CPA

The Workers' Weekly

Guardian

#2142 28 April 2025

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COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

We acknowledge the sovereignty of the First Peoples of Australia.

www.cpa.org.au

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MAY DAY 2025

Unite in action!

- Unite against anti-union offensive
- Defend the CFMEU
- Right to strike? YES!!
- Solidarity with world's workers
- Cancel the AUKUS war alliance
- Defend Medicare & the NDIS
- Raise wages & welfare payments

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The *Guardian* has a podcast

Search for "Communist *Guardian* Podcast" or use the QR code

Guardian

Issue 2142 28 April 2025

What they don't ask

If you've been finding the media coverage of this year's Federal election annoying, you're not alone. Partly, it's the major parties both trying to be 'small targets' and in lock step on so many issues. Partly it's the way the election is served up to you by the media. Media coverage in this year's Federal election has been mediocre, but there's something we can learn from it.

Journalists have been chasing 'gotcha' questions that don't really matter. It was corny but predictable for Peter Dutton to bring out his better-looking son in an effort to be 'relatable,' but it was inane for the press to ask Dutton if he would help his kid buy a house as if the answer matters. Dutton is rich. It's legal to help your kid buy a house. The real story with housing is that we have a housing system designed to make rich people richer, not give most people a home. So negative gearing and capital gains discounts are treated as sacred, and public housing is mostly not mentioned as a possibility.

Other journalists have focussed on 'costings,' but very selectively, berating Albanese about the price of renewable energy projects while ignoring the cost of climate inaction or of opening new fossil fuel projects. Household energy prices get a lot of attention, AUKUS not so much.

On AUKUS, the media has been pretty silent this election. Both major parties are committed to putting the largest amount of money Australia has ever spent on anything into submarines which will make us less safe. The Greens are AUKUS-critical, but they aren't being asked about that. Journalists would say the story doesn't have legs, without noticing that they're the ones who give any story legs.

Similarly, nobody is asking Dutton about his role in the 'African gangs' disgrace. That's in the past – unless you're a Black Australian still dealing with the slur Dutton made in government.

The media is part of the system. That's very obvious with the Murdoch media who always blatantly campaign for hard-right positions, but the other major media organisations all have an angle. There's no such thing as a real 'view from nowhere.' So think critically about the news you get, and pay attention to what they're not asking.

The system they're part of is a restricted democracy. We get to vote, but the interests of big capital always win.

This paper doesn't pretend to have a view from nowhere. We're proudly partisan for the view of the majority, the people who work for a living, the working class.

If you support news from a working class perspective, consider subscribing to this paper, or donating to the Press Fund.

Lest we forget

ANZAC day is upon us. Yet again, we will remember when Australia sent young men to die for a foreign power in a war which didn't threaten this country. The word 'sacrifice' will be used a lot. There will be less discussion of why the sacrifice 'had' to be made.

110 years later, there have been many such wars – young Australians sent to conflicts in the interests of our 'big friend' the USA in Malaysia, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Now there is talk of Australian troops going to Ukraine as peacekeepers. This country needs a government which looks after Australian lives.

Obituary for Maria Hilario

Maria Angeles Hilario

16 December 1959 – 26 February 2025

Denis Doherty and Amador Navidi

In late February this year, the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) lost a great campaigner, worker, enthusiast, for women's rights, and more recently Cuba, Venezuela and Palestine. Maria also loved to sing and was a dedicated member of the Sydney Trade Union Choir.

Maria Angeles Hilario Garcia was born in La Boveda de Toro, Spain, in 1959, to Narciso Hilario, a farmer, and Patro Garcia, a homemaker. Maria gained her qualifications as an architectural draftsperson in Spain and moved to Ireland where she met her husband. They moved to Australia and settled in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs.

Maria was intensely interested in politics. Having spent the first 16 years of her life under the fascist regime of General Franco, she had seen at first hand the results of the rule of fascism, the most violent form of capitalism. She had grown up implacably opposed to the injustice she witnessed. She saw clearly that the origins of war lie in a political system in which a privileged class, a small minority of the population, derive great wealth by exploiting the work of ordinary working people and use their wealth, power and influence to enforce their rule by war and international oppression. Maria joined the Communist Party in 2004.

Maria was very active in the CPA women's committee and was a ball of energy around International Women's Day on 8 March, year after year organising the speakers, venues, and catering for women after the IWD rally.

Maria went to Cuba five times and became a lifelong supporter of justice for the Cuban people. She was a very active member of the Cuban Friendship Society. Maria also travelled to Gaza once.

She was best known for her work with the 17th of the month picket. Maria started the Cuban vigil in front of the US consulate in Martin Place during the campaign to release the Cuban Five, they were released on 17 December 2014. This is the significance of gathering in front of the US consulate on the 17th of the month. Pickets remind the public that Cuba is under the unjust blockade imposed by the US.

In her last years, Maria was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. In the last year of her life Maria did not ease up on her vigils outside the US consulate in Sydney for Cuba but added Palestine to her vigils and attended the weekly rallies in Sydney in Hyde Park. Maria turned up even though she was going through some heavy chemotherapy, and even turned up when she was told that the chemo was not working. She was an integral part of the CPA team at the Palestine rallies and helped collect over 5,000 signatures on letters to the PM.

She passed away peacefully on 26 February 2025.

We pass on our condolences to Maria's close relatives and to all her friends who worked with Maria to make Australia and the world a more equitable place.

PRESS FUND

The Communist Party produces the *Guardian, The Workers' Weekly* is produced at a loss. We rely on the support of readers to put an anti-imperialist and working-class view out there. In a world of corporate media, it's more important than ever to put the workers' perspective. If you like the *Guardian*'s work, please donate to the Press Fund!
(for details see **cpa.org.au/press-fund/**)

Deepest thanks for the following donations:

Bel Branch $100 In Memory of Maria Hilario

S Salisbury $100 In Memory of Maria Hilario

P Limb $100 In memory of L Troy & T Orgles–Waterfront

D White $20, N Underdown $45, J Adey $60, D Mudie $20, J Wax $100, G Speirs $50, Eddie Seymour $125, Mark Mannion $140, Peter Farmer $1,310, Digireb $100, Sale *Guardian* mugs $20.

Total: $2,290

CPA Statement on the upcoming federal election

The betrayal of the people by the Albanese labor government has opened the door for the Coalition to form a minority government with the support of independent candidates.

As we go to press Labor is slightly ahead in the polls, but the situation is very volatile. Voters are concerned about the cost of living, with the economy overall and climate change also major concerns. It's still very possible for the election to result in a Coalition government either in its own right, or in coalition with right-independents.

This should be a warning to all progressive and left forces to unite efforts to ensure the betrayal of Labor doesn't deliver a minority Coalition government.

The electorate is resentful of all the betrayals; Indigenous Australians, the betrayal of unions, on Palestine. The destabilisation of organised labour by the Albanese government plays into the development of this move to the right. The reduction in living standards comes directly from the support given to the various wars and increases in military spending at the expense of health, education and social welfare. The feeling out there against PM Albanese is a significant setback for the government as union members and others abandon the Labor Party in favour of any other candidate.

A Federal Coalition government will bring with it worse outcomes for unions, workers, the environment and the people in general.

The priority at this election is to build a front to oppose the militarisation and opposition to the loss of democratic rights. The interests of Australia do not align with Dutton or Trump, our interests are in trade of a mutually beneficial character.

The trade unions and other groups need to adopt policies that align with the interests of the workers in their industries. A war with China or any other of the predatory behaviour that is being adopted does not offer Australian workers a prosperous future.

The Central Committee has decided to call on all its members to get actively involved in their localities to ensure the Coalition is last at the ballot box.

This means that all efforts should be put into force to work with the community for an outcome that benefits the people.

Party branches should analyse and discuss their local candidates and their policies and support the efforts of those who would benefit the people and could form part of a minority Labor government.

The CPA calls on party members – and the people in general – to vote for the balance of power in the Senate; there the vote should go to the Greens.

A vote for the Greens carries the double value that it sends a protest message to Labor but could also either help Greens candidates to get elected or to pass on their preference to Labor.

At all levels, the CPA calls on the electorate to put the Coalition last. ✪

The general call is to put the Coalition last.

Socialists, Greens, progressive independents ahead of Labor with the Coalition last.

In the Senate we recommend to vote 1 for the Greens to seek the balance of power.

House of Representatives Ballot Paper

State

Electoral Division of Division name

Number the boxes from 1 to 8 in the order of your choice.

1 SURNAME, Given names **SOCIALISTS**

LOGO 2 SURNAME, Given names **GREENS**

LOGO 3 SURNAME, Given names **PROGRESSIVE IND.**

LOGO 4 SURNAME, Given names **LABOR**

LOGO 5 SURNAME, Given names

6 SURNAME, Given names

LOGO 7 SURNAME, Given names

LOGO 8 SURNAME, Given names **COALITION**

Remember...number every box to make your v... unt

SAMPLE

Senate Ballot Paper

State – Election of 6 Senators

You may vote in one of two ways

Either:
Above the line
By numbering at least 6 of these boxes in the order of your choice (with number 1 as your first choice)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
LOGO	LOGO	LOGO	LOGO	LOGO	LOGO	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Or:
Below the line
By numbering at least 12 of these boxes in the order of your choice (with number 1 as your first choice).

GREENS	example	example	example	example	example	example	UNGROUPED
1 SURNAME Given Names MIST PARTY	3 SURNAME Given Names RAIN PARTY	11 SURNAME Given Names FOG PARTY	6 SURNAME Given Names HUMID PARTY	SURNAME Given Names BREEZE PARTY	10 SURNAME Given Names CLOUD PARTY	SURNAME Given Names	8 SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT
2 SURNAME Given Names MIST PARTY	SURNAME Given Names RAIN PARTY	4 SURNAME Given Names SUN PARTY	SURNAME Given Names HUMID PARTY	5 SURNAME Given Names BREEZE PARTY	SURNAME Given Names CLOUD PARTY	12 SURNAME Given Names	
	9 SURNAME Given Names RAIN PARTY				7 SURNAME Given Names CLOUD PARTY		

SAMPLE

In this example Group A = GREENS

One in five young workers victims of wage theft

Peter Farmer

Around 400,000 Australians – one in five workers aged under 25 – are paid below the legal minimum wage for their age, according to ACTU analysis of ABS data.

