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# CLASS WAR BUDGET

Anna Pha

**The budget, delivered on 25th October, is set in the context of a looming global recession, ongoing wars, rocketing prices, extreme weather events, famine, and western war hawks blowing the trumpets of war in the Asia Pacific in which Australia will play a major role.**

Inflation will far out-pace wages further reducing purchasing power and put additional pressure on the cost of surviving for millions of families. Many more Australians will join the ranks of the more than three million already living in poverty.

The rate of unemployment is expected to rise, and the unemployed are still expected to survive on the cruel and punitive $48 a day – well below the Henderson poverty line. Electricity prices are set to rise by fifty-six per cent and gas by forty-four per cent by the end of next year. Inflated food prices will remain high. Rising interest rates continue to take a toll on household budgets and will see more people driven into homelessness and poverty.

Unlike the previous Abbott/Turnbull/Morrison government, Treasurer Jim Chalmers talked down the economic situation. "Australians know there are hard days to come, and hard decisions to accompany them," Chalmers said in an ominous warning of cuts to come. Reviews of Medicare and the NDIS are under way.

After Labor's first budget, hard days are coming for the working class.

The tent city in Sydney saw homeless people come together as a community and stand up to the government. Photo: Anna Pha

## WAR MACHINE

There are, however, some big winners: the Australia-US war machine and the resources sector.

Australian government spending on the military is both astronomically costly and fails to serve the Australian peoples' needs and security, yet the government could find an increase of eight per cent in funding. (See page three) The government kept afloat the estimated $180 billion (before cost blowouts) for nuclear submarines.

The government also expects to save $3.6 billion over four years by replacing external contractors with employees; and cutting advertising, travel, and legal expenses across the public service and give a boost to staffing to handle the backlog of visa applications.

The pre-election promises of higher wages and lower electricity and gas bills are looking extremely questionable. Under considerable pressure from the public and businesses, Chalmers has indicated that measures are being examined to guarantee supply and contain prices.

## TAXATION

Corporate profits continue to soar, but workers are denied a share. Previous tax cuts have propped up consumer spending compensating to a small degree for falling or stagnant wages, thus letting employers off the hook from paying a living wage.

The stage three tax cuts for the rich are due to come into effect in 2024 at a cost of more than a quarter of a trillion dollars ($254 billion) over ten years. They remain on the agenda. Men on incomes over $150,000 are the major recipients. This is a political choice, an indicator of government priorities. The budget is a class question, and this budget favours the capitalist class at the expense of the working class.

Labor's promise to deliver the stage three tax cuts is a promise that should be broken.

There is nothing just or fair about them. Adding salt to the wounds of those on low incomes, Labor is discontinuing the low- and middle-income tax rebate which was introduced in stage one. This would, for example increase the tax paid by someone on $48,000 per annum by 3.1 per cent. (The Australia Institute)

Recent Australia Institute analysis estimates windfall profits for the Australian oil and gas sector of $26-$40 billion in 2021-22. The Department of Industry, Science and Resources estimates that the sector's revenue from Liquified Natural Gas and oil exports will increase from $84 billion in 2021-222 to $105 billion in 2022-23. "Despite the massive increase in profits the Australian public is set to receive a paltry share from the sale of natural resources that ultimately belong to them." (The Australia Institute)

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**The budget is a class question, and this budget still favours the capitalist class at the expense of the working class and the most vulnerable.**

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# JUSTICE FOR CASSIUS

**CONTENT WARNING: RACIAL VIOLENCE**

**Last month, a fifteen-year-old boy, Cassius Turvey – a Noongar boy – was brutally murdered.**

**It is alleged that Jack Steven James Brearley, 21, exited a black Ford Ranger, came towards Turvey, and beat him with a metal pole. Turvey suffered severe head injuries, a seizure, and two strokes. He was placed in an induced coma before succumbing to only days later.**

**Prime Minister Anthony Albanese condemned the attack in a nationally televised press conference stating: "This attack that was clearly racially motivated just breaks your heart. We are a better country than that and my heart goes out to the family and the friends."**

**Speaking to the effects these kind of attacks have on the community, Noongar elder Jim Morrison stated that:**

**"When a tragedy like this happens it's worse than ripples in the pond. It resonates to such a degree that it triggers the traumas of incidents of our history [...]. I've had grown men crying; parents are scared to let their kids go to school and ride the bus alone because of this."**

**Last week, vigils were held across the country for Cassius (see page 5) with thousands present. Mechelle Turvey, Cassius' mother who has been vocal and poignant throughout this traumatic event spoke at the Perth vigil saying "My boy talks to me every day through my heart."**

**On the other side of Australia, in Sydney, mass numbers arrived in solidarity. Wiradjuri woman Lynda-June Coe said Cassius represented "every single son, every brother, right across this vast continent."**

**In Melbourne, similar numbers were present with Vigil organiser and cousin of Cassius, Sam May – a Whadjuck-Ballardong Noongar man – stating "We've been angry for so long, but this is not about anger, it's about hurt."**

**The murder of Turvey is, unfortunately, not an isolated incident but part of a deeply-rooted, systemic issue at the heart and foundation of so-called Australia.**

**It is important that we acknowledge that this moment is not just a murder but part of a continued on-going genocide that has never stopped in this country. Colonisation stole Indigenous land. White Australia has systemically attempted to erase this land's Indigenous people. In the first instance by murder through wars waged against Aboriginal people and in the second instance, culturally, by attempting to destroy Indigenous life and customs as experienced by the Stolen Generations. Beyond this, Indigenous people are disproportionately represented in prison populations and they are systemically killed while incarcerated. They have limited access to resources to improve their quality of life which has resulted in poorer living conditions. And more than this, every day more sacred sites and land are destroyed for the purposes of extracting this land's wealth to make Australia's bourgeoisie even richer. They are in the truest sense of the phrase, second-class citizens.**

**The treatment and oppression of Indigenous people must end. Enough is enough.**

# CLASS WAR BUDGET

Continued from page 1

## HEALTH & WELL-BEING

The government is honouring its election promise for cheaper prescriptions which will be of assistance to many families and people with chronic health conditions. Scripts will fall by $12.50 from $42.50 to $30.

There will be fifty urgent medical centres to ease pressure on public hospitals. The government is not increasing its share of funding for public hospitals to fifty per cent, leaving the states and territories to carry fifty-five per cent.

Funding for aged care will be increased. Legislation was passed on 27th October requiring aged care centres to have a registered nurse on duty 24/7 and to provide a minimum amount of care time with residents. The government failed to include dental care under Medicare, a reform that is long overdue.

There is additional funding for community services, but this falls far short of needs.

The NDIS will receive funding for 380 additional staff. "The NDIS didn't get anywhere near the amount of attention it deserved in this budget, but the May budget next year is the party we really want an invite to," disability rights campaigner Elly Desmarchelier said.

## WOMEN & FAMILIES

There is some assistance for families with an increase in early childhood education and care (ECEC) subsidies and extension of paid parental leave to twenty-six weeks as promised prior to the elections. These measures have the aim of increasing the participation of women in the workforce and begin to be introduced in 2024.

The government is setting aside funds for increased wages for workers in the care sector. It will be up to the Fair Work Commission to determine them. There is no guarantee the government will fund the full cost.

These measures are a start but much more is required to achieve wage equity and make ECEC affordable for families.

$1.7 billion is allocated over six years to tackle violence against women and children. But experts are calling for a minimum of $1 billion per annum.

## EDUCATION

There is funding for an extra 20,000 university places but no measures to guarantee secure jobs in a sector where contract employment is all-too prevalent. These additional places are for areas where there is a shortage of skilled workers such as teaching, nursing, engineering, and IT. Around 35,000 jobs were lost in the university sector during COVID, but the budget fails to offer enough funding to restore them.

"While almost half a billion dollars for extra university places is a welcome start, this commitment needs to form the building blocks of wider reform," National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) National President Dr Alison Barnes said.

A $1 billion agreement with states and territories to provide 180,000 fee-free TAFE places in 2023 and 480,000 fee free places over four years is welcome, but all TAFE places should be free.

## HOUSING

Considerable attention is given to housing and the Housing Accord with state and territory governments. These measures include building 25,000 social housing properties a year and a guarantee of housing for women and children fleeing family violence.

A new Housing Australia Future Fund will build 30,000 new social and affordable houses over the next five years, mostly by the private sector. The Help to Buy scheme will assist homebuyers to purchase a new or existing home with an equity contribution (part ownership) from the government.

The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) notes that rents have risen by over ten per cent during the past year and affordable housing stock is contracting with nearly 30,000 affordable homes to be withdrawn from the market over the next four years

"We remain deeply concerned for people who have the least and are in chronic financial distress – people who are unemployed, single parents, people with disabilities, students, and people on temporary visas. There isn't enough in this budget to help them right now," ACOSS CEO Cassandra Goldie said.

