that passes, more people are killed. We must reach a deal that will bring back the hostages – now! We must stop this war and send this government back home."

Neta Heiman, an activist with Women Wage Peace, is the daughter of Ditzza Heiman, who was taken captive by Hamas on 7 October, and released in November: "The Kibbutz where I was born, Nir Oz, suffered a massacre. Over a quarter of its residents were murdered or kidnapped, the homes were looted, and the army only arrived after the last terrorists had already left.

"I was incredibly angry over the Hamas monsters who kidnapped my elderly mother, but also incredibly angry at those at the helm in the state of Israel, who in the past 20 years failed to see that you cannot 'manage the conflict,' you have to end it. Had we taken a different path, that of peace, 7 October was avoidable."

Rula Daood, national co-director of Standing Together, said: "As a Palestinian citizen of Israel, I hear all the eulogies, in Hebrew and in Arabic, coming from both Israeli society and from the Gaza Strip.

"We must change course. The future of both our peoples depends on achieving an Israeli-Palestinian peace, which is the only way to bring us all security and safety. This path is long, but we know: where there is struggle, there is hope."

*Morning Star* ✪

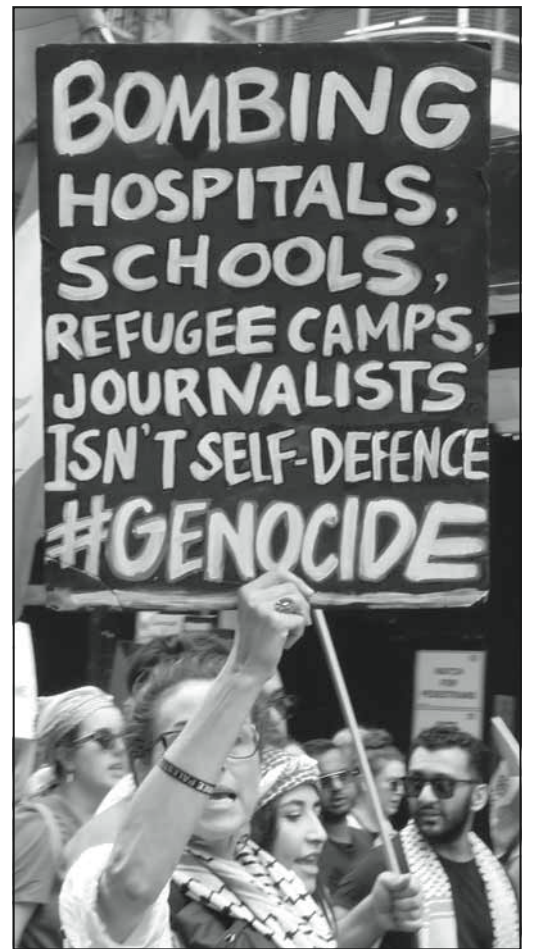


Photo: Anna Pha

## Japan eyes Australia for missile testing

**Japanese government sources have revealed that Japan and Australia are discussing potential military cooperation in case of "scenarios where emergencies arise simultaneously in both the East and South China Seas." According to the *Japan Times*, this is "apparently with China's growing maritime assertiveness in mind."**

The working-level consultation was launched based on a joint declaration on security cooperation, signed by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Australian PM Anthony Albanese when they met in October 2022 in Australia, according to media outlets.

The *Japan Times* has reported that through the discussion and the development of examples of collaboration between the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Australian

military, Tokyo envisions establishing bilateral defence cooperation guidelines with Canberra to clarify their role-sharing. Increasing the sophistication and frequency of joint drills between the two forces is likely to be brought up in the talks, the sources said.

Tokyo has also asked for Canberra's cooperation in using Australia's vast continent as a testing ground for Japanese missiles that are under development, the sources revealed. Japan has promised to acquire "counterstrike capabilities" by developing homemade long-range missiles, along with procuring US-produced Tomahawk cruise missiles, as a deterrent against regional security threats, the news report said.

Japan wants to conduct a test of its long-range missiles in Australia for two main reasons, Song Zhongping, a Chinese military

expert and TV commentator, told the *Global Times*.

First, it aims to participate in military exercises in Australia and showcase its domestically produced weapons and equipment to potential buyers, including Australia, Song explained, noting that Japan aspires to become a major arms exporter.

Second, Japan needs to test its weapons in various countries and climates to enhance the military equipment's versatility and adaptability, the expert said.

However, arms sales by either the US or Japan to Australia or other Asia-Pacific countries could undermine peace and stability in the region, analysts pointed out.

It is likely that Japan would be adversely affected as it lacks strategic depth. As an island country that is prone to earthquakes and volcanic disasters, Japan should

focus on maintaining good relations with its neighbors rather than constantly making provocations, analysts warn.