Young people in insecure work are disproportionately impacted by wage theft, with 30 per cent of 18-year-old casual workers paid less than what they should be under the relevant junior award rate.

For an 18-year-old casual worker employed for 20 hours a week, the underpayments are worth $1,560 a year in lost wages.

From 1 January 2025, new laws criminalising wage theft came into effect following Australian Union campaigns to tackle the normalisation of wage theft as a business model in Australia.

The Federal Parliament passed the Closing Loopholes Bill in late 2023, which also made it easier for underpaid workers to access the small claims jurisdiction in the Federal Court by lifting the cap on claims from $20,000 to $100,000.

Peter Dutton and the Coalition voted against the legislation, following pressure from employer groups that raised concerns about the unintended consequences of more 'red tape' for businesses.

AEC records for the 2023-24 financial year reveal that hospitality billionaire Justin Hemmes – who settled a $126 million wage underpayment class action lawsuit – donated $300,000 to the Coalition.

Young workers face various barriers to wage justice, including the expense and time required to bring a matter to court, fears of employer retaliation, limited knowledge of workers' rights, and the Fair Work Ombudsman's enforcement limitations.

Young workers are increasingly turning to Australian unions to address underpayment issues and to support them in taking legal action to recover lost wages.

The latest ABS data shows that union membership grew by almost 200,000 members from 2022 to 2024, powered by a 53 per cent boost to union membership among workers aged 15 to 24.

Estimates of the overall value of wage theft vary widely, given efforts by employers to cover up evidence of underpayment. Audits by the Fair Work Ombudsman estimate the figure is between $850 million and $1.55 billion in stolen wages each year.

ACTU Secretary, Sally McManus has called wage theft "a hidden epidemic that is worsening people's cost-of-living pressures." She's right that wage theft makes the cost-of-living crisis worse, but wage theft isn't very well hidden, it's happening in plain sight. As reported in numerous issues of *The Guardian, the Workers' Weekly*, wage theft at universities has been frequent and systematic.

McManus also says that the targets of wage theft "tend to be those with less power in the workplace, so we see a clear pattern of dodgy bosses going after the pay packets of younger people, especially casual workers."

That rings true. What Australian young people badly need is more power in the workplace, power that comes from effective unions. *That's* why the Communist Party of Australia supports the Construction Division of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Engineering Union against attacks from the government and elsewhere.

If you're not in a union, join one! If you are in a union, get active!

Comrade Bob Saltis is pictured here at the 2025 Australia-Cuba Friendship Society National Consultation receiving a Solidarity Award from Cuban Ambassador Tanieris Dieguez La. At 90, Bob is an active comrade, contributing to Branch discussions, and sending material and suggestions to the *Guardian*.

Sydney Vigil

STOP USA BLOCKADE ON CUBA

12:30pm Saturday 17 May

Sydney Town Hall

Further on the article about Peter Dutton and the police terror and protest on Palm Island (*Guardian* 31 March). When a leader of the protests Lex Wotton was sentenced in 2008, the CPA issued the following statement:

The Communist Party of Australia calls for the immediate release of Mr Lex Wotton, a leader of the Palm Island community. The sentencing of Lex Wotton to six years in prison is a national disgrace. He should be released and the sentence set aside. The campaign for justice for Lex Wotton is the latest issue in the long struggle against racism and the killings of Indigenous Australians, particularly young men, in custody.

After the brutal death in custody on Palm Island of Mulrunji Doomadgee, Lex Wotton was arrested and charged for being part of the justifiable protests against the murder.

The policeman charged with Doomadgee's death was acquitted. Mr Wotton has been jailed. No compensation has been paid to the Doomadgee family, no counselling has been provided. Instead they have been subjected to further brutality.

The Queensland government has contemptuously nailed its colours to the mast of racism by promoting the two police officers most involved in the violent death of Mulrunji Doomadgee and by awarding bravery medals to police on Palm Island at the time of the protest.

It is only a few months since Prime Minister Rudd said sorry for the violence and other injustices inflicted by governments on the Indigenous people of Australia. If that apology has any meaning, his government must condemn the Queensland government for its support of police violence and racial oppression.

The Communist Party of Australia congratulates all those people who have taken a stand against the charges brought against Lex Wotton. Our solidarity goes out to his family, in particular his wife, his four children and his mother. We also extend our solidarity and sympathy to all those who are still grieving over the jailing and deaths in custody of their loved ones.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is Anthony Albanese. In 2010, the councillors of Marrickville in Sydney's inner west voted by a 10-2 majority to support the Palestinian call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) against occupiers Israel. It wasn't long before the councillors became the subjects of vilification in the Murdoch press and death threats from the Israel lobby.

Albanese, then an MP whose constituency covered Marrickville Council's turf, said that "Foreign policy is a fair way outside the parameters of the role of Marrickville Council" and told the local authority stick to "local" issues.

Councillor Cathy Peters, who supported the boycott motion at Marrickville, said the boycott motion had also been supported by members of Jews Against the Occupation, and cited the many Australian church and trade union organisations which supported whole or partial boycotts of Israeli products and organisations.

Jennifer Killen, a Marrickville resident who strongly supported the council's twinning with Bethlehem and its boycott initiative, commented: "I'm very disappointed in my local member of parliament for not being more supportive of our hard-working local councillors at this time."

Today, as Prime Minister, Albanese will not acknowledge Israel's genocide against the Palestinians – he will not utter the g word. Here's why: last week it was confirmed that weapons parts manufactured here are in killer drones used by Israel to target defenceless Palestinians – Albanese is a collaborator in the crime against humanity he will not name.

MAY DAY
Workers of the world – UNITE!

Marcus Browning

May Day is taking place this year in the midst of a global economic crisis. Workers around the world are being reminded that capitalism is an unplanned and crisis-ridden economic system. Employers always chase maximum profits. They use new technology to cut the cost of labour and increase output. They slash wages, abolish benefits and cut working conditions.

It is in this context that, in August last year the Albanese government introduced new laws that undermine the democratic rights of union members to control their own future. The action by the government to put the Construction Division of the CFMEU into administration reflects an opportunism born of an entrenched class political anti-trade unionism, characterised by the mass media's vilification of ordinary Australian working men and women and the trade union they choose to belong to.

The Albanese government's move is an extension of the political objectives of its Liberal-National Coalition predecessor and their building and construction police, the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC). The real issues of criminality and corruption – most of which arise from the employers and their ruthless pursuit of profits – affect all workers in the industry.

Employer graft and corruption is not dealt with while unsubstantiated allegations against unionists are broadcast across the media. The tough game played by the building and construction unions is in response to ruthless treatment of employees over many years: the Albanese government's attack is a political campaign to destroy the building unions, discredit the whole union movement, and undermine organised labour's collective strength.

The Construction and General Division of the CFMEU and the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) have made clear that they remain united in exposing this offensive to undermine and threaten the rights of construction workers.

In an industry where abuse and the exploitation of power is already weaponised by employers against workers, and where health and safety run a distant second to their profits and schedules, the government's takeover on behalf of the employers increases the workplace health and safety dangers faced by construction workers daily. It will also leave them exposed to the criminality and corruption the legislation purports to stamp out. "Our strength as genuine trade unionists is in our unity," stated the unions.

"Both Construction and General and the MUA will do everything within our collective power to secure an outcome in the best interests of CFMEU members. A forced administration through the terms of the legislation, devoid of any real consultation with actual construction workers and the forced isolation from their elected representatives, does nothing to improve the lives and safety of CFMEU members.

"In fact, it further entrenches the systemic imbalance of power between construction bosses and construction workers. It is worth remembering that this legislation (for the administration) was lobbed into the Parliament as discussions between the CFMEU and the Fair Work Commission about its proposal for administration were taking place in a properly consultative and transparent process."

This attack on the Construction Division of the CFMEU is a blunt-force, open attack on workers, their physical, material and social well-being, and their right to organise and defend their rights at work. As such it is a threat to all working people and impacts all areas of their daily lives.

CRISIS

Working people did not create the economic crisis, but they bear the weight of the hardship it causes. Responses by governments and employers to the crisis, like slashing government spending on public services and infrastructure, sackings, and wage cuts only add to people's suffering.

The priority of governments should address the needs of people:

- End restrictions on trade union rights so workers can fully defend themselves.
- Immediately raise pensions, wages, unemployment and other social welfare benefits.
- Increase spending on the public sector and infrastructure.
- Governments build and manage public housing.
- Create public sector jobs and stop privatising essential services.
- Establish a government-run national superannuation scheme paying defined benefits. Investment from this scheme should go to social projects and to build public infrastructure.
- No evictions. Substantially increase the available public housing and impose rental controls.
- Full entitlements, retraining and a living wage for laid-off workers.
- Cancel AUKUS and slash military spending.
- Establish a government-owned people's bank.
- Re-regulate the financial sector.

While these policies will not fundamentally change capitalism, they will benefit working people and must be struggled for, to put the needs of people before the profits of big business.

Op-Ed: Business as usual

Eileen Whitehead

There are a lot of comments flying around about Donald Trump betraying his country and destroying cherished American principles. A look at past behaviour and world dealings seems to show this as quite normal. The implication that the US government can deport anyone who it arbitrarily labels as a subversive is nothing new. It's a repetition of American history. In 1919, the government deported Emma Goldman and 249 others deemed as radicals. Throughout the 19th century, mass deportations were carried out on a greater scale against its Indigenous peoples, who were forced to move from their land to distant reservations, and in the 1930s against Mexicans and Mexican Americans. About 2 million people were sent to Mexico, many of them American citizens. 120,000 Japanese Americans were put in internment camps during World War II.

Just as disturbing, Trump is now relying on the 1798 Alien Enemies Act to deport, without due process, Venezuelan nationals – allegedly gangsters. According to the White House, they are not simply criminals, but terrorists and invaders "conducting irregular warfare and undertaking hostile actions against the United States."

Speaking of hostile actions, here are the conflicts the US has started since WW2.

Vietnam War: Based on lies, it caused irreparable damage. The US created a puppet state and then abandoned it. When the final liberation by northern communists happened in 1975, the US evacuated in chaos, leaving destruction and poverty behind it.