"People on the lowest incomes are facing multiple and unrelenting crises right now – extreme weather events, rising rents, food, and fuel costs, and the prospect of more losing their jobs means that government must deliver on lifting incomes and social and affordable housing."

The scale of investment in affordable housing falls far short of needs and is compounded by the government's failure to increase Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

The $11 billion subsidies for fossil fuels remains intact and the budget measures on renewables fall short of what is required for Australia to play its important role in reducing climate emissions.

$20 billion is allocated to Rewiring the Nation program to enhance the capacity of the national grid and integrate renewable sources of electricity.

Funding for 400 community batteries and community solar banks are welcome steps in the right direction.

But these measures fall far short of what is required and gas and coal exports are left untouched.

The government's main increase in infrastructure spending is on private development of road and rail projects.

As National President of St Vincent de Paul Society said, "Can we give funds to those who are already very comfortable while a growing number of people in our community will struggle to afford the essentials of life?"

"Australians ... cannot live on the promise of help in the future when times are better."

Next week: The CPA's alternative for a peace and people's budget putting people and the planet first. ✪

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South Australian State Committee & Port Adelaide Branch

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# BUDGET: IF MILITARY SPENDING COULD PROVIDE PEACE, WOULDN'T WE HAVE ACHIEVED THAT ALREADY?

Hannah Middleton

**The Labor Government plans to spend $48.7 billion on the military this financial year, in line with the policies of Morrison and Dutton. There is nothing new here, just the same subservience to US efforts to keep its dominance in the region,**

Australia is subservient to US foreign policy objectives and as a result, military budgets are skewed to suit US military and economic objectives. This has meant that the Australian governments outlays on the military are both astronomically expensive and inappropriate for the Australian people's needs.

Federal Treasurer Jim Chalmers said military spending would increase eight per cent over the financial year, rising above two per cent of GDP over the forward estimates.

Budget papers show military funding, which includes funding for the Australian Signals Directorate, is planned to rise to $52.162 billion in 2023-24 (2.12% of GDP), $54.2 billion in 2024-25 (2.11%) and $56.6 billion in 2025-26 (2.1%).

The budget includes $9.9 billion over ten years on defensive and offensive cyber warfare and intelligence capabilities and $38 billion through to 2040 to increase the number of military personnel by 18,500 to 80,000.

The Navy will get a ship costing $155 million which the budget papers say will support undersea warfare and surveillance systems.

$976 million is allocated in 2022-23 to pay for the disastrous Lockheed Martin F35 planes, $5.1 million for research and development of biofuels and $32.2 million for a training simulator in Townsville

After years of arrogance and neglect, the budget includes $13 million to deepen engagement with Southeast Asia, including appointing a special envoy to Southeast Asia and establishing an Office of Southeast Asia within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Ominously, however, the 2022-23 budget excludes new spending on key capabilities with the government awaiting the recommendations of the Military Strategic Review, due in March 2023.

And all this exorbitant spending comes after revelations that at least twenty-eight military projects are behind schedule by a cumulative ninety-seven years and that the costs of at least eighteen projects have blown out by at least $6.5 billion.

## AUKUS

The government is also facing the coming cost of the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarines, expected to be about $170 billion.

The navy-led taskforce has yet to decide on what type of boat, where it will be built, when it will be delivered, and measures to avoid a capability gap, including an interim submarine.

"What confidence can Australians have in the soundness of this opaque, overpriced, strategically unjustifiable, and massively underspecified project?" is one question being asked.

This is reinforced by a recent *Washington Post* investigation that recently exposed the role played by retired US admirals and former senior US military officials in the Australian decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines, revealing the extent to which the Australian submarine procurement decision has been compromised and corrupted:

"Two retired US admirals and three former US Navy civilian leaders are playing critical but secretive roles as paid advisers to the government of Australia during its negotiations to acquire top-secret nuclear submarine technology from the United States and Britain."

"All told, six retired US admirals have worked for the Australian government since 2015, including one who served for two years as Australia's deputy secretary of defence," the *Washington Post* revealed.

## UKRAINE

The budget papers reveal that since March, Australia has added $213.3 million to its contribution to Ukraine, including $185.6 million for armoured vehicles including Bushmasters, $18.4 million for temporary visas for Ukrainians and $8.7 million for Ukraine's Border Guards to improve cybersecurity.

The government is expected to add to all this when it unveils a fresh package of military assistance.

## WHO PROFITS?

The exorbitant waste of money does not make Australia safer. Instead, it robs funds needed for wage increases, flood and bushfire mitigation, climate change prevention, the NDIS, Close the Gap, and much more.

In contrast, Australian military spending is delighting and enriching international military contractors who are rushing to grab the billions of dollars on offer.

Agreements with Lockheed Martin, Thales, and Raytheon have been extended, Lockheed Martin Australia has opened a new research and development centre in Melbourne, and Northrop Grumman is investing $50 million in a centre at Badgerys Creek.

## PEACE BUDGET

Instead of filling the pockets of the merchants of death, Australia needs a peace budget now.

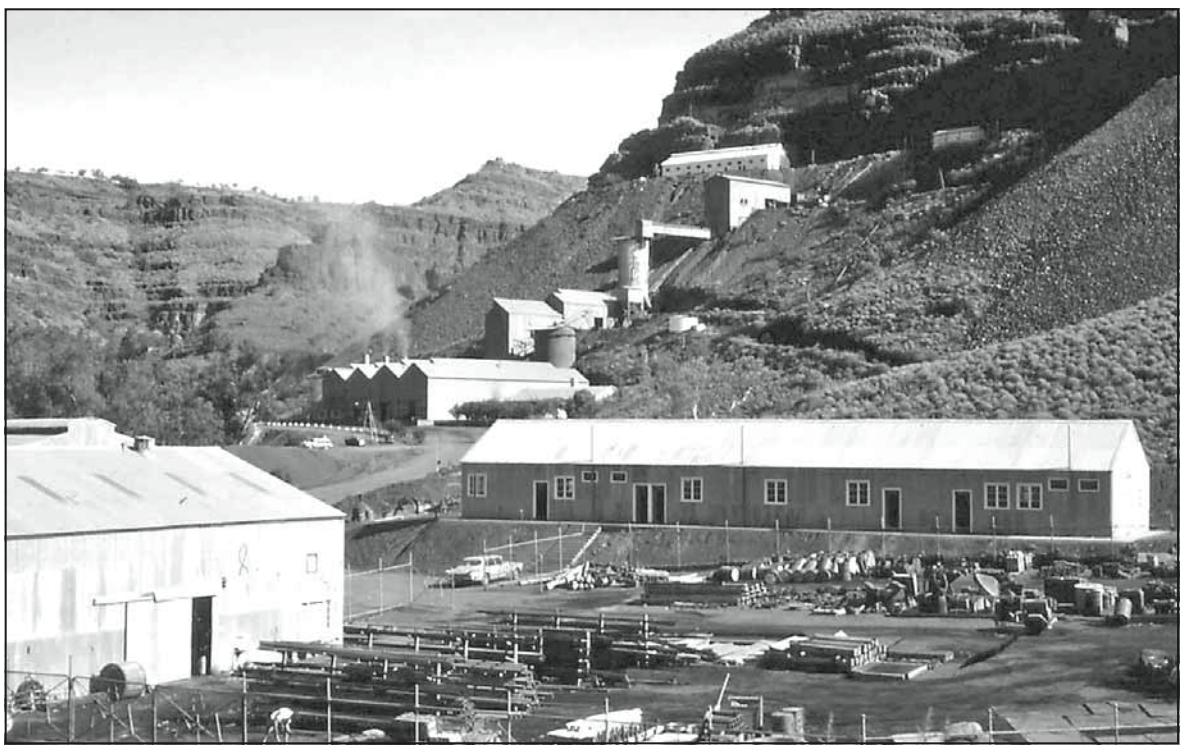
The $1.98 trillion spent around the world on militaries in 2020 did not provide peace or security. Ever-growing militaries have only brought us more human and ecological devastation. More of the same will not change the situation.

It should be obvious that countries trying to outspend one another by buying more and more deadly weapons does not create peace or security. It has not worked in the past and it never will.