In the event of a large-scale geological disaster, Japan needs to rely on neighbouring countries for rescue and assistance, rather than the US across the Pacific, Song said.

"As a proverb goes, 'a near neighbour is better than a distant relative.' Additionally, the US is not a distant relative to Japan, instead, it is Japan's master who always prioritises its own interests," Song said.

"As countries in the region, Japan and Australia should prioritise maintaining stability rather than participating in the US' Indo-Pacific Strategy which mainly targets China," Song warned.

The analysts offered some advice to Australia, a country located in the second island chain.

Both the US and Japan see Australia as an important strategic buffer zone in case of military contingencies, Song said, noting that Japan wants to woo Australia to 'contain' China.

The *Japan Times* noted that Japan views Australia as a "quasi-ally," in addition to its sole security treaty ally the US.

In case of military contingencies, the first island chain could become a battlefield, while the second island chain can enjoy a significant strategic buffer. "Australia itself needs to understand that by aligning itself with the US and Japan in this way, it will inevitably become a battleground and no longer remain an idyllic haven," Song said.

*Global Times*  
(edited for reasons of space). ✪

## 'India lurches toward full-fledged fascism'

**The executive body of Progressive International has warned of the accelerating erosion of Indian democracy as right-wing Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially consecrated a highly controversial Hindu temple on the former site of a 16th-century Muslim mosque destroyed a generation ago by a Hindu nationalist mob.**

Modi heralded the "advent of a new era" as he spoke outside Ram Mandir, a temple to the Hindu deity figure Ram – who epitomises the triumph of good over evil – in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. The small city of approximately 55,000 inhabitants is known for its religious diversity and long history of

peaceful coexistence between Hindus and Muslims.

The Prime Minister, who exalted Ram as India's "national consciousness," claimed the temple's construction reflected that harmonious history, and that "this construction is not giving birth to any fire, but to energy."

However, it was extremist members of Modi's right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) who, in December 1992, led a mob of Hindu nationalists in the destruction of the Babri Masjid Mosque, which they claimed stood on the site of an ancient Hindu temple to Ram. The act sparked fierce communal riots in which more than 2000 people were killed, most of them Muslims.

Celebrations of the new temple – much of which is still under construction – took part throughout India, with displays of Hindu nationalism prominent at many events. Emily Jones, a Christian Indian from Kerala state traveling in Goa, told *Common Dreams* that participants chanted slogans including "every inch of India is Hindu" at a car rally in Chapora.

In a statement, the Progressive International cabinet – whose members include National Federation of Indian Women president Aruna Roy – warned that "today, India lurches toward full-fledged fascism."

"Today, the Modi government has made a decisive move to overthrow India's secular

constitution in the name of a new Hindu supremacist nation," the statement continued. "As prime minister, Modi has pushed this Hindu nationalism as India's dominant political force: banning the hijab in schools, introducing 'anti-conversion' laws, abusing municipal forces to demolish Muslim households and shops in cities, and pushing for a 'uniform civil code' in law."

"Now, in open defiance of India's secular constitution, Modi fuses 'prime minister' with 'chief priest' to conduct the consecration of this controversial temple," the cabinet contended.

*Alternet* (edited for reasons of space). ✪



Department of Foreign affairs  
Democratic Front for the  
Liberation of Palestine



الجبهة الديمقراطية لتحرير فلسطين  
- اللجنة المركزية -  
دائرة العلاقات الخارجية

# Forced and mass displacement of the Palestinian people

## An essential pillar of the Zionist project

**It is not possible to talk about the emergence of the Israeli entity outside the framework of the massacres it committed since 1948, as the Israeli occupation sought, with direct support from the colonial Western countries, to erase the effects of those crimes and the forced displacement and ethnic cleansing they caused against the Palestinian people, which are documented by United Nations institutions.**

Enemy historians are currently trying to present new narratives with direct support from official legislative, judicial and executive institutions in order to deny and obscure the Palestinian narrative and establish the Zionist narrative as the only truth.

The plan to displace the population of the Gaza Strip is not new, and every time documents leak that confirm that this plan has been on the agenda of the occupation and its supporters for decades, and in all the wars launched against the Strip, the goal was the same: getting rid of the security nuisance posed by the Gaza Strip and imposing mass displacement on its population. Given Israel's inability to achieve the declared goals of its current aggression that has been ongoing for more than three months, it had only one of two means, mass displacement, mass murder or both.

### DISPLACEMENT FROM THE WEST BANK:

Since the first day of the occupation of the West Bank in 1967, the Zionist project has adopted a policy of tightly linking settlement with the theft of land and the displacement of its owners. In a general overview of the reality of settlement, it becomes clear that it is a systematic policy adopted by official Zionist institutions to create material facts on the ground whose results cannot be ignored in any future negotiating process. Israel is pursuing a clear policy regarding controlling the land through several forms, including:

- Forcibly transferring residents and forcing them to leave their homes, either by administrative decisions, punitive cases of residents, or

military considerations. There are many examples of this policy.