Iraq War: Based on lies about weapons of mass destruction. The victory over Saddam Hussein caused nearly a decade of civil war and occupation: the deaths of more than 4,400 American troops and approximately 300,000 Iraqis. Chaos replaced Hussein, and by dismantling the Iraqi military and shattering the Iraqi state, the Arab world strengthened the Iranian regime.

Afghan War: The US originally funded and armed the Afghan Mujahideen to fight the Soviet-backed communist government before taking control of the country in 2001. The US spent more than $US80 billion training the Afghan Army, but in 2021 US troops were withdrawn, handing the country to a victorious Taliban. The Afghan army has disintegrated and a humanitarian and economic crisis has ensued. The evacuation was a scene of lethal chaos.

Israel/Gaza: The continuation of this genocide can be placed at the feet of the United States. Its hypocrisy is breathtaking. Gaza is being razed by American-supplied bombs while the US air drops inadequate amounts of aid.

Part of the fury of the pro-Palestinian, anti-genocide protests on American campuses arose from the sense that Palestinians have been treated with bias repeatedly for decades by a United States that clearly favours Israel. The rhetoric of the United States about advancing freedom and democracy seems hollow to Palestinians while it supports Israel which has subjected them to occupation and apartheid and is pursuing a genocidal attack now.

Impending War with China: In March 2025, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth declared that the US is "prepared" to go to war with China! Trump has responded with hefty trade tariffs. China's foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian reiterated Beijing's stance: "If the United States ... persists in waging a tariff war, a trade war, or any other kind of war, the Chinese side will fight them to the bitter end."

Australia should be extremely concerned being tied to the hip with the US over AUKUS nuclear powered submarines at a cost of at least $368 billion. According to former Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, there are three concerns – (a) that we will never get them, (b) cost benefit, and (c) Australia's sovereign agency. Two former Prime Ministers – Keating and Turnbull – are appalled by a deal that has been shrouded in secrecy.

Our main concern should be that, in the event the US manipulates a war with China, Australia will have no jurisdiction over the use of these submarines, or know whether they're carrying nuclear weapons, and will be a prime target because we're hosting them. We are also hosting B-52 bombers at HMAS Tindall in the NT and also have no jurisdiction over their use or whether they're carrying nuclear weapons.

With friends like these, who needs enemies?

Socialism: the only alternative

Anna Pha

The question is; what is the alternative to capitalism? Humanity is facing two existential threats as workers celebrate May Day: climate change and nuclear war. The driving force behind each of these threats is capitalism and its short-sighted pursuit of profits regardless of the impact on people and the planet.

The two major parties have pursued an election campaign of little substance, with a great deal of personal mud-slinging and hollow promises to fix the housing and cost-of-living crises. Both parties are committed to AUKUS and have already incorporated Australia's defence forces into those of the US.

People are looking for a real alternative to the Lib-Lab merry-go-round.

CLIMATE CHANGE

As Hannah Middleton writes in *Fighting for the Future*, "The insatiable drive for profits by capitalism is leading to irreversible and catastrophic climate change. Capitalist governments – and the giant corporations they work for – are refusing to act on the desperate warnings of the great majority of the world's leading scientists to avert the climate crisis."

"Humanity faces soaring temperatures, choking oceans, dying rivers, melting caps, rising sea levels, disappearing wetlands, bleaching coral reefs, putrefying air, multiplying freak weather events, the unravelling of entire ecosystems. Coastal communities are exposed to tropical cyclones, extreme sea levels and flooding."

"In the past 50 years as much as 60 per cent of the world's mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians have been killed off and one million plant and animal species are under threat of extinction. Half the world's coral reefs and half the world's tropical forests have been destroyed. Capitalism has polluted the oceans, shrunk the Arctic and Antarctic summer ice, caused droughts, heatwaves, desertification, fires, floodings."

The major parties, bankrolled and beholden to the fossil fuel corporations, remain committed to the mining, burning and export of fossil fuels up to 2050 and beyond. (See Green Notes, page 5 this issue.)

They fail to recognise the urgency of reducing emissions as quickly as possible. This decade is critical to the future of humanity and life as we know it on our planet. There is no Planet B.

WARFARE

The miliary industrial complex is the largest greenhouse gas emitter in the world. The production of military nuclear or conventional weapons, military exercises and wars pollute the air, land, and water in peace time and during wars. Wars not only take lives and pollute the atmosphere but have long-term effects on people and the environment.

To take one example: "Use of Agent Orange and other US defoliants during the Vietnam War rendered about a third of Vietnam a wasteland. The Vietnamese farming landscape is defaced by 2.5 million craters. In all the wars between 1945 and 1982, Vietnam lost over 80 per cent of its original forest cover. The ecological devastation of the country will take generations to repair." (International Peace Bureau)

The government has shrouded in secrecy details of future spending on submarines and weapons systems towards US and UK war plans. Criminally Australia is also complicit in the arming of Israel's brutal genocide and occupation of Palestinian territory.

It is workers who will pay the billions of dollars through cuts to services and social welfare along with low wages to feed the profit-hungry US military industrial complex.

AUKUS alone is set to cost Australian taxpayers more than $368 billion. That money has to come from somewhere. Total global military expenditure reached US$2,443 billion in 2023, an increase of 6.8 per cent in real terms from 2022 according to data on global military spending published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

This is equivalent to **AU$3.840 trillion** spent on death and destruction, and environmental pollution that could have saved millions of lives and lifted millions of people out of poverty. The arms race serves no socially or environmentally useful purpose. Quite the opposite.

"Capitalism created the climate crisis. It cannot play a role in the solution," Middleton points out.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Decades of neoliberalism have seen wages suppressed, and past workplace gains and workers' rights including the right to strike rolled back. Privatisation and deregulation have taken a heavy toll in the process. The Reserve Bank of Australia hit workers hard, repeatedly hiking interest rates.

The wealth gap between a small minority and the large majority of working people has increased rapidly in recent years with millions of people in one of the richest countries, Australia, struggling to keep a roof over their heads and meet essential day-to-day living costs. Real wages have fallen or at best stagnated while inflation continues to eat into the value of wages.

Capitalism increasingly cannot provide for workers' basic needs let alone provide for a healthy, rewarding life with freely accessible cultural activities.

War, militarisation of economies, exploitation, and environmental destruction are systemic to capitalism.

SOCIALISM

Under socialism the working class becomes the dominant ruling power in society. Democracy does not mean only going to the polls every three or four years. Workers become involved in the running of society and workplaces.

State ownership of the means of production and key infrastructure to serve the interests of society instead of exploitative, profit-driven corporations it enables the wealth workers create to be shared with society.

Socialism does away with the anarchic system of capitalism and replaces it with planning. Such planning can include environmental measures to address climate change and biodiversity. It is no coincidence that China and Cuba have outdone other nations in climate action and environmental protection.

Socialist societies have no need for wars. In fact war goes against the intrinsic principles of socialism, a system promoting peace and cooperation.

The Communist Party has an important role in arguing the case for socialism as the only alternative. The CPA's goal is the creation of a society that can and will resolve the problems inherent in capitalism – war, exploitation, environmental destruction, oppression, poverty, unemployment, ignorance, bigotry, racism, and discrimination.

We must find ways to argue the case for socialism as the only alternative on social media, in workplaces and trade unions, amongst family and friends to build a movement for real change.

"Disaster is certainly possible, but we must not give in to despair. If we fight, we may lose; if we don't fight, we will definitely lose and humanity will lose its future," Middleton points out.

"It is time to radically re-think the way we live and function as a society. As the planetary crisis accelerates, we must confront the reality that what we do now will forever alter the course of humanity and all life on Earth."

"Now more than ever we must fight for a better system. Our lives are more important than their profits."

Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fall'n on you
Ye are many – they are few.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Utopian, or scientific?

In his historic work *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Engels writes: "To accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat. To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific Socialism."

Utopian socialists complain about society as it is now, but don't have a realistic plan for changing it. Scientific socialists understand *why* things are the way they are now and have a realistic plan for positive change.

War...exploitation and environmental destruction are systemic to capitalism

HSU celebrates historic day for gender equality

Health Services Union

The Health Services Union is celebrating an historic decision, with the Fair Work Commission finding minimum award rates of pay for several health, care, and support sector occupations have been undervalued based on gender.

The Fair Work Commission has released its first decision into its Gender-Based Undervaluation Review which began last June.

It found health professionals, pathology collectors, and dental assistants covered by the Health Professionals and Support Services Award and workers covered by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services Award have been subject to pay undervaluation based on gender. The expert panel found a boost to minimum award rates of up to 35.23 per cent was justified in light of this inequity.

It also found that a loophole in the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award being exploited by some employers to misclassify disability support workers as home care employees, rather than social and community services employees under the Award, should be closed. The loophole meant some disability support workers were being paid around $10 an hour less than others despite performing the same work, with employers pocketing the difference. Thanks to this decision, all disability support workers will now be paid equally for the important work they do, regardless of where that work is performed.

"This is an historic and welcome decision from the Fair Work Commission. The health, care, and support sectors are critical, and most of the people performing the essential roles in these sectors are women," HSU National Secretary Lloyd Williams said.

"Boosting the minimum award rates for these workers is well overdue and will make a huge difference for members in the current cost of living crisis. There's still work to be done, but this is a major win for our members, and for women more broadly."

"This decision would not have been possible without the Albanese Labor government. Labor paved the way for the Fair Work Commission to be able to examine gender-based undervaluation, so we are grateful for that reform," Williams said.

"It's important to acknowledge that not all occupations under the Health Professionals and Support Services Award will see their minimum award rates of pay increase, and that's disappointing. We'd really like to see improved pay and conditions for all workers under this Award, and we'll keep pushing for that to happen."

Coalition Budget: People with disability respond

People with disability were barely acknowledged in the Federal Budget – and in the Opposition's Budget Reply, we weren't mentioned at all.

As we head into a Federal Election, People with Disability Australia (PWDA) is concerned this omission sends a clear and chilling message: people with disability are not front and centre in either major party's vision for the election.

However, being ignored won't protect us.

Cuts flagged to the public service by the Coalition and to the NDIS workforce by both sides are deeply concerning. The NDIS is a frontline service. Undermining its funding and workforce puts at risk the essential supports hundreds of thousands of people with disability rely on to survive and participate in their communities.

The Coalition's plans to slash 41,000 jobs from the public sector will also threaten the implementation of NDIS reforms and the rollout of foundational supports. Weakening the administrative state means weakening the systems people with disability depend on.

