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Netanyahu promises to continue the genocide

William Briggs

The fate of the Palestinian people in Gaza and in the West Bank remains in the balance. Much has been said and written about a ceasefire, about hostage deals, about allowing more aid into Gaza, but Israel has coldly and cruelly promised to continue their assault on the people, regardless of any negotiations. For Israel, only the decimation of the Palestinian people will be enough.

The United States and its client state, Israel, are increasingly isolated. The overwhelming majority of United Nations member states support the establishment of a Palestinian state and have overwhelmingly indicated that a state would be recognised. The US is the only obstacle to that most significant step forward. Netanyahu proposed a ceasefire deal but immediately declared that regardless of Hamas agreeing to or rejecting any such deal, his regime would continue its assault and ground invasion of Rafah.

The 'deal' put forward by Israel allows for a 40-day pause in their offensive. It also permits further aid, and the release of numbers of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails in exchange for those Israelis held by Hamas in Gaza. Israel regularly takes hostages, but calls them prisoners. The US, along with its few but increasingly vocal supporters in the West, immediately labelled Netanyahu's proposal "very generous." It is an odd view of generosity that condemns Palestinians to an almost inevitable bloodbath after 40 very short days!

For their part, Hamas seeks a permanent ceasefire, the withdrawal of Israeli troops, release of prisoners, and a return of displaced Palestinians to their homes. None of these demands can be seen as unreasonable or unrealistic. A permanent ceasefire has been the demand of millions of people around the world, as well as the majority of states. A ceasefire, of course, is essential, but does not, of itself, signify an end to the torment of the people.

DELIBERATE SABOTAGE

Netanyahu's cabinet, like his country is divided. His response to Palestine, to the suffering of Gaza and to the future has been unequivocal. He made his position especially clear when he said that "the idea that we will stop the war before achieving all of its goals is out of the question ... We will enter Rafah and we will eliminate Hamas' battalions there – with or without a deal, to achieve the total victory."

Netanyahu's pledge to "eliminate" Hamas and to achieve final and "total" victory can only be seen as a deliberate act of sabotage. The extreme right in Israel want Gaza cleared and for settlers to occupy the land. They also want the West Bank to be ethnically cleansed.

What the extremists in Netanyahu's government want is to build settlements on the bones of the people of Gaza. There are reports of attacks on aid trucks from these same potential 'settlers.' According to the United Nations, it will take 14 years to clear the rubble and get rid of the unexploded bombs Israel has dropped. It will cost at least $40 billion to repair the damage. The destruction is on a level not seen since WW2.

There was a quick response to Netanyahu's statement. Upon hearing the pledge that Israeli troops would roll into Rafah, regardless of any efforts at diplomacy, and with such horrific consequences, a Hamas spokesperson, Osama Hamdan, declared that "our position on the current negotiating paper is negative." This was immediately followed by a statement from the Hamas press office indicating that no decision, either to accept or reject Israel's proposal had been made and that they remained hopeful.

Israel, in response to the fact that Hamas was still prepared to negotiate, reacted by bombing a Syrian security building on the outskirts of Damascus. This cannot be seen in isolation from what is happening in Gaza.

BIDEN ENABLES GENOCIDE

For their part, the United States continues to send more and more military hardware worth billions of dollars to Israel in order to facilitate the genocide. As they ship weapons, and approve more aid, the president and his secretary of state make 'heartfelt' calls to Israel not to engage in a full-scale ground assault on Rafah and to ensure that civilian lives are protected.

Biden and Blinken have the capacity to end the bloodshed. They have the capacity to ensure a state for the Palestinian people. Instead, they choose to support genocide even while shedding crocodile tears over the graves of the victims.

Israel's objectives are clear. Gaza is but one step in achieving an apocalyptic vision of a 'Greater Israel' free of Palestinians. The people of the West Bank, already victims of apartheid rule know that if Israel realises these dreams, then their future will be the same as their brothers and sisters in Gaza.

The United States and its allies look on, or rather, look the other way.

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As the *Guardian* goes to press, the ground invasion of Rafah has begun.

Netanyahu: "the idea that we will stop the war before achieving all of its goals is out of the question." Photo: National Photo Collection of Israel, Government Press Office. (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Netanyahu to face court?

The International Criminal Court started investigating war crimes in occupied Palestine back in 2021. Israel has not cooperated with the investigation and has never recognised the ICC's jurisdiction.

According to the *Times of Israel*, deliberate starvation of Palestinians in Gaza will be "a major focus" for the ICC, which could issue arrest warrants for IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi, as well as Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and Netanyahu himself. There have been reports that Netanyahu is lobbying hard to head off ICC action.

The USA doesn't recognise ICC jurisdiction over its own troops, but supports or opposes ICC jurisdiction over other countries if it suits them. Under Biden, the US supported the ICC issuing an arrest warrant for Russia's Vladimir Putin. When it comes to Netanyahu, it's different. Biden's Secretary of State said that the ICC has "no jurisdiction" over war crimes Israel may have committed in Palestine.

Genocide, the use of starvation as a weapon of war, and ethnic cleansing are classed as war crimes. We probably won't see Netanyahu, Gallant or Halevi in court any time soon. Biden and Blinken's lobbying on their behalf should be remembered the next time the US decides to get on its high horse about the morality of other nations.

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Pine Gap on red alert – Part 2

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

Guardian

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May Day

Dance because we need to

International Workers' Day, also known as May Day, can be quite a nostalgic event. Workers remember past struggles and victories. We celebrate old achievements, like the weekend, and the 8-hour day. It's good to remember important goals that we've kicked, especially in a country where working class victories are downplayed or ignored. The Australian government puts way more money and energy into commemorating a failed attack on Türkiye than it does into remembering the 8-hour day movement, a huge international campaign which began in this country. We need to remember and celebrate wins like that, but that's not why we need May Day.

When we attend May Day events, we are marching for the present. Look around you at your workmates, your family, your friends. That's why we're marching. Sure your friends, family and workmates all seem okay now, in 2024. Also, we've had the weekend, sick leave, and overtime for a long time now. Why march for it now? Do we still need unions and other workers?

We do. Capitalism is a live and moving target. It is not a dragon that was tamed years ago. That weekend that feels so natural? It's under attack from employer groups who never ever stop attacking the idea of penalty rates, not to mention the right to disconnect. Timid Labor attempts to limit your boss' access to your time with email and text messages were ferociously resisted.

Capital isn't just making your days off less fun, it's also attacking your health. Workers are still dying on the job, especially truck drivers and building workers. If you're not working in those areas, cast your mind back to the 2019-2020 Australian bushfire season. Those fires, the worst on record, cost this country around $4 billion, and killed at least 34 people outright. Remember spending two months watching the air quality every day, the way you usually check the weather? The smoke from those bushfires was responsible for more than 400 deaths.

What does that have to do with May Day? The fires were directly connected to Climate Change. This country could do a lot about Climate Change, by reducing our carbon emissions. We don't do that. Instead, we make token efforts and do *some* good things, but nothing that will upset the big companies that are making money from making Climate Change worse. Those companies, busy producing and using fossil fuels, won't stop because we ask nicely. They will only stop if they absolutely have to.

The CPA isn't reacting to the climate crisis by despairing. We are reacting by working even harder for working class control of this country.

On May Day, we march to assert that workers, united, are stronger than the bosses. We're the majority. We should be running things, but we aren't.

Look around the world. In Cuba, people poured onto the streets in their millions to dance and celebrate May Day.

We hope your May Day was a good one this year. Please join the Communist Party of Australia in our efforts to keep the spirit of May Day going all year.

Let's reclaim May 1 as the day of workers' struggle across Australia.

25/04/2024 – Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) concludes its eighth conference

The Central Committee of DFLP elects Fahd Suleiman as new Secretary-General and Hawatmeh as President

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) has officially announced the conclusion of its eighth general national conference, which was the culmination of a democratic process that extended for a full year, starting in April 2023. The conference was held in cycles, in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the countries of diaspora.

The holding of the eighth General National Conference required a high degree of preparation and follow-up coordination, and the DFLP, armed by its political program, was able to hold its conference with complete success, and to respond to its demands and its various organizational, political, administrative, and security challenges, including the major events of the war on 7 October, 2023. The Front, its leadership and members, responded to that storm and its repercussions in adherence to the Front's system, which regulates relations between members and leadership and emphasises the Front's commitment to scientific socialism.

The conference saluted the steadfastness of our people and their rally around the resistance, and saw that the emerging situation places the Palestinian situation before two imminent demands:

1) Restoring internal unity within the framework of the unifying national institutions, which includes the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of our people;

2) Providing the conditions for continuing resistance in all its shapes and forms, as it is the obligatory passage that leads to the horizons of freedom, independence, return, and the establishment of the state of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital.

The conference considered that the future of Gaza and any part of our occupied and usurped national territory is determined by the resistance and heroic steadfastness of our people. It affirmed the principle of preserving national identity, with its three pillars:

1) The PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, is the only one responsible for representing them and speaking on their behalf in any political process concerned with resolving the national issue.

2) The PLO National Program: The right to self-determination, the establishment of an independent and fully sovereign state on the borders of 4 June 1967 with Jerusalem as its capital, the solution of the refugee issue in accordance with Resolution 194, which guarantees them the right to return to their homes and properties from which they were displaced since the year 1948.

3) Relevant international legitimacy resolutions, guaranteeing the inalienable national rights of our people.

The Eighth General National Congress elected a new central committee of 99 members, the eleventh central committee, which elected Fahd Suleiman as its Secretary-General, and Magida Al-Masry and Ali Faisal as Deputy Secretary-General, as well as the rest of the members of the Political Bureau.

Comrade Nayef Hawatmeh, the great national leader, as head of the DFLP

In an atmosphere full of loyalty and high appreciation, the Central Committee of the DFLP stood united and unanimously named the great leader Nayef Hawatmeh as head of the Front. The decision to nominate Hawatmeh as head of the DFLP stated that the Central Committee, out of loyalty to the historical role played by the great leader Comrade Nayef Hawatmeh, in his honourable history of struggle, unanimously agreed to take this decision.

In conclusion, the conference addressed a set of appeals and greetings, including to all the parties and peoples of the world that took to the streets, rejecting the American and Western Zionist aggression and in solidarity with the Palestinian people and the justice of their national cause. It called for the continuation of these movements that send to our people and their resistance messages of support and support in order to continue the battle for freedom and independence.

On this occasion, we are pleased to receive congratulatory messages from the parties and active figures on the occasion of the end of the conference and the election of the central committee of DFLP, including the new Secretary-General and members of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee.

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
Department of Foreign Relations

The Communist Party of Australia congratulates the DFLP on a successful, democratic conference. We congratulate the new central committee with Secretary-General Fahd Suleiman, and Deputy Secretary Generals Magida Al-Masry and Ali Faisal. We stand in solidarity with the DFLP in its struggle for the people of Palestine. Palestine will win!

