The Workers' Weekly
Guardian
CPA
#2097 6 May 2024
$3
COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA
We acknowledge the sovereignty of the First Peoples of Australia.
www.cpa.org.au
ISSN 1325-295X

PALESTINE WILL WIN!

Photo: Anna Pha

Anna Pha

For 7 months now the people of Gaza have been under siege from Israel with the death toll continuing to rise, at the time of writing more than 34,000, with estimates of more than 7,000 more buried under the piles of rubble that were once homes, hospitals, places of worship, and essential infrastructure.

Israel continues to act with impunity, ignoring mounting international opposition. It does so with the material support and cover of the US, Australia, the UK, and EU governments, who opportunistically call for a ceasefire at the same time as further arming Israel.

Hamas is seeking a permanent ceasefire, the free return of displaced people, an acceptable deal for the exchange of hostages and Palestinian prisoners in Israel, and an end to the siege. It is also demanding the recognition of an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, in line with UN resolutions.

The charity Save the Children reports that since 7 October, the rate of attacks every month on medical facilities and healthcare workers "has been higher than in any other recent conflict globally, standing at an average of 73 attacks each month."

Becky Platt, a paediatric nurse at the field hospital in Rafah told Save the Children that, "We've recently seen an influx of children from other hospitals with wounds and lost limbs, often needing skin grafting and multiple operations, but even getting hold of simple things like strong pain relief is a major challenge."

"When children have to undergo a procedure to save their limbs and avoid infection, we are forced to do it with less pain relief than we'd normally use. So, I brought bubbles and games on my phone to distract them, but the reality is that a lot of these procedures need strong pain relief. That is causing huge distress, and it will also add to long-term psychological damage."

She added, "We treated a 10-year-old boy who had shrapnel in his thigh that had shattered his femur. He lost a lot of muscle and tissue, so he needed skin grafting and also had an external fixator on the leg. He had multiple operations, but he was so distressed by the way his leg looked that he couldn't even look at it. He was silently crying; that was heartbreaking. But this is a standard story. Children are psychologically destroyed by everything that's happened."

Peaceful anti-Palestinian protests continue to spread across university campuses in the US despite a heavy response from police. (See page 9) In Australia the rallies continue on a weekly basis without a break.

FAMINE

"We are getting closer by the day to a famine situation," says Gian Caro Cirri, Geneva director of the World Food Program. Half of all Gazans are experiencing "catastrophic" hunger, with famine projected to hit the north of the territory this month unless there is urgent intervention, a United Nations-backed food security assessment warns.

Aid charity Oxfam has accused Israel of continuing to "systematically and deliberately block and undermine" the delivery of aid into Gaza, in violation of international humanitarian law.

"People in Gaza are starving to death right now. The speed at which this man-made hunger and malnutrition crisis has ripped through Gaza is terrifying," said Cindy McCain, head of the UN's World Food Programme. Starvation is a brutal and deliberate weapon of war against a defenceless population. The health and well-being of an entire future generation – if they survive – is being compromised.

Hospitals have become mass graves.

Gazans struggling with displacement, destruction of medical facilities and scarcity of food are also having to deal with the stench from rotting rubbish, which has become a breeding ground for disease.

"There is an accumulation of over 90,000 tonnes of waste, and with rising temperatures, it has become a real environmental catastrophe due to decomposition and the significant increase in the spread of foul odours in recent days," said Hussni Mohanna, spokesman for the municipality in Gaza city.

GOVT MUST ACT!

In a significant and important departure from the Labor government's appalling disregard for human life and human rights, the Australian Council of Trade Unions has issued a statement calling on the government to take immediate steps to secure peace. (See page 6)

The CPA calls on the Australian government to:

- Increase funding for the UN aid agency UNWRA
- Cease military and other support for Israel
- Impose economic sanctions on Israel
- Recognise an independent Palestinian state.

Israel's occupation must end. A ceasefire cannot be seen as an end in itself. It must be permanent and be seen as the beginning of a just and enduring political solution, including the recognition of an independent Palestinian state by the international community.

Palestine will win!

9

Anti-genocide encampments go global

12

ALP: A crisis of policies and ideology

The *Guardian* has a podcast
Search for "Communist *Guardian* Podcast" or use the QR code

Guardian

Issue 2097 6 May 2024

Budget time: Building what? Who for?

Overshadowed by more important events, the Future Made in Australia plan was meant to be Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's Big Idea. It sounds like a good thing. Australia making things again! Renewable energy superpower! Education for the future! What's not to like? With a Federal Budget approaching, it's worth having a closer look.

Media reactions to Albanese's plan have taken one of two approaches: horrified neoliberal, or satisfied centre-left. The horrified neoliberals are aghast at the idea of government playing an active role in the economy. For them Comparative Advantage – countries should stick to what they're good at, and buy things they're not good at making – is like the law of gravity, unbreakable. Never mind that if they'd followed Comparative Advantage, Japan and Korea would be making just fish hooks and pickled cabbage, instead of cars, ships, computers, and telephones; governments should not pick winners!

Centre lefties are delighted at the idea of the government taking an active role. They point out, rightly, that the government has always tried to "pick winners." The Liberal-National Coalition committed us to $9.3 billion dollars for an Inland Rail project that's still not there, although the cost has since gone up to $31.4 bn. $17.4 bn has gone to private schools, but like military spending, that's somehow immune to criticism by otherwise hard-headed neoliberals.

Governments *always* have a role in the economy. When they pretend they're not planning it, they're really leaving the planning to the corporate sector. Capital certainly does not mind actively planning an economy in its own interests. The important question is not "Should Albanese take an active role in the economy?" All governments do that. The real question is this: what is he planning to do?

The government says they're going to spend big on renewable energy. They're not going to stop spending a lot on subsidising fossil fuel production. Spending on Defence was slipped into the Future Made in Australia announcements. Our children need technical skills for the future for sure, but the ALP, like the Coalition, wants a workforce that can service nuclear-powered submarines for our future role as a US military outpost under AUKUS. Defence Minister Richard Marles recently announced that Australia is going to lift spending on the military to 2.4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, the highest it's ever been.

The *Guardian* will keep a very close eye on the coming budget, but it's bound to include colossal funding for AUKUS, and other military projects.

One feature of any plans for the Australian economy is that it's always about what 'they' should do with 'our' money. Under a capitalist system, that's as good as it gets – maybe 'they' will do nice things, like building solar panels or fast trains, maybe they will do bad things, like giving our money to the already-wealthy through private school funding, and subsidies to big companies. Gina Rinehart, Australia's richest woman, has received $840 m in loans and grants to help her company mine for rare earths. For the USA, our 'progressive' Labor government builds runways for bombers, bases for foreign troops, and shipyards for nuclear-powered submarines.

A country run by the workers would build for the people, not for the rich. Our parliament is building the future for big capital, for corporate donors, and for the USA. We could have free dental, free education, enough housing, and job security, if working people ran Australia.

Join the Communist Party of Australia! Support the Party and the *Guardian*! We are working hard for a future where the people choose what gets built.

Statement on the death of the activist, Comrade Mahmoud Al-Aqqad, member of the Central Committee of the Palestinian Communist Party

It is with great sadness that the Secretary-General of the Palestinian Communist Party, members of the party, and its youth received news of the death of the freedom fighter, comrade Mahmoud Hassan Abdel Qader Odeh (Al-Aqqad), who passed away on Sunday, 28 April at the age of 84 years. The activist Mahmoud Al-Aqqad was one of the first generation of the party and a member of the Central Committee of the Palestinian Communist Party. He participated in re-establishing the party in 1991. Your death, my comrade, is considered a great shock and a huge loss for all comrades. We will remain loyal to your path and loyal to the party.

Al-Aqqad was born in 1940, from the village of Ijzim in the Haifa District, where he completed his studies in the first grade of primary school before the Nakba. He was born into a poor peasant family. In his childhood, the he experienced the injustice of feudalism and the terrorism of the Zionists who were constantly attacking Palestinian villages before the Nakba, and this created an awareness in him despite his young age, as he linked the two feudal lords.

He reached the conclusion that the enemies of the people and the homeland were the Arab feudalists and the Zionist movement. His family settled in the village of Ijzim and his father began working in agriculture for the feudal lords there. He noticed the feudal lords exploiting the peasants there and not giving them their rights.

During his visit with his father to the city of Haifa, he came across some publications of the Palestinian Communist Party and read about the Soviet victory in World War II, which attracted him despite his father's telling him that these were atheists and one should not read them. He was only 8 years old at the time.

In 1948, in the wake of the Nakba (catastrophe) that befell the Palestinian people, he and his family were displaced from the village of Ijzim, where the family returned to their hometown, the village of Salfit, where Mahmoud completed his studies. In secondary school, comrade Mahmoud met comrade Ahmed Al-Sayyid, who was a member of the Jordanian Communist Party. In 1954, he joined the Jordanian Communist Party and began his struggle in the party.

In 1956, during the tripartite aggression against Egypt, he volunteered to defend the Suez Canal with a group of patriotic students. Comrade Mahmoud Al-Aqqad fought in the Suez Canal against the tripartite aggression, returning home.

On 24 April 1957, martial law was declared as a result of the demonstrations that took place in Jordan. Mahmoud was one of the most active comrades at that time. He was pursued by Jordanian intelligence and charged with leading armed gangs. He was sentenced to death in absentia in a Nablus court, along with five other comrades.

In 1991, after the coup against socialism and the revisionist approach taking control of the party, changing its name, and abandoning Marxist-Leninist principles, comrade Mahmoud Al-Aqqad was one of the first comrades who played a major role in re-establishing the Palestinian Communist Party, specifically with his companions, the late Hussein Al-Qahah, the late Muhammad Alqam, and the late Basem Shuqair, Jihad Aoun Allah, and his companion, Ahmed Al-Damas. Al-Aqqad continued party work despite his advanced age. He was elected a member of the Central Committee of the Palestinian Communist Party in 2008.

"To this day, I still believe in Marxism-Leninism, its values, and its pragmatism, and I consider it to be the only solution for the peoples of the world to reach safety. Whoever betrayed and sold out, history will not have mercy on them and will judge them for what they did to the party."