The enormous military budget must be redirected to a peace budget for healthcare, housing, education, social services, and sustainable development. That is the road to security and peace. ✪

Photo: Matt Hrkac (matthrkac.com.au) – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

# THE LEGACY OF ASBESTOS MINING AT WITTENOOM



Wittenoom Gorge Mine – 1962. The mine in operation. The asbestos dust from the "bagging" room often cast a blue haze over the area. Breathing that dust was deadly for those that lived and worked there.
Photo: Philip Schubert – flickr.com (CC BY-ND 2.0)

Peter Wills

**"If the sugar refining company won't come to my rescue/ Who's going to save me?" So goes the song *Blue Sky Mine* by Australian band Midnight oil. A song about the effects of asbestos mining on the workers and inhabitants of Wittenoom, a mine owned and run by sugar refining company CSR. Even when it became obvious that asbestos mining was detrimental to the health of the workers and was killing them they continued mining it until the mine was shut down in 1966 due to unprofitability and growing health concerns.**

The health issues connected with the mining and use of asbestos were widely known by the 1930s yet this information was hidden by medical institutions. Asbestos was widely used by all branches of the military at the time so the government, with the help of medical institutions, embarked on possibly the worst act of indifference to worker's health ever in Australia, through denial and cover-ups, it was a shameful act.

CSR operated the asbestos mine at Wittenoom from 1943 until its eventual closure in 1966. The first case of Mesothelioma was diagnosed in 1962 by the West Australian medical officer Dr Mc Nulty. He expressed his concern that the mine was being run in a manner detrimental to the health of the workers and inhabitants to both the CSR management and the west Australian government, but CSR threatened to shut the mine down if it was forced to spend money on safer mining processes so it continued until 1963.

It is incredulous that despite the many warnings from doctors and mining inspectors, CSR continued to run the mine and milling operations with little regard for dust suppression, which is now considered to be the reason for many premature deaths of former Wittenoom workers and inhabitants many years later.

During the 1970s Dr Janet Elder, Senior Chest Physician at the University of Department of Medicine at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, was horrified by the speed with which the new cases of mesothelioma and other asbestos-caused diseases were developing amongst the former Wittenoom workers. "The dreadful tragedy," she recalls, "was that so many of its victims were very young and very fit when they went there."

Over 2000 former workers and inhabitants eventually died from mesothelioma. Although compensation was eventually granted through the courts, for many it was too late, passing from the disease before they received anything.

One of the legacies of this shameful example of capitalist greed and profit before people is that the Wittenoom area now has the dubious distinction of being the largest contaminated site in the southern hemisphere, estimates of remediation costs run into the hundreds of million dollars. The first custodians of the red-dirt country in the state's Pilbara region are the Banjima people. Their land is still scarred by mountains of asbestos tailings.

The Banjima people have been unable to access their land and sacred sites for over sixty years due to the level of contamination and the fact that Hancock mining, owned by Gina Reinhardt, still holds an iron ore lease over the land in the Wittenoom gorge. It is a major concern to them that further damage may be done to sacred sites and artefacts.

Successive governments have focused on closing the town and removing residents from the area, but what the WA state government really needs to do is clean up the mess created by CSR, and send them the bill, so that the Banjima people can access the land they legally own again. ✪

**Over 2000 former workers and inhabitants eventually died from mesothelioma.**

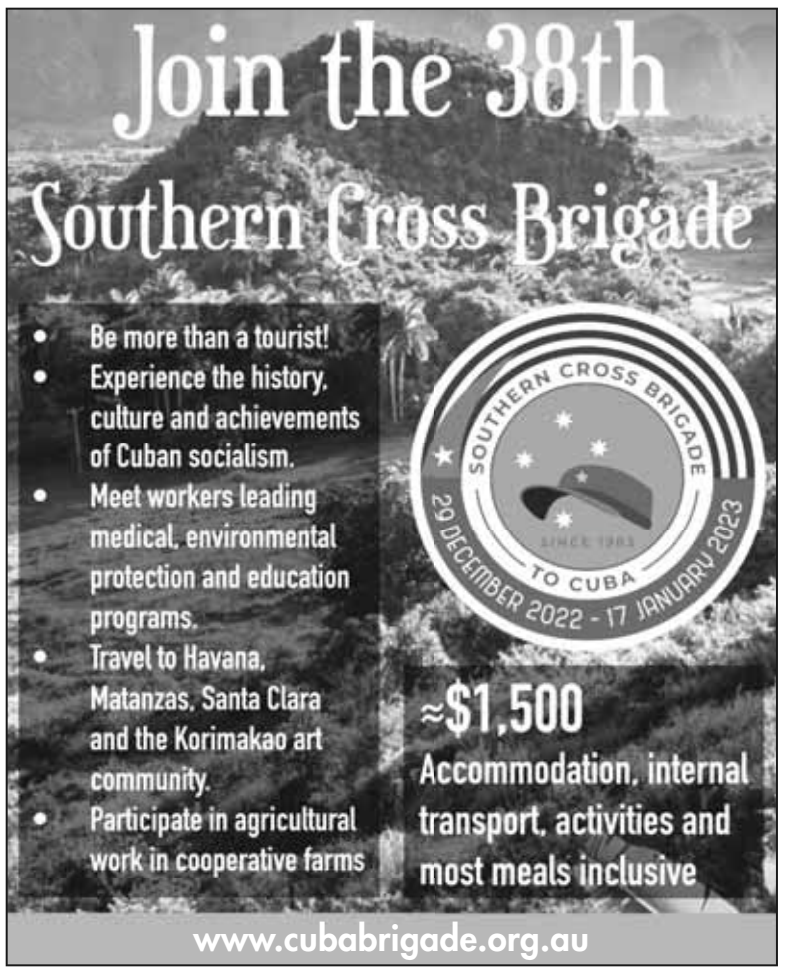
## Dingo bytes

The wholesale theft from Optus and Medibank of the personal information of their customers by hackers brings forth a quote from Karl Marx: "Finally, there came a time when everything that men had considered as inalienable became an object of exchange, of traffic and could be alienated. This is the time when the very things which till then had been communicated, but never exchanged; given but never sold; acquired but never bought – virtue, love, conviction, knowledge, conscience – when everything finally passed into commerce. It is the time of general corruption, of universal venality, or, to speak in terms of political economy, the time when everything, moral or physical, is brought to the market to be assessed at its truest value." Marx – *The Poverty of Philosophy*

A small group of paediatric nurses from Sydney Children's Hospital in Randwick gathered in their own time and called on the NSW government to introduce safe nurse-to-patient ratios into paediatric wards across the state. With emergency department attendances and admissions to Sydney Children's Hospital on the rise, NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) members fear nurses are struggling to care for infants or children safely, and need a ratio of one nurse to every three patients. NSWNMA General Secretary, Shaye Candish, said infants and young children were some of the most vulnerable patients, who often cannot communicate what is wrong and do require specialised care. "Our members at Sydney Children's Hospital are highly skilled clinicians. They want to be able to deliver safe and effective care to paediatric patients coming through the emergency department doors and onto their wards," said Candish.

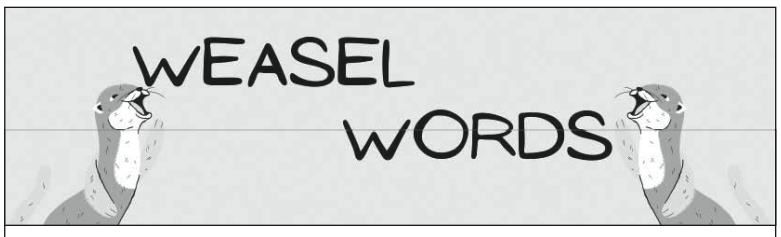
"It is not safe to have sick kids and their families waiting for extended periods to start treatment given how quickly they can deteriorate. Adequate and regular observations are fundamental in paediatric nursing, yet we know this is diminished every time a shift is understaffed. To deliver the best health outcomes for sick infants and young children, we need the NSW government to ensure working conditions inside paediatric EDs and wards are safe for nurses, and there is adequate support for early career paediatric nurses developing their clinical scope."

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: The deployment of US nuclear armed B52 bombers near Darwin highlights the Albanese government's complete subjugation to crisis-ridden imperialism, confirming Australia's main role in the world as a US military base and spearhead strike force against China. Agreements such as the Pacific Nuclear Free Treaty, meant to prohibit nation states in the region from stationing nuclear weapons on their territories, are made null and void as independence and sovereignty are dumped overboard.



# PERTH: CASSIUS TURVEY VIGIL

**Below are some images of one of the many vigils held across the country for Cassius Turvey. Solidarity with the Turvey family. Read our editorial (page 2) for more information.**




### SOVEREIGN

/ˈsɒv.ər.ɪn/

A sovereign country, Wikipedia tells us, is "a political entity […] that has supreme legitimate authority over territory." Unless you're one of those "sovereign citizen" nutcases (people who think they can declare independence from their country on an individual basis), that's what it means. A moment's thought would show that the weasel-ishness is built into the definition, in the gap between "supreme" and "legitimate." Who gets to say the authority is "legitimate?" Usually it's the country doing the supreming, followed closely by the UN playing catch-up. Unless you're Israel, in which case the authority is usually the Israeli "Self-Defence" force, with a thumbs up from the United States.