Australian friends of Cuba will be outside the USA Consulate, 50 Miller Street North Sydney, on Friday 17th May from 4.15 pm to 5 pm, demanding an end to the blockade on Cuba.

Join us!

Netanyahu promises ...

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CHINA CONSTRUCTIVE

All of this makes a recent meeting in Beijing rather significant. Delegations from Fatah (the largest faction in the PLO and a central player in the Palestinian Authority which is the effective leadership of the state of Palestine) and of Hamas, accepted an invitation to travel to China to discuss possible resolutions to their differences. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Lin Jian, addressing a press conference at the conclusion of these talks said that "the two sides fully expressed their political will of realising reconciliation through dialogue and consultation, had discussions on many specific issues, and made encouraging progress. They agreed to continue this dialogue process so as to achieve Palestinian solidarity and unity at an early date."

It's early days, but the willingness of the factions to come together and to seek a way to unity and to promote a shared vision of a national state is important. Securing the territory that already exists for that state is another question.

The state of Palestine is recognised already. It has representations across the globe. It speaks reasonably, rationally and realistically about the issues before it and of the just cause of its people.

Izzat Abdulhadi, the Palestinian Ambassador to Australia expressed the desires of his people in a recent interview, published in the *Guardian* (29th April). He spoke of the bilateral negotiations between the PLO and Israel in 1993 that were intended to pave the way to a two-state solution. Despite Israel's aggression, the Ambassador reaffirmed Palestine's commitment to that goal, saying that "the PLO strongly believes that a one-state solution is no solution," but that Israel by word and deed is promoting the idea of a one-state solution. He also observed that Israel cannot claim that it is democratic while maintaining an apartheid regime.

Whether a ceasefire is accepted or not is hardly the issue, despite the posturing of some Western states. As long as Israel denies the Palestinian people a state, there will be occupation and resistance. There will be many more deaths.

What happens next will shape the region and beyond for decades to come. Israel sees only one way out. That path leads to incalculable destruction and genocide. It is aided and abetted in this by the USA, Australia, and a shrinking coterie of regimes. Against this backward and reactionary group stands the vast majority of the people and governments on the planet.

Palestine's cause is just. It represents a step forward and with its statehood, with its liberation, comes not simply a defeat of Israel's reactionary policies, but a defeat for imperialism. ✪

May 9 defeat of fascism commemorated

With all the recent celebrations of May Day, let's not forget May 9, the anniversary of the defeat of fascism. Also known as Victory in Europe (VE) Day, and simply Victory Day in countries that made up the Soviet Union, which bore the brunt of the fighting and had by far the most casualties, May 9 marks the anniversary of the official end of World War II with the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany. ✪

Photo: Kremlin.ru (CC BY 4.0)

May Day 2024 in Adelaide

May Day was celebrated on the day with a dinner where outstanding unionist were recognised with several awards. A feature of the evening was a direct video from Gaza of an interview with a social worker who organises programs to help children. The grim reality of the desperation facing families in Gaza became starkly clear.

On the Saturday the May Day March paraded through the centre of the city from the south parklands to Tandanyangga (Victoria Square) including the Communist Party of Australia where a family fun day took place, and solidarity and other groups were able to operate their stalls, including the Communist Party of Australia.

Key themes in the celebrations were solidarity with the Palestinian people, ending the cost of living (really a cost of profits) crisis, and women's rights. ✪

May Day 2024 Fremantle, Western Australia

Richard Titelius

On a mild autumn day, the union movement in Western Australia held their annual May Day rally and march. Secretary of Unions WA, Owen Whittle started the speeches with occupational health and safety, especially the ongoing toll caused by asbestos in Australia and amongst workers in Indonesia. Recently in WA two teenagers contracted non-occupational mesothelioma, showing the prevalence of asbestos is still with us.

Whittle recognised the 20,000 people who lived or worked at the former mine in Wittenoom in WA's northwest, noting more than 2000 had died of asbestos related diseases. Owen also spoke about the efforts of organised labour in Australia to secure improvements in wages and conditions through persistent struggle and improvements in the Fair Work Commission and Federal industrial relations laws.

The rally platformed the work of Union Aid Abroad (APHEDA), helping in the struggle for the protection of workers and their unions in countries such as Myanmar, the Philippines, Cambodia and Palestine. In Myanmar, the military junta has outlawed unions and union officials have often been arrested and imprisoned. The leader of their peak union body was even stripped of his citizenship and expelled from the country making it impossible for him to return. However, said Whittle, this did not stop many in the country continuing the fight for a free Myanmar and for a return of democracy and union rights.

Chief Executive Officer of APHEDA, Kate Lee spoke about the work of APHEDA. She spoke of APHEDA's solidarity work to protect and maintain the rights of workers across the globe including in Myanmar, Philippines, India, Indonesia and in Palestine. She made particular mention of work being done to protect the lives of workers in Gaza and their communities.

Michael Kaine, the National Secretary of the Transport Workers Union spoke about the struggles and wins of members who work for Qantas, and in the gig economy in transport generally. Casualisation, and sham contracting has lead to 54 truckies dying in one year – totally unacceptable.

May Day is also a day of celebration of the victories of organised labour, and Kaine described the TWU's sustained struggle with the former CEO of Qantas, Alan Joyce who tried to eliminate the jobs of 117 members of his union during COVID. The TWU fought back and won.

Over 5,000 unionists, their families, friends and activists joined together for the colourful and vibrant march through the streets of Fremantle. There was a strong presence of activists across many community groups supporting the Freedom of Palestine. Among them were comrades of the WA Branch of the Communist Party of Australia, Australia Cuba Friendship branch of WA, Stop AUKUSWA, and Nuclear Free WA. We also celebrate Karl Marx's birthday on 5 May 1818. ✪

May Day & Free Palestine Melbourne

Melbourne Communist Party of Australia comrades ran a stall at the Trades Hall May Day event, and joined in the May Day march, which this year combined with the weekly Free Palestine rally. Comrades joined with their unions in the rally.

The Federal Secretary of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) Annie Butler addressed the Free Palestine rally, stating that nurses and midwives demand the prevention of war and the end of all wars. Therefore: the ANMF condemns the attacks on Healthcare Workers and hospitals, and the killing of innocents.

Healthcare workers in Gaza are doing what they do in Australia, care for the community.

In addition, the ANMF condemns the use of starvation as tool of war, and calls on Israel to guarantee devices and humanitarian assistance to Gaza. Along with all union members at the rally, the ANMF calls on the Australian government to work on immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, and for an end to the occupation in Palestine.

All workers at the May Day event called for a free and independent Palestine.

For a just and sustainable peace for every community:

Healthcare not warfare! ✪

May Day Sydney

On the 1 May 2024, in Belmore Park, Sydney, the atmosphere was jovial as it was May Day, the day to celebrate the achievements of the working class. Many people took a day off work to be here at this rally.

The crowd was a sea of union flags and logos of all types, but this year, the Palestine flag also had a large presence. The terrible actions of the Israeli settler colony loom large over this year's May Day. The display of Palestine flags is a show of solidarity with our fellow workers in Palestine.

Australian workers have struggled hard in the last year and they had several achievements to celebrate. The CFMEU have pushed hard to ban engineered stone which carries fatal health risks to construction workers, and this regulation is on the precipice of being passed. We also must take this opportunity to congratulate all the rank-and-file workers who fought for improvements within their own enterprise or workplace!

Paul Keating of the Maritime Union delivered a speech in which he underscored several of the main issues facing Australian workers today. The lack of a right to strike and the cost of living crisis are squeezing the pockets of everyday Australians. There is a housing crisis, yet the government is spending $368 billion on AUKUS submarines instead of addressing our material needs. There is a genocide in Palestine, an impending climate catastrophe and draconian anti-protest laws. The capitalist system is oppressing and squeezing workers in many ways.

Of course, we have some large issues to face up against but let's not forget that we, the working class, are the largest class. We are the most powerful class when we organise together, so happy May Day comrades, we hope you have a fantastic and militant year to come!

CPA City of Sydney Branch ✪

Cleanaway workers stick together

In a resounding display of unity, employees at Cleanaway have firmly rejected proposed agreements, with an astounding 95 per cent majority. This victory underscores the commitment of workers to advocate for fair and reasonable working conditions.

For years, employees have been tirelessly pushing for better conditions, having worked off the award for an extensive period. Cleanaway finally came to the negotiating table late last year, presenting their model agreement which sparked intense debate and scrutiny among the workforce.

One of the central issues at the heart of negotiations was the proposed shift in ordinary hours, from 7.6 hours a day Monday to Friday to 9.6 hours a day Monday to Sunday. This change would have allowed Cleanaway to roster employees over weekends, potentially disrupting work-life balance and impacting family and social obligations.

Initially, Cleanaway's offer included maintaining double-time for Sundays but proposed shifting Saturday rates to a flat time and a half for the entire day. However, employees staunchly objected to these changes, highlighting the unreasonableness of the proposed Saturday rates. Following intense negotiations, Cleanaway eventually relented, offering time and a half for the first 2 hours on Saturdays, followed by double-time thereafter.

This concession by Cleanaway underscores the importance of collective bargaining and the power of the unified voice of workers. It serves as a clear reminder that employees are unwilling to compromise on their rights and values.

Moving forward, this victory energises the workforce to continue advocating for positive change and upholding their values as workers. It reaffirms the significance of solidarity and collective action in achieving meaningful outcomes.

In the face of ongoing challenges, Cleanaway employees stand united, demonstrating their resilience and resolve in pursuit of a better workplace for all.

Australian Workers Union ✪

Unions welcome cost-of-living relief for nursing, teaching and social work students

The ACTU has welcomed the Albanese government's plan to introduce a Commonwealth Prac Payment to provide financial support for nursing, teaching, midwifery, and social work students undertaking mandatory workplace placements necessary for university and vocational education and training qualifications.

Australians studying to be teachers, nurses, midwives, and social workers face significant financial challenges during their clinical and professional placement periods, contributing to long-term workforce shortages in these critical fields. The Commonwealth Prac Payment, offering $319.50 per week, will ease cost-of-living pressures for around 68,000 eligible higher education students and over 5,000 VET students each year.

This payment, benchmarked to the single Austudy per week rate, will be means-tested and available from 1 July 2025 and will be in addition to any income support students also receive.

ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien has said that unions welcome the government reducing cost-of-living pressures for nursing, teaching, and social work students.

O'Brien described the payment as "a vital step towards ensuring that students have equal access to educational opportunities, regardless of their financial backgrounds."

Certainly nobody's going to get rich off this. The payment is set at $319.50 per week, so students who are giving up work to go on placements will still be feeling the pinch. If the payment means that students who would otherwise have not been able to do placements get to finish their course and become teachers, nurses or social workers, that's a good thing, but students will still struggle.

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation also welcomed the payment saying "We have seen an increasing number of students dropping out of courses – which means Australia has lost future nurses and midwives because they can't afford to complete their studies." ✪

ASU backs Community Legal Centres

The Australian Services Union has written to the three relevant government ministers to urge more funding to Community Legal Centres, especially in the light of the recent concern over violence against Australian women.