Support the *Guardian* by donating to Press Fund

CPA greeting to the XVII Congress of the PCOE

Dear comrades,
The Communist Party of Australia conveys its warmest greetings to the delegates of the Spanish Communist Workers' Party (OCIE) on the XVll National Congress to be held in the city of Seville on 11 May 2024.

We believe that this Congress is a prominent event in the history of your party. It represents a turning point in the struggle to defend the rights of the working class and marginalised groups in Spain.

We are certain that your Congress will shape the PCOE's policy through examining, discussing, and determining the party's political line, its program, and statutes for the years to come. Congress will also elect a new Central Committee and other leading bodies for the period ahead.

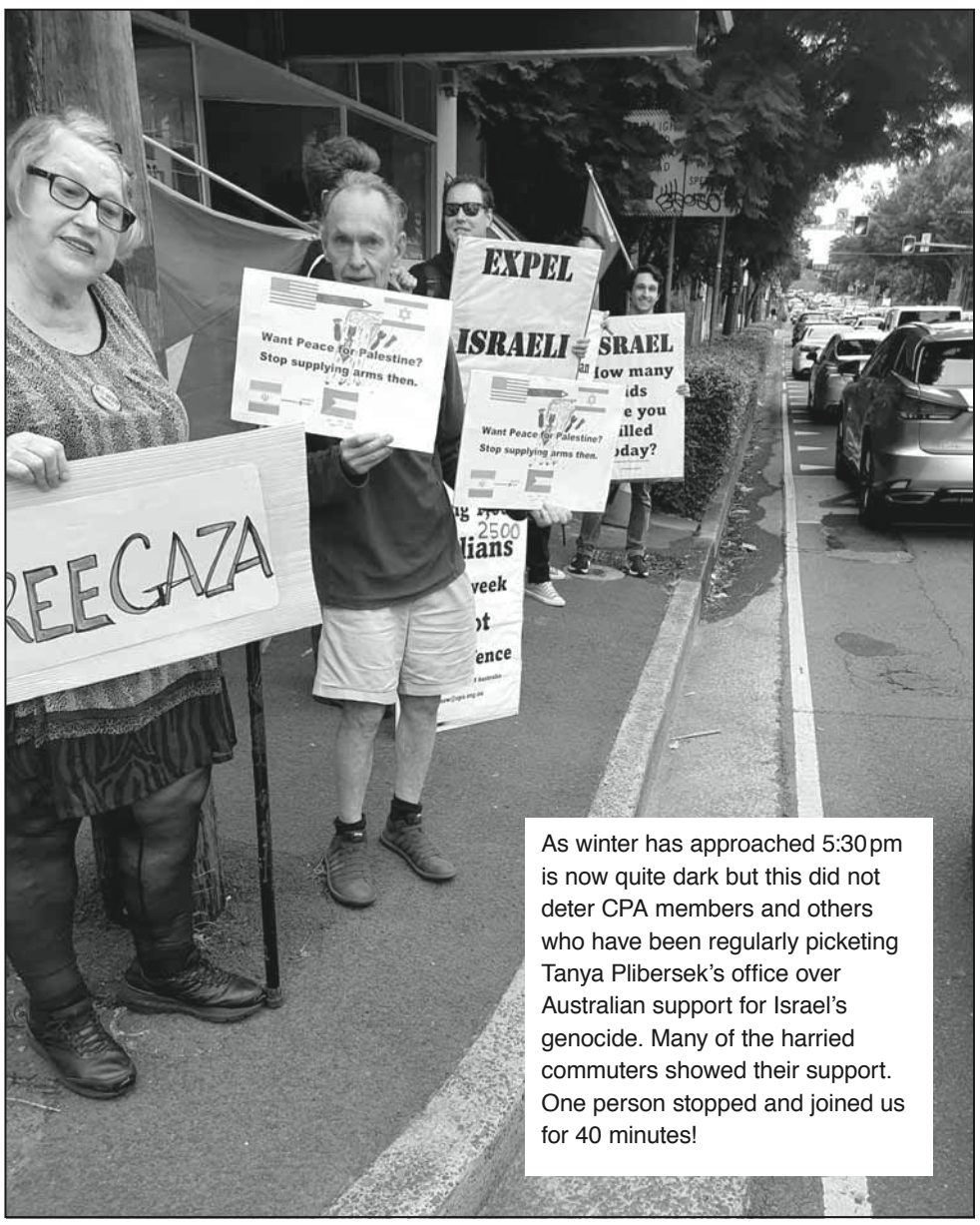
In the last six months, we have seen millions of people around the world taking to the streets in solidarity with the Palestinian people demanding a permanent ceasefire, an end to Israel's genocide, the end of the occupation and an independent Palestinian state.

The Communist Party of Australia wishes the Spanish Communist Workers' Party a successful 17th Congress. We extend our congratulations to Congress' delegates, leadership, members and supporters of the PCOE.

We look forward to strengthening the fraternal relations between the CPA and the PCOE based on international solidarity, the struggle for peace and socialism.

In working class solidarity,

International Department
Communist Party of Australia
15 April 2024



As winter has approached 5:30pm is now quite dark but this did not deter CPA members and others who have been regularly picketing Tanya Plibersek's office over Australian support for Israel's genocide. Many of the harried commuters showed their support. One person stopped and joined us for 40 minutes!

May Day Solidarity with the Lebanese Communist Party

May Day came early for the Lebanese comrades in Melbourne. By invitation, the CPA General Secretary and Melbourne Branch President attended a May Day dinner on 25 April in Coburg. Three anthems were played, Australian, Lebanese, and the Lebanese Party anthem, and the crowd gave an enthusiastic welcome to comrade Andrew Irving.

Comrade Irving reminded the Lebanese comrades how close the world was moving on the topic of Palestine, with only the USA standing in the way of full UN recognition of the Palestinian State, and even such staunch US allies as the UK and Australia either voting in favour of recognition or abstaining. Comrade Andrew also pointed to the tide of protest around the world, as the full horror of the Israeli genocide becomes inescapable, and congratulated the Lebanese Communist Party on the recent election of its Peace and Solidarity Committee, and powerful efforts in the face of Israeli aggression. ✪

Class action launched for transport workers' unpaid super

Vik Sharma

The Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) and Gordon Legal have announced a class action against one of Australia's largest super funds.

The Emergency and State Services Super (ESSSuper) is under fire for unpaid superannuation to transport employees, which could exceed more than $40 million in unpaid entitlement.

ESSSuper is responsible for managing the superannuation of more than 127,000 members, holding over $36 billion in assets. The super fund has been accused of breaching its obligation to its members and failing to include shift penalty allowances when calculating the super owed to some Transport Fund members.

The class action will represent a few hundred group members, including a mix of transport workers who are still actively working and those who have already retired and are eligible to join the legal action.

Gordon Legal Partner James Naughton, one of the lawyers leading the class action, is calling for possibly affected transport workers to get in touch directly with the firm to receive advice on their eligibility to join the class action.

Cases have been uncovered where ESSSuper has been miscalculating superannuation entitlements by as much as $300,000. Such variances can have a drastic impact on the ability of members to retire and have the quality of retirement they deserve.

The RTBU will keep working tirelessly to ensure members get the retirement funds they are entitled to.

Superannuation is the most important aspect of financial planning for retirement in Australia and it is a basic expectation of workers that superannuation is paid correctly.

The RTBU is encouraging anyone who has been a member of the ESSS Transport Fund to contact the law firm to understand their legal rights and eligibility to join the class action. This could also affect deceased members who were part of the Transport Fund.

RTBU ✪

Palestine Under Siege – Sydney film screening

6.30pm Wed May 8

North Steyne Surf Club, Manly

Hosted by: Northern Beaches Committee for Palestine

Seats are filling up so probably best to book events.humanitix.com

****

6pm Thurs May 23

365 Sussex St, Sydney

Hosted by: MUA Sydney Branch, Dare to Struggle Films

You can view the upcoming screenings at palestineundersiege.org

AUKUS boosters start to doubt

FK

Fans of unintentional humour could do a lot worse then head over to 'The Strategist,' the website/journal of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), and check out an article called "Start thinking now about alternatives to AUKUS Pillar 1." ASPI is a Defence and Defence Industries-funded lobby group/think tank set up by the Howard Liberal-National government in 2001. It remorselessly argues for more weapons and a warlike posture towards China. ASPI is casting some doubt on the AUKUS nuclear submarine program.

Naturally, they're not questioning the need for Australia to be a cog in the USA's global war machine, or the supposedly threat posed by China, a country with exactly one military base outside its borders. However ASPI is having doubts about AUKUS. The article points out that:

- "the prospective costs are enormous and have been badly underestimated"
  No kidding.
- "industrial capacity is inadequate for the tasks of building and supporting a nuclear fleet"
  That sounds like a good thing.
- the program "lacks a powerful leader".

We're not crazy about Australia's leadership either, and it's true that Prime Ministers and Defence Ministers have been playing Pass the Parcel with our submarine program for literally decades, but someone powerful enough to force a seriously bad idea through is not on our wish list.

- "armed with 'only conventional weapons,' the planned fleet of eight nuclear powered submarines would have minimal deterrent value on Chinese perceptions"
  These "perceptions" would be what exactly, ASPI?

The article doesn't say anything more about the mysterious Chinese perceptions, but this point is a strong hint that we should get nuclear weapons to go with our nuclear-powered submarines, just like Labor (who, as the government, partly fund ASPI) promised us wouldn't happen. Oh, and later on, we're invited to consider China as a "possibly existential threat."

The article then tells us, as if we didn't know, that the US is flat-out trying to build the nuclear-powered submarines that *they* want, so it'll be hard for them to build more for us.

With masterful understatement, we are told that the questions of huge cost overruns in the Australian nuclear submarine program "may not have been fully considered." Anti-AUKUS groups, and the *Guardian – The Workers' Weekly* have been shouting this one from the rooftops.

The piece doesn't want to "cast fundamental doubts" on AUKUS, but it seems that they've cast some very fundamental doubts on it anyway, by repeating criticisms of AUKUS that the *Guardian* has been making since Scott Morrison first announced this wasteful and dangerous idea. We can only thank whoever it was who bought ASPI a *Guardian* subscription for Christmas. ✪

Still much less than Best

Best&Less does U-turn on deal to sign garment worker accord

In case anyone thinks capitalism can fix itself up, Best&Less is here to prove you wrong. The Australian clothing and household linen retailer has done a U-turn on its commitment to sign an international Accord on worker safety on the anniversary of a factory collapse that crushed 1,138 garment workers.