"We remain concerned that cuts to the NDIS remain on the table under the Coalition. The NDIS needs guaranteed, long-term funding and must be recognised as an essential service. The constant political uncertainty undermines its ability to deliver the outcomes people with disability and our friends and family deserve," said People With Disability Australia (PWDA) President Trinity Ford.

Employment was also in the spotlight. Workforce participation of people with disability has lifted in recent years. Progress will stall if the Coalition's measures that reduce flexibility and remove protections for the casualised workforce are implemented. This will be compounded if they roll back the public sector's leadership role as a model employer for accessibility and inclusion.

"People with disability will not accept being sidelined, especially when what's on the table threatens to pull apart the essential services we rely on to survive," said Ford.

Despite the urgent need for reform, neither major party has mentioned funding for implementation of the Disability Royal Commission's recommendation, produced a roadmap for change or national plan to ensure the rights and safety of people with disability are embedded across all policies and portfolios.

The Federal Budget and Opposition's Reply came on the eve of an election where 5.5 million people with disability and millions of our friends, families and allies won't just be watching but voting. PWDA is calling on all parties and candidates to make explicit commitments to people with disability's rights, inclusion and futures through:

Guaranteed long-term funding for the NDIS and no cuts to participant's supports or choice and control.

Securing a long-term co-funding agreement with states and territories to deliver nationally consistent Foundational Supports.

Safeguarding diversity in the public sector and not cutting public sector jobs.

Lifting income support payments above the poverty line.

Ensuring people with disability are considered in every policy by creating a Federal Minister for Disability Inclusion and a Department of Disability Equality and Inclusion.

People with Disability Australia

GREEN NOTES

Vote Climate Action!

Anna Pha

Extreme and costly weather events continue to have a deadly and destructive impact on people, our biosphere, and the planet. 2024 was the second consecutive year of record temperatures. During the summer just past, the Great Barrier Reef was hit with its sixth extensive coral bleaching since 2016 due to warming oceans and acidification. Time is running out to end the production and use of fossil fuels to keep warming below 1.5°C. So what action/inaction on climate change are Australia's political parties offering?

The Coalition has a plan for "zero-emissions nuclear energy." "Zero-emissions nuclear plants will be owned by the federal government and we will form partnerships with the most experienced nuclear companies in the world to develop and operate the plants," according to their policy statement. It is not often, if ever, the Coalition talks of government ownership but then again, what private investors would invest in nuclear? The partnerships with the private sector, however, would be an opportunity to profit from taxpayer investment at no risk.

Their policy statement goes on to falsely claim nuclear reactors will produce cheaper energy. CSIRO has found the cost of electricity generated from nuclear reactors by 2040 would be about $145-$238 per MWh, compared to $22-$53 for solar, and $45-$78 for wind. And the cost to build the reactors? Up to $600 billion. Add that to the $368 billion plus commitment to AUKUS, and we are looking at a commitment of close to $1 trillion! Where would a Coalition government obsessed with surpluses find that amount? Trumpian cuts to the public service, Medicare, aged care, the NDIS, wages, and social security payments? Privatisation of public services? It would take decades to first establish a nuclear industry and then build the reactors. The Coalition's nuclear 'option' is nothing but a smokescreen to continue mining, burning and exporting coal and gas for decades to come. Dutton's nuclear plan could increase Australia's emissions by more than two billion tonnes.

As for Labor: "Gas plays a critical role in Australia's economy," Madeleine King, Minister for Resources, claims in her introduction to Labor's *Future Gas Strategy*. "Gas is also an important part of Australia's future, because it will enable us to compete successfully in the global race for jobs and opportunities in a net zero world. The global shift to clean energy is Australia's biggest opportunity for growth and prosperity."

"Under all credible net zero scenarios, natural gas is needed through to 2050 and beyond, though its production and use will change over this period," King claims. "We cannot rely on past investments in gas to get us through the next decades. We need continued investment in, and development of, gas supply and transport infrastructure to get us through the energy transition with thriving industries."

The fact is, we have enough gas. We export a lot of it.

Labor does acknowledge the existence of climate change and is pushing ahead with wind and solar energy, albeit at an inadequate pace.

Unlike Labor and Liberal, the Greens have a genuine plan to phase out coal and gas and invest in renewable energy. Their policy says they would "shift electricity generation to renewables and storage. Increase electricity production to allow the direct and indirect electrification of all energy used by households, businesses, transport, and industry. Replace our coal and gas exports with green energy and green products that we have manufactured here. Soak up the remaining emissions and move to negative emissions by protecting our forests and landscapes, and reforming our agriculture to drawdown carbon from the atmosphere."

The CPA calls on party members and supporters to vote for the balance of power in the Senate. There the vote should go to the Greens. Put the Coalition last.

March on

MAY DAY

Poster by Victorian Trades Hall

Letters to the Editor
The Guardian
74 Buckingham Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
email: editor@cpa.org.au

Propaganda polling

Dear comrade editor,
I was contacted by a polling agency last week, and curious to find out what it was about I decided to spare a few minutes and answer the questions. It was a frustrating and at the same time educational experience.

I was asked if I recognised a couple of names. I did not, but later discovered they were the Liberal and Labor candidates in my electorate. Endless questions followed, asking me to choose between Liberal, Labor, or undecided. The questions were loaded.

For example when asked to choose a preferred party on defence, the choice was between Liberal or Labor, I responded they are the same. "Oh so you are undecided." My response: "No, I am not undecided. I prefer the Greens' anti-AUKUS pro-peace policy." "I'll put undecided," the pollster responded. "No, I am decided," I replied.

"Would Liberal or Labor make a stronger government?" I questioned what is meant by that. The response was: "I'll put undecided."

This continued on a range of issues. Occasionally there was a question where I could choose, such as on health. I do not recall a question on climate change.

There were just two questions that provided for the inclusion of the Greens or independent – how I allocated my first preference in the last election and how I would vote on 3 May.

The questions reflected the main focus of mass media's coverage of the election as if only two parties were standing. So much for opinion polls! No wonder they get it wrong so often. I wondered if the whole exercise was some sort of propaganda stunt.

M Santos

It's a Crime – let's say so

This is a local as well as a national and international issue. The recent execution of doctors and paramedics in Gaza by the Israeli military was not a 'mistake,' or a subject for some phony 'investigation,' but a crime. It was outright, cold blooded murder.

Our craven Trump-obsessed media has hardly mentioned the fact, and our spineless politicians, so keen to stamp out the distracting phantom of 'anti-semitism,' have not made any serious statement on the matter. In the eyes of the world, we are complicit with our age-old 'friends,' the USA and Israel, in a genocide happening before our very eyes.

Yes! Whether it's indiscriminate bombings of civilians killing over 18,000 children ('terrorists'?), or the 'voluntary removal' of the whole battered and decimated Palestinian population to make way for a luxury resort, there is no other word for it – it's genocide alright.

In this forthcoming election its high time we began to assert our clear voice, our independent Australian view for the future of this world, and that voice of condemnation is certainly not coming from the two major parties, busily scuttling for cover on all the big global issues.

Show your disgust by registering a protest 'Stop the Genocide' vote in this forthcoming election. *Don't* vote for Labor or the Coalition, and opt for candidates clearly condemning murderous Israeli imperialism.

Bob Treasure

Go Falcons!

Dear Comrade,
The documentary film *Equal the Contest*, screening on SBS until 27 May, is about the 2021 return of women's footy to Castlemaine on Dja Dja Wurrung Country, Victoria, after 74 years.

Despite still being a male dominated sport, footy today is now played nationwide by 600,000 women and girls. AFLWomen's, since its inception in 2017, became a force to be reckoned with and demanded gender equity at high level AFL policy. So what's the score with Mount Alexander Falcons?

From the start MA Falcons have recruited gender diverse members, so when Mitch Nivalis (they/them), producer and film maker, saw its inclusive poster they jumped in boots 'n all. Mitch discovered a team united in its diversity by a desire to have fun and form community.

This film traces battles fought for the team's right to exist; to occupy space; to negotiate use of turf long and jealously guarded by cis men; and to break through sexism at regional level.

While country footy may seem mundane, for those who have experienced exclusion and discrimination, common to many LGBTQIA+ people in sporting arenas, a team like MA Falcons offers healing and a fresh start, tackling demons together, left, right, and centre.

I'd call this a revolutionary step towards what Arthur Miller had envisaged, "... life could be a comradely embrace, people helping one another rather than looking for ways to trip each other up." Go Falcs!

Yours sincerely

M Whittle
Dja Dja Wurrung Country
Victoria

Get a dog

I thank Anna Pha for her clear explanation of tariffs (*Guardian* 2141), which I found very helpful at clearing up the issue under the hysteria. One passage stood out to me. Pha quotes Albanese saying "The administration's tariffs have no basis in logic and they go against the basis of our two nation's partnership. This is not the act of a friend."

It's a masterful understatement from Albo. The tariffs are not the act of a friend, they're the act of an obnoxious bully. But the USA has never really been a friend. It has always been the global bully, putting the interests of US capital against the interests of the rest of the planet.

Albanese meekly whinging about 'the act of a friend' should remember the old saying that in politics if you want a friend, you should buy a dog.

Peter Farmer
Melbourne

Book Review

Culture Warlords by Talia Lavin

Graham Holton

In *Culture Warlords* Talia Lavin, a Jewish queer woman, infiltrated the dark side of the internet during President Donald Trump's first term of office, exposing how the far right works in the United States. Motivated by the white supremacist rallies in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017, Lavin analyses insurgent fascism to find what it truly is and where it comes from. White supremacy normalises white nationalism and authoritarianism.