The letter, from ASU Assistant National Secretary Emmeline Gaske states that "Funding frontline services must be at the heart of any national effort to reduce gendered violence and keep women safe. No woman experiencing violence or at risk of violence should be unable to get the legal advice and support they need to be safe and rebuild their lives due to funding gaps.

Women can't make informed decisions about their legal rights without advice and support which Community Legal Centres provide.

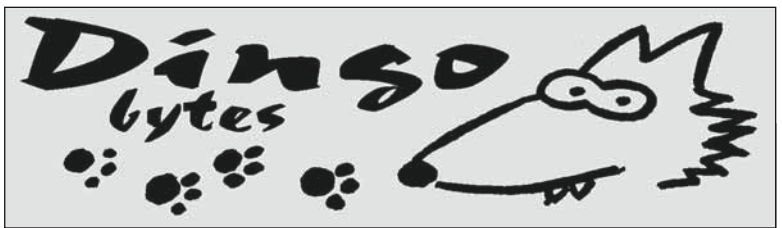
ASU also pointed out that there is a workforce shortage in the Community Legal Service Sector with many workers leaving for jobs with more security and wages that help them keep up with the cost of living.

The letter was sent to Treasurer Jim Chalmers, Minister for Finance, Minister for Women Katy Gallagher, and to Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus. ✪

Something to say?

Write to the Editor!

editor@cpa.org.au



Paramilitarised

Powers to intervene in civilian public order management were given to the Australian Defence Force to be used during the 2000 Sydney Olympics, although the government probably always had the power to use the military in certain emergency situations. Since that time, the military has been given more real and symbolic powers.

The legal role of the ADF has been expanded in areas to include migration and customs. Its actual role has been expanded by deployment overseas, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Solomon Islands. At home, the ADF was used during the Tampa incident, when the Special Air Service Regiment (SAS) was used to rescue refugees from a Norwegian vessel because the government had refused permission for the ship to come ashore. With Operation Rolex, the ADF used – and is authorised to continue to use – powers to prevent refugee boats from entering Australian waters.

On a symbolic level, the ADF has a higher profile in civil society. The Governor-General, Michael Jeffery, is a retired Major-General in the SAS, and has seen service in Malaya, Borneo, Papua New Guinea, and Vietnam. The symbolic nature of Anzac Day, a celebration that almost died out in the 1960s, has been elevated and conflated with a tribute to all serving ADF personnel, rather than just soldiers who fought on a particular beach in Turkey.

Additionally, of course, the ADF was used to a greater extent in the so-called "war on terror." It is involved in planning and joint counter-terrorism exercises with the police. This has led to a complementary process – as Melbourne academic Dr Jude McCulloch has pointed out – the increased "para-militarisation" of the police, as a result of the ADF working with and training State and Territory police forces.

CPA policies for women

The following are the basic demands of the CPA's policy on women. The CPA advocates:

- The immediate introduction of equal pay for work of equal value.
- Part-time or full-time employment to be on a permanent basis with full rights to all entitlements such as sick and other personal leave, annual leave and long service leave.
- The end of social security payments based on relationship status, so that women have access to an independent income.
- The enforcement of anti-discrimination and affirmative action legislation to assist Indigenous, migrant and disabled women to become economically independent.
- The provision of publicly funded before-school, after-school and long day child-care facilities for all who need them and for good quality, free early childhood education and care services, including after-hours, vacation and occasional care, in communities, schools and workplaces.
- The payment of parental leave for at least 26 weeks.
- Legalisation for the right of women to have an abortion.
- The elimination of all types of violence against women.
- The enforcement of laws against sexual harassment.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: goes to whoever wrote the *Australian Financial Review* editorial of 30 April. The headline "Labor green-lights toxic bully-boys of the CFMEU," followed by:

"The Albanese government has given the thugs and law-breakers of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime and Energy Union the green light to unleash its militant bully-boy tactics on the nation's construction workplaces with impunity."

Welcome to the class war.

The 2024 Rental Affordability Snapshot surveyed rental listings across Australia and found that affordability has crashed to record lows. Out of 45,115 rental listings, we found that:

- 289 rentals (0.6%) were affordable for a person earning a full-time minimum wage
- 89 rentals (0.2%) were affordable for a person on the Age Pension
- 31 rentals (0.1%) were affordable for a person on the Disability Support Pension
- 3 rentals, (0%) all sharehouses, were affordable for a person on JobSeeker
- 0 rentals (0%) were affordable for a person on Youth Allowance.

In response to the findings, Anglicare Australia is calling on the Government to return to directly funding and providing housing itself, instead of leaving housing to the private sector. Anglicare Australia is also calling on the Government to wind back landlord tax concessions.

Rental market 'never less affordable'

Denis Doherty

The latest annual Anglicare Report on Housing Affordability (ARHA) exposes a scandalous situation, revealing a growing housing inequality in Australia and an unforgivable lack of action by both State and Federal governments.

The latest ARHA shows that for over 54,000 rentals on the market, none or very few are available for people on low incomes. The picture is the same in both capital cities and major regional areas.

The picture is one of growing inequality while in response the Federal government refuses to mount an attack on the problem, preferring instead to rely on old, failed neoliberal policies.

Importantly, ARHA recommends that the government "return to directly funding and providing housing itself, instead of leaving housing to the private sector."

However, the Federal government continues to show its revulsion for direct financing for public housing by introducing its so called "help to buy" program. There is also Labor's Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF), whereby an investment *may* produce some funds to be spent on housing in the States.

These are fake schemes that do nothing for housing but increase its price, and put it further out of the reach of most young people wanting to buy a home.

The alternative message of Anglicare and housing advocates across Australia – which the CPA has long been fighting for – is to defend and extend public housing.

This message is not being heard by the NSW ALP government, which is continuing to demolish and rebuild public housing despite promising not to during the election campaign.

Similarly, former Victorian Premier Dan Andrews

adopted a program of demolishing 44 public housing towers. He also adopted a form of privatisation like the NSW community housing providers program. These so-called private, not-for-profit companies run public and social housing, allowing the government to abandon its responsibility to provide public housing.

The system is not working, and the Anglicare report underlines that it cannot provide secure, good quality housing for most Australians. The simple straight forward activity of governments being directly responsible for providing public housing has been proven to work.

Instead of having public housing only 4.1 per cent of total housing stock, our public housing must reach 50 per cent or more. As public housing increases, it can begin to provide answers for youth, emergency, and other housing problems.

We must keep our focus on returning Australia to country with a vibrant public housing sector. ✪

Esso toxic dump plan threatens Gippsland

Esso is planning to build a massive, toxic, industrial dump in the middle of a United Nations-listed wetland on the eastern side of Corner Inlet on Victoria's Gippsland Coast.

The plan would see more than a dozen multi-storey 'topsides' from decommissioned oil and gas platforms dumped in the middle of the Corner Inlet Ramsar site along with hundreds of thousands of tonnes of other waste material, until it can be slowly broken down and transported away.

Ramsar wetlands stretch in front of, and on each side of, the proposed beachfront site.

According to the oil and gas industry's own research, the structures will include thousands of tonnes of hazardous radioactive waste, huge amounts of asbestos, oil and other hydrocarbons, as well as mercury, lead and other heavy metals.

Esso wants to do this to save money.

More suitable brownfields sites in Geelong and Tasmania were also scoped by the company, but both would require Esso to bring the old oil platforms ashore in a gradual and responsible manner. Esso only wants to rent a specialist decommissioning ship for one season.

Friends of the Earth (FoE) Offshore Fossil Gas Campaigner Jeff Waters said he was seeking an urgent meeting with the Federal Environment Minister to ask for assurances that the Corner Inlet Ramsar site will be protected.

"That Esso wants to build a massive, highly toxic, multi-storey breaking yard in the middle of this fragile wetland is just another demonstration of how it holds Australia in contempt," Jeff Waters said.

"How are they going to remove thousands of tonnes of hazardous radioactive waste? Where will it be stored?"

"This is an enormous toxic threat to an internationally important wetland, and governments need to act immediately," he said.

Hundreds of people have now signed a RecycleTheRigs.org petition to Federal Ministers, calling for Corner Inlet to be saved and for Esso's plan to dump thousands of tonnes of steel into the ocean to be stopped.

"Governments need to take control of this filthy industry, and make them clean up their mess properly," Jeff Waters said.

"The industry should be made to pay for a world's-best-practice recycling centre, with European-style environmental safeguards," he said.

"By increasing and indefinitely extending the existing temporary decommissioning levy now being charged to industry, a government authority could be set up to supervise the construction.

Friends of the Earth
(petition at RecycleTheRigs.org) ✪

GREEN NOTES

Plastics, treaties, and why capitalism will not save us

Peter Farmer

Older readers may remember when the media talked a lot about 'arms treaties,' limiting the number of and use of nuclear weapons. We are keeping our eyes on treaties between governments in Australia and Indigenous Australians – will they be good treaties? What's in them?

Another sort of treaty we all need to know about is the Plastics Treaty. Plastics have been not just piling up and looking ugly, but also getting into the food chain. So much so that we're all part of a huge experiment to see what effect having microscopic plastics throughout the human body has.

A lot of countries agree on plastic waste. There's too much of the stuff, and it needs to be better managed. We all understand that, but a logical thing to think would be this: maybe we should stop making so much plastic in the first place. That way, there'd be less plastic waste to worry about, and less plastic to get into the food we eat and the liquids we drink. This isn't just a hunch. Research has shown that the more plastic that's made, the more waste there is. The more waste there is, the more plastic can get into our food chain.

Like a lot of things that sound like a simple and good idea, getting less plastic made runs into the problem of self-interest. Specifically, the self-interest of the people making money producing the stuff.

In Ottowa, Canada late this April, delegates to the Plastics Treaty negotiations worked late into the night to try to get the treaty done. The talks ended without much progress because of the issue of plastic production. The 'High Ambition Coalition,' a group of countries, campaigners, and scientists that really push hard for less plastic being made say that a Plastics Treaty won't really work without limits on production. However other countries, mainly ones with powerful gas and oil interests, want to rule out any targets that limit the amount of plastic being made.

This is really important. If there are no limits, plastic production will triple by 2050. That's what the petrochemical industry wants to do. Peru and Rwanda proposed a target of reducing plastic polymers by 40 per cent by 2040, using 2025 as a baseline.

Anyone who's been following efforts to reduce Carbon Emissions will know that the baseline you choose is very important. Choosing baselines that mean that emitters don't have to really reduce emissions in any meaningful way is one way Australian governments have been keeping carbon emissions high – and big donors happy.