2024 is the 11th anniversary of the disaster.

In May 2023, following the 10th anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse in Banglasdesh, Best&Less told ActionAid Australia of its intention to join other Aussie brands in signing the Accord.

Late last year it became apparent Best&Less had lost motivation to sign.

As of February 2024, Best&Less was still sourcing from two factories in Bangladesh, Sayam Knit, and Knit Horizon, which are not Accord approved.

These factories have structural issues. It was structural issues which led to the collapse of the eight-storey Rana Plaza building crushing over one thousand people.

Best&Less sources from 26 factories in Bangladesh, only 12 of which are Accord approved. The safety status of the remaining factories is unknown, but Sayam Knit and Knit Horizon have been inspected and deemed unsafe.

In failing to sign the Accord Best&Less is freeloading off other Aussie brands who source clothing from some of the same factories and therefore pay to keep these factories safe for the women who work there.

While Best&Less says it has its own system of safety auditing, it's worth noting the Rana Plaza building had passed a safety inspection shortly before collapsing. Only the Accord is a truly independent auditing system with no conflict of interest.

It is well documented garment workers observed cracks in the Rana Plaza building before it collapsed and reported these obvious structural problems to management.

"We are incredibly disappointed Best&Less is walking back on its intention to sign the International Accord for Health and Safety in the Textile and Garment Industry," said Farah Kabir, Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh.

"I've seen first-hand how basic safety measures like smoke alarms and making sure fire exits are clear in factories saves the lives of women garment workers making clothes that Australians wear.

"If all Australian clothing retailers signed up to the Accord, it would support a system that secures the safety of all garment workers in factories in Bangladesh. This would create a level playing field and no retailer would get an advantage by sourcing cheaper garments from unsafe factories.

"Best&Less needs to do the right thing and sign the Accord for workers so Australian shoppers can be assured the clothes they are buying aren't putting workers' lives at risk," said Kabir.

ActionAid Australia Executive Director Michelle Higelin says it's very disappointing Best&Less have reneged on signing. ✪

Special *Guardian* subscription offer:
10 issues for $10
See subscription form page 11

Dingo bytes

The government of Papua New Guinea continues to reject Australia's attempt to force it to abandon its relations with China. Twenty years ago, the then PNG government of Michael Somare stood up against pressure from the Howard government to give legal immunity to more than 300 Australian police and other officials to be sent to PNG as part of a so-called Enhanced Cooperation Program.

Australia tied the approval of an $800 million aid package to the granting of immunity from criminal prosecution to the Australian personnel.

A report in PNG newspaper *The National* at the time carried comments from PNG officials who were giving vent to the sense of outrage in the country: "We have taken offence to the attitude of the Australian officials. Australia insists on its jurisdiction over criminal immunity for its personnel while Waigani (the PNG government) maintains that PNG's jurisdiction should be applied because PNG is not in a crisis situation, or a failed or weak state."

The PNG government was clearly on alert that its Australian counterpart viewed their country as another target for the sort of treatment handed out to the Solomon Islands the year before.

In that 2003 exercise in colonial arrogance, Operation Helpim Fren (Helping Friend), 2000 Australian troops and police were sent to the Solomons to "restore order" in what the Howard government had declared a "failed state." In this Australia gave the first demonstration of its new, enhanced role as deputy sheriff for the US in the Pacific.

At the same time, Australia assumed the right to impose its commercial and strategic interests on the region. Australian officials coordinated a regime of outsourcing and privatisation, and saw to it that nearly all the goods and services purchased for the Solomons came from expensive Australian sources. Today the Albanese gang is trying to dictate PNG's choice of trade and economic partner – to deny its right to take its own sovereign, independent path.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is fossil fuel polluter Woodside with its planned Burrup Hub mega gas expansion in Western Australia that would be a climate and nature disaster. If it goes ahead, over its lifetime this project will emit more than six billion tonnes of climate-wrecking pollution, 13 times more pollution than Australia's total annual emissions.

Woodside's plans are reckless, partly because the facilities they currently run are spewing out more pollution than allowed under the government's Safeguard Mechanism. The Australian Conservation Foundation's analysis of the Safeguard Mechanism data has found that in the 2023 financial year, Woodside's North-West Shelf Project had a pollution blowout of 168,773 tonnes CO2e, making this project the second-highest polluting facility in the country, releasing almost seven million tonnes of climate-heating pollution.

More than 10,000 Australians urged their super funds to hold Woodside's board to account, and the superfunds acted. Because superfunds own supersized shares in big businesses like Woodside, they have a supersized say in how these companies act.

In the lead up to Woodside's AGM, thousands upon thousands of members urged their super funds to take a stand against Woodside's climate destruction and to vote against the chair of the company.

Water crisis adds to women's health burden amid war on Gaza

Photo: Natalia Cieslik / World Bank – flickr.com (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Over 34,000 people have been killed in Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip since 7 October, 2023. Among them are over 10,000 women, 6,000 of whom have left 19,000 orphaned children, according to a recent United Nations report.

The health status and living conditions of women and girls in Gaza continue to plummet. Few feminine hygiene supplies are available, and infectious diseases pose a unique threat to women and girls as caregivers within their families.

The water and sanitation crisis has left women and families who are forcibly displaced surviving on as little as 1.5 litres of water per day. The minimum prescribed for crisis situations is 15 litres per day. The effects are particularly harsh on pregnant women and those who are breastfeeding infants. According to the UN report, breastfeeding women need at least 7.5 litres of water per day to stay hydrated.

"We are already noticing an increase in women and children struggling with dehydration and diarrhea. Infants who have no access to breastfeeding – due to the inability or the death of a mother – and must use formula are especially vulnerable due to the need for clean, safe water, which is rarely available in Gaza at present," a physician told the UN team as per the report. ✪

'Practically irrelevant' – Fortescue Mining arguments in trouble

The West Australian Mining Act which limits compensation to the value of land is practically irrelevant in settlements between miners and Traditional Owner groups, Yindjibarndi witness Murray Meaton has told the Federal Court.

Meaton, an economist with decades of experience negotiating this kind of settlement, told the Court that even the government's own advice to miners and native title parties made no mention of the Mining Act as a guide to how these agreements should be reached.

Meaton gave impassioned testimony to the Court of the expert evidence about the impact of mining on traditional lands, indicating that this was another justification for miners to be paying substantial compensation.

The evidence forms part of the Yindjibarndi claim for substantial compensation for Fortescue's mining of the Solomon hub region without the consent of the Yindjibarndi Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation (YNAC). Fortescue has extracted more than $50 billion in iron ore from this region, and officially destroyed more than 240 heritage sites, while refusing to pay a cent of compensation to YNAC.

"In 20 years, no-one has ever referred to Mining Act as the basis on which we are negotiating," Meaton said.

"Anyone valuing this land will take into account the fact that it contains an estimated 2800 million tonnes of iron ore," he added. "I can't imagine anyone would look at this land and ignore the potential to which this land could have, which is the mining of that iron ore."

Meaton said he was concerned that "the impact on the land is understated. The impact on the land is severe". He said companies can clear vast areas of land and despite rehabilitation, "the land is never the same – the land has been severely degraded".

"I have visited many of these areas. There are many examples of rehabilitated sites in arid environments that have not been very successful," he said, adding that miners are only required to backfill pits to the water table, and they leave behind "large waste dumps of processed material".

Legal counsel for Fortescue and the State government have relied on the Mining Act to argue that Yindjibarndi are entitled to very limited compensation. The Act states that compensation cannot be paid "in respect of the value of any mineral which is or may be in, on or under the surface of any land".

However, this Act was passed in 1978, and predates the era of Native Title, which began with passage of that act in 1994.

The hearing continues.

Ngaarda Media ✪

PEACE NOTES

Hannah Middleton

As we pass 200 days of Israel's military assault on Gaza, the death toll has reached 35,000 and the aid blockade has subjected millions of Palestinians to starvation, dehydration, and disease.

Both the US and Australian governments have refused to put pressure on Israel to allow more aid deliveries to provide relief to the millions who are being subjected to collective punishment.

Our government cannot be allowed to continue to claim they want to help Palestinians, but in secret continue to sell arms to Israel and refuse to condemn genocide.

AL-SHIFA HOSPITAL MASSACRE

Pepe Escobar has written of the attack on the aid workers: "The 'logic' behind the deliberate three-tap strike on the clearly signed humanitarian convoy of famine-alleviating workers in Gaza was to eviscerate from the news an even more horrendous episode: the genocide-within-a-genocide of al-Shifa hospital."

At the same time, the unearthing of mass graves and testimonies from survivors of Israel's assault on al-Shifa hospital receded into the background as attention was diverted to Israel's possible response to the Iranian counterattack.

As one commentator put it: "Between obligatory crocodile tears and theatrical anger, the US continues to arm and provide full support for Israel's genocide, while pleading for Israel to call a "ceasefire" and allow food into Gaza through more crossings – all the while holding veto power at the UN Security Council.

"In other words, it is obfuscation coupled with escalation, while the killing in Gaza continues."

MILITARY SPENDING

The world spent $2.4 trillion on military forces last year, 2.3 percent of the global gross domestic product. This is the highest amount ever recorded by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

Yet imperialism's military-industrial complex wants even more super profits from death and destruction.

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan claims that *even if peace broke out tomorrow* (can you believe this comment!), "there is such a gap between where the collective West is and where it needs to be in terms of munition stockpiles, that ... there is a need for replenishment on all of these systems that extends out years.

"The arrows are all pointing in the direction of the collective West ramping up its defence industrial base in a way that has been long overdue."

ASIAN NATO

Over the past couple of years there has been a flurry of activity linking NATO with Asian states, principally Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

It is clear that the plan is for NATO to become a 'one shop stop' for US imperialism, expanding both in geographical reach and geopolitical function.

In just three of many examples, the German Bundeswehr joined the Talisman Sabre war games last year. A British army unit participated in military exercises in South Korea. The US, Japan, the Philippines, and Australia conducted joint military exercises in the South China Sea in early April this year.