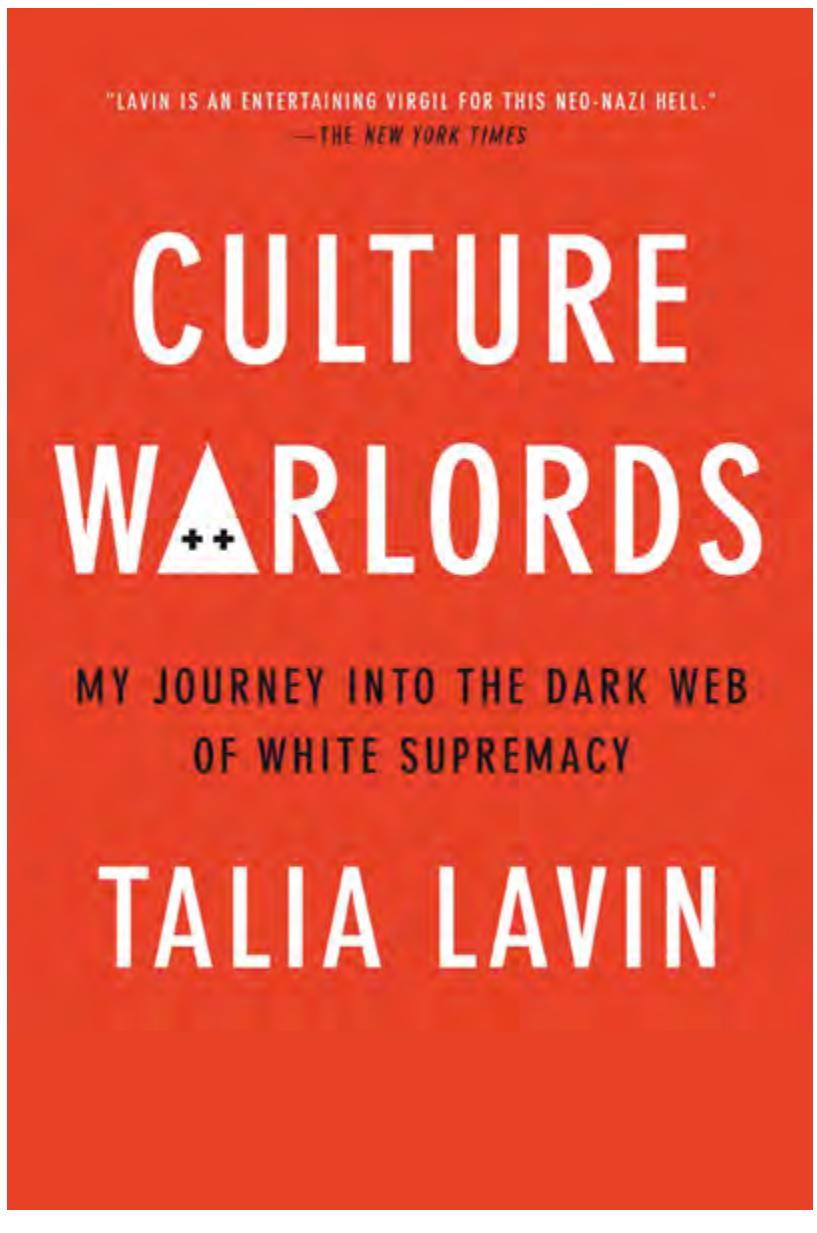
Trump uses culture as a "potent driving force that promotes – and thus erodes the social cost of – misogyny and a range of racism." What Lavin shows is just how hate-filled are those who Trump called "good people." The Proud Boys are nothing but a fascist street gang, who were "standing by" on the president's orders. Trump's endorsement of the far-right marchers showed "an unsettling degree of comfort with racist violence." Trump released the Proud Boys from prison the moment he was inaugurated.

Lavin invented her online personae to allow her to expose fascists and white supremacists in online chatrooms and websites. She infiltrated the neo-Nazi Vorrherrschaft (Supremacy) Division, the neo-Nazi website the *Daily Stormer*, the Patriot Front with its slogan "Blood and Soil," and other groups. She also looked at Telegram, and "whites only" dating sites.

Lavin's research showed that the white nationalists' hatred for women and gender non-conforming people is particularly aggressive online, a seething rage linked to a view of white women, not as people, but as pure, untainted progenitors of the race. "Misogyny was a natural outcome of indoctrination into white supremacy, which sees women purely as vessels for breeding." Controlling women is an essential image of "Whiteness." For Lavin, vitriolic misogyny is at the core of these "Culture Warlords."

Lavin found that these people are ordinary people "who have chosen to hate." She warns that the far right is "an enemy to whom one must give no quarter," because they inevitably use that hatred for violent ends. Her exposé raised the ire of white supremacists, and created a torrent of hate towards her, which ended in depression. "It changed the way I saw myself when I looked in the mirror."

Lavin provides an important insight into Trump's second term of office. Trump has already displayed strong sympathies for the far right and has been actively hostile to people of colour. The book is well worth reading. ✪



Solutions to Palm Sunday Crossword

Guardian 14 April 2025 #2141

Across

4 **CodePink** – Activist group in the noughties

7 **Yugoslavia** – Protests were held in Australia against the bombing of this country

9 **Christ** – Last name of famous Palestinian, Palm Sunday commemorates

10 **Pax** – Latin word for peace

Down

1 **nonviolence** – Core principle of Palm Sunday peace rallies

2 **Selma** – US city, site of a famous 1965 Palm Sunday peace march

3 **Olve Branch** – Traditional symbol of peace

6 **SOS** – Australian anti-conscription group

8 **Oxfam** – British peace and charity group

Israel's policy: fascist genocide

An address by Vinnie Molina, president of the Communist Party of Australia, to the 2025 International Anti-Fascist Forum

Distinguished delegates,
I would like to begin by thanking the Communist Party of the Russian Federation for organising the International Anti-Fascist Forum, devoted to the 80th anniversary of the victory over fascism in World War II and the invitation issued to the Communist Party of Australia.

This is an important event that takes us back 80 years in history to the victory over fascism by the heroic Soviet people.

Today we live in a very dangerous and precarious situation where right-wing extremism and fascism are a threat to peace and collective security once again.

While fascism is chauvinistic and nationalistic, it is a form of colonial capitalism, an extension of the international nature of imperialism in crisis. There is no contradiction; it is a more extreme form of capitalist exploitation and oppression; where a few countries are the dominant powers in the world, through their financial system and military power, and all other countries are either auxiliaries, subjects, or opponents of this power. Fascism aspires to either continue or achieve this position for a country, in the face of the ever-nearer collapse of global capitalism. It is an expression of the violent desperation of the most single-minded capitalist oppressors.

We look to Israel; Netanyahu's words are not the words of a madman; his moves are calculated towards a 'greater Israel.' Israel does not act alone. It works in tandem with the US for control of the region enveloping the Middle East, operating in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria. This includes stifling Palestinian aspirations to statehood and the subjugation of any state in the region that opposes US domination.

Israel speaks of fighting an existential battle for its survival. It is a dangerous fiction. Israel consciously seeks to destroy Gaza and the Palestinian people by brutality and terror with the 'ironclad' support of the United States.

Israel continues to act with disdain and impunity in defiance of the International Court of Justice and UN resolutions. Israeli Defence Minister, Smotrich has stated that "we were a step away from applying sovereignty to the settlements in Judea and Samaria and now is the time to do it. The year 2025 will, with God's help, be the year of sovereignty." The Trump administration is aligned and means an even more terrifying future for the Palestinian people, for Lebanon, for Syria, for Iran. Trump has repeatedly stated that Israel must be able to "finish the job."

Al Jazeera reports one in every 50 Palestinian people in Gaza have been killed and 1 in 20 injured. 90 per cent of the Palestinian population have been displaced since October 2023. Gaza has been cut in two. The north has been effectively cleared of its population. The massacres in Gaza continue to add up to ethnic cleansing. The escalation of a genocide that has already claimed casualties of 100 children each day since the ceasefire was broken on 18 March, continues as the US government resumes its shipments of 2,000 lb 'bunker buster' bombs to arm its ally Israel.

Netanyahu's fascist government proclaims itself as "the only democracy in the Middle East," promotes a true genocide in Gaza and is engaged in a process of ethnic cleansing in the occupied territories of Palestine.

Israel's genocide in Palestine has been broadcast to the world. The mass media is also complicit in the fascist policy carried out against the Palestinian people in both Gaza and the West Bank.

Australia is not an exception. The Australian media has been systematically demonising Hamas and the Palestinian resistance while attempting to appear neutral or openly supporting Israel's war on the Palestinian people.

Government and media have been at one in the attacks on activists who campaign for a permanent ceasefire, the end of the occupation and an independent Palestinian state.

During the student encampments across several universities in Australia, the media, government and pro-Israel groups have condemned the students' actions and their right to demand their universities cut ties with the Israeli entity.

We live now in an environment in Australia where anything can be considered antisemitic and the threat of criminal prosecution lays over the heads of those who stand against the genocide. Speaking the truth about Israel's genocide, apartheid, illegal occupation, and the impunity it is offered by its allies, is a legitimate and necessary act of resistance against injustice, not an endorsement of hate or antisemitism as claimed by authorities.

There must be only one solution – an end to the occupation and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their justified demands. Ending the occupation and instating a just peace is in the clear interests of both peoples.

Lenin wrote of the decay of capitalism. Imperialism shows this decay clearly. Fascism follows but is not inevitable. All the working class must rise up, united against fascism and push back against the state and ruling class move to cripple the working class, politically and organisationally.

> "One of the most 'democratic' republics in the world is the United States of America, yet nowhere is the power of capital, the power of a handful of multimillionaires over the whole of society, so crude and so openly corrupt as in America. Once capital exists, it dominates the whole of society."
>
> VI Lenin, 1919.

Communists have a responsibility to lead the struggle for the establishment of a society that is fairer, more cooperative, more democratic and far more enriching for the people than the present society.

The Communist Party of Australia stands in solidarity with the Palestinian right to self-determination and demands the Australian government unilaterally recognise Palestine as an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The CPA also advocates for collective security and calls for a diplomatic and peaceful resolution of the current conflicts in the best interests of the people of the countries involved.

We firmly believe that only Socialism can save us from another holocaust.

Once again, we thank the organisers of this event and wish the very best to the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, its members and the Russian people as a whole on the 80th anniversary of the victory over fascism.

Moscow, 21-25 April 2025.

Fascism is an extreme form of capitalist oppression

World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)

2025 May Day declaration

The International Class-oriented Trade Union Movement, the workers, and the militant unions all over the globe honour with struggles the 139th anniversary of the workers' struggle in Chicago in 1886. The World Federation of Trade Unions, the most historic international trade union organisation, representing more than 105 million workers all the length and breadth of the world, sends a cordial and militant message to all the workers and farmers, to the ordinary people of toil and labour, on the occasion of International Workers Day, which constitutes a lasting and bright milestone of struggle.