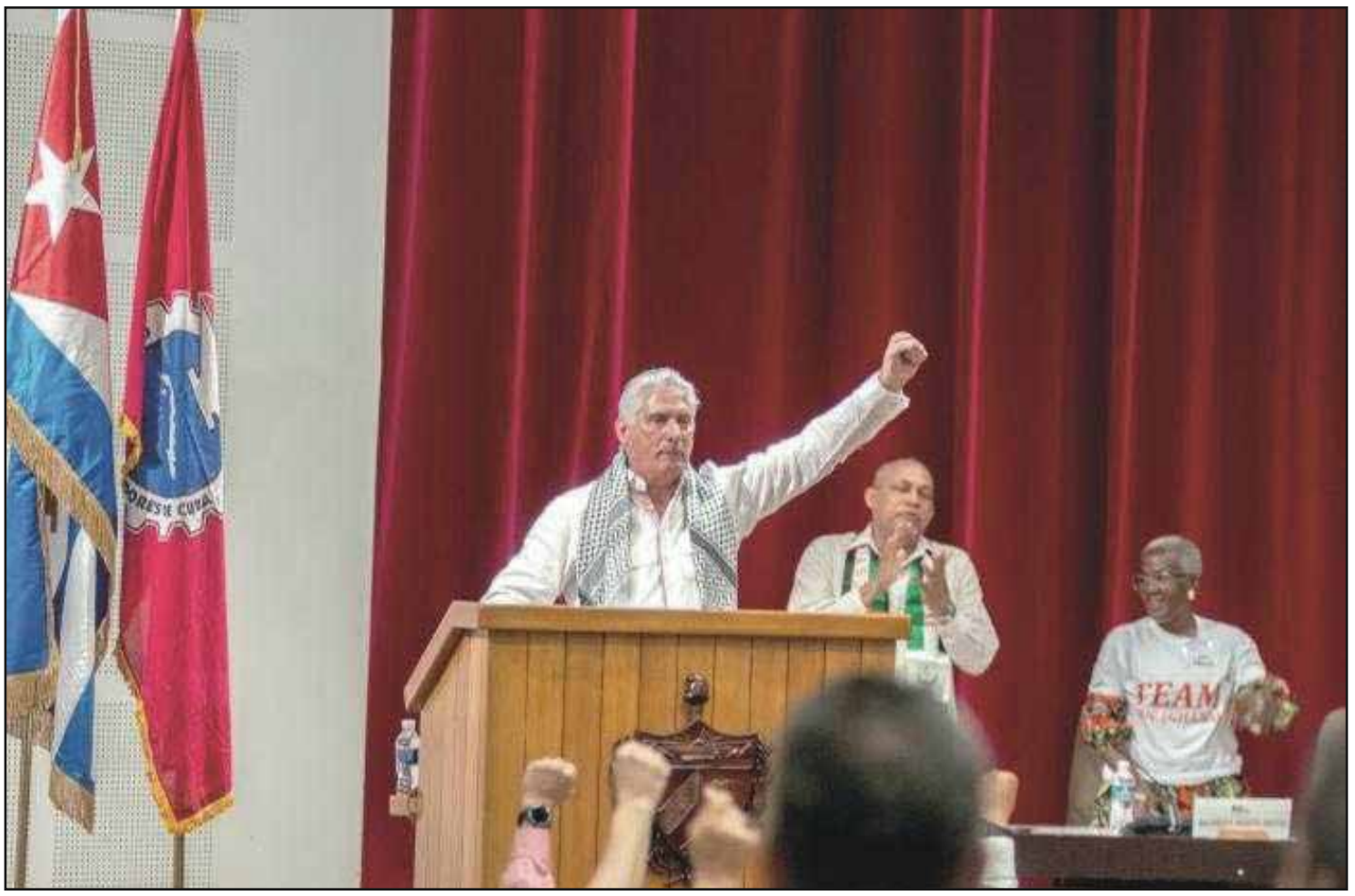
28 countries signed a pledge, the 'Bridge to Busan' declaration to announce that they agree that having binding limits on plastic production is vital for an effective treaty. Australia was one of the signatories. Busan in Korea will be the location of the next treaty conference.

Surprise, surprise, *Gas Outlook* estimates there were 196 fossil fuel lobbyists at the conference in Ottowa. Some scientists reported being intimidated and harassed. The United States also played a part. Carroll Muffett, of the Centre for International Environmental Law said that the US "intentionally blocked" progress on the treaty, saying that the United States "needs to stop pretending to be a leader and own the failure it has created here."

The 'Bridge to Busan' declaration can be read – and signed – at **bridgetobusan.com**

Diaz-Canel: friendship, pe

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel made an inspiring speech at the closing ceremony of the International Meeting of Solidarity with Cuba and against imperialism, at the Havana's Convention Centre, on 2 May 2024, "Year 66 of the Revolution." We are pleased to present excerpts.



To all of you we would like to thank you for being here in Cuba. We thank you for your participation in the Meeting, in which we share the same sentiment and the same commitment: that of human solidarity, which is also for you with your expressions, solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and with the struggle of the peoples for their true emancipation.

To celebrate International Workers' Day, as we did yesterday in Cuba, together with representatives of the working class and solidarity movements, and friends of Cuba is a great honour and a gesture of courage. Our heroic people thanks you.

It is also an honour for the Cuban people the significant presence and participation of young people in the May Day International Brigade and in the trade union delegations that visit us.

We also salute the work of the Latin American and Caribbean Continental Network of Solidarity with Cuba and just causes; the approval of more than 100 resolutions against the blockade in the United States; the 40th anniversary of an uninterrupted friendship with the Australian friends of solidarity, who will visit us in December of this year; and also the 30th anniversary of the Canadian Che Guevara brigade, present here.

We acknowledge the valuable work of trade union and solidarity organizations in Europe and the United States to disseminate the results of the International Tribunal against the blockade, which took place in Brussels in November 2023.

We highlight the importance of the continental meetings of solidarity with Cuba, which are planned for this year in the People's Republic of China for the Asia-Pacific region, and in France for the European area.

Each friend who visits us is further evidence that Cuba is not alone or isolated, but continues to beat in the hearts of millions of women and men around the world.

We distinguish the generous efforts you make to combine solidarity actions with cooperation projects. From here we promise that Cuba will continue to raise the flags of peace, solidarity, and cooperation with the peoples.

In the face of enemy media and subversive actions aimed at provoking a change of regime in Cuba, the vast majority of the humble and working people have demonstrated, once again this May Day, in squares and cities, that they are ready to defend their independence, their sovereignty, their right to live in peace, without blockades, without sanctions and without surrender, without selling out or kneeling down, without renouncing their history and their principles.

This event is taking place at a time of extreme global complexity: there are threats to world peace, war is the language used by the hegemonic powers to resolve conflicts; poverty is growing; the impact of climate change is increasing; there is a depletion of natural resources, and a growing inequality between the poor and the rich, which explains and expresses the limits to which the current International Economic Order has reached. This current International Economic Order must be changed, and this change must also be promoted through unity and solidarity.

In the midst of the most colossal scientific and technical development of all time, the world has gone back three decades in terms of reducing extreme poverty, with levels of famine not seen since 2005.

Eight hundred million people in the world suffer from hunger. 760 million people, mostly women, cannot read or write.

The so-called Third World has more than 84 million children out of school; there are more than 660 million people without electricity, and only 36 per cent of the population uses the internet in the least developed countries and developing nations.

When turning to financial markets, the nations of the South have faced interest rates up to eight times higher than those of developed countries. About one-fifth of developing economies liquidated more than 15 per cent of their international foreign exchange reserves to cushion the pressure on domestic currencies.

By 2022, twenty-five developing nations had to devote more than one-fifth of their total income to servicing public debt, amounting to a new form of slavery. That year alone, global military spending, as mentioned here, reached $2.24 trillion.

Achieving universal inclusive participation in the digital economy will require at least $428 billion to be invested in our countries by 2030. This demand could be met with just 19 per cent of that annual expenditure on armaments.

Our peoples have a historic thirst for justice. And, in the face of so much uncertainty and despair deployed by the capitalist elites, we need more and more certainty and confidence in the triumph of our ideas, in the triumph of unity and in the triumph of solidarity.

Far from globalising solidarity, friendship and respect, the world resorts to war, sanctions, coercive measures, pressures, blockades, walls and, above all, war and genocide. This shows that capitalism has no answer to the current problems of humanity.

On more than one occasion, we have all pointed out the dangers of the impunity with which Israel acts, thanks to the complicity and support of the US government and despite the serious risks of regionalisation of the conflict in the Middle East, a serious threat to peace and international security.

Only an imperial mentality, an interventionist purpose can deny that peace and stability in that region depend, in the first place, on a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which contemplates the creation of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital and guaranteeing the right of return of the refugees to their land.

Together with you, we demand the immediate entry of the State of Palestine as a full member of the United Nations

Cuba has always been in solidarity with the Palestinian cause. Today hundreds of Palestinian students are studying in our country, with them we have a permanent exchange, with them our people have paraded in front of the US Embassy in Cuba demanding an end to the aggression against Palestine. Together with them we have shared talks, debates and also demonstrations of public expression.

We have told those young people that they are also children of Cuba and all Cubans feel like fathers and mothers of those young Palestinians who study with us, who also share the daily life of the Cuban people.

Long live Free Palestine!

Likewise, we express our support for the cause of the Saharawi people who can continue to count on a faithful and loyal friend in Cuba.

We support the cause of the Syrian people.

We also express our support for the young people who are demonstrating today in the universities of the United States and who are being repressed and brutalised by the police

Imperialism persists in its project of domination over our lands finances, and promotes violence, destabilisation, and increasingly engenders hate speeches, attacks

Cuba has always been in solidarity with the Palestinian cause

eace, solidarity, and unity

leftist and progressive forces and seeks to erase the history of struggle and resistance of the Latin American and Caribbean peoples.

In spite of the sanctions and coercive measures imposed by the United States, in addition to the pressures and blackmail on our nations, the nature of the revolutionary processes in Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua was preserved; the governments of Mexico, Brazil, Colombia and Honduras, governments headed by López Obrador, Lula, Petro and Xiomara , together with their peoples, contributed to maintain the correlation of forces in favour of progressivism in our region.

We reiterate once again Cuba's rejection of external interference and impositions that seek to influence the functioning of Venezuelan institutions and affect the stability and tranquillity that characterise the society of that brotherly country.

We express our recognition and full solidarity support to our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters, who are resisting the media siege and the interference attempts of imperialism and its allies to break their constitutional order.

To the Plurinational State of Bolivia we extend our support and solidarity in the defence of its sovereignty over its natural resources and in the face of destabilising attempts.

We congratulate the Venezuelan people for the development of the new electoral process in a climate of peace and in compliance with its Constitution, for the fulfillment of the electoral schedule despite the threats and actions of the right-wing in complicity with the United States.

The Haitian people have the right to find a peaceful, sustainable and lasting solution to the challenges they face, based on full respect for their self-determination, sovereignty and independence.

Cuba has offered fraternal and disinterested cooperation to Haiti in areas of great impact for its people. Even in the current circumstances we maintain a medical brigade there that provides services to the children of that people in need.

We consider that there are two components of this imperial purpose to destroy the Cuban Revolution: economic asphyxiation and media intoxication.