- According to United Nations data, in 2022, Israel demolished about 708 private Palestinian homes, and during the first half of 2023 alone, 256 homes were demolished, and their residents were asked to leave.

In addition to other forms such as confiscation of lands for reasons that are often unknown, deprivation of residency rights and then control over the land, or direct control over it by the settlers by force of arms and without the intervention of the occupation army, which usually provides protection for the heavily armed settlers. Zionist data has indicated that there are 200 thousand weapons in the hands of the settlers, and recently one of the pillars of the Israeli government (Itamar Ben Gvir) distributed tens of thousands of military weapons to the settlers.

The goal is to kill the Palestinians and push them to leave their land.

### FORCED DISPLACEMENT FROM THE GAZA STRIP:

With the start of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, it began to become clear that forced and mass population displacement is one of Israel's goals. Every detail of the aggression confirms that this project is still at the forefront of the Israeli government's concerns, according to what was announced by the United Nations.

Although the United States and the European Union countries announced their rejection of such plans, this rejection is merely a positions that cannot be trusted, because Israel continues its strategy of imposing this plan by force of death and destruction. It is not possible to reconcile the rejection of forced and mass population displacement projects with the cover that Western countries provide for Israel to continue its aggression under misleading slogans about "self-defence" because everyone knows that Israel is practicing a policy of mass displacement.

In practice, the United States of

America does not refuse to displace Palestinians outside the Gaza Strip, and its daily positions and policies confirm that it adopts this plan. Aside from the positions of some members of Congress who explicitly call for the displacement of refugees from Gaza, documents have been leaked confirming that the United States is directly involved in the project to displace Palestinians.

The project of mass displacement of the Palestinian people from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank is a real plan in which Israel, the United States of America, and some Western and Arab countries participate, but it cannot be imposed on the ground except in one case only, which is Israel's possession of the field in all its details and the crushing of Palestinian resistance as a reality, idea, and culture. This is clearly impossible to achieve, which makes the conflict continue regardless of the results of the aggression on the Gaza Strip, because the displacement of the Palestinian people outside of Palestine will remain an essential pillar of the Zionist project, which has begun to fray in many of its details.

We have called and reiterate our call to international organisations and Western countries not to be false witnesses to the crimes of genocide committed against the Palestinian people, and they bear political, legal, and humanitarian responsibilities in terms of exercising their influence on Israel to stop the deportation plan as it is a war crime whose perpetrators must be held accountable.

We also call on the political forces and Western parties to condemn the plans for the mass displacement of the population, and to push their governments to condemn these projects that the occupation seeks to impose with force of destruction, killing, and difficult humanitarian conditions. The situation requires an immediate halt to the aggression, the return of all displaced people to their homes without restrictions or conditions, and the lifting of the siege completely, including meeting all food and health aid and humanitarian needs, and launching an international workshop to rebuild what was destroyed by the aggression. ✪



## Global Briefs

**UGANDA:** Uganda has disowned in the International Court of a judge from Uganda over the Israel genocide trial. "Justice Sebutinde's ruling at the International Court of Justice does not represent the government of Uganda's position on the situation in Palestine," Adonia Ayebare, Uganda's Permanent Representative to the UN said. His message was reinforced by Uganda's Foreign Ministry, which released a statement saying "the government categorically clarifies that the position taken by Judge Sebutinde is her own individual and independent opinion, and does not in any way reflect the position of the government of the Republic of Uganda." The swift reaction came after the Ugandan judge had opposed all emergency measures sought by South Africa in the genocide case against Israel. She voted against all the emergency measures that had been introduced at the ICJ, as in her opinion South Africa did not sufficiently demonstrate that Israel's acts had genocidal intent.

**RUSSIA:** 27 January marked the 80th anniversary of the complete liberation of Leningrad (now St Petersburg) from the Nazi siege. The blockade began on 8 September 1941, and lasted almost 3 years. Over 2.5 million people were trapped in the city, including 400,000 children. Between 600,000 and 1 million people died during the blockade, most of them from starvation. The blockade was broken in January 1943 when a 11-kilometre wide corridor was created. A 33-kilometer long 'Road of Life' was built along the shore of Lake Ladoga and a crossing over the Neva River was built in 18 days. Despite the blockade, the city's industries continued to work as best they could.