Recently the Albanese Labor government kept a promise and reversed the Morrison Liberal government's cynical decision to recognise West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in a vain attempt to make voters in Wentworth and Goldstein and other seats with a lot of Australian Jewish voters in them overlook the corruption and active hatred of workers and reneweable energy which characterised the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government.

Now that the ALP has kept its promise not to recognise West Jerusalem as the capital, more Jewish electors are being appealed to by Zoe Daniel in Melbourne's Goldstein. Daniel has said that "every sovereign nation, including Israel, has the right to determine its own capital." We know this is aimed squarely at any Goldstein voters for whom Israel can do no wrong, but we do hope news of the Daniel Principle doesn't get around. If countries took it seriously, what's to stop New Zealand sovereignly determining that its' capital is Brisbane, or Canada crying "sovereignity and Zoe Daniel!" and then determining that Toronto is too cold and they'd like Miami as the new seat of Canadian (sovereign) power. The possibilities, like the cynicism, are endless.

### DEMOCRATIC (THE ONLY COUNTRY)

/ˌdem.əˈkræt.ɪk/

Look, I'm not going to do an entire Weasel Words column on the West Jerusalem thing, or the editor will tell me to lift my game, but this is irresistible. Attempting to "both sides" the question of why the Albanese government should keep a promise and reverse what John Hewson has described as "knee-jerk Trumpianism" on Morrison's part, Nine-Fairfax, formerly known as *The Age*, got Josh Feldman to rattle off a piece opining that since King David conquered Jerusalem that should be the end of the matter (since some scholars think David is as real as King Arthur, so maybe the British should move their capital to Camelot), and then bringing up an old chestnut that feels even older than King David; Israel is Australia's "only democratic ally in a volatilve region." Yeah right, Palestine has elections, but Israel doesn't like the results. Egypt had elections, but they elected an Islamist government that was crushed by a military coup unprotested at by those democracy-loving Israelis and Americans. Jordan has elections, and they're right next door. Lebanon also has elections, but maybe Josh Feldman thinks they're too Arabic about it.

### THUG

/θʌg/

Can't believe I missed this one. A "thug" is a ruffian, a hoodlum, someone who doesn't mind a bit of violence. Arbitrary violence is a bad thing, so we don't like thugs. But did you know you can be a thug without going to be trouble of belting people and risking arrest or being belted back? Easy-peasy! Just join a union that actually achieves things for its members. For Liberal Party leaders, "union" and "thug" go together like "grant" and "spreadsheet-showing-list-of-marginal-electorates."

*Have your say!*
*Write a letter to the Editor*

email: **editor@cpa.org.au**

# CPA: SUBMISSION TO THE D

**The Communist Party of Australia (CPA) is a democratic, transparent and accountable organization. We are member led and governed by a Central Committee elected every four years from our membership. We are committed to the working class of Australia with no other motivation than to act in their interests.**

The 2013 Defence White paper that precedes this review found Defence had an unaffordable investment program. Since then, the dollars spent on military have been steadily rising with a planned expenditure for the next ten years of quarter of a trillion dollars placing a significant burden on the back of the working class of this country.

Military spending by successive Australian governments has outstripped funding for climate action, industries, education, and healthcare. More and more, successive governments of both major parties have embraced the concept that government cannot take responsibility for anything beyond defence and should leave it all to the markets. This had led to dangerous failures and sets Australia on the same path as the US towards growing structural violence and the threat of internal instability.

Neglecting social expenditure places a massive strain on our future economy and environment. It also masks the shift in expenditure away from the life necessities of the people such as health and education under the premise of limited dollars. It would be much more productive and give greater protection to plan for peace.

We make this submission to the Defence Strategic Review in the hope of broadening the discussion on what constitutes security in the interests of the Australian people.

If the Defence Review is to be anything more than a paper tiger, it must carefully examine what real threats exist and what we can do about them. The review must analyse the triggers for war, our role with partners and allies and what is in the interests of the Australian people.

The terms of reference of the review are to consider what force posture and force structure are now required to ensure that Defence has the right capabilities to meet the growing strategic challenges that Australia and its partner countries will face in coming years. The review commits to being a holistic consideration of those terms.

We raise our concern here that in the call for submissions the review named Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) as a think tank of note. ASPI acquires their funding from a range of sources including the Australian department of defence, foreign governments and their departments such the US department of Defence, private interests such as Lockheed Martin, Thales and BAE systems applied intelligence. Invested interests must be considered when evaluating submissions from bodies funded by manufacturers and dealers of weapons.

Professor Tanter suggests that we might keep in mind the example of Costa Rica which got rid of its military and spent the money on education and health instead. They couldn't win a war but having no military made it impossible for anyone to invade on the grounds that it was a threat. They have been safe ever since.

## THE US ALLIANCE

Crucially for the Review, the time has surely arrived when we should re-evaluate our defence relationship with the United States.

The Defence Review must start from scratch without preconceived assumptions or encumbered by past practice and beliefs.

However, we share the concern that the Review will be used to double down on the status quo (our alliance with the US) rather than considering how Australia can best maintain its security and prosperity as the balance of power within the global system continues its realignment from a unipolar to a multipolar system.

The US is the most violent and aggressive country in the world. The US has never had a decade without war. Since its founding in 1776, the US has been at war ninety-three per cent of the time in most areas of the world. The US maintains 800 military bases or sites around the world, including in Australia. The US has massive deployments of materiel and troops in Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Guahan (Guam).

We are attaching ourselves uncritically to a declining but dangerous hegemon engaged in a struggle for supremacy. The Review must examine how much we are willing to sacrifice for the perpetuation of American global supremacy.

Australia remains subservient to US foreign policy objectives and as a result defence budgets have been skewed to suit US military and economic objectives. This has meant that Australian government outlays on the military are both astronomically expensive and mostly inappropriate for Australian peoples' needs.

The CPA supports Australia's independence in military decision making which must include a space for both a parliamentary and public voice. We oppose joining offensive wars and encourage the notion of common security based on the principle that that no nation, community or individual can be secure without other nations, communities, and individuals enjoying the same level of security.

Comprehensive security goes beyond the traditional realist state-centric and military approach and includes human, economic, and environmental dimensions as well as a subjective feeling of security or insecurity of individuals. We support human security as a people-centred approach to foreign policy and argue for sustainable stability based on protecting people from threats to their rights, health, and life.

## AUKUS

In AUKUS we are effectively fusing our Navy with that of the US so that we can operate together in the South China Sea and threaten China. We are surrendering more and more of our strategic autonomy by encouraging the US to use Northern Australia as a forward base against China as if the US does not have enough giant military bases ringing China.

It is well known that the need for the submarines stemmed from concerns in the US defence community years ago about the so-called "submarine gap" in the containment ring around China – which they intended Australia to fill. And we would pay for it!

The risks of the AUKUS project for Australia are strategic, financial, technological, regulatory, and deformations of force structure and opportunity costs. It is a project the Review should clearly reject.

## FUTURE STRATEGIC CHALLENGES – CHINA

If Australia wishes to review its defence strategies realistically, the Review must reject unsubstantiated accusations against China, think more independently and not toe the American line

China is not Australia's enemy. If it is an enemy and Australia continues to trade with China as it does, it reflects a schizophrenic attitude that we have to sort out before spending vast amounts of money preparing to fight an enemy that is of our own making.

The US is goading and provoking China and wants Australia to join it. And we are obliging. The Review must recognise that our alliance with the United States is the greatest single risk factor for a conflict with China.

If China and the US went to war, China would then, but only then, have a motive to attack Australia and would certainly do so if only to take out American assets like Pine Gap, the Northwest Cape, Amberly, and perhaps Darwin where US marines are based.

The threat we face from China is if we continue to act in our region as a proxy for the US. Other regional countries are not doing so.

The Review must take into serious account that a deteriorating relationship with our major trading partner China (where our trade interdependence is growing) as well as increasing isolation from regional countries is detrimental to Australia's prosperity and our chances of dealing with the real risks to Australia's energy, water, soils, and climate. Australia cannot fight a war with China and avoid devastating our economy.

## FUTURE STRATEGIC CHALLENGES – ENVIRONMENT

Prime Minister Albanese in his update noted that previous "Defence planning has assumed a ten-year strategic warning time for a major conventional attack against Australia. This is no longer an appropriate basis for defence planning." He identified the greatest threats to "Australian interests" as direct and indirect targeting by coercion, competition, and "grey-zone" activities.

While we agree with the above statements, we note that this review appears to have a narrower focus on conventional military

USS Blue Ridge entering Sydney Harbour before the st

planning and expenditure and a more of the same approach with a focus on weapon expansion and bases despite the commitment that it would be holistic.

We note also that the identified threats fail to recognise climate change, disruptions to supply chains, housing shortages, resource constraints and growing inequality as threats. The CPA believes the latter presents the greatest threat to all Australians and must inform any future strategic security expenditure. The security of the nation state should not be a goal in itself, but must be for the benefit of the society.