We are not exempt from the consequences of the multidimensional crisis of today's capitalism. Our situation is further aggravated by the economic, commercial and financial blockade applied by the United States for more than six decades, intensified to the extreme by the administrations of Donald Trump and Joe Biden. Both administrations have tried to suffocate our economy while allocating millions of dollars to subversive plans and media campaigns aimed at breaking the national unity around the Revolution and the Party.

Dear sisters and brothers of solidarity:

Cuba has resisted more than 60 years of a genocidal blockade, simultaneous with terrorist attacks and countless actions to destroy the Revolution.

Cuba does not send armed forces or troops to any country in the world to attack; we did it in Angola at the request of the African countries and it was to put an end to apartheid and to achieve independence for those countries. The troops we send to the world are troops of doctors, teachers and internationalist aid workers!

It must be said that social networks have become the biggest hate factory and platform for cultural colonisation by the United States. There is cyber-bullying, incitement to violence, exacerbation of individualism and narcissism; it is filled with slander, perjury, defamation. There is an exploitation of the imagination and of people's feelings, and, as a famous Brazilian academic – also mentioned by Frei Betto in a conference in January this year in Cuba – says, all those who are users of social networks become at the same time free labor, free raw material and finally merchandise, because all our data are sold as merchandise; therefore, it is also a sophisticated system of exploitation.

You have been able to appreciate in these days, when you have exchanged with labor centres, in cities and camps you have visited, the difficulties we face and the creative and determined effort of our people to overcome the difficulties, and this keeps intact the will to continue building an ever more just, prosperous and sustainable socialist society, an endeavour that receives extraordinary encouragement with the countless displays of solidarity from millions of friends around the world

Today we are living through one of the most difficult moments in the face of the reinforcement of economic, commercial and financial persecution, but the unity of our people keeps us firm in the defense of our social conquests. That is the legacy of Fidel and Raúl and it is our commitment to the present and to the future!

We have set as our priorities to continue strengthening our unity. General Raúl Castro Ruz in his speech on 1 January, on the occasion of the 65th Anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution said that unity was the most precious thing we had and that we had to take care of it like the apple of our eye.

How do we try to strengthen unity? By seeking more participation of our people in all processes and decision making. That is why we are constantly encouraging the creation of spaces where the people raise their concerns, criticise, propose and from there make decisions; spaces where besides proposing solutions, they participate in the implementation of those solutions, and spaces where the people can also make popular control of everything we do together and in which we participate, because that is how we face adversity.

Today we are living through one of the most difficult moments in the face of the reinforcement of economic, commercial and financial persecution, but the unity of our people keeps us firm in the defense of our social conquests. That is the legacy of Fidel and Raúl and it is our commitment to the present and to the future!

Our struggle will continue day by day, week by week, month by month, year after year, until the US Government lifts this cruel, immoral and unjustifiable policy.

Our people deserve to live in peace and equal conditions, to really show what we are capable of advancing and building in Cuban socialism.

We are convinced, and we appreciate it every day in our exchanges with the population, that this country has enough dignity, talent and will to rise above the siege with its own efforts and, moreover, to overcome it.

From Martí, Fidel, Raúl and Che we learned the value of solidarity; we learned to give solidarity and to be grateful for the solidarity you give us.

From here we pronounce ourselves for a No to war, to hegemony, to interference, to coercive measures, to aggressions, to the building of walls and blockades.

Long live friendship, peace, solidarity and unity among our peoples and all the workers of the world!

The full speech can be found at en.granma.cu

CPA president, Vinnie Molina delivers a speech in solidarity with the Cuban revolution at Havana's Convention Centre on 2 May 2024. The event was attended by Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel

CFMEU delegation receives the Cuban Workers' Central (CTC)'s Award for Solidarity on 2 May 2024.

the troops we send to the world are doctors, teachers, and internationalist aid workers

New International Economic Order calls for 'global South insurgency'

The 50th anniversary congress on the New International Economic Order in Havana closed with a roadmap for a "global South insurgency to remake the world system."

The congress – co-convened by the Progressive International and the National Association of Economists and Accountants of Cuba (Anec) – brought together leading scholars, diplomats and policy-makers to Havana from 36 countries, including Brazil, South Africa, China, Colombia, Kenya, Indonesia and Spain. Anec brings together Cuban professionals linked to the economic sciences and technicians of related specialities.

The three days of discussion aimed to prepare a programme of action to secure peace through sovereign development in the 21st century.

Participants included former Colombian president Ernesto Samper, United Nations independent expert on foreign debt Attiya Waris, permanent representative of South Africa to the UN Mathu Joyini, and director of the Columbia Centre for Sustainable Development Jeffrey Sachs.

In her opening presentation to the congress, Ms Joyini said: "The New International Economic Order will address the harms caused to developing countries by the international system, including the raft of financial, trade and tax abuses that have been sucking trillions out of the South."

The delegates discussed finance, debt and the international monetary system, science, technology and innovation, climate, energy and natural resources, commodities, industry and international trade and finally governance, multilateralism and international law.

Proposals on these topics will be developed into a detailed programme of action ahead of the September 2024 UN general assembly alongside partner governments from around the world.

In his concluding remarks, former Cuban minister of economy and planning, Jose Luis Rodriguez, said, "The first thing to achieve development is peace. As long as bombs continue to fall, we will not achieve development."

Co-general co-ordinator of the Progressive International Varsha Gandikota-Nellutla closed the congress, saying, "At this historic congress, hosted in the splendour of the National Capitol here in Havana, scholars, diplomats and policy-makers from Senegal to Sweden, Colombia to China, Australia to Argentina have laid out a concrete and inspiring path out of this age of intolerable plunder and vengeance.

"We have before us a roadmap for a global South insurgency to remake the world system through new and alternative institutions of global governance for peace, prosperity, and planetary protection.

"In September, at the United Nations general assembly, we will publish this detailed action plan, and commit to toil tirelessly to unite, mobilise and organise progressive forces all over the world to win it."

Progressive International was launched in May 2020 to unite, organise and mobilise the world's progressive forces.

Morning Star ✪

UNRWA in the clear

Peter Kinch

Remember the accusations that UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, employed Hamas operatives responsible for the 7 October breakout? Australia took it seriously enough to stop funding this UN agency which does invaluable lifesaving work in Palestine and nearby.

Well you won't hear much about this from most Australian media, but the final report of the "Independent review of mechanisms and procedures to ensure adherence by UNRWA to the humanitarian principle of neutrality" found that UNRWA's mechanisms and procedures are "exemplary" and set a high standard for other United Nations and humanitarian agencies.

The report also noted that Israel had not yet provided supporting evidence of its claims against UNRWA that a significant number of its employees are involved with terrorist organisations. Based on Israel's allegations, 16 UN-Member State donors, including Australia, paused or suspended funding to UNRWA amounting to around US$450 million (AU$689 million) overall.

According to the report, "In the absence of a political solution between Israel and the Palestinians, UNRWA remains pivotal in providing life-saving humanitarian aid and essential social services, particularly in health and education, to Palestinian refugees in Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the West Bank. As such, UNRWA is irreplaceable and indispensable to Palestinians' human and economic development. In addition, many view UNRWA as a humanitarian lifeline."

As stated by Catherine Colonna, former French foreign minister and head of the independent review group, "The set of rules and the mechanisms and procedures in place [at UNRWA] are the most elaborate within the UN system, precisely because it is such a difficult issue to work in such a complex and sensitive environment."

The final report, which provides 50 recommendations to further enhance UNRWA's already high standards of impartiality, humanity, and neutrality, is a testament to the United Nations and the international community's commitment to preserving UNRWA's mandate and ensuring its continuity until the rights of Palestine refugees are realised and a just political solution is found, in accordance with international law and UN resolutions. ✪

Israeli police attack Communist Party's Nazareth HQ on eve of May Day

Israel: determined to derail a planned May Day rally centred on ceasefire and anti-occupation demands, heavily-armed police forces raided the office of the Nazareth branches of the Hadash coalition (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality) and Communist Party of Israel (CPI) on Friday evening, 26 April.

When police stormed the building, activists from Hadash, the CPI, and the Young Communist League were involved in preparations for the central May Day demonstration being organised by Hadash and the CPI. At least two activists were arrested.

"We won't let the fascists silence us!" declared Ofer Cassif, the CPI parliamentarian that the government has repeatedly attempted to suppress.

"Come to the demonstration, to raise a loud and clear voice against the criminal massacre in Gaza, against the ethnic cleansing of the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, against the raging tide of fascism and in support of justice for all, before it's too late!" he continued.

"The order of the day: Unite against fascism!"

Several rallies against the deadly war in Gaza and the occupation of the Palestinian territories will be held across Israel for May Day, in Tel Aviv, Nazareth, Kufr Yassif, Western Galilee, Jerusalem, and other locations.

This is the third assault on the branch in Nazareth in the past year. Police raided the office on 10 November, tearing down political posters and spray-painting over murals. "The Ben-Gvir police continues its political persecution and attempts to intimidate and silence the Arab public and other forces opposing the war," Hadash said in a statement, referring to Itamar Ben-Gvir, Netanyahu's national security minister.

"We will not put up with these provocations. We will continue to lead the joint Arab-Jewish struggle against fascism, war, and persecution," Hadash said.

On 28 April 2023, just before the May Day demonstration in the city, in another raid police took down the red flags and the Palestinian flag at the Nazareth branch and arrested the secretary of the Communist Party in the city.

Zo HaDerekh (*This Is The Way*) is the Communist Party of Israel's Hebrew-language newspaper.

People's World ✪

Calling all readers

Give us a laugh

The *Guardian – the Workers' Weekly* is in need of cartoonists, or humourists

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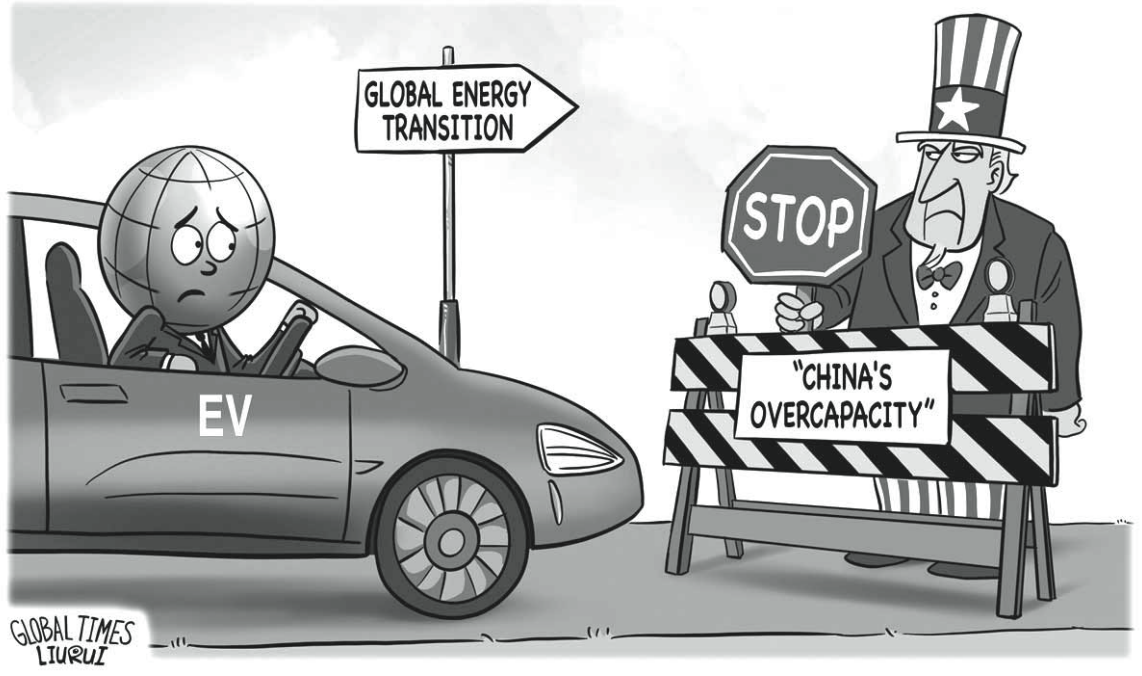

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Workers of the world mark May Day with marches and rallies

Workers across the world took to the streets this May, marking International Workers' Day by protesting against the pressure of rising prices and demanding better employment rights.