Leaders of Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand have been invited to NATO summits in Madrid and Vilnius, and NATO has been signing Individually Tailored Partnership Programs (ITPPs) with these four regional states.

However, the path has not been straightforward. There are objections to the extension from the Atlantic to the Pacific from both within Europe, particularly France, and the US itself. It was Macron's veto that scuttled the plans to open a NATO liaison office in Tokyo.

One response to these difficulties has been the promotion of the "United Nations Command" (UNC), based in Seoul. Despite its name, the UNC it is not an organisation under the control of the United Nations. In fact it is a US-controlled military alliance.

Interestingly, senior military personnel from Australia, Canada and Britain have been appointed to the post of Deputy Commander of the United Nations Command.

Its name and its illegal use of the UN flag and logo mean the UNC can be portrayed as a UN body, an expression of the international community rather than the US military.

Under this cloak, the US has been making efforts over recent years to rejuvenate the UNC and to transform it into the core of an expanded and repurposed global alliance structure to deploy against China.

Pine Gap on Red Alert: Australia's 'allies' revealed

Part One

Caiden Bartholomew

In October 1973, the US government placed all of its bases on nuclear alert, including the Pine Gap and North West Cape bases in Australia, without informing the Prime Minister. Speaking with the ABC, Brian Toohey, a journalist and former Labor staffer who has written extensively on Pine Gap and the Whitlam government, revealed that the US had broken its agreements with Australia. This story is just one example of the secrecy and foreign intervention which defeated Australian democracy in 1975.

The red alert was in response to tensions created by the Yom Kippur War, also known as the Fourth Arab-Israeli War. As the US supported Israel against Arab nations, led by Egypt and Syria and supported by the USSR, then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger issued a DefCon 3 alert as the Americans prepared to deliver nuclear strikes should the conflict escalate to war with the Soviet Union. Australia was to be a key player in this war plan, through the secretive US military facility Pine Gap and other US bases across the country. Even Australia's own military bases continue to be available for US use, and would likely have been involved in a US and Israel-led nuclear war.

There was one major problem. Australia knew nothing about it.

MEETINGS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Whitlam's time in office was plagued with secrecy from Australia's so-called allies, as well as Australia's own intelligence apparatus and political elites. Whitlam is perhaps most famous these days for his unprecedented dismissal on the 11 November 1975 Governor-General Sir John Kerr. The narrative most Australians are told is that Whitlam failed to pass his Budget in the face of political deadlock between the Labor-led House of Representatives and the Liberal advantage in the Senate. Kerr, obliged to defend responsible government, was forced to use, for the first time, the reserve powers of the Crown to dismiss Whitlam and install his political nemesis, Liberal Party leader Malcolm Fraser, as caretaker PM.

This story does not even begin to cover the true scale of political intrigue both domestically and internationally which conspired to remove Whitlam from office. Australian historian and political scientist Jenny Hocking, in her biography *Gough Whitlam: His Time*, provides a much more detailed picture. Months before the political deadlock, Malcolm Fraser, in close contact with former PM Sir Robert Menzies, began secret communications with Kerr regarding the possibility of sacking Whitlam. It is from these meetings that the deadlock emerged as a deliberate strategy by Fraser's Liberal Party to undermine the Whitlam government and create an excuse for Kerr's intervention.

Kerr also met with Chief Justice Garfield Barwick and Justice Anthony Mason of the High Court. Barwick and Mason assured Kerr that he possessed the power to remove Whitlam and, in clear violation of the doctrine of separation of powers, devised with Kerr a strategy to install Fraser as PM. Mason encouraged Kerr to tell Whitlam about the existence of these powers and warn him about a possible dismissal. Fraser was informed. Whitlam was not.

Hocking has also campaigned for more information to be revealed through her successful case in the High Court against the National Archives. Secret correspondence between Kerr and the Queen's private secretary, Sir Martin Charteris, as well as then Prince Charles and Queen Elizabeth II herself have been released as a result of this case. Now referred to as the Palace Papers, these documents reveal that the Queen had extensive prior knowledge of Kerr's plans to dismiss Whitlam. In fact, as Hocking notes Kerr's every action seems to have been informed by correspondence with the Royals. Not only did the Royals assure Kerr that he had the power to dismiss Whitlam, but Charteris wrote to Kerr that "The Queen would take most unkindly" to any advice from Whitlam that would challenge Kerr's own position.

It is a platitude today to say that the Crown is politically neutral and has no real power. Even Buckingham Palace stated after the dismissal that "neither Her Majesty nor the Royal Household had any part to play in Kerr's decision to dismiss Whitlam." The Palace Papers reveal this to be nothing but lies. The Queen and the Royal Household lied to the Australian public about their involvement in undermining the democratically elected government of Australia, and kept their involvement secret for nearly fifty years.

Former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. Photo: Peter Hunter – flickr.com (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

WHITLAM'S CHALLENGE TO AMERICAN POWER

A major part of Whitlam's programme was the drive for greater Australian sovereignty. Whitlam began a push towards the nationalisation of Australian resources. He also began to move Australia towards the Non-Aligned Movement (a largely decolonial movement which sought to avoid taking sides in the Cold War) and opened relationships with the German Democratic Republic, Vietnam, and most significantly, China.

Whitlam was also opposed to the USA's regime of secretive military installations on Australian soil. The October 1973 red alert is just one incident in the long history of the USA's disrespect for Australian sovereignty. One of Whitlam's campaign promises was to reveal the secrets of Pine Gap to all Australians. He also opposed the involvement of ASIS in the CIA's coup of the democratically elected leader of Chile, Salvador Allende. Whitlam instructed Australian intelligence agencies, such as ASIO and ASIS, to cut ties with the CIA. These instructions were largely ignored. A 1976 Royal Commission revealed that ASIO had been providing the CIA with extensive, secret information about Australian politicians. Whitlam's international policy deviated from the Americans' further, as he resolutely opposed Apartheid and withdrew Australian soldiers from Vietnam.

The Socialist Party of Australia (now the CPA) wrote to Whitlam in 1973 posing ten questions on foreign policy, among them issues of nuclear disarmament, détente, and the withdrawal of military bases from Australian soil. In his response, Whitlam stated plainly that "We do not favour the extension or prolongation of any of those existing [stations]."

ACTU statement on Gaza

The Australian Union movement is a movement of peace and respect for all races and nationalities. We oppose war, racism, and oppression. We act in solidarity.

The Australian Union movement is horrified by the escalating violence and death toll of civilians in Gaza. The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) reiterates its statements and resolution of 19 October 2023 and 23 February 2024 and continues to call for an urgent and permanent ceasefire and the release of hostages and political prisoners.

The Australian Union movement is a movement of many cultures, communities, nationalities and faiths, we call on all community, civil society organisations, and faith groups in Australia to build unity, oppose racism and promote cultural harmony and tolerance throughout their membership.

We condemn the deaths of over 34,000 civilians since 7 October including (1,200 Israelis and over 33,000 Palestinians). We condemn the killing of Zomi Frankcom and other aid workers, including those working for Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA partner MA'AN development centre who have been working on emergency relief in Gaza.

The situation facing people in Gaza is dire: two million people are facing food insecurity. Food shortages have exceeded famine levels and mass death is imminent. The ACTU condemns the use of starvation as a weapon of war and urges Israel to comply with the International Court of Justice's Order to take immediate steps to prevent acts of genocide, punish incitement to genocide, and facilitate the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza. Israel must immediately provide food and essentials to people in Gaza and ensure unimpeded access for humanitarian aid.

The ACTU welcomes the Australian government reinstating funding to UNRWA, appointing a special advisor to assess the IDF investigation of the killing of Zomi Frankcom, and calling for a two state solution.

The ACTU is deeply concerned, however, at evidence that Australia companies supply parts used as part of global supply chains , including to F-35 fighter jets. Israel utilises F-35 fighter jets to drop bombs on Gaza. Under international law, Australia has obligations to deny exports that could or would be used to violate humanitarian law and must employ all means to prevent genocide by another state. The Australian government must take active steps to ensure it is not contributing to breaches of international law.

The ACTU calls on the Australian government to take immediate steps to secure peace by:

Using all influence, pressure, and diplomatic measures to achieve a permanent ceasefire.

Ending all military trade with Israel

Enacting targeted sanctions on Israeli officials who have called for the denial of aid, and military and civil servants denying essential food and materials to civilians of Gaza.

Committing additional funding of $100 million in humanitarian assistance to Gaza and the West Bank.

This latest escalation is part of a decades-long conflict that must be brought to a just outcome through dialogue and respect for international law, including human rights.

The ACTU calls on the Israeli government and the Palestinian leadership to promote open, tolerant and respectful societies through adherence to democratic principles in governance, respect for human rights and equal treatment for all.

The ACTU calls for an end to the occupation of Palestine and a just and sustainable peace in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions. Including the removal of illegal settlements, the withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian lands along with the dismantling of the separation wall. In line with the ACTU's commitment to a two-state solution with the security of borders for both nations, we call on all countries to recognise, without delay, Palestine as a sovereign state with East Jerusalem as its capital. This will confirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in a free and independent Palestine.

Palestine and the world

Part two of the CPA's interview with His Excellency Izzat Abdulhadi, Palestinian Ambassador to Australia.

Interviewer: A Carruthers

Monastery of Saint Theodosius, Palestine. Photo: Britchi Mirela – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 4.0)

140 countries have now recognised the State of Palestine

***AC*:** Thinking about the PLO and the various progressive forces in Palestine reminds me of the National Progressive Front in Syria, which includes Arab nationalist as well as communist and socialist forces, and the necessity for unity between them. As for external, international relations, we hear that Russia and China have been working with the Palestinian Authority. There's also been a strong response from the Global South, from Brazil for instance. Do you think that these kinds of forces have a positive role to play now?

IA: Yes, this is very important, actually, that Palestine has become a significant issue on the global agenda. Palestinian self-determination enjoys huge support from the Global South as you mentioned; Brazil, Cuba, countries in Asia such as Indonesia and Malaysia, most Latin American countries, and African countries. In addition to, importantly, Russia and China. We clearly observe the growing political influence of China in the international arena and its clear political support for Palestinian self-determination.