Prime Minister Albanese went on to say "Australia cannot rely on a timely warning ahead of a conflict occurring, because of growing regional military capabilities and the speed at which they can be deployed, and therefore Australia cannot assume it can gradually adjust military capability and preparedness in response to emerging challenges."

The CPA says, nor can it or should it

**Our military and defence leaders are heavily dependent on the US Departments of Defence and State, the CIA and the FBI for advice. We act as their branch offices.**

# EFENCE STRATEGIC REVIEW

tart of the Australia-US exercise Talisman Sabre 2015. Photo: Royal Australian Navy – flickr.com (CC BY-NC 2.0)

assume expenditure on submarines and bases will meet the requirements of a conflict especially when threats may come in the form of blockades, externalities such as disease, and environmental catastrophes.

We assert that the military itself is a threat to climate. It consumes huge quantities of oil in research, testing, and production in preparation for war and war itself has rendered large areas uninhabitable as well as created tens of millions of refugees. This has the effect of making huge demands on forest, water, and other resources, leading to land degradation and pollution. Indeed, all military activity is highly polluting, highly damaging to the environment and a major contributor to climate change.

The Federal budget tells a clear story of Australia' misplaced priorities. The money that Australia spends on environmental protection is $3.4 billion. The money spent on the military is $48 billion this financial year and an estimated quarter of a trillion dollars over the next 10 years.

Climate change must now be given top priority on the political agenda as the greatest threat to security. Worldwide population growth and the rise of a global urban middle class are driving an enormous increase in demand for energy, water, food, minerals, land, and other natural resources. The transition to renewable energy sources is an urgent challenge.

It is essential that funding is not diverted away from essential resources to fund weaponry for the defence of an unliveable environment. More and more climate catastrophes such as heat waves, drought, fires, and floods will drive migration, along with the growing number of people moving from unstable states confronted with protracted internal and regional conflicts.

The OECD forecasts that by around 2030 almost half of the world's population will be confronted with the negative effects of the rising sea level and that this will cause huge numbers of people to seek their fortune elsewhere.

Submarines and missiles will never provide solutions to this insecurity. The greatest co-operation is needed now. Developed countries must address their own emissions and start supporting developing countries with infrastructure to transition to a low emissions world. In that way the pressures of displacement that will inevitably drive conflict can be managed for more peaceful outcomes.

## PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS

It should be obvious by now that countries trying to outspend one another by buying more and more deadly weapons systems does not create peace or security. It has not worked in the past and it never will.

Longer term strategic investment, Globalisation and the emergence of new economic powers has seen the relationship between economic and military security become a far more prominent issue. Flow security is increasingly important and was very much evident in the early days of the COVID pandemic which saw many Australians faced with shortages such as pharmaceuticals which had never been experienced before.

Safeguarding global flows of goods and services, infrastructural hubs and systems must now be seen as having utmost importance and cannot be addressed by protecting national territory against hostile armies.

Priority expenditure in the interest of security must include the establishment of an Australian merchant fleet to meet the challenges of flow security. National and international security are linked to the security of the society and the individual.

Another emerging threat is cyber security with approximately ninety-five per cent of all intercontinental communication dependant on the 600,000 miles of submarine fibre optic cable and some twenty-four cable landing points. An attack on this infrastructure could cause enormous damage for the global economy because of the total reliance of worldwide electronic data traffic on it.

None of these threats can be dealt with by conventional wars. Only comprehensive security can bring sustainable peace.

## DANGEROUS INFLUENCE

The Review faces a profound difficulty in reaching genuinely independent recommendations due to the undue influence of a foreign power – the United States.

Our military and defence leaders are heavily dependent on the US Departments of Defence and State, the CIA and the FBI for advice. We act as their branch offices.

The US funds our War Memorial and the Australian Strategic Policy Institute and many other fronts for US military and business interests. The US Studies Centres in Sydney and Perth are agencies of foreign influence.

We quote here from an article by John Menadue:

> The *Washington Post* has found that a retired US Admiral is 'now a Deputy Secretary of Defense for Australia' ... [and] exposed how retired US Admirals have been employed as highly paid consultants to shape our policies on submarines.
>
> This is more than "foreign influence." It looks more like foreign control.
>
> ... the abdication of responsibility of our politicians, public officials and journalists .... They have been captured by American interests, particularly the US military and industrial complex that former President Eisenhower warned us about.
>
> But all the $10 million of funding to US Admirals is of lesser concern than the peddling of US interference in our national security debate.
>
> This is not just a national disgrace. It is positively dangerous.
>
> Malcolm Fraser called the US a dangerous ally.
>
> Our future is not to be a spear carrier for the US in our region. Our future is learning to live securely in our own region.

## COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY

The CPA proposes that if the government is committed to a holistic approach and real preparedness for conflict, it must choose comprehensive rather than conventional security.

This must begin with the acceptance of a multipolar world. Always the best security is co-operation and diplomacy. In a comprehensive defence approach, besides considering military aspects of countering threats, threats against human security must be considered. A comprehensive defence approach tries to distinguish threats against national security emerging from the human security domain. This requires their effects on national security to be analysed to develop and propose the ways to counter these threats.

## MILITARY SPENDING HASN'T CREATED PEACE

Courage will be needed to choose between allocation of resources to what makes Australia strong and healthy as a nation on the one hand, and deeper spending on military capabilities on the other.

What the Defence Review should achieve is a review of Australia's overall strategic circumstances. Australia must be worth defending, we must have economic, environmental and social policies to improve our sustainable development. That raises questions of the proportion of public monies that should go to defence rather than national improvement.

The CPA advocates for the redirection of the enormous military budget to a peace budget for healthcare, housing, education, social services and sustainable development. That is the road to real security and peace.

# COMRADE IRVING'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE 22ND INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF COMMUNIST AND WORKERS' PARTIES

The following is a speech delivered by Communist Party of Australia General Secretary Andrew Irving at the 22nd International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties.

27th to 29th October 2022, Havana, Cuba.

**The Communist Party of Australia (CPA) is pleased to be able to speak at this important forum and thanks the Communist Party of Cuba for organising the 22nd International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. It is a great opportunity to visit socialist Cuba and share this experience with the other comrades from the parties in attendance.**

I begin by acknowledging comrade Miguel Diaz-Canel General Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba and president of Cuba. We appreciate the great responsibility he inherited from the leaders of the revolution in particular comrade Fidel Castro. We salute Fidel & Raul Castro, Che Guevara and the many other historical leaders of this victorious socialist revolution ninety miles from the United States.

The CPA is proud to stand in solidarity with the Cuban revolution and its people. For many years our members have been active in Cuban solidarity, in branches of the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society (ACFS), some of which were founded by our members.

For example, in Sydney and Perth, CPA and ACFS members continue to rally on the 17th of each month outside their local US consulates. That date was chosen internationally after the successful campaign for the freedom of the Cuban Five heroes. We share these actions in a global network knowing from small things big things grow when it is organised and shared.

We salute the fact that despite the criminal US blockade on Cuba that has tried to destroy the socialist revolution for more than sixty years, Cuba was able to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic. Its scientists developed successful vaccines against the virus and shared its technology and personnel with other countries, despite the US unilateral coercive measures.

The CPA also stands in solidarity with other struggles in Latin America like the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and welcomes the recent electoral victories by progressive governments. We stand with the people of Palestine, their campaign to end Zionist occupation, and campaign for recognition of an independent Palestinian state.

Our delegates come to this conference to listen to the experiences of our fraternal Communist and Workers' Parties. Consider and discuss their reports on how the universal theories and principles set out by Marx, Engels, and Lenin have been applied in practice and applied to their national characteristics.

At our 14th National Congress held at the end of February 2022 under the slogan "Build the Party for a Socialist Future" our delegates strongly endorsed a resolution that continued a commitment to the working-class and the application of Marxism-Leninism to the national conditions and the international challenges that have confronted the workers' movement and its unity in struggle against the imperialists. Together we have confronted significant attacks and have had many victories against the common enemy and their system of exploitation.

In Australia there has been a surge in support of the struggle for change and a new generation of revolutionaries who are willing to commit themselves to the movement that seeks the elimination of capitalism. But this is providing a real challenge to our Party and its ability to turn this enthusiasm into an organised, disciplined, mature, and active force that is committed to scientific socialism and the leadership of the working class.

The application of class-based politics to the crucial issues in Australia, such as the national question, work in trade unions, peace, and the environment is essential in creating the conditions for social change in our country.

The building of a militant political trade union movement lead by Communists, now includes the study by our cadres of Lenin's Three sources and component parts of Marxism with a focus on political economy and the history of Dialectical Materialism and analysis of contradictions by Marx and Engels. This gives our comrades the strongest foundational understanding of the economic and social realities they will need to apply to collectively build our party's political vanguard role in workers push for real change.