In Istanbul, Turkish police fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse thousands of people who tried to break through a barricade and reach Taksim Square, where May Day celebrations are banned.

The square holds symbolic value for trade unions. In 1977, unidentified gunmen opened fire on a May Day celebration in the square, causing a stampede and killing 34 people.

At least 30 people were detained for trying to pass through another blockade.

In Athens, several thousand people, including Gaza demonstrators, joined marches as strikes disrupted public transport and train services across Greece.

The country's largest union is demanding a return to collective bargaining after workers' rights were scrapped during Greece's 2010-18 financial crisis.

"We want to send a message that workers say no to exploitation, no to poverty, no to high prices," said Nikos Mavrokefalos at the march.

In Paris, thousands of protesters marched through the French capital, seeking better pay and working conditions. Pro-Palestinian groups and anti-Olympics activists joined the rally, chanting slogans in support of people in Gaza.

Unions have warned of a strike during the Games, which start in less than three months, if the government does not adequately compensate people forced to work during summer holidays.

Government officials have failed to meet with union leaders ahead of the Olympics, said General Confederation of Labour (CGT) general secretary Sophie Binet.

Photo: Alisdare Hickson – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

"How do you expect it to go well if the authorities don't respond to our simplest demand?" she asked.

In South Africa, pro-Palestinian demonstrators joined May Day events, while in Kenya, President William Ruto called for an increase in the minimum wage.

In Iraq, protesters demanded better wages, the reopening of closed factories and the end to the privatisation of certain businesses.

In Lebanon, pro-Palestinian marchers mingled with workers demanding an end to a miserable economic crisis.

In Indonesia, workers gathered in the capital Jakarta to demand protections for migrant workers abroad and a minimum wage rise.

In South Korea, thousands of protesters shouted pro-worker slogans at a rally against the anti-union policies of President Yoon Suk Yeol's conservative government.

In Japan, more than 10,000 people gathered in Tokyo, demanding pay increases to offset higher prices.

In the Philippines, hundreds of workers and activists marched to demand wage increases and job security amid soaring food and oil prices.

Morning Star ✪

May Day Haiti: repeated demands from workers

In Haiti, better wages, working conditions, security, and social protection from the state are among the main demands of the working class in Haiti on International Workers' Day.

The anniversary turned into a day of reflection and repeated demands from those who struggle daily to bring home the bread.

The Professional Association of Private Schools has been denouncing for some time the state of desolation and deterioration of the institutions.

They criticised the loss of the right to life, the right to freedom of movement, and other reasons that cause young people to flee their homeland in search of better living conditions elsewhere.

Haiti's schools, public and private, are suffering greatly, and the reality on the campuses is bleak, due to uncertainty, anxiety, frustrations, anguish, and even sadness.

There are difficulties in teaching calmly, retaining teachers, paying them adequately and meeting multiple obligations.

Haitian teachers called for dignified actions such as: using resources to help schools in poor financial situations, cancelling schools' debts to tax authorities and granting a five-year moratorium to secular schools.

Health professionals are also finding it difficult to reach their jobs due to crossfire from armed gangs. The president of the Haitian General Hospital Health Workers' Union, Evelyne Fremont, called on the gangs to establish a truce in favour of the sick.

The Haitian Medical Association called for respect for the right to health, which has been violated by the closure of state and private hospitals due to the growing wave of violence in the Caribbean country.

The Haitian National Police Union called for the urgent provision of resources to curb the spread of gangs that already control 80 percent of the capital.

The union says that heavy equipment, weapons, ammunition, bulletproof vests, and ballistic helmets are vital to enforce the law against criminal gangs.

Telesur ✪

Global Briefs

USA: More than 2,000 students have been arrested on US college campuses during pro-Palestinian actions. Many students have been suspended. As a gesture of solidarity, Yemen's Sanaa University is prepared to welcome the suspended students to continue their education there. The university has issued a statement applauding the "humanitarian" position of the American students. "We are serious about welcoming students that have been suspended from US universities for supporting Palestinians. We are fighting this battle with Palestine in every way we can," an official at Yemen's Sanaa University said. "The board of the university condemns what academics and students of US and European universities are being subjected to, suppression of freedom of expression," Sanaa University stated. The university provided an email address for students looking to take them up on the offer.

TÜRKİYE: "We decided to stop exports and imports to and from Israel until a permanent ceasefire is achieved [in Gaza] and humanitarian aid is allowed without interruptions," said Turkish Trade Minister Omer Bolat. Türkiye is also negotiating "with our Palestinian brothers on alternative arrangements to ensure that they are not affected by this decision," he added. Türkiye has denounced Israel's military campaign in Gaza, sent thousands of tons of aid to Gazans, and said it would join South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The Turkish decision to maintain commercial ties with Israel despite Erdogan's strong rhetoric, prompted a domestic backlash and affected the results of the ruling AK Party in nationwide local elections in March. Hamas said Türkiye's trade halt was brave and reflective of the support for Palestinian rights and self-determination.

JORDAN: Jordan's state-run Petra news agency reported on two Jordanian aid convoys carrying flour, food and other humanitarian aid attacked by Israeli settlers on their way to Gaza. The settlers dumped some of the cargo and damaged the trucks. "The extremists' attack on the two convoys, and the failure of the Israeli authorities to provide protection for them, undermine all the Israel's government's claims and commitments to allowing aid to enter Gaza," said Jordanian Foreign Ministry statement.

NIGER: US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin has confirmed that Russian military personnel have entered an airbase in Niger that hosts US forces. "Airbase 101, where our forces are, is a Nigerian air force base that is co-located with an international airport in the capital city. The Russians are in a separate compound and don't have access to US forces or access to our equipment," Austin said. Niger's authorities had earlier informed the US that they must withdraw the nearly 1,000 US military personnel stationed in the country.

US plan to seize Bolivian lithium

An article published for the Bolivian Information Agency "gives account of a new plan of the United States to carry out the recolonisation of Latin America."

This new interventionist plan, according to the press agency, is aimed at consolidating the rupture of the Bolivian political party Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) and creating an 'outsider' candidate for the 2025 elections, with the aim of seizing natural resources such as lithium and rare earths containing significant resources.

"The strategy would be focused on its natural resources and on the consolidation of a servile and right-wing government, for this reason the United States has as a priority the rupture of the MAS-IPSP (leftist coalition that currently rules in that Andean country) seeking to make that instrument disappear from the political scene," says the news portal *El Radar*.

The plan, called 'Simón Bolivar,' would try to build a foreign candidate has not yet appeared in the polls who would appeal to right-wing and undecided voters. According to El Radar, one of the operators of this plan in Bolivia is Debra Hevia, who since September 2023 has been in charge of business at the United States Embassy in La Paz.

It was also leaked that the National Foundation for Democracy, the Institute of International Relations, the DEA, the Freedom and Democracy Foundation, the Fundación Construir, Comunidad Ciudadana, the Alianza Informativa Latinoamericana, Military Church Support Group - Centurian Project (Fort Bragg), and others are financing the plan.

It also targets local and national politicians. The mayors of Cochabamba, Manfred Reyes Villa, and Santa Cruz, Jhonny Fernández, and former presidents Mesa and Quiroga are mentioned. From the National Assembly, the deputy of Citizen Community for Santa Cruz, Luisa Nayar, and the senator of the same political faction for Cochabamba, Andrea Barrientos; and, externally, the businessman Samuel Doria Medina would take part.

The final objective of the plan, according to **El Radar**, is "to take the largest lithium reserve in the world by taking advantage of and encouraging the growth of the political crisis, which would become an economic crisis increased by the obstruction of credits by operators in the Assembly.".Lithium would not be the only resource Washington wanted, but also the reserves of iron, uranium, and rare earths. " This is not impossible, as Bolivia is surrounded by US military bases. The nearest ones are on the border between Tarija and Argentina, where the US Southern Command took over."

Telesur ✪

Socialism through chess: the USSR, Cuba and the politics of Chess

Graham Holton

Chess is a game of intellect, discipline, and strategic thinking. It's is an equaliser in which a peasant, once taught, can play as well as someone of the ruling class. Chess has been associated with socialism for some time, not only in its Soviet incarnation.

Karl Marx was an avid chess player. One of his frequent opponents was Wilhelm Liebknecht the co-founder of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, with whom Marx played marathon sessions. Only one recorded game played by Marx has survived. Marx's biographer, Frederick Wheen places him as Class A, meaning possible Grandmaster.

Vladimir Lenin was also an avid chess player and a strong promoter of the game in the USSR. There are famous photographs of Lenin playing the Bolshevik revolutionary Alexander Bogdanov during a visit to Maxim Gorky in 1908. There is an apocryphal signed sketch of Lenin playing chess with Adolf Hitler dated 1925, representing the coming conflict between the USSR and Nazi Germany.

As chess materials became more affordable, and the theory was spread amongst the Soviets, chess became a state-funded sport. Chess was closely tied to the State labour organisations. The Party believed that chess would raise the cultural level of the working class, a prerequisite for socialism. Chess soon became the 'people's game' as it was inexpensive, social, easy to teach, and players learnt strategic thinking. By the 1940s the Soviet Union was the world's leading chess power.

In 1945 the visiting US chess team gave Stalin a carved pipe depicting him playing chess with President F.D. Roosevelt. The US vs USSR chess match was broadcast on radio in both countries. The ten leading masters of the USA played the ten leading masters of the Soviet Union. The USSR team won by 11 points, a crushing defeat for the US. The defeat in chess of the USA against the USSR became a Cold War symbol. Soviet chess players went on to modernise the game and produced the world's greatest players. By 1991, seven out of the eight chess world champions were Soviet. The only non-Soviet was Bobby Fischer.