**FINLAND:** The first round of Finland's presidential elections took place Sunday 28 January. A record 44 per cent of eligible voters cast ballots in advance. The elections were the first ones since Finland's entry into NATO in April of last year which drastically changed its international and domestic policies. Former Prime Minister Alexander Stubb and former Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto were the favourites. Alexander Stubb of the centre-right National Coalition Party got 27.2 per cent, while his opponent got 25.8 per cent. A second round will be held on 11 February. To be declared president, the winning candidate must receive more than 50 per cent of votes.

**GREECE:** Poor farmers from the Thessaly region and across the country are setting up roadblocks on main roads to demand assistance from the government. They demand state compensation for lost income due to reduced production because of adverse weather conditions, as well as large cuts set out in the common agricultural policy (CAP), among other things. The government responded by sending police and riot police to deal with the protesters. The violent attacks by the police, the use of tear gas and stun grenades, the arrests of trade unionists have failed to deter the farmers, who have declared that they "will not be deterred by repression." They are determined to continue and escalate their struggle for survival.

**FRANCE:** French farmers are not very happy either. According to the latest figures, 72,000 farmers and more than 41,000 tractors have been involved in the protest action there. The French Interior Minister ordered 15,000 police officers to protect Paris, two major airports and Rungis food market on the outskirts of Paris. The farmers are angered by unfair competition and want their demands heard. However, they are likely to be met by the police who using armoured vehicles and helicopters against them, as promised by the minister.

mass displacement,  
mass murder, or both

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Letters to the Editor  
The Guardian  
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Surry Hills NSW 2010

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Dear Editor,  
**In a week when the International Court of Justice has reminded Israel to prevent genocide happening and to be more sensitive about supplies of food and water plus other essentials, Israel has come up with a flea bite of an excuse to impose further privations on the Palestinians. I refer to the UNRWA, the UN organisation responsible for distributing aid to the Palestinian people. This organisation employs over 30,000 people in Gaza, and just 10 have been shown to be involved in the 7 October action.**

Tiny as this is, it is enough for Israel to insist on restrictions on UNRWA and other countries to stop funding this body as if the UN body was or had any part of the organisation of 7 October. Worst of all Australia has joined the group and refused money to Palestinians based on this premise. The deprivations suffered by the Palestinian people, the bombing, the shells from tanks, from the sea, and the constant buzz of drones looking for targets makes the situation in Gaza absolutely appalling, yet Australia seeks to punish Palestinians at the urging of a pariah state, Israel which has wantonly destroyed heavily populated areas.

The Australian government, Prime Minister Albanese, and Foreign Minister Wong jump to attention at the mere clicking of the fingers of the Israeli government, but can turn a blind eye to the suffering of the Palestinian people. They are unmoved by the demonstrations in many capital cities and regional centres, they are more attuned to the Israeli lobby than the people of Australia. I hope all supporters and members of our party send blasting messages to our government.

Yours sincerely

Denis Doherty

## Some greetings received from parties for the recent CPA Organising Conference



### Communist Party of Greece

Dear comrades,  
**On behalf of the KKE (Communist Party of Greece), we wish you success in the works of your National Conference. Your conference is being held at a time of particularly complex and dangerous developments, to the detriment of the interests of the peoples of the world.**

At its heart is the horrific massacre of the Palestinian people and the atrocious bombardment of Gaza by the murderous state of Israel for over 100 days. In defiance of the Euro-NATOists who have justified the massacre from day one, and in response to the filthy Israeli propaganda, massive mobilisations have erupted in the whole world in solidarity with the just struggle of the Palestinian people, condemning the brutal Israeli occupation. The

peoples of the world are defending the resistance of the Palestinian people and its right to have its own independent and free homeland.

Almost two years have passed since the beginning of the war in Ukraine between the US, NATO, and the EU and capitalist Russia. Its imperialist character has already been revealed. It is a result of the competitions for market shares, control of wealth resources, and regions of strategic importance. It is being waged and led by the bourgeois classes, it is an imperialist war on both sides, it is directed against the peoples and there is a great danger for its further escalation.

We believe that the main features of global developments are the intense competition between the US and China for the primacy of the international capitalist economy,

the intensification of contradictions leading to imperialist wars and interventions, and spread of war zones, the intensification of exploitation, the escalation of poverty and unemployment, the waves of refugees. People today more than ever are suffering from unbearable poverty, low wages and pensions, and crushed social rights.

The need for the independent organisation of the workers' and people's struggle centred on their own rights is today more necessary and topical than ever. The centre of this struggle must be the overthrow of the capitalist exploitative system, the building of the new socialist society. A socio-economic system that has its own principles of construction and laws, incompatible with private ownership of the means of production, capitalist profit, the involvement of the

capitalist market, and the treatment of labour power as a commodity.