The task for Communists is to determine what is universal and what is specific to the reality that we encounter in society. Communists do not require to mechanically apply models to realities for which they are unsuited. We must strengthen our understanding of Scientific Socialism, and the importance of theory, that is tested in practice to overcome opportunism and dogma.

One example is our commitment to Peace with the Central Committee initiating a new significant party-wide campaign against Australia's involvement in the AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom & United States) Agreement.

The AUKUS alliance represents an intensification of the imperialist threats to the countries of our region and Australia's independence, and is clearly directed at preparation for war with China. Unwillingly locking our people and nation into an offensive military build-up which will cost Australians $48 Billion this year, growing to a quarter of a trillion over 10 years.

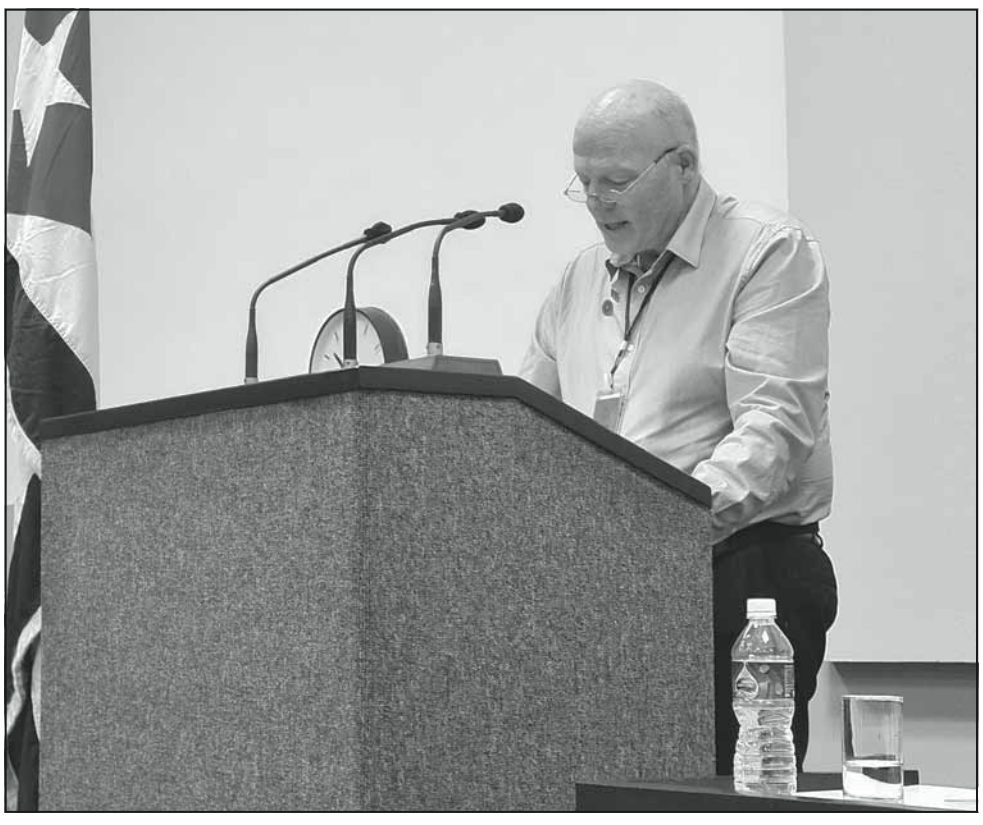
Our new Peace Budget campaign will focus on the redirection of money which is desperately needed by the community for health care, schools, aged care, community services, and housing. It must also be directed to addressing the climate crisis, help develop alternative renewable energy, many other significant environmental challenges and the communities impacted by extreme weather disasters. The Australian government says that we cannot afford to help others in our region and this agreement has once again isolated us from our neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region.

The application of Scientific Socialism continues to inspire and provide proof of the words of Marx, Engels and Lenin. They are not just part of the past or a superseded understanding of the reality of nature. They are now being given new life and meaning by comrades advancing the theories that inspire, liberate and energise the people. Giving them tools and knowledge that has and will engage, win over, and achieve advancements that show what is possible and how the workers can build a world based on mutual respect, common interest, friendship, and the betterment of all.

Our party is dedicated to studying and applying Marxist-Leninist theory in campaigns to deepen our understanding and building a strong, dynamic and enthusiastic movement committed to internationalism and a future Socialist society.

Finally, the CPA joins the demand of the Cuban people to end the criminal US blockade, the removal of Cuba from the unilateral US list of countries sponsors of terrorism, the end of subversive actions against the people, and the return of Guantánamo Bay to the people of Cuba!

Long live the Cuban revolution!
Long live Marxism-Leninism!
Long live international solidarity!
Long live Fidel!



Andrew Irving giving his speech.

Andrew Irving, Gerry Grainger, Vinnie Molina.

# OP-ED: WHY AMERICA IS ALARMED

Eileen Whitehead

**Every five years, the delegates of the Communist Party of China (CPC) – 96 million members – meet to elect its top leaders and set the future direction of the party. Its 20th Congress was held from 16th - 22nd October, 2022.**

One of the main themes of the congress this year was "rejuvenation" of the country through "a Chinese path to modernisation," and in his report to congress, Xi Jinping, the CPC's general secretary, sketched out the way forward to build China "into a modern socialist country."

Xi spoke about the situation that the Chinese people faced a decade ago, mentioning the great achievements that had been secured in reform, opening up, and socialist modernisation. He did not, however, ignore the number of prominent issues and problems which had been building for years or those just emerging, which demanded urgent action. Xi mentioned the "slide toward weak, hollow, and watered-down party leadership," pointing out that "money worship, hedonism, egocentricity, and historical nihilism" were deep-seated problems in a development process that was "imbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable": a significant self-criticism made by the leader of the country for the past decade.

The history of the CPC is remarkable, going from the eleventh poorest country in the world in 1949 to become the world's second-largest economy, growing from 58.8 trillion yuan in 2013 to 114.37 trillion yuan in 2021. In terms of the world economy, China's GDP was 18.5 per cent of the global total in 2021, and the country was responsible for thirty per cent of world economic growth from 2013 to 2021. China also manufactured thirty per cent of the world's goods in 2021, up from more than twenty per cent in 2012. This adds to the decades of an historically unprecedented growth rate of 9.8 per cent per year from 1978 to 2014 since the launching of economic reform in China in 1978. These economic achievements are historic and did not come without their set of challenges and consequences.

Xi Jinping's first task after taking over as general secretary of the CPC was to tackle corruption. In his inaugural speech as the party head in 2013, Xi said he was committed to "the fighting of tigers and flies at the same time," referring to the corruption that had spread from the high echelons down to the grassroots level within the party and the government. He reduced official meetings by twenty-five per cent and removed 160,000 "phantom staff" from the government payroll, also stopping 2,580 "unnecessary" official building projects.

From November 2012 to April 2022, nearly 4.4 million cases involving 4.7 million officials were investigated in the fight against corruption. Party members were not immune from investigation either. In the first half of this year alone, twenty-four senior officials were investigated for corruption, and former ministers, provincial governors, and presidents of the biggest state-owned banks have been expelled from the party and given harsh sentences, including life imprisonment.

This "capitalist" behaviour from 1978 produced an increasing inequality and Xi launched a mass line campaigns to bring the party closer to the grassroots. A campaign in 2014 was to target poverty alleviation, where 800,000 party cadres were sent to survey and visit 128,000 villages. In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme poverty was eradicated.

This party correction and Xi's actions renewed the Chinese people's confidence in the government and, according to a 2020 research paper by Harvard Kennedy School's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, the overall satisfaction with the government's performance was 93.1 per cent in 2016. There had been significant growth in the more underdeveloped regions in the countryside, together with increased social services, trust in local officials, and the campaign against poverty.

At the 20th Congress, Xi Jinping reflected on the history of colonialism and stated: "China will not tread the old path of war, colonisation, and plunder taken by some countries. That brutal and blood-stained path of enrichment at the expense of others caused great suffering for the people of developing countries. We will stand firmly on the right side of history and on the side of human progress."

China wants to collaborate with other countries. The Belt and Road Initiative, for instance, launched in 2013 is to encourage cooperation and development and has built much-needed infrastructure with investment and construction contracts totalling $1 trillion in almost 150 countries. China is tackling the climate catastrophe by planting a quarter of the world's new forests over the past decade. It has become a world leader in renewable energy investment and electric vehicle production. China has adopted a COVID-19 policy that prioritises lives over profit, donating 325 million doses of vaccines. The life expectancy of Chinese people has, for the first time, surpassed life expectancy in the United States.