Melbourne May Day, 2012. Photo: Johan Fantenberg–flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

This year's May Day coincides with the 80th Anniversary of the WFTU, which was born in the ashes of the most destructive war in the history of humanity in the revolutionary fresh air of the great anti-fascist victory of the peoples with the Soviet Union at the forefront, and completes 8 decades of continuous and uninterrupted struggle for the rights of workers, for justice and social progress, against all forms of discrimination, against wars and imperialist interventions, against may by man exploitation.

Both the messages and demands of the Chicago pioneers of 1886 and the needs that inevitably led to the establishment of the WFTU remain relevant and necessary today. The crisis of capitalism deepens and is generalised. Social inequalities are widening dramatically. Democratic freedoms and trade union rights are under attack all over the world, and the imperialist wars and interventions are on the daily agenda.

The genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza and in the West Bank, the bombing in Lebanon and other countries of the wider Middle East region, with the support and encouragement of the USA, the EU, and their allies, continues, revealing in all its grandeur the hypocrisy, cynicism, and inhumane nature of imperialism.

At the same time, global defence spending rose to 2.46 trillion USD last year, with big budget increases in countries of Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe. Notably, there are examples of countries that are almost doubling their defence spending. At the same time, the USA's President Trump calls for a minimum spending of 5 per cent of GDP among NATO members, and the EU Commission Summit decided to finance 800 billion euros for military armament within the ReArm EUROPE project.

The shift towards a war economy is clearly a priority for the ruling circles of capitalism, as it incites profitability for multinational monopolies and the expansion of the geopolitical power of developed imperialist states.

These new massive increases in military spending, apart from being a threat to global peace and security, also mean even harsher austerity policies and widening social inequality. The resources that would be destined for families, workers, and ordinary people are cut and diverted to rearmament, and civil and social rights and liberties are placed under guardianship, because in the preparation for war, different opinions are not allowed.

the weapon of workers everywhere is solidarity and internationalism

The WFTU and the class-oriented trade unions strongly condemn the war preparations of the bourgeoisie. The popular strata have nothing to expect from a new widespread and generalised war but death, poverty, destruction, refuges, and hardship. We demand spending for the contemporary needs of the workers and the peoples. We demand adequate education and healthcare and not weapons. We demand dignified working and living conditions and not ammunition and missiles. We demand spending on culture, sport, and recreation, and not fighter aircraft and naval vessels.

We demand measures against rising inflation and living costs that erode living standards. We oppose privatisation, outsourcing, and flexible forms of work that intensify the precarious employment and exploitation, alongside extended retirement ages.

The workers and their achievements are under relentless attacks and challenges undermining labor rights, collective agreements, and democratic freedoms. Workplace safety remains neglected, causing daily injuries and fatalities. Despite global challenges, workers do not passively accept the anti-labour offensive on their rights and freedoms. Millions mobilise worldwide for dignified work and the protection of trade union and social rights with the WFTU members to be firmly at the forefront of these struggles. The response of bourgeois governments to the just popular demands is the sharpening of state repression and authoritarianism. At the same time, employers and governments are attempting to manipulate labor struggles, betting on the role of yellow unions and compromised trade union leaders.

In our era it is obvious that the prerequisites for truly dignified working and social living conditions for all workers exist in abundance. The class-oriented trade union movement fights so that the huge productive capabilities are not utilised to increase the profits of capitalists and create unimaginable wealth for a few, but to ensure dignified living and working conditions for those who create and produce the wealth.

Organisation and struggle is the only path that can overturn the existing realities of misery, exploitation, and social injustice. The weapon of workers everywhere is solidarity and internationalism. The WFTU remains firmly committed to these principles. It continues its 80-year tradition with the same vision that inspired its founding: for a world without wars and imperialist interventions, without exploitation and discrimination. A world where work will be permanent, stable, regulated, and safe.

On the occasion of May Day 2025, the WFTU calls upon the class and militant trade unions around the world to take initiatives and organise this year's campaign and activities under the slogan:

Their profits or Our lives – Hope lies in peoples' struggle
NO to war economies
YES to the class struggles:

- **against the imperialist wars and interventions,**
- **against capitalist exploitation,**
- **for the satisfaction of the workers' contemporary needs.**

Let the WFTU flag proudly wave along with the flags of the militant trade unions in the uninterrupted class struggle for stable work with rights, social security, free public universal health and education, a dignified life. This will be the highest and proper celebration of the glorious 80-year course of struggles, sacrifices, and dignity of the international class-oriented trade union movement.

LONG LIVE MAY DAY!

LONG LIVE INTERNATIONALIST SOLIDARITY!

LONG LIVE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WFTU!

'Grim milestone' in Sudan

Dozens of people have been killed in Zamzam camp in Sudan's North Darfur region following intense fighting. The seizing of the camp by armed parties also saw aid organisations targeted, and humanitarian workers killed. Zamzam camp and neighbouring Abu Shouk camp provide shelter for more than 700,000 displaced people – the majority of whom are women and children.

The attack, which coincided with the 2nd anniversary of the crisis, is part of a significant escalation in violence around the area of Al Fasher, the state capital of North Darfur where armed parties are fighting for control. There are fears that this phase of intense fighting could put hundreds of thousands of civilians, including women and children, at grave risk in North Darfur.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 60 per cent of people in Al Fasher are projected to face acute hunger in the coming months.

Sudan Country Director for Plan International, Mohamed Kamal, said: "The appalling killing of civilians and aid workers in a camp where people, including children, are already fighting for survival from famine is a devastating development in Sudan. We condemn these killings in the strongest terms and stand with the loved ones and colleagues of those murdered.

"This growing violence in North Darfur is driving hundreds of thousands of people to flee yet again. Most of those people are women and children who are facing many grave risks – including starvation.

"Today sees the arrival of a grim milestone in Sudan – two years of gruelling conflict. We are at a critical moment right now – with famine already affecting 25 million people, increasing violence sweeping homes and camps, and a health system that has collapsed."

Plan International Australia Chief Executive, Susanne Legena, said the escalating violence and death of children and humanitarian workers has been tragic and completely unacceptable.

"It remains the largest hunger crisis on earth and remains largely out of the news. The resilience and fortitude of the people of Sudan is awe inspiring but they need help and they need it now," she said.

"Australia has so far committed $50m in humanitarian assistance to Sudan and neighbouring countries since the outbreak of the conflict in April 2023. These contributions are welcome but, given the scale and severity of this crisis, we can and must do more."

A meeting of donor countries has taken place in Paris to galvanise further support for the Sudanese people in crisis. Australia did not increase its support.

"This is an opportunity for Australia to act on our values and utilise the country's humanitarian assistance capacity to make a further commitment," Legena said.

Plan International

China and Vietnam: Building on past achievements and making new advances in pursuit of shared goals

Xi Jinping

China and Vietnam are friendly socialist neighbours sharing the same ideals and extensive strategic interests. The profound friendship between the two parties and two peoples, forged decades ago, has grown stronger as we explore a socialist path suited to our respective national conditions and advance our respective modernisation drive. Building the China-Vietnam community with a shared future that carries strategic significance serves the common interests of our two countries and is conducive to peace, stability, development and prosperity in our region and beyond. It conforms with the trend of history. And it is the choice by our peoples.

The China-Vietnam community with a shared future is inherited from our distinctive revolutionary traditions. During modern times, pioneers of Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions together explored a path to national salvation and made important contribution to the Third World's victory in the struggle against colonialism and imperialism. President Ho Chi Minh joined and supported the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression in Yan'an, Guilin, Chongqing and Kunming. China sent military and political advisers in support of the Vietnamese people's War Against French Occupation. The Communist Party of China and the Chinese government and people gave full support for Vietnam's just War Against US Aggression to Save the Nation. The well-known line: "The friendship between Vietnam and China is so profound because we are both comrades and brothers," is etched on our shared revolutionary memory.

The China-Vietnam community with a shared future is based on strong political mutual trust. In recent years, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary To Lam and other Vietnamese leaders and I have visited each other many times, steering the course for building a China-Vietnam community with a shared future. Our two parties and two countries have kept close high-level engagement.

Asia represents a new elevation in global cooperation and development. As a new starting point toward revitalisation of the whole region, Asia faces both unprecedented opportunities and challenges. China will ensure continuity and stability of its neighbourhood diplomacy. We will stay committed to the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness. We will continue to pursue the policy of forging friendship and partnership with our neighbours. And we will steadily deepen friendly cooperation with them to advance Asia's modernisation.

China is going all-out to build a great modern socialist country and achieve the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation by pursuing Chinese modernisation. Vietnam will usher in a new epoch of national development toward the two goals set for the centenary of the party and the country respectively. China always gives Vietnam high priority in its neighbourhood diplomacy. Our two countries should strengthen our efforts on all fronts to build the China-Vietnam community with a shared future, and contribute more to peace, stability, development and prosperity in Asia and the world at large.

— We should deepen strategic mutual trust and advance the socialist cause. The two sides should act on the guidance of the leaders. The China-Vietnam steering committee for bilateral cooperation should coordinate our interactions more effectively to boost party, government, military, law enforcement and security cooperation; jointly tackle external risks and challenges; and uphold political security. China is ready to enhance exchanges of governance practices with Vietnam, explore and enrich together socialist theory and practices, and promote the steady development of the two countries' socialist cause.

— We should continue win-win cooperation and deliver more benefit to our two peoples. We should create greater synergy between our development strategies, implement well the cooperation plan between the two governments on synergizing the Belt and Road Initiative and the Two Corridors and One Economic Circle strategy, and build more platforms for economic and technological cooperation. China stands ready to advance cooperation with Vietnam on the three standard-gauge railways in northern Vietnam and the smart port. China welcomes more quality Vietnamese products in the Chinese market and encourages more Chinese enterprises to invest and do business in Vietnam. Our two countries should step up cooperation on industrial and supply chains, and expand cooperation in emerging areas such as 5G, artificial intelligence and green development to create more benefits for the two peoples.

— We should strengthen people-to-people exchanges and forge a closer bond between our peoples. This year is the China-Vietnam Year of People-to-People Exchanges, and we should use this opportunity to promote people-to-people exchanges in diverse forms. China welcomes Vietnamese visitors to travel across China and encourages Chinese tourists to visit scenic sites in Vietnam. Our two countries should carry out more activities that will bring our two peoples together such as the friendly meeting between youth and festive events in border areas. We should further tap into our revolutionary resources and tell stories of friendship that resonate with our two peoples, so as to pass on the baton of China-Vietnam friendship from generation to generation.