It's hard to imagine now, but the 1972 championship was a major media event, billed as the Match of the Century, as the US press turned the World Chess Championship of Bobby Fischer (USA) vs Boris Spassky (USSR) into a spectacle of Capitalism vs Socialism. It was covered by the daily TV and newspapers around the world. Held in Reykjavik, Iceland, chess became a major propaganda tool for the US media circus. Under this unprecedented media hype, Fischer demanded that all cameras be removed, then used every dirty trick to distract his opponent, who in the end capitulated.

Fischer became the World Chess Champion on 1 September 1972. He retired from chess, forfeiting his title without defending it in 1975. He knew he had been a pawn of the US media and politics. Fischer died in 2008, looking dishevelled and suffering from mental health issues, saying he hated what chess had become. Films such as *Searching for Bobby Fischer*, *Bobby Fischer Against the World*, *Pawn Sacrifice* (2015), and Broadway play *Chess the Musical* continue to bring Fischer to popular American attention. The American media still touts Fischer as the World's greatest ever Grand Master.

Since the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the Cuban government has been a strong supporter of chess, as a national sport supported, to help spread socialism. The Federación Cubana de Atletismo (FCA) was founded in 1961. Chess is taught in Cuban elementary and secondary schools. Cuba's first world champion was José Raúl Capablanca (1888-1942). In his honour the annual Capablanca Memorial Chess Tournament was set up in 1962.

Fidel Castro was a strong chess player and there are numerous photos of him playing chess with workers and advanced players. In 1965 Cuba connected to the Marshall Chess Club in New York by telex to allow Bobby Fischer to play in the 4th Capablanca Memorial tournament in Havana. Each game lasted up to seven hours. Cuba paid its US$10,000 cost. In 1966 Cuba spent more than US$5 million on the 17th Chess Olympiad in Havana.

Castro played several exhibition games including a draw with Grandmaster Tigran Petrosian and a win against Bobby Fischer. Fischer extended his visit in Cuba after the rest of the US team left. In 1975 FIDE (International Chess Federation) awarded its first Cuban Grandmaster title to Silvino Garcia Marinez. Despite US sanctions and the continuing propaganda by the US media, Cuban chess players are well known around the world, having twenty-seven Grand Masters. Cuba's Cabrera Albornoz received the award of Grandmaster from FIDE in 2019. The 2024 Capablanca Memoriam International Chess Tournament will be played at the Habana Libre Hotel, supported by The Confederation of Chess of the Americas (CCA) and the FCA. ✪

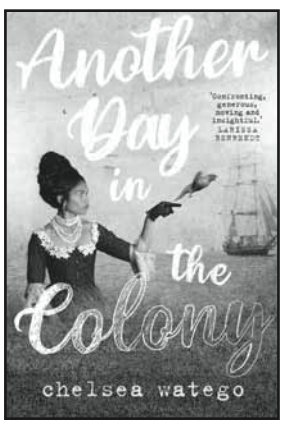
FIDE and politics

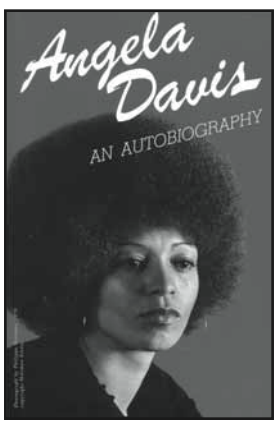
In Toronto, Canada the 2024 World Chess Championship is run by FIDE (International Chess Federation) to determine the next World Chess Champion.

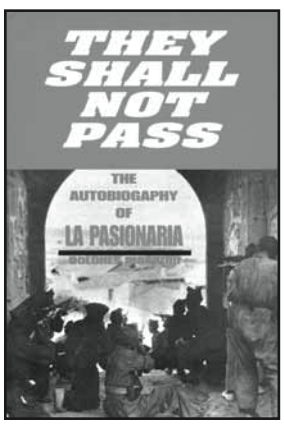
There is more than a lot of money at stake, the winner also carries national political prestige.

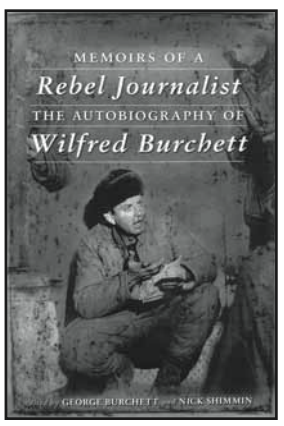
The eight-player double round-robin tournament will decide the candidate to play the defending champion, Grandmaster (GM) Ding Liren of China. From the start the competition has had its upsets, with the very popular GM Magnus Carlsen of Norway withdrawing. In response to the Russian conflict with Ukraine, Russian and Belarusian flags have been banned from all FIDE-related events, leaving Russian players using the FIDE flag. Ukraine has a special significance, as it is one of the world's great chess nations. The other GM candidates in the competition are from USA, India, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan. The politics of the US playing against Russia and possibly China have not been lost on international observers.

WORTH READING – AUTO/BIOGRAPHY









Another Day in the Colony

Chelsea Watego

An excellent autobiographical account of modern colonialism and racism in Australia. This book's critique of the various ways white perspectives dominate discourse surrounding Indigenous peoples – at the expense of Indigenous peoples' voices - is particularly important, with implications for Australian academia, media, and justice systems. Watego's book is a powerful example of Indigenous voices asserting and reclaiming sovereignty over their own stories.

Angela Davis: an Autobiography

Angela Davis is one of the US's great radical black leaders. She is an energetic activist, campaigning for the release of the Soledad brothers who were imprisoned in Governor Ronald Reagan's California. She was a prominent figure in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, among the black Panthers and as a Communist Party. She spent 14 months in jail before being acquitted of 'murder, kidnapping, and conspiracy' in an incredible political trial. She later went on to fight for the rights of prisoners in the US. Her other books include *Women Race and Class* which gives a great explanation of the links the struggles for women's rights, black rights, and the class struggle.

This book is as much an important history of the time, written from inside the various struggles, as it is of Davis's life.

My Autobiography: Charles Chaplin

Mention Charlie Chaplin and everyone thinks of the comedian with the baggy trousers and the moustache, or, in *The Gold Rush,* boiling an old shoe and eating the shoelaces. He started life in poverty in London, and went on to conquer Hollywood and millions around the world with his films in which those early roots are never lost.

He engaged with US presidents, sometimes to their discomfort, arguing for measures against the Nazis and Russian war relief during the Second World War. He also opposed the Committee on Unamerican Activities which he describes as "a dishonest phrase to begin with, elastic enough to wrap around the throat and strangle the voice of any American citizen whose honest opinion is a minority." He refers to "the plethora of power given into the hands of men whose moral responsibility and intellectual competence to say the least not infallible, and in many cases questionable, could end in a war of extermination of all life on earth. Yet we go blindly on."

They Shall Not Pass: The Autobiography of La Pasionaria

Dolores Ibarruri

The legendary Spanish communist, Delores Ibarruri died in 1989 but remains honorary president of the Spanish Communist Party. The reason is partly told in her autobiography. It is an inspirational book, set against the backdrop of the Civil War, but her story is bigger than this book.

She was jailed four times before free elections in 1936 saw her elected to parliament. Her first action was to take the keys to the prison where political prisoners were held and personally release them. She was, after all, *La Pasionaria*.

There is a statue in her honour in Glasgow. It includes the quote, made famous in her campaign for striking miners in 1934, "better to die on your feet than live forever on your knees."

Memoirs of a Rebel Journalist – The Autobiography of Wilfred Burchett

Burchett's life was remarkable by any standards and his work was astonishing. The bourgeoisie hated him for reporting from the 'other side.' He covered the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, revolutions in China and the DPRK, and was a staunch supporter of the new socialist republics in Eastern Europe. He defended socialism and he suffered as a consequence, but never flinched. He was, for decades, effectively made stateless by the state and system he criticised.

His story is a huge one. The cause he fought for is huge, and one worth fighting for.

UK Rwanda scheme copies Australian failure

Caiden Bartholomew

The UK has begun mass arrests of migrants in preparation for Rishi Sunak's Rwanda deportation scheme. The UK Home Office, which manages immigration, has released footage of armed immigration officers handcuffing individuals at their homes and escorting them in deportation vans.

The plan has already hit a major roadblock. Government data reveals that while 2,143 migrants have been "located for detention," more than 3,500 individuals are unaccounted for. The scheme, approved under the *Safety of Rwanda Act*, was declared unlawful by the UK Supreme Court last year. Despite criticism from unions, human rights organisations, and several of their own MPs, the Tories have maintained their commitment to the plan.

The UK Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights released a 52-page report in February which found that the Rwanda scheme is "not compatible with the UK's international obligations" to human rights and international law. So why is Sunak's government still committed to its deportation plan?

As workers in the UK and other western countries face worsening housing and cost-of-living crises, anti-immigration rhetoric serves to pass the blame from capitalism and neoliberal governments to fellow workers. Rather than acknowledge capitalism's cyclical economic collapses, or decades of austerity regimes which have carved out more and more wealth for the owning classes from public programs and workers' wallets, anti-immigration scaremongering seeks to turn workers against each other and drum up political support for parties aligned with corporate interests.

Australians should recognise the similarities between the UK's Rwanda plan and Australia's own deportation and detention schemes with Cambodia, Papua New Guinea (Manus Island), and Nauru. Scott Morrison, in his 2022 election campaign, cited the UK-Rwanda deal as evidence of Australia's border security success, stating "other countries are taking their lead from Australia's successful approach."

Introduced by the Howard government in 2001, then strengthened by Abbott's 'Operation Sovereign Borders' plan in 2013, Australia's offshore processing regime has enjoyed continued support from the Albanese government. Governments around the world have taken inspiration from Australia, as shown by rhetoric from Germany and Austria, as well as Italy's detention of immigrants in Albania. China exports electric cars, Italy exports fashion, and Australia, it seems, exports expensive ways of using asylum seekers as scapegoats.

Australia's record regarding offshore detention and resettlement should cause major concern regarding the future of the UK's Rwanda scheme. In 2014, Australia agreed to pay the Cambodian government $55 million to resettle refugees from Nauru. In total, only seven people were resettled. That's $7.8 million per person. Alleged corruption has also been rife, such as the Paladin affair – $423 million was paid by the Australian government to Paladin, which works out to an average of $1600 per person every day to detain refugees on Manus Island.

International human rights organisations have also repeatedly criticised Australia's offshore detention schemes, with the policy widely regarded to be in direct contradiction to Australia's commitments to international law. The International Criminal Court's prosecutor office has referred to Australia's policy as "cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment," citing "sporadic acts of physical and sexual violence committed by staff."