Comrades,

The forces of the KKE have been protagonists in the past period in major, tough class confrontations for contemporary working class' and people's needs. Against the involvement of our country in the dangerous NATO imperialist plans, the transformation of our country into an imperialist stronghold for the war in Ukraine, and the massacre of the Palestinian people.

At the same time, the KKE achieved a significant increase in votes and percentages in the national elections of June 2023, achieving 7.7 per cent from 5.3 per cent with an increase of more than 100,000 votes and 6 new MPs, increasing its parliamentary group to 21 MPs. In the regional elections of October 2023 it surpassed 10.3

per cent nationwide and elected 6 communist mayors and hundreds of municipal and regional councillors.

In these circumstances, we continue our struggle with renewed strength. The KKE shows the people that no bourgeois government of any orientation can save them. The way out for the benefit of the people can be given by strengthening the workers' and people's struggle by building a strong social alliance with an anti-capitalist, anti-monopoly direction, for the disengagement from the EU and NATO, the overthrow of capitalism, and the building of socialism.

With these thoughts, we wish you again good luck in your work. Comradely.

**International Relations Section  
CC of the KKE**



### Portuguese Communist Party

Message of greetings from the Portuguese Communist Party to the Communist Party of Australia's National Organising Conference Unity in Action

Dear Comrades,  
**On behalf of the Portuguese Communist Party, we wish you success for the Communist Party of Australia's National Organising Conference. We sincerely hope that it may provide an important contribution to the work of Australian Communists among the workers**

**and the people, which is so necessary in our times.**

Our world is today in the midst of a major crisis that has its roots in the structural crisis of the capitalist system and, in particular, in the relative decline of the US and other imperialist powers gathered in the G7. Everywhere there are signs of this intensifying crisis. Even in the imperialist centres, working people and their livelihoods are being sacrificed to ensure the profits of increasingly parasitic and corrupt ruling classes. There is a real risk that, in the attempt to counter and

reverse their decline, the most reactionary and warmongering sectors of big finance capital from the US and other imperialist powers will lead Humankind to the brink of a major disaster.

After decades of wars of aggression by the US, NATO, EU, UK and their allies, which have destroyed countries in West Asia, the Balkans, and North Africa, we are today witnessing Israel's genocidal policy with the systematic massacre of the Palestinian people, who have long been deprived of their inalienable national rights by the

imperialist powers that seek to control the Middle East and its immense natural resources. This is, and has always been, the true face of imperialism.

Today there is an urgent need for the **Unity in Action** which you have very appropriately added to the name of your National Organising Conference. Unity in action of the working people in each country – and of all countries – in defending their social, political and economic rights. Unity in action of all oppressed peoples that are targeted by imperialist plunder and

aggression and that stand up for their sovereignty and their rights. Unity in action among communists and between them and other progressive and anti-imperialist forces. Unity in action to ensure a future of peace and social progress for all of Humankind.

Long live the unity of the workers and peoples of the world!

**Lisbon, January 16, 2024  
Central Committee of the  
Portuguese  
Communist Party**



### Communist Party of Canada

Vinnie Molina, National President Communist Party of Australia. Solidarity with Delegates to the CPA Organising Conference.

Dear Comrades,  
**On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada, we send warm**

**fraternal greetings to the Organising Conference of the Communist Party of Australia, meeting this weekend.**

Canadian Communists wish you every success in your work to build the Communist Party in the working class movement, in the trade unions, amongst the unorganised and unemployed, among women

and youth, Indigenous Peoples and people of Colour, and all those who are exploited and oppressed by capitalism and imperialism.

Your victories are our victories as you build the Communist Party and the ideals of socialism – where the working class is in the driver's seat – in the labour and people's movements. A strong Communist

Party means a strong and fighting labour movement, and a powerful movement for fundamental social change.

With all of the very real dangers of the current period, there is also opportunity as the working class and its allies expand the struggle against declining wages and living conditions, against

reaction and war.

Communists always punch above their weight! We are sure that this Organising Conference will add more power to the CPA's punches in the period ahead!

Yours in the Struggle,  
**Elizabeth Rowley  
Leader  
January 27, 2024**



# Anti-China economics threaten the world

William Briggs

**The mind of the average bourgeois economist at first appears disordered and schizophrenic. But there is an almost orchestrated approach to their anti-China reporting that is rather telling. This synchronised approach is perfectly illustrated when reading any commentary about China's economy when compared to the rest of the world and particularly to the United States. China's economy is written off as failing. America's is described as 'motoring' ahead. It is repeated, mantra-like, in an effort to convince the world and themselves that their words are true. But they are not.**

The IMF's most recent figures for global economic growth for the year is just 3.1 per cent. The USA can expect 2.1 growth in its GDP and China, after the property problems and Evergrande's collapse has been factored in has dropped but still is expected to be at least 4.6 per cent this year. Growth for the 'advanced' economies is predicted to be 1.5 per cent. The IMF while putting a positive spin on these rather bleak figures has routinely downgraded its predictions as the year unfolds. This will inevitably mean attacks on the global working class as states respond to more economic pressure.