We should also note the systemic and gradual progress of the Western Bloc towards supporting self-determination of the Palestinian people, at the grassroots level and at the elites' level. As an example, support for the two-state solution is growing among Jewish communities in the United States, especially the young generation; it is estimated that 37 per cent of Jewish youth in the US support the establishment of a Palestinian state. Likewise in Europe we have huge support, although they are unable to recognise Palestinian statehood without consensus among all members of the European Union.

140 countries have now recognised the State of Palestine. We've signed 50 international treaties. We have been upgraded to observer non-member status at the United Nations and soon, we hope to achieve full membership at the UN.

***AC*:** I'd like to talk about the cultural side. The other day we published a piece on Mahmoud Darwish, Palestinian poet. What about the culture of Palestine, both modern and ancient culture?

IA: Maybe this is an exaggeration, but it is said that Palestine is the cradle of civilisation! [laughter] A strong statement, but it includes aspects of truth. The Palestinian people historically have had a very strong culture. Even if you look at religion, as a cultural aspect, Palestine has been really important as it was and continues to be holy to the three Abrahamic religions.

In addition to the history, Palestine has a vibrant modern culture. If you look to our writers, novelists, poets; all are inspired by the struggle against colonisation, occupation, and apartheid, and now against Israeli genocide in Gaza. Our own intellectuals, artists, and painters represent Palestinian resistance and the resilience of the Palestinian people. Palestinian culture has been a significant tool for non-violent resistance against colonisation and self-determination.

***AC*:** In a poem by Darwish there's a striking line, 'The war will end.' We wish for this day, but we know it may be far ahead. The Communist Party of Australia has supported Palestinian struggle and will do so far into the future. What are some short-term and long-term goals for this struggle?

IA: Firstly, I want to express our appreciation for the CPA's position of continuous support for the self-determination of the Palestinian people and Palestinian statehood. Although of course it is still a small Party, its ideas, history, and intellect will definitely assist in the CPA playing a huge role here in Australia to promote and advocate for Palestinian rights.

Actually, the Communist movement in Palestine was very crucial in advancing Palestinian resistance. We're very appreciative of the historical and current role of the Communist Party in Palestine. It's the oldest Party – it was active before 1948, already advocating and struggling for our rights.

Regarding goals: in the short-term, we should focus on the genocide in Gaza, violent Israeli settlers in the West Bank, and the apartheid system. I know you're participating in the rallies, issuing statements in support of a ceasefire in Gaza and delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as international advocacy towards these objectives.

Another proposal for advocacy in the short-term is a lobbying strategy: it's important to talk to MPs and other officials and lobby them, either at the state or federal level.

A third aspect of effective advocacy is networking and coordination processes, such as talking to unions, civil society organisations, academics, faith-based organisations, health organisations among others.

Fourthly, it is valuable and important to conduct effective media and social media strategies; the *Guardian* is an example. It's important to promote the Palestinian story and explain to the public about what's happening.

These are four aspects of an effective advocacy strategy.

In the long-run, I think the CPA supporting the self-determination of the Palestinian people, and statehood is crucial. The most important task to achieve this objective is to link the current struggle in Gaza and the so-called 'day after' to long-term political solutions – this is the establishment and recognition of the State of Palestine on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital.

It is imperative to lobby the Australia government to recognise the State of Palestine immediately, as a major and tangible contribution towards peace and justice in the Middle East.

We'd also like support for an international or regional conference to solve the Palestinian issue based on international law and UN resolutions. ✪

Op-Ed: Where is the Red Menace?

Caiden Bartholomew

Australia's political, military, and media elites and the Americans holding their leashes have been doubling and tripling down on China fearmongering in the last few years. Deputy PM Richard Marles has justified the recent expansion of Australia's military budget with all too familiar tales of defending trade from our largest trading partner and deterring war over Taiwan.

"Now, we want to do everything we can to be deterring a conflict of that kind and we are working very closely with our ally, the United States" Marles said in an ABC Breakfast radio interview.

How much do the claims of Marles and the other Australian and American war hawks stand up to scrutiny? China's recent diplomatic efforts tell a very different story to the new Red Menace narrative, as does Australia's involvement in stoking conflict around the globe.

From April 1 to 11, the former chairman of the Kuomintang party Ma Ying-jeou led a delegation of Taiwanese youth to the Chinese mainland. He met with Xi Jinping on 10 April, where the two discussed the importance of maintaining peace across the Taiwan Straits. Meanwhile, the US, Japan, the Philippines, and Australia have continued to go down the war path with talks of anti-Chinese encirclement. Australian media has had little to say about the landing of Green Berets in Taiwan, and has had nothing but venom to spit at our Pacific neighbours who refuse to cut ties with China.

More recently, in the wake of Israeli aggression against Iran and the bombing of Iran's Syrian consulate, China took immediate action by sending their top diplomatic official Wang Yi to meet with his Iranian and Saudi counterparts. As the three nations have reaffirmed their commitment to diplomacy and the prevention of further escalation, Israel has expressed their continued drive for further aggression. The Australian response, meanwhile, has been to parrot the Israeli narrative of Iranian culpability. Albanese wasted no time in condemning what he calls Iran's "flouting of international law," all while continuing to obscure the true scale of Australia's material and intelligence support for Israel's ongoing project of genocide.

As Australia expands its own military budget and continues its support for allies engaged in conflict and genocide all around the world, as it redoubles its commitment to international espionage via the Five Eyes, and as it continues to bankroll the US' war machine through AUKUS, Australian media and politicians have no shame in calling China the warmonger.

As Australian government, media, and even universities become increasingly AUKUS oriented, it is more important than ever for Australians to take a stand against the push for war. Challenging the China threat mythology is a crucial first step. ✪

Germany cracks down on behalf of Israel

Demonstration in Berlin, 4 November 2023. Organised by Palestinian and Jewish groups. Photo: Streets of Berlin – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Caiden Bartholomew

Germany has clearly learned no lessons from history as it cracks down on pro-Palestine voices as part of its unwavering support for the Zionist project. The keyword for the German strategy appears to be 'ban.' From the banning of entire languages at protests to the banning of pro-Palestine speakers, it seems that Germany's leadership is willing to put a stop to everything other than its own military, economic, and political collaboration with Israel.

In a draconian move emblematic of Germany's attitude towards the ongoing genocide and apartheid perpetrated by Israel, Berlin has banned all languages other than English and German from being spoken at pro-Palestine rallies. The rules have already been used to break up Irish protestors who had gathered in a ciorcal comhrá, or conversation circle, at a pro-Palestine camp near the Reichstag. The protestors had been singing various songs in Gaeilge as well as English. As an official language of the EU, Gaeilge has equal status to all 23 other EU languages, a fact evidently ignored by Berlin police. The language ban is of course intended to enable police to impose their control more easily on pro-Palestine events, with Arabic speakers as the main target.

Berlin's language ban follows other actions taken by German authorities on all levels of government to effectively outlaw pro-Palestinian sentiment. A three-day Palestine conference in Berlin was raided by police on 12 April after a mere two hours, as power was cut off and hundreds of attendees were forced to leave. All further sessions were banned.

Yanis Varoufakis, former Greek finance minister and one of the main speakers at the event, was issued with a general ban against all speech in Germany, even by video call. Berlin media later reported that the restriction had been reduced to a travel ban from entering the country. As of the 17 April, in an interview with *Jacobin*, Varoufakis reported that neither ban, the former of which having previously only been used against ISIS operatives, had been delivered to him in writing.

Germany's crackdown on the voices of its working-class, and indeed any voice that opposes the ruling class's support for the Zionist project, coincides with the rise of right-wing and fascist elements in German, and indeed European, politics. These echoes of history should be of grave concern to all working-class people in the EU and beyond.

Germany's pro-Israel mania reached international attention after Nicaragua initiated proceedings against Germany before the International Court of Justice on 1 March. Nicaragua alleges that German support for Israel constitutes contributing to genocide and other violations of international law inflicted upon Palestinian people. Judging from their attempts to ban pro-Palestine voices, it is clear Germany's leadership have no desire to back down from their support for Israel. ✪

US: Repression of Gaza war protests intensifies

Mark Gruenberg

Rising tensions over US support for Israel's war on Gaza continued on 22 April, with 47 students being arrested by Yale University police in New Haven, Connecticut after a peaceful sit-in, and with Google firing 50 workers, most of them from its Manhattan offices, who peacefully sat in against the firm's big tech contract with the Israeli armed forces.

Those events, combined with continuing protests at Columbia University and NYU in New York City, show increasing popular opposition not just to the war itself but to US backing for what many international organisations have designated as genocide against Gazan civilians.

The protesters at Yale, NYU, and Columbia staunchly oppose US financial and military support for the right-wing Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu. They point to the billions of dollars worth of US bombs, ammo, and fighter jets which the Democratic Biden administration has sold to the Israeli military. Students and faculty are also demanding that their institutions divest from any investments in companies and institutions active in the Israeli occupation and genocide in Palestine.

Google workers pinpoint the high-tech systems their employer supplies to Israel for Project Nimbus, a $1.2 billion defense contract. Aided by Nimbus, the Israeli military has killed over 34,000 Gazan civilians and counting, created a million refugees jammed into the southern sector of Gaza in and around the Rafah entry point from Egypt, destroyed Gaza's infrastructure, and produced a humanitarian catastrophe, notably increasing famine.

YALE STUDENTS DEMAND DIVESTMENT

In a telephone interview with *People's World*, two Yale protesters, who asked not to be named to avoid university retribution, explained that 200-300 peaceful demonstrators started with an encampment in Beinecke Plaza beginning round-the-clock on 19 April and lasting through the morning of the 22nd.

The Yale protesters demanded the university disclose its investment portfolio "and then divest from companies engaged in military production," as one of the two put it.

"But the university was unwilling to entertain disclosure – and we can't discuss divestment unless we know what they're talking about," the protester said. Yale police arrested 60 people, but then let the 13 non-Yale students go. The rest were charged with misdemeanour trespassing and released on their own recognisance.

Before 19 April, the students demonstrated only during daylight hours. They "are in solidarity" with the students protesting in New York, the other Yale protester told *People's World*. The pro-Palestinian demonstrations at Columbia and NYU have been met with harsh repression by campus security and police.

After being evicted from the plaza, the Yale students traveled around the Schwartzman Building to the intersection of Prospect and Grove in New Haven, where they remained sitting down until 5 pm when their protest permit expired. Some then adjourned to a *seder* for the first night of Passover, elsewhere.