Australia's experiences with offshore detention should therefore be a warning for the future of the UK's Rwandan deportation plan. Stronger government powers to detain and deport immigrant workers serves not only to exploit those who are deported, but also to enable further exploitation of those who remain. Under threat of detention and deportation, immigrant workers can be paid less, denied their benefits, and punished for speaking against exploitative or unsafe work practices. Meanwhile, non-immigrant workers also suffer the consequences, as they are pressured into accepting worse pay, conditions, and benefits by the threat of replacement by immigrant or offshore workforces that are more easily exploited. Furthermore, public programs such as healthcare and education have funding cut while anti-immigration schemes receive billions.

Workers in the UK, Australia, and across the world must recognise anti-immigration rhetoric as dangerous to the wellbeing of immigrants and workers alike. The Australian example has proven the offshore detention and resettlement model to be intentionally cruel and expensive, to proliferate racial violence, and to undercut workers' rights. These experiences set a dark precedent for the UK to follow. ✪

Palestinian Students and Academics express solidarity with university encampments

Since late April, thousands of students across the US have launched encampments on the campuses of their universities in solidarity with Palestine. Students are demanding that their universities divest their endowments from Israel and all companies that do business with Israel and benefit from its illegal occupation of Palestine. They are also calling for universities to cut all academic partnerships with Israel. They have declared that they will remain in the encampments until their demands are met.

These encampments have already been met with heavy repression by university administrations and local officials. In many cases, administrators have already called in campus police, local town or city police, and even state troopers to violently attack, arrest, and evict students, faculty, and community members from the encampments.

Groups across Palestine have expressed gratitude and solidarity for the actions taken by students and encouraged them to continue the struggle. A statement from the Palestinian Educational Collective, a grouping of Palestinian youth, students, and university workers reads, "As you erect tents across campuses, as you demand that colleges and universities divest from companies profiting from genocide, as you demand to put an end to academic programs with Israeli institutions, you are making history! Your loud cry for Palestinian liberation is being heard and is slowly but forcefully resonating around the world."

Globetrotter ✪

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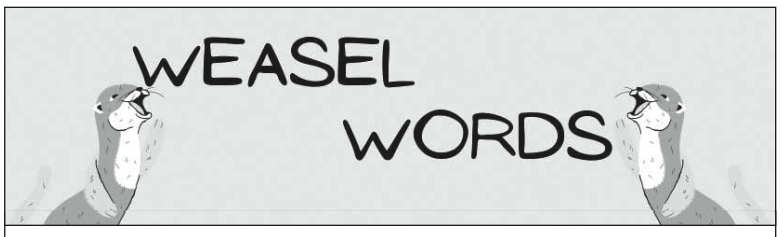

Soros

This is one of the nastiest Weasel Words we've ever had. It's a bloke's name, specifically a really rich bloke who's done a lot of philanthropy. As well as being a billionaire hedge fund manager, George Soros is Jewish, and accusing him of being behind things he's really not behind has become a way of being anti-semitic with what the perpetrator imagines to be plausible deniability. Extra-weaselly, people who are suddenly furious with pro-Palestine protests on US university campus because protesting against mass murder is 'anti-semitic' are also into accusing Soros of being behind anything they think is left-wing.

Why it's almost as though they're not anti-anti-semitic at all!

Listening

Listening is a good thing to do. It's also a weasel way of sounding apologetic without actually apologising.

"We have listened," says Qantas CEO Vanessa Hudson. She was Qantas' Chief Financial Officer while it was selling people tickets to flights that have already been cancelled, as well as CEO while the airline was loudly saying they'd done nothing wrong. Presumably at that stage Qantas was sticking fingers in its ears and saying "I can't hear you." What Hudson means is "we've been caught."

Now

"Now is the time," according to US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken. Shorthand for "hurry up," what Blinken means is that it's Hamas' fault if they don't agree to a ceasefire deal that involves the Israeli Defence Force attacking Rafah. Why 'now' wasn't the time 34,000 murdered Palestinians ago is something Blinken didn't explain.

High jinks

Like 'larks' and 'shennanigans,' 'high jinks' sounds like fun. It's also how senior officers in the British Royal Marines described sexual assault when a member of the Marines Band reported it, telling her "If you don't admit to high jinks ... you are more likely to get into trouble than the boys are." With officers like that, who needs enemies?

'Courageous'

How the UK Tory Chancellor described William Wragg, an MP who gave the phone numbers of colleagues to a blackmailer he met on a dating app. Wragg said sorry when the scandal went public, and you don't get much more courageous than that. If only he'd had Vanessa Hudson's number. (see 'Listening' above) She would have told him to say he'd been listening.

Passionate

Being passionate used to be quite a romantic thing to do, before a billion resumes and job applications reduced passion to just something people felt about getting office work done on time. Biden re-election campaign co-chair, Mitch Landrieu, is inviting the world to feel sorry for Joe Biden on his reaction to the pro-Palestine protests on US university campuses. It's a difficult time for Biden, says Landrieu, and there are "very passionate opinions on both sides of the issue." Indeed there are – a lot of people feel very strongly about genocide.

Disorder

You could fill a whole book with things that US presidents have said and done which would be cited as proof of evil authoritarianism if Chinese leaders had said and done them. Any such book would have a place for Joe Biden's remark about the wave of pro-Palestine protests sweeping the US, that "dissent must never lead to disorder". A lot of the disorder he's not happy with has been caused by violent overreaction by universities, police forces. Biden should have a look at the rubble of Gaza, and the murders on the West Bank he's funding before he starts on 'disorder' at home.

Pine Gap on red alert – Part 2

In October 1973, US bases in Australia were put on 'red alert' in case of a nuclear war. The USA did not bother informing the Australian Prime Minister. In part two of a series, **Caiden Bartholemew** explains what this reveals about US operations in Australia

CIA INTERFERENCE

Given Whitlam's attitudes towards nationalisation, world socialism, and American secret military operations within Australia, it is unsurprising that the US had a hostile view of Australia's Prime Minister. Brian Toohey and former member of the US State Department William Blum, among others, have alleged that foreign involvement in the 1975 dismissal of Whitlam extended beyond the Royals. In his book *Killing Hope*, Blum notes that both major opposition parties, the National Country Party and the Liberal Party, received CIA funding, as admitted by CIA officers such as Victor Marchetti.

At the time, Whitlam responded to these allegations by demanding a list of CIA operatives in Australia, which soured relations further. Kerr received frequent briefings from Australian intelligence agencies, which continued to receive instructions from Washington.

Kerr had been involved with CIA fronts for many years, as noted by Blum and Toohey. He was a prominent member of the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom, which was tied to the CIA's Congress for Cultural Freedom. He also founded Lawasia (or Law Asia), an organisation of lawyers funded by the Asia Foundation, an anti-communist CIA front with representatives in all major Asian capitals. Other CIA operations had a huge presence in Australia, most notably the scandal-plagued Nugan Hand Merchant Bank of Sydney. The Nixon administration also appointed Marshall Green, a key figure in CIA coups in Indonesia and Greece, as ambassador to Australia. Christopher Boyce, an American involved in communications between CIA headquarters in Virigina and military facilities in Australia, reported that the CIA considered Kerr "our man." Allegations have also been made that the CIA bugged Parliament at this time.

Marchetti, who had helped establish Pine Gap, has stated that "a kind of Chile was set in motion," drawing connections between the coup that overthrew Allende and the dismissal of Whitlam. Whether the CIA was involved in the removal of Whitlam or not, the results remain the same. Riding on an unprecedented media campaign from the Murdoch Press, Fraser retained office. One of his first actions was to end Whitlam's move towards nationalisation, instead making it even easier for foreign corporations to obtain mining licences. Since the dismissal, no Australian PM has challenged the secrecy of American operations at Pine Gap or beyond.

Australia has continued to play the role of America's imperialist lapdog. Australians are arrested and threatened with imprisonment for approaching Pine Gap. Australian journalists are tortured for exposing the international American security state, and Australian veterans are dragged through secret courts for blowing the whistle on war crimes committed as part of America's campaigns of bloodshed around the world. In the midst of a cost-of-living crisis Australia forks over hundreds of billions for submarines that may never come. Pine Gap has gone from aiding the bombing of Cambodia to allegedly aiding the bombing of Gaza.

Scott Ludlam visits Pine Gap. Photo: Greens MPs – flickr.com (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

AUKUS exposes Australia's continued commitment to the American and British war machine. The support of both major parties for political and military aid to Israel reveals that the only lesson learned from the 1973 red alert scandal, which also arose from Israeli military actions, has been to remain silent. Australians must remember our brief attempt at independence under Whitlam. We must remember who our 'allies' really are. ✪

Homeless Police and Health Care Workers

State-Owned Housing is the solution in Queensland

Graham Holton

Homelessness is common throughout Queensland. It even impacts those with full-time work. The situation is so bad that homelessness now impacts police officers and health care workers. That people on a good income are homeless says a lot about the problem now being faced in the Sunshine State.

One case is a police officer who was transferred to Mackay. Unable to find accommodation, he purchased an RV (recreational vehicle) to live in. The problem was that all the caravan parks were full. He ended up parking next to the river to live, and driving each day to work.

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) pays an entry level police officer $79,721 a year, and First Year Constable $84,999. New recruits receive a cost-of-living allowance of $183 per fortnight, and all accommodation costs at police academies for live-in recruits are waived. Up to $20,000 is paid towards the cost of relocation from other jurisdictions. QPS has some accommodation of its own, but not every officer can use it.

The Queensland Nurses and Midwifery Union (QNMU) secretary, Beth Mohle, says the rental crisis is affecting health services in rural communities. A Queensland Health spokesperson acknowledged that worker shortages were the greatest obstacle to sustaining regional, rural, and remote health services. "It's a critical issue and we really need to actually have government turn their attention to this," she said.

According to *ABC News* there is a woman in Theodore, 200 kilometres from Rockhampton, who has a permanent full-time job at the local hospital but is now homeless, unable to find accommodation. State Health Minister Yvette D'Ath said the government was building more accommodation to try and combat the issue. Healthcare workers, "will be supported by a $115 million injection into the delivery of staff accommodation," Aimee McVeigh of Queensland Council of Social Services says that regional Queensland is the most expensive part of Australia to live. McVeigh wants the government to work with the private sector to supply affordable housing.

Queensland's Labor government is not doing nothing about this, but it's not doing anywhere near enough. There are plans to add more than 53,000 homes to the state's social (not public) housing stock over the next two decades. In the last year the government has built 485 social homes. Labor has also announced more support "for those struggling to find a home in the private rental market," and announced some changes to laws; rent bidding will be banned, and a rental sector code of conduct will set out the obligations of rental property owners.

Before the 1980s the government provided free accommodation for regional workers, such as railway station masters, nurses, health care workers, midwives, teachers, and police officers. State-owned properties provided a very useful service to state employees and rural communities. With the rise of neoliberalism, these properties were sold off to private enterprise at low prices. We are now facing the consequences, not only in Queensland, but across all Australia.

We need to bring back state-owned housing for workers in rural communities. The private housing sector has not solved the homelessness problem, but greatly aggravated it. The Miles Labor government acknowledges the problem but refuses to invest in the necessary public housing to fix it. ✪

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