Despite these figures, the economists, the media and Western governments continue to declare that the Chinese economy is on the rocks and the West is moving ahead. Successive Australian Treasurers and their loyal media assert that ours is an economy that is a thing of envy around the world. The IMF expects Australian growth to be 1.25 per cent! Deloitte Australia acknowledges that there will be a 9 per cent drop in real disposable income in the coming year.

The final chapter in the Chinese Evergrande property crisis is being played out. Western 'experts' are greeting this with something almost akin to glee. The fact remains that the crisis was a long time coming and the Chinese have all but ensured that there will be no ripple effect through the broader economy. The IMF has highlighted the fact that while the Evergrande collapse was a major problem, the manner in which the Chinese government

has been responding across the broader economy has significantly limited the damage.

The same bourgeois economists and observers ought to give thanks on a daily basis for the strength of the Chinese economy. The very opposite sentiment is poured out in almost every opinion piece, in every section of the capitalist media.

The Western world, its political establishments, economists, and media all face the same contradiction when dealing with China. There is an acknowledgement of the power of the Chinese economy and that it is a major trading partner with many countries. It is Australia's largest trading partner. Australia's economy survives, largely on the back of the Chinese and yet barely a day goes by when economists do not exclaim that the end of the Chinese economy is almost in sight.

If their wishes come to fruition then the global economy will crash. Understanding how such disordered thinking can exist is to begin to understand the logic of capitalism that allows global war, climate destruction and impoverishment on a global scale so long as the reptilian system survives and hegemony rests with the existing imperial power.

Individual capitalists and entire sections of capital do not share the mad rush to economic Armageddon that would accompany a seriously weakened Chinese economy. What we are witnessing, however, is a general tendency of capitalism towards economic nationalism, that returned following the cracks that developed in capitalist globalisation.

Globalisation was seen as a panacea to capitalism's crisis. Marx's theory of a tendency for profits to fall was evident to all from the 1970s. The response was to globalise, thereby reducing costs and maximising profits. Manufacturing industries relocated, often to China, laying waste to national economies and devastating entire communities. The nation-state was in retreat. Capital showed that it cared nothing for the interests of anyone but its own survival. It has always been a survival predicated on growth and expansion.

It was a brief respite. The same contradictions that haunt capital returned. Profit rates rose briefly and began, once more, to decline. At the same time the distribution of wealth became concentrated into

fewer hands. Such is the logic and the laws of capitalism.

Globalisation failed to be the cure-all. Economic nationalism and the political nationalism that goes with it had already led the world into two world wars and yet the cycle is being repeated.

Against this backdrop of capitalist crisis, China's socialist transformation continued. Capitalism initially thought that China would simply be the 'workshop of the world' but the Chinese Communist Party regarded the future in quite a different light.

Today it equals the economic might of the USA. It is able to defend itself and yes, it does threaten the West. The threat is an ideological one. The battle of ideas between capitalism and socialism is being fought out before the eyes of the world and it is becoming increasingly obvious, not just to Marxists, but to increasingly large numbers of people that this is the case.

This is why governments, economists, and the bourgeois media, spend such energies seeking to 'prove' that China is either a ruthless autocracy, a communist dictatorship, an expansionist military threat, or a predatory economic power. It can become anything that the propagandists decide it to be.

The awful reality that underpins the thinking of imperialism is that it is prepared to destroy the global economy to maintain power and to destroy socialism. There is no other logical explanation.

If China was seen simply as an economic rival to the USA, then there would be no issue. Other great economic powers in the post-war period have not been threatened with destruction. But things are different. There is a shift in attitude and it is a shift back to business as usual for imperialism with the added pressure of an ideological struggle against socialism.

Imperialism, being the highest stage of capitalism, sees survival as more important than competition or cooperation. Imperialism would be willing to see the entire global economy crash in order to preserve hegemony. History shows that there is no crime which the USA, as the leading imperialist power or its henchmen will not stoop to and no price too great to maintain global control of the global market. ☺



## Class warfare

For people who like pretending that classes and the class system aren't a thing, Australian centrists and conservatives really like invoking 'class war' and 'class warfare' whenever there's any attempt, however feeble, to make the class system in Australia less unfair. Readers with long memories might remember Julia Gillard as Education Minister 'ending' class war by guaranteeing funding for private schools. Now it's David Littleproud's turn. The leader of the National Party is ropable at the prospect of slightly less unfair Stage 3 tax cuts, and says it's "class warfare." If only. There's always class warfare going on in this country. Right now the National Party's paymasters are doing alright.