This is the result of the long process undertaken by the government toward achieving and ensuring social development. From an early focus on growth rates, Xi Jinping has shifted the emphasis to defusing major financial risks, eradicating poverty, and controlling pollution. But first and foremost, Xi has restored Chinese dignity. ✪

Photo: Thomas Galvez – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

**"China will not tread the old path of war, colonisation, and plunder taken by some countries. That brutal and blood-stained path of enrichment at the expense of others caused great suffering for the people of developing countries. We will stand firmly on the right side of history and on the side of human progress."**

**Xi Jinping**

# DORISE NIELSEN: GROUNDBREAKING COMMUNIST MP IN CANADA, PEOPLE'S HERO IN CHINA

Mike Wu

**Norman Bethune is a well-known figure in the history of Canada–China relations. But there is another legendary figure: Dorise Nielsen, the first Member of Parliament from the Communist Party of Canada, went to China in her later years to support the Chinese people's socialist construction, until her death in Beijing in 1980.**

Dorise was born in London, England in 1902 and settled in Saskatchewan in 1927 to work as a public school teacher. Dorise initially did not concern herself with politics, until the Great Depression broke out in 1929.

During the Depression, Dorise saw with her own eyes how workers, farmers, the ill and the old struggled under capitalism. In 1933, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) held its first convention and approved the Regina Manifesto, which described capitalism as an unjust and inhumane system that concentrated power and wealth in a small elite while leaving most people in poverty.

Two events convinced Dorise to join the Communist Party of Canada. In July 1936, she had heard the Party's General Secretary Tim Buck speak during the CCF provincial convention. She was deeply impressed by his charisma and his call for the working class to unite and defeat the establishment of Liberals and Conservatives. One year later, Dorise helped raise money to send the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion to Spain and met Norman Bethune on his cross-country tour in support of Republican Spain. By this time, she had joined the Communist Party.

In Saskatchewan during the 1940 federal election, the Communist Party initiated a popular front called the United Progressive Movement which included members of the CCF and other reformers and populists. Dorise was the United Progressive candidate in North Battleford, which she won by defeating Liberal incumbent Cameron Ross McIntosh. She had made history by becoming the first communist MP elected in Canada and North America.

After the federal government banned the Communist Party in 1940, Dorise joined the Labor-Progressive Party, which was the Party's legal political organisation. As the third woman elected to Canada's Parliament and the first to still be raising young children while holding political office, Dorise worked on behalf of women and children. She was the first MP to support public daycare, arguing that "It is being tied to all the multitudinous tasks of home and family that robs women of the opportunity to compete with men, not her inferiority." She knew that only when a socialist economy lifted the burdens of childcare and housework from the shoulders of individual women would they have equal footing with men.

Dorise worked to promote public healthcare, pointing to the number of infant deaths and the high mortality rate from tuberculosis at the time.

After losing her seat in 1945 and despite the difficulties of the Cold War, Dorise continued fighting for peace and feminism. Dorise helped found the Congress of Canadian Women, attended the 1948 Women's International Democratic Federation Peace Congress in Budapest and helped found the Canadian Peace Congress.

Travelling under the alias Judy Godefroy, Dorise moved to the People's Republic of China in 1957, to teach English at Beijing Foreign Studies University. As the only Canadian in Beijing, she became the link of friendship between China and Canada.

Throughout the late 1950s and 1960s – including during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, policies which went terribly awry during socialist construction – Dorise continued actively in China. She worked in factories and farms and helped compile English-Chinese dictionaries and public school textbooks. In 1962, Dorise became a citizen of the People's Republic of China.

For health reasons, Dorise left the Beijing Foreign Studies University in the late 1960s and began working as an editor at Foreign Languages Press. There, she helped translate works by the leaders of the People's Republic of China, important Party and government documents, and books reflecting the contemporary conditions and traditional culture of China. When the Communist Party of China started to consider economic reform soon after Richard Nixon's visit, Dorise suggested the importance of developing education and technology. She also helped with programs for Chinese students studying abroad.

Dorise died in Beijing on 9th December, 1980. In recognition of her long service to China, a memorial service was held at Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery. In her eulogy, the director of the Foreign Languages Press noted that Dorise Nielsen "had a deep love of China and Chinese people, she lived a very simple life and was never extravagant, her feeling for the socialist construction was profound."

*Peoples Voice* ✪

Dorise Nielsen. (Public Domain)

# 22ND INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF COMMUNIST AND WORKERS PARTIES MET IN HAVANA

Vinnie Molina

**The 22nd International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties (IMCWP) met in Havana on 27th-29th October 2022 hosted by the Communist Party of Cuba (CPC). The event attended by 150 delegates from seventy-eight parties and sixty countries was a great success. It closed with a final Declaration and an action plan which were adopted unanimously.**

The CPA delegation led by the General Secretary comrade Andrew Irving made a contribution to the meeting that was well received and is made available to *Guardian* readers (page 8). An important part of the event was the many opportunities, formal and informal, for the CPA delegation to exchange views with other delegations present. An important bilateral meeting was held with the CPC's international department. At this meeting both delegations exchanged views on a number of issues including the effects of the criminal US blockade on the Cuban people which also impacts Australian citizens. We spoke also on the upcoming Resolution against the US blockade on Cuba before the UN General Assembly. It is expected that for the 30th consecutive time the overwhelming majority of the UN General Assembly will vote in favour of the Cuba's resolution. In 2021, 184 countries voted against the US blockade which was supported only by the United States and Israel.

The CPA will stand with other organisations in Australia in support of the Cuban resolution on 2nd-3rd November 2022. Several organisations will demonstrate their support for Cuba and demand the end of the criminal US blockade.

The delegations participated in the different activities which allowed them to share with Cuban workers and people. Visits were organised to the new Fidel Castro Centre, the Centre for Genetic Engineering, and Biotechnology (CIGB), the La Timba neighbourhood currently part of a transformation project, and other visits of interest.

Delegates were able to witness the effects of the blockade on the Cuban people during their stay. The blockade has a criminal effect on the people and makes it difficult for the Cuban government to be able to purchase basic foodstuffs and medicines. It was noted that despite the blockade Cuba was able to develop 5 vaccines and vaccinate the entire population against Covid, to become the only country in the world able to inoculate children under 2 years of age and to develop the first nasal vaccine against the virus.

The closing ceremony was attended by the CPC's General Secretary and President of Cuba, comrade Miguel Diaz-Canel. His closing remarks highlighted the fact that the 22nd IMCWP final declaration and action plan adopted unanimously shows the necessity for unity in the struggle against imperialism and for a better world for all.

Delegates expressed their solidarity with socialist Cuba and its people and demanded the end of the criminal US blockade on Cuba, the removal of Cuba from the unilateral and illegal list of countries sponsors of terrorism, the end of the subversive actions against the revolution, and the return of Guantánamo Bay to the people of Cuba. ✪

Andrew Irving and Elizabeth Hulm at the IMCWP.

# CHILDREN CRY FOR HELP WHILE TRAPPED "LIKE ANIMALS IN A CAGE" IN OVERCROWDED ASYLUM CENTRE

Bethany Rielly

**UK: Children have been calling out for help over the barbed wire fence of an asylum processing centre at Manston, where campaigners warn of an unfolding "humanitarian catastrophe."**

Migrants' rights activists who staged a small protest outside the facility told the *Morning Star* they were surprised to see "dozens" of young children, including toddlers, inside the compound.

The group described the site in Kent as an "internment camp," with 4000 asylum-seekers held in deteriorating conditions, many sleeping in large communal marquees without proper sleeping facilities.

Pressure is piling on Home Secretary Suella Braverman to address severe overcrowding at Manston after 1000 new arrivals were transferred there following a petrol bomb attack against another asylum-seeker centre in Dover.

The prison watchdog has also called on the Home Office to "get a grip" of the situation as it published a damning report into conditions at Manston today.

Protesters from the Action Against Detention and Deportation coalition said they counted thirteen coaches full of people entering the site during the three hours they were outside the facility on Sunday afternoon. Only one coach was seen leaving.

Joseph Maggs, co-ordinator of Soas Detainee Support, one of the members of the coalition, told the *Star* that they saw around twenty to thirty children inside the facility during their visit.

"As soon as the private security saw us they tried to hold people back," he said.

"But the children ducked beneath them and started running out towards us, up to the fence, that's when they started shouting out 'Freedom,' and 'We need your help.'"

He said the group used a megaphone to make contact with detainees inside, who shouted back that they were from Afghanistan, Syria, Iran, Sudan, and Pakistan, with one saying he had been held there for forty days.

Obtaining information from inside the complex has been difficult as the Home Office has refused to allow charities, lawyers or journalists to enter. Protesters said they wanted to visit Manston to make contact with detainees and shine a light on conditions there.