— We should enhance multilateral collaboration and promote Asia's prosperity and revitalisation. This year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War as well as the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Our two countries should firmly uphold the UN-centered international system and the international order underpinned by international law. It is important that we pursue the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilisation Initiative. It is also important that we promote an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalisation. We should work together with the Global South to uphold the common interests of developing countries. Trade war and tariff war will produce no winner, and protectionism will lead nowhere. Our two countries should resolutely safeguard the multilateral trading system, stable global industrial and supply chains, and open and cooperative international environment. We should strengthen coordination in mechanisms such as East Asia cooperation and Lancang-Mekong cooperation so as to ensure more stability for a changing and turbulent world and inject more positive energy in it.

Standing at this new starting point of history, China is ready to work with Vietnam to build on past achievements, write a new chapter in building the China-Vietnam community with a shared future, and contribute even more to building a community with a shared future for mankind.

* Originally published in *Nhân Dân*, republished by Friends of Socialist China. Edited for space.

Global Briefs

FRANCE: President Emmanual Macron has stated that a historic injustice was imposed on Haiti when it was forced to pay a colossal indemnity to France in exchange for its independence 200 years ago. Macron announced the creation of a joint French-Haitian historical commission to "examine our shared past" and assess relations, but did not address demands for reparations. France took 150 million gold francs from Haiti for the loss of slave-based assets after Haiti's independence in 1804. Haiti finished paying France for its independence debt in 1947. It took Haiti over 140 years to fully repay its debt.

TÜRKİYE: Dozens of people, including journalists, appeared before a court in Istanbul on 18 April, accused of attending banned demonstrations and disobeying police orders to disperse during anti-government protests. These protests were triggered by the jailing of the city's opposition mayor, Ekrem Imamoglu. A total of 189 accused, most of them university students, have begun defending themselves from the charges. Some have also been charged with carrying arms.

MALVINAS ISLANDS: The Malvinas are set to become the site of a new oil and gas exploitation project. It involves Navitas Petroleum, an Israeli company which owns 65 per cent of the shares in the project, and the British company Rockhopper, which owns the remaining 35 per cent. This megaproject, which will take place in the South Atlantic at depths ranging from 180 to 500 metres, aims to extract 300 million barrels of oil over a 30-year period, generating estimated revenues of US$25.5 billion. The initial phase will include the drilling of 23 wells in the Sea Lion field. Taking advantage of their de facto occupation of the Malvinas Islands, the British government stands to benefit economically from this project, receiving an estimated US$6 billion in royalties. This plundering of Argentine resources is being organised without any effective action being taken by the government of President Javier Milei to defend the rights of the Argentinian people. The Argentine government's silence enables the continuation of the Sea Lion project, undermining national sovereignty and marking a setback in Argentina's struggle to reclaim the islands.

GERMANY: Thousands of people took part in around 90 Easter marches to demonstrate for peace. The Peace Cooperative Network coordinated the marches this year. The group's spokesperson said this year's demonstrations focused on an appeal to the incoming German coalition government for Germany to "become capable of peace rather than war." Demonstrators also raised their opposition to the genocide in the Gaza Strip and the planned stationing of US medium-range missiles in Germany.

INDIA: A commemorative plaque depicting Yuri Gagarin, the first human in space, was unveiled at the Russian House in New Delhi. The event was held to mark the International Day of Human Space Flight, observed annually on 12 April. An exhibition of rare archival photos of Gagarin's 1961 mission was also presented there. Shortly after returning to Earth, Gagarin toured India, where he was welcomed by thousands of people lining the streets. Indian astronauts continue their training at Russian facilities.

PAKISTAN: Foreign ministry officials from Pakistan and Bangladesh held talks after a 15-year long gap. The meeting in Dhaka was described as a major step forward in easing strained relations between the two South Asian Muslim-majority nations.

RUSSIA: The Supreme Court lifted a ban on Afghanistan's Taliban. The group was designated as a terrorist organisation more than two decades ago.

MYANMAR: The head of the military government has granted amnesty to around 4,900 prisoners, including political ones, to mark the country's traditional New Year.

Trump attacks Black history to 'Make America White Again'

Graham Holton

President Donald Trump continues to attack African American rights, heritage, and history in his desire to Make America White Again. On 27 March 2025, Trump signed an Executive Order titled "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History." It accuses the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture of engaging in a "concerted and widespread effort to rewrite our Nation's history," perpetuating division rather than fostering national unity.

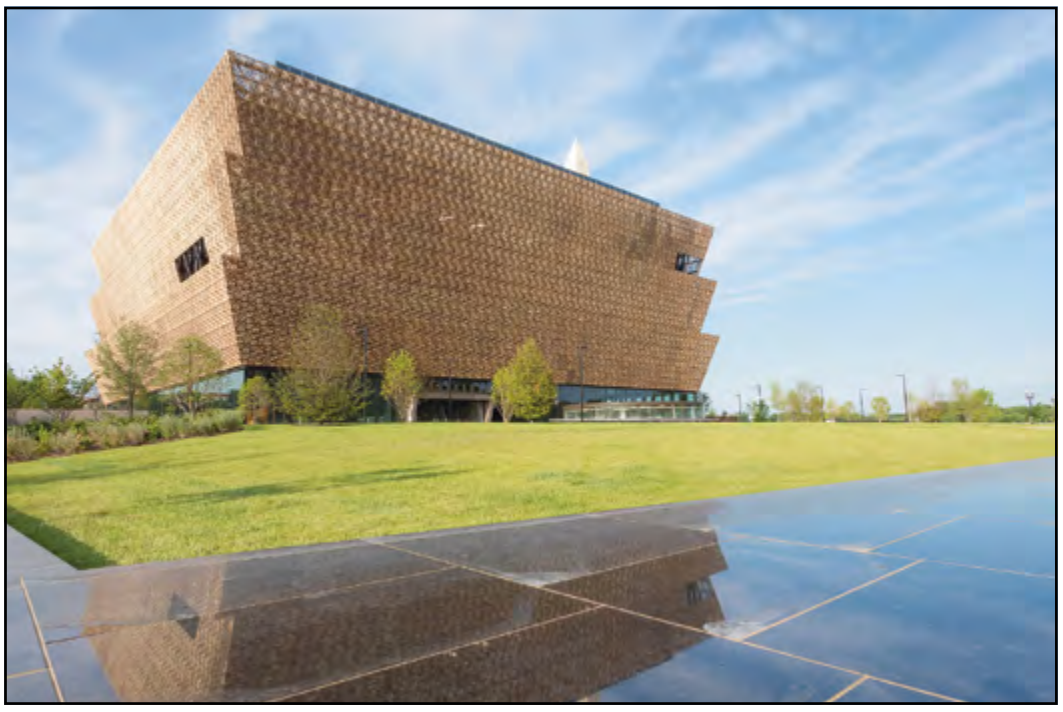
The Smithsonian was founded by the largesse of British scientist, James Smithson, to found "an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Institution holds over 157 million items, making it one of the largest museums in the world.

Trump said changes following the police killing of George Floyd in 2020 were brought about by protesters who wanted to "undermine the remarkable achievements of the United States by casting its founding principles and historical milestones in a negative light." Trump has asked the Secretary of the Department of the Interior to restore the monuments, statues and memorials in its jurisdiction that have been removed since 2020. These attacks "perpetuate a false reconstruction of American history, inappropriately minimise the value of certain historical events or figures." The restored monuments must have no message that will "inappropriately disparage Americans past or living." Instead, they will "focus on the greatness of the achievements and progress of the American people." So, restoration of statues to Confederate Generals, and no plaques explaining the racist violence any of the commemorated figures might have carried out.

Trump's order accuses the prior administration of advancing "corrosive ideology." He has directed the Vice President, J D Vance, himself a member of the Smithsonian Board of Regents, to rid the institution of "improper, divisive, or anti-American" ideology. Its new board members will be aligned with Trump's vision, focusing on a traditional portrayal of US history.

Civil rights advocates, historians and Black political leaders have attacked Trump's order, arguing that he targeted the Smithsonian Institution to downplay how racism and Black Americans have shaped the nation's story. Clarissa Myrick-Harris, history professor at Morehouse College, the Black campus in Atlanta, said this is: "an attempt to deny that the institution of slavery even existed, or that Jim Crow laws and segregation and racial violence against Black communities, Black families, Black individuals even occurred."

Catalina Gonzalez and Rachel Mayo of the Center for Progressive Reform write: "It is no coincidence that since taking office on Martin Luther King Day, the Trump administration's most aggressive actions have targeted historically marginalised groups." It is part of the far-right's suppression of "the real history of structural racism and Black progress." The Legal Defense Fund has attacked Trump's order as advancing pseudo-scientific ideas on race.



Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.
Photo: roma g – flickr.com (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

'an attempt to deny that the institution of slavery even existed'

Trump's man in Ecuador, declares victory amid fraud charges

WT Whitney Jr

Incumbent Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa of the National Democratic Action Party took 56 per cent of the vote in the second round of elections on 13 April. With 95 per cent of the votes counted, Luisa González, candidate of the social democratic Citizens' Revolution Party, gained 44 per cent of the vote.

González appeared to have been astonished at the results, and with good reason; the two candidates had been evenly matched until now. She exclaimed that, "Today, we do not recognise the results. I denounce before my people, before the media, and before the world, that Ecuador is living through a dictatorship, and we are confronting the most grotesque electoral fraud."

Polling had shown the two candidates tied at 44 per cent each. First-round voting on 9 Februay had Noboa taking 44.2 per cent of the vote and González, 43.9 per cent – with Leónidas Iza, leader of the indigenous Pachakutik party, securing 5.29 per cent of the vote. His second-round support for González appears to have been inconsequential.

Noboa took office following a second round of elections in October 2023 that gave him 52 per cent of the vote and González 48 per cent. He was completing the term of President Guillermo Lasso, a conservative former banker who had resigned because of bribery charges. Noboa will now serve until 2029, and he's already targeting his rival for retribution.

On the day before the elections, Noboa decreed a "state of exception" in seven provinces, in sections of Quito and in prisons. The measure, referring to "internal armed conflict," calls for curfews and mobilisation of the police and military forces.