Littleproud also says that \$190 grand a year is "not a lot", so we're looking forward to a \$190 thousand dollar donation to our Press Fund. After all, it's not a lot.

## Disparagement (thinly disguised)

Readers! Have you ever disparaged something by not being super-enthusiastic about it? Nick Cater, columnist for Murdoch's *The Australian* thinks that's what Woolworths did by not having a special section for 'Australia Day'-themed Australian flag sandals and towels. Woolies had already explained that people weren't buying the stuff in great numbers, and implied that they're in business to make money (as their long-suffering customers, staff, and suppliers know all too well) but to no avail. Cater had jumped on the culture war bandwagon and was breaking through the thin disguise of Woolworth's hatred of invasion-celebration.

Woolworths doesn't sell Lamborghini sports cars either, so we look forward to Cater exposing their Lamborghini-phobia and anti-Italianism.

## Challenges

Former PM Scott Morrison, the man behind the obscene AUKUS submarine spend, says he's finally leaving parliament for new challenges. In the weasly sense of challenge (making anything at all that you do sound like you're off to climb K-2 blindfold), he may be right. In non-weasel language, as a noun, a challenge is a difficult but worthy thing. It's also a popular euphemism for events, people or jobs which are a pain in the neck. 'Challenge' can also make the dullest gig sound a bit like you're off to run an ultramarathon. Former Prime Minister Scott Morrison, having stuffed up or avoided challenges galore while in office, has finally found someone willing to employ him outside parliament, with a stress on defence. There's no news on what he'll actually do. Finding out what Morrison did was a genuine challenge during the bushfires too.

## Genuine (tax reform)

Two weasel words for the price of one here! 'Reform' is a famously weaselly way of making any political change sound positive, no matter how awful it really is. 'Genuine' is something you say when you aren't, as in 'genuine savings.' Together, they're weaselly squared, or something like that.

For the *Australian Financial Review*, the newspaper that tells you what the ruling class would like to see, 'genuine tax reform' means, among other things, taxing people up to 18 thousand dollars a year so as to 'ease the burden' on people who've got more than that. Taxing the poor so as to make life easier for the non-poor is genuine something, that's for sure. Try not to step in any.

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Editor:  
 Floyd Kermode

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

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# Silencing dissent

Marcus Browning

**Such are the festering contradictions in capitalism's deepening crisis that it is but a short reach to connect the recent actions by balaclava-wearing fascists thugs in Sydney and the current employer campaign against the Maritime Union of Australia. What the Albanese government has in mind to suppress dissent, recalls the 1998 waterfront dispute: locked-out workers, police, and balaclava-wearing thugs with guard dogs on the wharves.**

Recall also that last year the Albanese government cut funding to the budgets of parliamentary crossbenchers, undermining their ability to scrutinise policies and decisions; tyranny hides behind a veil of secrecy. It is but a short reach from there to the increasing attacks on the national broadcaster, the ABC.

A blatant blackout of reportage on Israel's ongoing crime in Gaza throughout the mass media demonstrates the commercial broadcasters' lapdog role in service to its ruling class masters. The independence of the ABC has been targeted in order to gag it over coverage of Israel's genocidal drive.

Most publicly, ABC radio broadcaster, Antoinette Lattouf, was sacked in December for a reference she made to Palestinians on social media. It raised a warning about self-censorship by journalists in fear of retribution. The sacking was as fast as it was ruthless, as Lattouf put it: "One minute I was taking talkback callers, the next I'm thrown under a bus."

Lattouf warned, "This was a really orchestrated attack to not only target me and my reputation, but to send a bit of a warning shot to other journalists: criticise Israel, use your voice in a public domain, and there will be consequences."

## EXIT PACKER, ENTER MURDOCH

The week before last, Albanese installed former chief executive of Rupert Murdoch's News Ltd, Kim Williams, as ABC chairman. Murdoch had brought Williams into News Ltd as a hatchet man to cut jobs. Asked of his time at News Ltd, he declared that he should have cut "harder, faster, bolder."

Williams replaces Ita Buttrose who was groomed into the mass media by Kerry Packer and his publishing empire. Packer and Murdoch are the propaganda spearheads in the war on working people the world over, now attached like the parasites they are to the national broadcaster.

## WHOSE INTERESTS?

All this is done in the name of the 'national interest.'

This despite the policies of Albanese and his government actually being in the interests of a tiny minority, the ruling class.

An ABC with its independence free of corporate diktat, is in the national interest, but it is under constant fire, a reflection of the intention of silencing voices and shutting down opposition on the streets against the government's austerity program and drive to war.

We are told that wars of aggression are in the national interest. The violation of the human rights of asylum seekers is said to also be in the national interest.