NO TECH FOR APARTHEID

Meanwhile, at Google headquarters in midtown Manhattan and its CEO's offices in Sunnyvale, California, the high-tech workers and engineers who protested the use of Nimbus were fired, in two contingents. Nine were also arrested, according to organisers for the sponsoring group, No Tech for Apartheid.

Nimbus "involves Google Cloud and Amazon Web Services providing cloud computing and artificial intelligence services for the Israeli government and military," *Information Age* explained.

Others who did not even enter the one Google room in Manhattan where the larger group sat in quietly for nine hours were fired just for showing up briefly and expressing their solidarity with the Palestinians and against the Israeli use of Nimbus.

The firings were by e-mail, and then their in-house Google accounts were cut off. The workers, who also kept their full identities secret – using only first names or pseudonyms – told a Zoom press conference what happened.

"We were taken down in the cargo elevator in secret by the New York Police Department," said one who was taken out of the Manhattan office. "Then they threw my belongings, though not all of them, at me. When I returned the next day to get the rest of my belongings, the lieutenant said 'Get the fuck out.'"

"We chose to participate in this peaceful protest because we filed" internal protests, which were ignored "against fear-mongering tactics" directed at critics of Google's Nimbus contract, said another worker. "Voicing our opinions at work can come back to hurt us" in future job hunts, added a third.

"I'm a Palestinian-American" with relatives in Gaza, said another now-fired Google worker. "Peaceful expression of opinion is what America stands for and what Google says it stands for – but only if you're expressing an opinion they [Google] agree with."

One worker arrested at Google CEO Thomas Kurian's office in Sunnyvale, California, drew the larger picture of why they're upset not just at Google, but at US policy.

"The history of the US is one of colonisation and exploitation, and the US government is now backing this – including with artificial intelligence" which Google ordered its technical professionals to create.

"These facts alone should give you pause."

People's World ✪

Anti-genocide encampments go global

Palestine Solidarity Protest in San Francisco. Photo: Hossam el-Hamalawy – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

Massive pro-Palestinian demonstrations and occupations continued across universities in the United States, Europe, and Australia as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu comes under increasing pressure at home.

The student protests have led to a brutal crackdown by police, particularly at US universities. From New York to California, students protesting against Israel's assault on Gaza have been sleeping in tents at college campuses and occupying the central squares of campuses.

With the Gaza death toll surging to nearly 34,500, protesters around the globe are following the example set by US students and demanding that unis cut financial ties to Israel and divest from companies they say enable the Netanyahu government's genocide.

In Paris, at the renowned Sciences Po university, protesters blockaded a central campus building, forcing classes to be held online.

Canada's first campus protest for Gaza has been set up at McGill University in Montreal, where protesters are demanding a divestment of funds "implicated in the Zionist state as well as a cut in ties with Zionist academic institutions."

In Australia, students at the University of Sydney's Camperdown campus set up a pro-Palestinian encampment last week, also calling for the university to "cut ties with arms manufacturers."

Last week, Netanyahu described ceasefire protesters around the world as "anti-Semitic mobs calling for the annihilation of Israel," and claimed they were attacking Jewish students and faculty members. His allegations have been slammed as slander by major political figures, including US Sen. Bernie Sanders, the most prominent Jewish member of the US Senate.

Sanders said Netanyahu's claims "insult the intelligence of the American people" and that the Israeli leader was using false allegations of anti-Semitism to distract attention from the policies of his "extremist and racist government" in Gaza, the West Bank, and inside Israel itself.

"No, Mr Netanyahu, it is not anti-Semitic or pro-Hamas to point out that, in a little over six months, your extremist government has killed over 34,000 Palestinians and wounded more than 78,000, 70 per cent of whom are women and children."

The Israeli Prime Minister faces mounting pressure at home, with thousands hitting the streets across Israel to demand his resignation and imprisonment. In Tel Aviv, three separate protests converged near Azrieli Mall, while dozens of demonstrators, led by relatives of hostages, attempted to block Ayalon Highway, reported *The Times of Israel*.

Some protesters bypassed police barriers, and others ended up in skirmishes with police. Seven protesters were reported to have been arrested.

Netanyahu's police forces also attacked local offices of the Communist Party of Israel and Hadash (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality) in an effort to disrupt planned May Day marches that are to center on demands for a ceasefire and an end to the occupation.

People's World, edited for space ✪

Argentina: Hundreds of thousands protest

Argentinians have hit the streets in huge numbers across the country to protest against deep cuts to education funding imposed by neoliberal extremist President Javier Milei.

The latest demonstration in Buenos Aires appeared even bigger than previous protests against Milei's war on public spending. Even conservative politicians, private university administrators, and right-wing TV personalities joined the march to defend state education.

"It is historic," said protester Ariana Thiele Lara, a 25-year-old recent graduate. "It feels like we were all united."

Students and academics worked with the trade unions and left-wing political parties in organising opposition to the axing of most public spending on education, a policy that has forced Argentina's most venerable university to declare a financial emergency and warn of imminent closure.

Claiming that universities are bastions of socialism where professors indoctrinate their students, Milei has tried to dismiss the higher education budget crisis as politics as usual.

"The cognitive dissonance that brainwashing generates in public education is tremendous," he said.

At the public-sector University of Buenos Aires (UBA), the lights went out, lifts stopped working and air conditioning ceased to function in some buildings last week. Tutors gave 200-person lectures without microphones or projectors because the institution couldn't pay its electricity bill.

In his drive to reach zero deficit, Milei is slashing spending across Argentina – axing ministries, defunding cultural centres, laying off public-sector workers, and cutting subsidies.

He announced Argentina's first quarterly fiscal surplus since 2008 and claimed that the pain would eventually pay off.

The following day, protesters poured into the centre of Buenos Aires. "Why are you so scared of public education?" banners asked. "The university will defend itself," students shouted.

Since last July, when Argentina's fiscal year began, the state has provided UBA with just 8.9 per cent of its total budget at a time when the annual inflation rate hovers near 290 per cent. The university says that's barely enough to keep the lights on and provide basic services in teaching hospitals that have already cut capacity.

The university warned last week that without a rescue plan, it would shut down in the coming months, stranding 380,000 students in the middle of their degree studies.

President Milei, who came to power last December after brandishing a chainsaw during his campaign to symbolise what he would do to public spending, continues to trot out the same mantra: "There is no money."

Morning Star ✪

Global Briefs

SOUTH AFRICA: South Africa celebrated the 30th anniversary of the end of the racist system known as apartheid on 27 April. It is marked as Freedom Day, and as President Cyril Ramaphosa said "on that day, the dignity of all the people of South Africa was restored!" President Ramaphosa acknowledged major problems South Africa still has after 3 decades, such as severe poverty and extremely high unemployment, saying, "We have made much progress and we are determined to do much more."

RUSSIA: Russia is getting ready to celebrate Victory Day on the 9th of May. One of the features this year will be a display of multiple military equipment captured by Russian forces in Ukraine. A German-made Leopard 2 tank, as well as the US-made Abrams were the latest additions to the trophy display. Overall. 30 armoured pieces from 12 countries will be exhibited, including weapons produced or supplied by the US, UK, Germany, France, Czech Republic, Sweden, Austria, and Australia. Australia has pledged extra funding for Ukraine of $100 million, bringing our total contribution to more than $1 billion.

ITALY: Italian neo-Nazis marked the 79th anniversary of the execution of Benito Mussolini by marching through north Italian towns where Mussolini was arrested and executed. Dozens of people chanted fascist slogans and performed Nazi salutes.

Also in Italy, while some Italian towns have revoked Mussolini's honourary citizenship, other towns have conspicuously left it in place, with the mayor of Anzio saying that "History must be respected," and adding that "fascism no longer exists."

BOTSWANA: The British government asked Botswana to take refugees off its hands, Foreign Minister Kwape said. "We did not accede to their request. "We have enough problems that we are dealing with, especially immigration problems in the neighbourhood," he said, adding that to have agreed would have been unfair to Botswana. The offer to Botswana came hours after the Rwanda scheme had been approved by MPs at Westminster. Under the new law, asylum seekers who arrive illegally to Britain will be sent to Rwanda. British Prime Minister Sunak pledged that the first flights will leave as early as July and promised a wave of deportations "come what may" over the summer. "The UK government clearly doesn't care about the cost of its Rwanda deportation scheme to UK taxpayers any more than it cares about the cruelty it will inflict on asylum seekers," commented Human Rights Watch representative.

POLAND: Prosecutor-general Adam Bodnar informed Polish MPs that Israeli-developed Pegasus spyware, used to crack mobile phones, had been used on hundreds of people under the former government. Bodnar, who is also the Justice minister, said that it was used by three separate government agencies – the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau, the Military Counterintelligence Service, and the Internal Security Agency. Pegasus was used to spy on 578 people from 2017 to 2022.

SOMALIA: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that about 88,000 people were internally displaced in Somalia in the first three months of 2024. The UNHCR said the displacement was mainly caused by conflict or insecurity and the long-term effects of flooding, which occurred between October and December 2023.

CUBA: Economists, politicians and academics have headed to Havana for the 50th anniversary New International Economic Order Congress, the second time the event has been held in Cuba. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, the forum will promote dialogue around the problems that hinder development and world peace, due to an unbalanced international economic, political, scientific-technological, and military order.

Papua New Guinea, Australia, USA: the good, the bad, and the ugly

William Briggs

Two state visits and an insult of huge proportions. All this in just a little more one rather tumultuous week for Papua New Guinea. There were serious talks aimed at taking the relationship between China and PNG to a stronger and mutually advantageous level. There was a flag-waving, camera-clicking visit from the Australian prime minister that harked back to the dark period of WW2. There was a bizarre and phenomenally stupid remark from President Biden alleging that his uncle had been eaten by cannibals in PNG during the war. Each tells a story.

PNG's week could be divided into 'the good, the bad, and the ugly.' It certainly reflected the past, the present, and the future. Albanese's Kokoda photo-opportunities and WW2-era 'fuzzy-wuzzy angels' imagery is locked in a past aimed at an Australian domestic audience. Biden's comments are a metaphor for how imperialism views the world, even today. While it is extreme, demeaning, and racist, it fits with Australian media representations of Solomon Islands as a 'fly-speck' country, when it had the audacity to develop good relations with China. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Port Moresby represents the future, one that benefits both countries and helps PNG to develop a stronger economy and infrastructure.