Describing the conditions, Maggs said: "It was a very cold, hostile, and securitised atmosphere.

"Inside looks like a massive internment or even concentration camp where people are not really free to move around."

In one disturbing scene, protesters said they saw a father and his daughter walking around a "tiny" fenced-off area, describing it as "just like they were animals in a cage."

"I don't think any of us have stopped thinking about the cries of freedom and help from the kids especially," he said.

"We're just really worried that if there isn't a massive change in direction soon that maybe someone will die or get hurt in the centre – through disease or through use of force."

The campaigner added that the group hopes to organise future protests outside the site to shine a light on the "humanitarian catastrophe" inside Manston.

Conditions at the centre have come under increased scrutiny after independent border inspector David Neal told MPs he had been "left speechless" by the "dangerous" conditions at the site, where he found families sleeping for weeks on the floor.

Photo: pxhere.com CC0

Outbreaks of diphtheria, scabies and norovirus have also been reported, while the union the Prison Officers Association has described the site as a "humanitarian crisis on British soil."

Now a report by the chief inspector of prisons, following an unannounced inspection of Manston and two other sites in July, reveals that there were problems with overcrowding and prolonged detention at the site well before mid-September, when concerns first started to be raised.

The disused airfield near Ramsgate was intended to be used as a 24-hour processing facility for small boat arrivals before they were moved on to hotel accommodation or detention centres.

However, inspectors found that people were being held there for "too long," including children who had been detained for up to forty-eight hours, which inspectors described as "unacceptable."

Inspectors found "exhausted" detainees sleeping on the floor between rows of seats, and raised concerns that some people were not allowed to have their mobile phones to let their family know they were safe.

In some parts of the facility, men were "inexplicably" not allowed to close toilet doors fully, it adds.

Chief Inspector of Prisons Charlie Taylor noted that recent reports suggest conditions have deteriorated "significantly" since his July visit, adding that he was planning a "swift return" to the site.

The Home Office disputed claims that Braverman had failed to sign off on measures that could have eased pressures at Manston.

It came after several media publications reported that the Home Secretary had refused to book new hostels despite warnings that she would be in breach of her legal duties if she failed to do so.

The department described the claims as "baseless" and insisted she had taken "urgent decisions to alleviate issues at Manston and source alternative accommodation."

Braverman told the Commons that she did not block the use of hotels to accommodate asylum seekers and has "never ignored legal advice" on the issue.

The Home Secretary was jeered by members of the house after describing small boat crossings as "an invasion on our southern coast."

Labour MP Zarah Sultana described the comments made just one day after an asylum-seeker centre was fire-bombed, as "disgusting."

"Language like this – portraying migrants as 'invaders' – whips-up hate and spreads division," she Tweeted.

"She's totally unfit to be Home Secretary."

The Home Office was approached for further comment.

*Morning Star* ✪

**"Inside looks like a massive internment or even concentration camp where people are not really free to move around."**

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# "BRAZIL IS BACK," SAYS LULA AFTER ELECTION VICTORY

**"Today, we are telling the world that Brazil is back and is too big to be relegated to the sad role of a pariah," he exclaimed.**

The former President and metal worker focused on international politics in the last stretch of the electoral campaign.

"What I hear the most in my international trips is that the world misses that sovereign Brazil that spoke on equal terms with the richest and most powerful countries and, at the same time, contributed to the poorest countries," he said.

He also recalled that his previous administrations strengthened Mercosur and other regional integration organisations.

"We are going to reconquer the credibility, predictability and stability of the country so that investors regain confidence in Brazil so that they stop seeing our country as a source of immediate and predatory profit and become our allies in economic growth with social inclusion and environmental sustainability," he proposed.

He also spoke of recovering partnerships with the United States and the European Union under new standards. "We are not interested in trade agreements that condemn our country to enter the role of the seller of commodities and raw materials. We are going to reindustrialise and invest in the green economy," he added.

At the same time, he raised the end of the right to veto that undermines the balance between nations in the UN and the enlargement of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

"We are ready to re-engage in the fight against hunger in the world. Brazil is ready to regain its leading role in the fight against the climate crisis by protecting all our biomes, especially the Amazon rainforest," he concluded.

Lula da Silva won Brazil's presidential elections with 50.90 per cent of the votes, against 49.10 per cent for his rival, the current president, Jair Bolsonaro, so as of 1st January, he will assume his third term as the head of the Executive.

Lula promises to open Amazon preservation to international cooperation.

"We will monitor the surveillance of the Amazon and combat any illegal activity. At the same time, we will promote the sustainable development of the communities that live there and prove once again that it is possible to generate wealth without destroying the environment. We are open to international cooperation to preserve the Amazon, but always under Brazil's leadership, without giving up our sovereignty," said the former president (2003-2011).

The former metallurgist affirmed: "Brazil and the planet need a living Amazon; a standing tree is worth more than tons of illegally extracted timber, a river of clean water is worth more than all the gold extracted at the cost of mercury that kills the fauna and puts human life at risk."

"When an indigenous child dies because of the greed of predators, a part of humanity dies with it (...) We commit with the indigenous peoples; we want environmental pacification, we are not interested in a war for the environment, but we are ready to defend it from any threat," he completed.

The president-elect elaborated on the idea of generating sustainable development for food production, as opposed to the agribusiness that drove Jair Bolsonaro's candidacy in 2017, which massively turned out to the polls in the present elections.

"Our most urgent commitment is to end hunger again; we cannot accept as normal that millions of men, women and children do not have to eat in this country or that they consume less protein than necessary. We are the third largest producer of food and the largest producer of animal protein," he emphasised.

Lula da Silva. Photo: Ricardo Stuckert – commons.wikimedia.org (CC BY 3.0 BR).

And he added: "We are capable of exporting to the whole world and we have the duty to ensure that every Brazilian can have breakfast, lunch and dinner every day. This will once again be the number one commitment of my government."

"We cannot accept as normal that entire families are forced to sleep on the streets; that is why we will resume the "my house my life" program and bring back inclusion programs. Brazil can no longer live with this immense concrete wall of inequality. This country has to recognise itself, to find itself again," he concluded.

*teleSUR*

# VIETNAM WON'T BE PRESSURED INTO JOINING US-LED COLD WAR AGAINST CHINA

Amiad Horowitz

**The Socialist Republic of Vietnam will not be coerced into joining the United States-led effort aimed at isolating China and provoking conflict as part of its Cold War 2.0 foreign policy.**

That's a major message expected to come out of the upcoming visit to China by Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Trong will travel to China to pay an official visit to the newly re-elected Communist Party of China leader Xi Jinping. Trong will be one of the first world leaders to visit China since the closing of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

Among the goals of the meeting is further developing the long and historic ties between the two governing parties. Official announcements say the two leaders hope to strengthen bilateral ties between their governments and foster an environment of peace between the peoples of both countries and in the region at large.

This meeting is significant on the international stage because it once again presents further evidence that the US effort to split China from its neighbours is not a total success. Despite decades of fake news and attempts by the anti-China forces, Vietnam continues to stick to the "Four Nos" that make up the core of its foreign policy.

As part of this policy, Vietnam will not join any military alliances, will not side with one country against another country, will not allow any foreign country to use its territory for military purposes, nor will it use force or the threat of force as part of its international relations.

Vietnam has repeatedly said it will continue to seek peaceful coexistence with all countries, promote international law, and focus on building strong multilateral and bilateral relationships. Vietnam has been lauded by the international community for its tireless work towards peace and stability around the world. As a result of this, the country was recently elected to serve on the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Despite all these facts, the corporate media continues to spread fake news, claiming Vietnam will join the US's anti-China "rules-based order." Some "experts" even go so far as to claim that Vietnam will bow to US pressure and allow a permanent US naval base to be built on Vietnamese territory. Not only is there no proof for this claim, but there is ample evidence against it.

The United States and its allies are hoping to exploit a territorial disagreement between Vietnam and China. Both countries claim sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos in the South China Sea (referred to as the East Sea in Vietnam). Despite this territorial dispute, Vietnam has consistently said that it seeks a peaceful solution.

In fact, in its leadership role in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Vietnam has steadily pushed for *all countries* with territorial disputes in the region to settle problems through peaceful means and dialogue.

The Communist Parties of China and Vietnam continue to work together and learn from each other as both countries chart their own paths toward building socialism. Both parties meet on a regular basis to share experiences and further develop economic, political, and defence ties.

Currently, China is Vietnam's second biggest market for exports and the largest importer of goods to Vietnam. China is also one of the major sources of foreign direct investment to Vietnam, helping fund many important developmental projects.

The upcoming meeting between Trong and Xi is being seen as a step toward further stabilization in the region. While the corporate media will most likely downplay the significance of the summit between the two leaders, it is important to remember that the socialist countries are actively working towards peace, despite the best efforts of US imperialism.

*People's World*


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