The war-making AUKUS axis is also promoted making the same claim.

How will war against China or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea help the Australian people?

The real national interest of the Australian people is expressed in the growing opposition to AUKUS and the scandalous expenditure of \$368 billion on nuclear submarines while Medicare, public education, and other vital public needs are starved of funds.



Photo: White House – commons.wikimedia.org (Public domain).

The real national interest is to be found in the policies of those who campaign for the strengthening of public education and public health.

Karl Marx in his monumental work *Capital*, described the reality of capitalist greed and immorality: "Capital eschews no profit, or very small profit, just as Nature was formerly said to abhor a vacuum. With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 per cent will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 per cent certain will produce eagerness; 50 per cent, positive audacity; 100 per cent will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300 per cent, and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged."

"If turbulence and strife will bring a profit, it will freely encourage both. Smuggling and the slave-trade have amply proved all that is here stated."

The cry about "national interests" coming from Albanese & Co is a fraud and the promotion of nationalism is a crime that divides the Australian people from the people of other countries. It breeds another crime – racism – that feeds on the idea of national superiority by one country over another.

The Communist Party of Australia stands for the interests of the working people of Australia – the overwhelming majority – and it is their interests that are truly national. Along with this goes a belief in the common interests of all working people of all countries. ✪

## Opinion: The Second US Civil War?

Russell Bentley

**We may well be witnessing a pivotal moment in history – a letter of support for Texas Governor Abbott, in his defiance of the federal regime, has been published and signed by governors of half the states in the very disunited United States.**

These governors have also offered to send their National Guard troops to Texas, to support the Texas National Guard. What was just last week a legal dispute between the governor of Texas and the federal regime has now become a very real confrontation between Washington and 25 states. These states include all of the states who joined the Confederacy in the US Civil War, as well as some states that were on the Union side, and other states that were not even states back in 1861.

The Governors' statement read, in part, "We stand in solidarity with

our fellow Governor, Greg Abbott, and the State of Texas in utilising every tool and strategy, including razor wire fences, to secure the border. We do it in part because the Biden Administration is refusing to enforce immigration laws already on the books and is illegally allowing mass parole across America of migrants who entered our country illegally."

Trump has also spoken in support of Governor Abbot's defiance of the federal order, saying, "Instead of fighting to protect our Country from this onslaught, Biden is, unbelievably, fighting to tie the hands of Governor Abbott and the State of Texas, so that the Invasion continues unchecked. In the face of this National Security, Public Safety, and Public Health Catastrophe, Texas has rightly invoked the Invasion Clause of the Constitution, and must be given full support to repel the Invasion." In view of the speed and intensity with which

this dispute has escalated, there is no telling how far and how fast it could go.

Of course, there is one alternative that could satisfy both sides and avoid confrontation, but Biden and his masters have, so far at least, proven too stupid or pernicious to accept. Biden recently sent his underlings to Mexico to ask Mexican President Obrador (known as "AMLO") for help sealing the border on the Mexican side of the border). President Obrador agreed in principle, but had four demands in return – the ending of the US blockade of Cuba, dropping all sanctions against Venezuela, legal work status for 10 million Latino immigrants already in the US, and a \$20 billion development fund from the US for Central American and Caribbean countries. If \$20 billion seems like a lot, it should be remembered that that is the amount the US federal government has spent on refugee resettlement

in the US in only the last 2 years. Twenty billion spent on improving and developing the countries that a majority of refugees come from would go a long way towards substantially reducing the number of people who become economic refugees in the first place.

AMLO's other 3 demands are pragmatic, moral, and virtually cost free. Only a fool or someone who was bent upon intentionally escalating the crisis could refuse to take these common sense measures, but guess who has refused, and engendered a crisis instead, constitutional and otherwise. This situation is a powder keg, waiting for a spark, just as the Maidan in Ukraine was ten years ago. Governor Abbott and Joe Biden are about as far from being Russians as anyone can get, and no sane person can find any way at all to blame this on Russia, though some not-so-sane people will probably try. But the people of Texas (and of the states supporting

Texas) have much more in common with the people of Donbass than they may realize. Texas fought and won a revolution against a despotic Mexican government, and then for ten years was its own Republic, before joining its bigger neighbour to the North, almost exactly as the Donbass Republics have done.

Perhaps, just as AMLO has taken a page from Putin's diplomatic playbook, the people of Texas will take a page from the revolutionary playbook of the people of Donbass. We will soon see. But one thing for certain, this is how real revolutions start. If the Biden regime continues to escalate this crisis, it could quickly and easily eclipse the festering wars the US is already involved in Ukraine, Gaza, Yemen, Syria and Iraq. They will have much bigger problems with the war at home. Sooner or later, the chickens come home to roost.

Sputnik International ✪



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