The Chinese Foreign Minister, upon leaving the country, pointed out that the visit was good for both sides, that mutual interests were advantaged and that increased cooperation would inject vitality into the entire South Pacific Region. Wang summed up the healthy state of relations between PNG and China as "mutually beneficial."

PNG suffers from the legacy of colonialism. Chen Hong, director of the Australian Studies Centre of East China Normal University described the situation as it affects PNG, but which equally applies to the region in general and the policies of imperialism in particular. He commented that "Western powers colonised these regions without properly establishing a system of social governance and left them in a mess in terms of politics, economy, and social governance when the regional countries gained independence."

In the face of Australian pressure, the nations of the Pacific have repeatedly said that it is not a case of choosing one country as an exclusive partner. Marape has consistently stated that his country is a friend to all and an enemy to none. Fostering good relations with China serves the actual best interests of both states. China consistently denounces the doctrine of zero sum in favour of a more rational win-win strategy in international relations.

PNG Foreign Minister, Justin Tkatchenko, echoed the sentiments of his Chinese counterpart, stressing that PNG is committed to the promotion of strong bilateral relations.

The joint meetings had a clear focus. It was all about promoting interactions that would benefit both sides and lead to greater development of sustainable economic structures for PNG. After decades of Australian domination, both before and after independence in 1975, development has been all but ignored.

How Australia really regards PNG can be seen in a telling extract from Australia's Defence White Paper of 2016, updated in 2020 and unchanged today. It is an assessment of the 'value' of PNG. "Geographical proximity ... security, stability, and cohesion of Papua New Guinea contributes to a secure, resilient Australia with secure northern approaches." PNG is, in such a telling, little more than a buffer zone for Australia. That is hardly reassuring for PNG.

While Australia may see PNG as a buffer state, Beijing and Port Moresby have moved closer to a Belt and Road arrangement. China has stated that it is hoping that a free trade agreement will be established in the near future.

Prime Minister Marape does not seek to distance his government from Australia. He is clear in his estimation that an independent foreign and economic policy is in his country's best interest. Relations with the United States are expressed in similar terms. President Biden's outrageous remarks about cannibalism and his uncle seriously stretched the resolve of Marape to remain a 'friend to all.'

Marape reminded the USA that a little respect might be in order. The US has for decades treated the region in a cavalier manner. More recently, and only because Pacific Island states have expressed a willingness to develop good relationships with China, the Americans have been making a show of interest.

Papua New Guinean Prime Minister James Marape.
Photo: US State Department/Chuck Kennedy – Public Domain

The White House sought to explain away Biden's inane remarks as a 'slip of the tongue.' This is not good enough and Marape recognised it. He urged the US to clear up the mess that they left behind after the war. A clearly angry Marape, reminded the US that "the country remains littered with wartime human remains, plane wrecks, ship wrecks and tunnels, as well as leftover bombs that were still killing people." He invited the US president to clean up the mess and possibly find the remains of his dead uncle. He also reminded the US leader that "PNG's people were needlessly dragged into a conflict that was not of their doing."

And so, a week of turmoil for PNG. The good the bad and the ugly.

There were talks that are leading to a stronger economy and a more prosperous future for the country. There were displays of symbolism, linked to the past. There were photo-opportunities for one visitor, but no substance beyond the flag waving and back-slapping. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit might have lacked the symbolic gestures of Anthony Albanese's Kokoda Track spectacle, but a future is made, not by empty gestures but on tangible, mutually beneficial things. PNG Prime Minister, Marape, when asked about the two visits coming so close to one another, smiled and said that PNG was blessed. The message delivered by President Biden was anything but a blessing. ✪

Venezuela: US sanctions will hurt US, Europe

Angel Rodríguez, president of the Energy and Petroleum Commission at the National Assembly, noted on Tuesday that the ratification of sanctions against Venezuela will deepen the energy crisis in both the United States and Europe.

Describing the sanctions as "a wrong decision," Rodríguez stated that the Bolivarian Republic is a safe energy supplier for both Europe and the United States, and insisted that ratifying the sanctions against Venezuelan oil would deepen the energy crisis in Europe and the United States.

He explained that at present, oil prices settle around 85 dollars a barrel, and a litre of gasoline tops one dollar in the United States.

The lawmaker added that for the electoral campaign of US President Joe Biden, making decisions against Venezuelan oil "implies a significant increase in hydrocarbons at the domestic level."

He commented that some European countries have no intention of stopping the military confrontation between Ukraine and Russia, or the conflict in the Middle East, and the White House continues to provide the resources to fuel the conflicts.

During Tuesday's broadcast of the "Con Maduro +" radio program, the president spoke about the talks with the United States, which led to the signing of an agreement of which, as he claimed, "they never respected a single comma."

He recalled that a year ago, the White House requested to hold talks in a private and reserved manner and certified that Venezuela has always respected the reserved and private meetings.

In those conversations, participants reached agreements that were written and signed and had at their centre the total lifting of all illegal and criminal sanctions against Venezuela, Maduro added.

The president commented that there were ups and downs after the exchange with diplomat Alex Saab. Since January, the United States has threatened to revoke license no. 44 granted six months ago.

He described that license as colonialist, and estimated that Washington intends to monitor, control, and tutor the national oil industry so that Venezuela lives from the licenses they give, and then "you have to do this or I will take your license away," he stressed.

Prensa Latina ✪

Caribbean states work together

Other Caribbean prime ministers and senior officials also spoke on Wednesday at the XXIII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the countries that are part of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America – Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP).

The Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, Philip Joseph Pierre, confessed himself a faithful believer in the right of the people of Palestine to exist, while he pleaded for "an end to hostilities in Haiti, which also has the right to exist."

The Ambassador of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Norgen Wilson, stressed the importance of ALBA-TCP to face the challenges of the region, promoting unity and cooperation.

In addition, he reiterated that they have natural resources, the people and educational institutions, "Now we have to become more strategic in the development of our science and technology, so that we do not simply give those natural resources to those countries that have already developed in the global north."

"ALBA-TCP is a community, it is an organisation that is key to facing many of our challenges as a region," he said.

The ambassador expressed his support for the "call to eliminate barriers, including unilateral coercive measures that have been imposed on Cuba and Venezuela, as these sanctions continue to diminish the quality of life of all of us.

Telesur (edited for space) ✪

World military spending explodes

Denis Doherty

World spending on the military in 2023 reached an astronomical $2.44 trillion, according to research just released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). This is an increase of 6.8 per cent compared to last year.

"In 2023 $2.4 trillion of public money from countries across the world was spent on new and novel ways to kill each other. That must be a wake up call for governments across the world to reverse this trend and redirect that money into things that will make us a more secure place," Senator David Shoebridge said in launching the SIPRI research in Sydney.

"This starts with climate action by all countries, in Australia it also involves critical action on housing and the cost of living crisis …. Imagine if $2.4 trillion was spent on public health, public education, and finally the climate crisis, imagine how much more secure we would be!"

In his address to the National Press Club on 17 April, Defence Minister Richard Marles indicated that Australia will spend an extra $50 billion on the military over the next decade, with the military budget rising to a whopping 2.4 per cent of GDP, up from the current 1.9 per cent.

Marles blamed an alleged threat from China for this rise, but SIPRI shows that China is responsible for 12 per cent of world military expenditure, less than one third of the US budget which stands at 37 per cent. The biggest threat to peace is US imperialism and its allies.

The SIPRI figures indicate that on a per capita basis Australia spends twice as much as Russia on the military, twice as much as Taiwan.

Australia is 13th in the world among the big spenders on the military, more than countries like Canada, Spain, and Brazil.

Bob Carr has pointed out that: "We can't keep playing trade games with China and war games with the US."

The winners in this massive increase in military spending is the small group of war profiteers or arms corporations. The top ten have offices in Australia and include such well known merchants of death as Boeing, Northrup Grumman, Raytheon, and BAE Systems.

These companies have former Australian military officers and politicians on their boards in the ever-revolving door between the private arms companies and politicians and public servants.

Former Senator Rex Patrick has commented:

"Those in Defence bureaucracy guiding our politicians will be happy, uproariously happy, because they'll personally benefit from the arrangement.

"They've cemented their position in an alliance arrangement that involves important meetings and conferences, important decisions, trips overseas, and, for some, exchange postings. For them, they've got ringside seats and the opportunity to be occasional players in the big league."

Such spending cannot be maintained without raiding other parts of the budget.

In 2022 a survey gave voters the choice of which government service to cut age care, NDIS, health, education, or the military. The majority of both the ALP and LNP voters opted to cut the military budget.

The Australian people will have to campaign hard to reduce the Labor government's exorbitant military spending and to win a large reduction in military spending. ✪

Chinese president rejects competition between China and the US

During a meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Chinese President Xi Jinping has noted that this year marks the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, and called for helping each other to succeed instead of harming and engaging in destructive competition.

Xi advocated "honouring words with actions, instead of saying one thing and doing the opposite," while recalling the three basic principles to guide bilateral ties: mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and mutually beneficial cooperation. "I have said many times that the planet is large enough to accommodate the common development and respective prosperity of China and the United States," he added.

The Chinese president urged the US to view each other's development "in a positive light" so that the relationship can stabilize, improve, and move forward.

Xi Jinping acknowledged some progress in bilateral ties after he met with US President Joe Biden last November, however, he warned about pending issues that require more efforts.

Blinken concluded a three-day agenda that first took him to Shanghai, where he met with city authorities, teachers, students, and businessmen.

The visit took place amid renewed tensions between the two sides due to trade disagreements, US sanctions against Chinese companies, as well as Washington's interference in the Taiwan issue, the deployment of missiles in the Philippines, and its interference in tensions around the South China Sea.

Less than a month ago, Secretary of Commerce Janet Yellen arrived in China to address the trade dispute, exacerbated by US concerns about alleged Chinese overcapacity and Beijing's dismay at the politicisation of economic issues by the United States.

Prensa Latina ✪

Support the *Guardian* by donating to Press Fund

Subscription to **The Guardian**

❑ 12 months: $100 ($80 conc / $150 solidarity) ❑ 6 months: $55 ($40 conc / $80 solidarity)
❑ Special offer: 10 issues for $10 (new subscriptions only)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____POSTCODE:_____

Pay by ❑ Cheque ❑ Money order (Payable to "*Guardian* Publications")
Phone in details on 02 9699 8844 or info@cpa.org.au Or send to:
Guardian Subscriptions
74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010
or by credit card: ❑ Mastercard ❑ Visa *$20 minimum on cards

Card# _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Amount: _____ Expiry Date: ____/____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

The Guardian

Editorial Office
74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010
Ph: 02 9699 8844 Fax: 02 9699 9833
Email: guardian@cpa.org.au

Editor:
Floyd Kermode

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

Printed by
Spotpress Newspapers
The Print Centre, corner Hume Highway and Muir Roadd, Chullora, NSW

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

Half the Sky

Anna Pha

At the end of April thousands of women and men took part in rallies in 17 locations across Australia. They were calling for government action, not words, to end men's violence against women. There were also calls for royal commissions at state and federal level. Whether or not any are held, action cannot wait until their outcomes. We know the horrendous nature of the crisis and what needs to be done. This year one woman is being killed every four days compared with every five days in the same period last year. In 2015, after a number of family violence-related deaths in Victoria – most notably the death of Rosie Batty's son Luke – the Victorian government established a Royal Commission into Family Violence.

While the Victorian government has still to develop a comprehensive strategy, it has increased funding for specialist family violence support services to ensure that victims of family violence receive appropriate support. It is worth noting that so far this year 3 women have been killed by men in Victoria compared with 11 in NSW and 6 in Queensland. Funding for women's services in NSW is a fraction of that in Victoria. Indigenous women and women with disability experience the highest rates of violence from men.

All too often women experiencing violence and abuse face a choice of remaining in that situation or homelessness. To its credit Labor has implemented its pre-election commitment to legislate for ten days' paid family and domestic violence (DFV) leave to be added to the National Employment Standards (NES). The NES contains other national minimum leave entitlements for workers. This leave is designed to support women who need time off work to deal with the impact of DFV, and ensure they can return to work with the necessary support. It still falls short of the $18,000 on average required to escape a violent relationship.

Greens Senator, Sarah Hanson-Young said that instead of political hand-wringing, there should be an "all-shoulders-to-the-wheel" approach, starting with better funding of support services and a "root-and-branch review of the justice system," including apprehended violence orders (AVOs) and how well they protect women. A number of homicides have occurred when men have breached AVOs.

Professor Ann Summers researched the impact of DFV on single mothers and their children. "We count dead women, but we have overlooked other consequences of the violence. We do not count the physical and emotional injuries, the hospitalisations, the permanent disabilities resulting from domestic violence, the often-lifelong injuries to mental health or psychological well-being. And we have not taken into the account the most frequent, and the most obvious, consequence of all: that if women who have children leave violent relationships, they become single mothers – and all that results from that.

"We ignore the fact that these single mothers include Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, LGBTQI, cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds and women from rural or remote areas. And that not only are there often tough economic consequences, health risks and other problematic outcomes for single mothers who have left violent relationships, but single mothers are themselves often at risk of continuing to endure violence – especially from previous partners."

The Coalition government savagely and cruelly cut funding to women's services. Increased funding for services, including housing, is part of the solution. The causes of the crisis also require urgent attention. This cannot be left to women alone to fight. The historic roots of women being seen and treated as men's chattels remain to be overcome. Education and role models are an important part of the solution – teaching little boys respect from a young age right through to and including in adulthood and encouraging men to join their sisters in the struggle to feel and be safe.

If you or someone you know is affected by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732.

ALP: A crisis of policies and ideology

Marcus Browning

Opposition from Labor Party members to the Albanese government's AUKUS war coalition with the US and Britain emerged in Labor Party ranks, and was quickly suppressed by the ALP leadership. In broader terms the rank and file unrest reflects a deep-seated and widespread dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the ALP among working people.

It is a crisis of political leadership of the working class. It is a crisis of the policies and ideology of the Labor Party which have been followed by many trade unions.

Disillusionment, frustration, and anger will intensify as the leadership of the Labor Party distances itself more and more from the interests of the working class and the trade unions; as the Albanese government cuts further into basic and crucial services such as health and education.

The present day disillusionment (there have been previous periods of dissatisfaction with Labor – the actions of Labor governments during the 1930s Depression, for example) commenced with the adoption of economic rationalist policies by the Hawke/Keating Labor governments of the 1980s and '90s.

The Labor Party adopted the so-called "competition policy." Its main aim was to justify the breaking up and privatisation of public enterprises. Since then the privatisation of publicly owned enterprises and institutions has been pushed by succeeding governments both Liberal and Labor.

As public ownership went, so did the social charters that were associated with public enterprises. Profits came first – not social responsibilities and commitments.

Private ownership was crowned king as the ALP handed over public assets to the corporations. Not even those public enterprises that had been created by the Labor Party years before, were defended.

Many other consequences flowed from the adoption of economic rationalist (neoliberal) policies. Instead of technology leading to shorter working hours and other benefits for workers it became accepted that technology was sufficient reason for the number of workers employed to be substantially reduced. Support for a reduction in overall working hours was abandoned.

Tens of thousands of jobs were lost and hours of work rose substantially. The argument that employers had to cut costs, despite enormous profits, was accepted. The centralised system of legally binding and comprehensive awards was scuttled and replaced by individual work contracts and enterprise agreements.

All these measures are means by which employers reduce costs, and at the same time, reduce the living standards of workers.

The ALP implemented policies of contracting out, casualisation of the workforce, privatisation, the winding back of Medicare and the promotion of private health insurance, the cutbacks to public housing, the transfer of state school funds to private schools, and cuts to university funding.

It is in these circumstances that the perception grew that there is little difference between the Labor Party and the Liberal Party. With this disillusionment came the search for an alternative.

The fact that many trade union leaders failed to contest the policies and arguments being advanced by the leaders of the Labor Party resulted in widespread disillusionment among workers with trade unions as well. This disillusionment contributed to a decline in trade union density compounded by Labor's reforms imposing serious limits on the right to strike.

There was an all too ready acceptance by trade unions of the policies and arguments put forward by the Labor Party and the employers that are behind the present political crisis.

The solution is not to be found in mere organisational measures but in the adoption of working class policies and ideology.

Disillusionment up to now has been expressed in one election after another as the primary votes for both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party have declined and those of some of the smaller parties have risen.

Some voted for the demagogy, racism, and phony nationalism of the likes of the One Nation group or United Australia Party. Some went to the much more progressive Greens. Overall, the protest vote has been fragmented and without direction.

Working people require honest representation and policies that will look after their interests. Anti-worker policies and sham arguments that have had such bad consequences for working people need to be rejected.

The Communist Party supports every effort to win support for policies that serve the interests of the working class. Many others, in a variety of organisations, also support and advance such policies.

Working class policies include support for public ownership with social commitments, working class democracy (which means the participation of the working people in all aspects of economic, social, and political life), peaceful and humanitarian relations with other countries, substantial improvements in living standards, jobs, a fully maintained public health service, public education system, environmental protection, and much more.

The implementation of such policies requires the establishment of a new type of government such as has not been seen in Australia before.

Such a government, closely linked with the people's mass movements and struggles, could implement many of the policy proposals which have been put forward by the left, and progressive political parties, by trade unions, environmental, peace, educational and community organisations, health and democratic rights bodies.

To be effective, we believe that such a new type of government would have to substantially curb the power of the big corporations. It would not be beholden to the military industrial complex or fossil fuel corporations.

Such a government would include the political representatives of all the progressive and democratic forces, from communist and left Labor, from trade unions and progressive community organisations, from the Greens and environmental organisations, from working farmers, professional and small business circles. It would be democratic and multiparty and answerable to the people – the vast majority of whom are working people.

This is not some opportunist ploy arising from recent developments, but is rooted in the historical fact that to bring about a significant change in direction Australia needs a government giving priority to the needs and interests of the working people, to country people, to educators and professionals, and those who provide the many necessary services required by the community.

The Communist Party would contribute by assisting work on policies in cooperation with others, working for unity, providing hard working activists and so on. Communists have proved to be committed and reliable stalwarts who are loyal to the working class.

The Communist Party has a wide range of working class policies. It is a working class party. Those who are committed to the immediate and longer-term interests of the working class have a place in its ranks as active members. We hope that those who are at present looking for an alternative do not limit their perspectives and will think seriously about joining the CPA.

In Australia, the best years for the trade union movement were those of the 1940s, '50s and '60s when the Communist Party of Australia had considerable influence in the working class, in the trade unions, and the labour movement generally. Many of the strongest unions of those years had a combined communist and left Labor leadership.

The present CPA needs to be much stronger and this can only happen when working class and other committed activists join it, thereby extending the Party's activities and helping in the formulation of policies in the fields of social, economic, political and cultural life.

The CPA will continue to respect and work with all who have similar or identical policies on the issues that confront the working people of our country. ✪

The ALP implemented contracting out, casualisation, privatisation, winding back Medicare, cutbacks to public housing…

Communist Party of Australia

www.cpa.org.au cpa@cpa.org.au

Head Office (Sydney)
74 Buckingham St,
Surry Hills, NSW 2010
phone: 02 9699 8844
email: info@cpa.org.au

General Secretary
Andrew Irving
andrew@cpa.org.au

Party President
Vinnie Molina
president@cpa.org.au

Media guardian@cpa.org.au
amr@cpa.org.au

Canberra	act@cpa.org.au PO Box 35 Dickson ACT 2602
Darwin	Vinnie Molina darwin@cpa.org.au 0419 812 872
Melbourne	Andrew Irving cpavic@cpa.org.au Box 3 Trades Hall, Lygon St, Carlton Sth, Vic 3053
NSW State Comm	Christian Goopy nsw@cpa.org.au 02 9699 8844 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010
Perth	Elly Hulm perth@cpa.org.au 0421 113 343 PO Box 98, North Perth, WA 6906
Qld State Comm	0499 476 540 qld@cpa.org.au
SA State Comm	sa@cpa.org.au 0411 805 356 PO Box 56, Royal Park, SA 5014
Tasmania	Andrew Irving tas@cpa.org.au 03 9639 1550