The election results cast doubt on the legitimacy of Ecuador's democracy and portend troubles ahead for Ecuador's already beleaguered majority population. Crime has reached record levels along with narcotrafficking, militarisation, and aggressive US intervention.

Adding to a bleak outlook is the dissolution of the progressive legacy of Rafael Correa's presidency (2007-17) that gave rise to the Citizens' Revolution movement and González's candidacy.

Born in Miami, Daniel Noboa studied at three US universities, and benefits from family businesses worth $1.3 billion. His campaign featured "promises to stop the violence, finish with electric power blackouts, and raise people's purchasing power through neoliberal measures," according to one report.

A recent accounting places Ecuador's most recent murder rate at 38.8 murders per 100,000 inhabitants, up from 6.45 per 100,000 in 2015, under Correa's government. For reference, Australia's murder rate is 0.85, the USA's is 5.76. Seizures of illegal drugs in Ecuador, mainly cocaine, are also unprecedented – 33 per cent higher in 2024 than in 2023. Ecuador produces much cocaine, but is also a throughway for Colombian-produced illicit drugs on their way to Europe and the United States.

News surfaced during the campaign that authorities had seized cocaine from banana containers shipped to Europe by Noboa Trading Company. Lanfranco Holdings S.A., co-owned by President Noboa and his brother, claims 51 per cent equity in the firm.

Meanwhile, the economy is also in downward spiral. Ecuador's GDP is falling, and an ongoing energy crisis stemming from drought and deteriorating infrastructure is exacerbating the situation. Unemployment has increased, and the poverty rate is 28 per cent. The Noboa government recently obtained a $4 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund, but the public has seen little benefit.

Noboa was an honoured guest at President Donald Trump's inauguration in late January and is a close ally of the Trump administration in Latin America. Meeting with Trump in Florida on 29 March, Noboa requested US designation of irregular armed groups in Ecuador as terrorist organisations, which many see as a pretext for even closer cooperation between his military and that of the US.

Since 2024, the US military has been preparing to deploy warships, weapons, and personnel to Ecuador's Galápagos Islands, and plans are afoot for a new US naval base at Manta. Correa had closed down the US airbase there in 2009.

Noboa wants to make sure that cannot happen again; he's seeking to modify Ecuador's Correa-era Constitution so as to permit foreign military bases. Agreements are already in place for the arrival in Ecuador of US troops, possibly soon.

The debacle of this election highlights a contrast. On the one hand, there are the achievements of Correa's presidency and the goals of González's campaign. On the other, there is the record of Noboa's government so far and of US intervention.

Analyst Stansfield Smith, in a 2017 report, surveyed the accomplishments of Correa's government. They included: taxation of the rich, non-payment of illegitimate debt, steady and significant GDP growth, a doubling of Ecuador's minimum wage, reduction of the poverty rate from 37.6 per cent to 22 per cent (rural poverty from 61 per cent to 35 per cent), construction of 31 new hospitals, either completed or in progress, and the addition of 34,000 new health workers.

Commentator Irene León summarised the goals articulated by the Citizens' Revolution candidate. González "proposes an ethical pact to pacify the country, as well as to restore the democratic fabric and institutionality destroyed in recent years ... [She] proposes a foreign policy characterised by the return to regional integration and multilateralism, the revitalisation of the national economy and production, and the articulation of state policies around economic, geopolitical, social, cultural, and gender justice, among others."

Just as Luisa González's electoral defeat will surely discourage hopes for a revived Citizens' Revolution movement, it will also encourage US intervention. Analyst William Blum recalls that, prior to Correa's government, US agents had "infiltrated, often at the highest levels, almost all political organisations of significance, from the far left to the far right."

Now with Noboa in charge, the old ways are back. For instance, the Noboa government and USA based businessman Erik Prince recently agreed that armed mercenaries hired by Prince's Academi Company – formerly Blackwater – will soon be joining the 'war on crime' in Ecuador.

**People's World*, edited for space.

Trump supports dangerous eugenicist beliefs

Graham Holton

At a Wisconsin rally in 2024, President Donald Trump called illegal immigrants murderers: "You know, now a murderer, I believe this, it's in their genes. And we've got a lot of bad genes in our country right now." On the Hugh Hewitt radio show Trump said, "I believe this, it's in their genes," again referring to immigrants as murderers. At a New Hampshire campaign stop in 2023, Trump warned that undocumented immigrants were "poisoning the blood of our country." Trump has repackaged key aspects of eugenics as his own, with noted journal *Scientific American* in 2024 attacking Trump's eugenics as "nothing but factless."

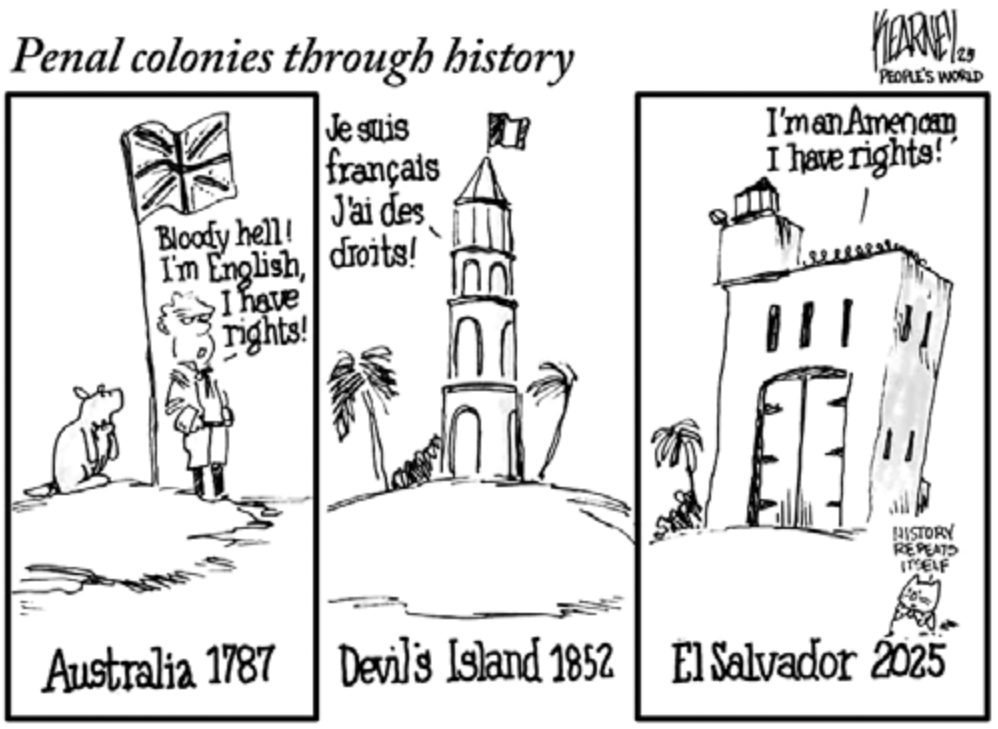
Trump's support of eugenics is witnessed in his policies on immigration, abortion, health, fitness, and religion. He uses targeted language when addressing women of colour, the disabled, and his political opponents. This language draws heavily upon America's eugenicist past, and as such it is important to understand what eugenics is and what it led to.

Sir Francis Galton, cousin to Charles Darwin, invented "eugenics" in 1865. He argued that the "bad genes" must be removed from society for the "good genes" to prosper. He applied the principles of natural selection to the biological development of human races, inventing regression analysis to "scientifically" prove his race theories. By the early 1900s, eugenics and "biological determinism" had gained scientific legitimacy. Biological determinism holds that the behavioural norms and the socioeconomic differences between human groups are inherited. Society and culture reflect this biological differential. In 1918, the Galton Society was formed in New York, attacking Franz Boas who argued that differences were due to society not genes. By the 1920s, eugenics was scientifically accepted with racial hierarchy and racial inferiority becoming facts beyond reproach.

By 1920, thirty-five US states had passed laws to forcibly sterilise the intellectually disabled, women with 'too many' offspring from various fathers out of wedlock, and criminals, especially African Americans. More than 60,000 Americans were sterilised. These laws were declared constitutional by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1927.

Inspired by California's eugenics law, Germany passed its own sterilisation laws. In July 1933, the National Socialist Party introduced the Eugenic Sterilszation Law, which led to the Final Solution as laid out in Berlin under the Wannsee Protocol in 1942. The ultimate eugenicist solution was the Nazi death camps. Up to the 1950s, eugenics was still believed to be the solution to society's problems, before being disproven by sociologists.

Trump's comments and derisions are not to be taken lightly. He cannot be allowed to use the US as a testing ground for his eugenicist beliefs and policies. Every day we witness what these policies are doing in Trump's war on racial minorities, women, gender, and sexual diversity.



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Very Clear

Picture this. You announce you're going to build a 30-metre yacht. You don't have any yacht-building experience, or much money. A friend asks how you're going to do it. You tell them you've been very clear about it, and then walk off.

If you tried that with people you know, they'd think something was wrong with you. It's easier for Peter Dutton's Liberal-National coalition – they've spent a lot of time this election campaign putting up vague ideas and then saying that they've been clear about them when asked for details.

Firebrand

One of those weaselly positive words used when reporters want to make someone seem exciting rather than just obnoxious (see also 'feisty'), 'firebrand' is a good way to talk about someone who shoots their mouth off without much thought (think Barnaby Joyce, but not for too long). Firebrand means the media gets to talk about what fun you are as a topic, rather than about how awful or unoriginal your ideas are. Assimilationist Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price has been photographed in one of Trump's 'Make America Great Again' hats. She's also said that she wants to "make Australia great again" before giving journalists who asked about it a serve for being Trump-obsessed. What an absolute, errr, firebrand.

Signalling (appropriate)

The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry wants, surprise surprise, lower 'regulatory burdens' and 'red tape,' but is also after "appropriate signalling." Should the Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan wave a flag out of her office window? Perhaps she should wear an 'I heart the private sector' t-shirt to events?

No, the signalling the VCCI is after is lower land tax, and more private-public partnerships for it to rort. The VCCI press release has 518 words that could be reduced to "give us more money", but that would be tacky, hence 'appropriate signalling'.

Exiting (the market)

If someone is in a market and leaves it, they've exited the market. So far, so non-weaselly. If that someone is renting a house and stops renting it, they've exited the real estate market. The weaselly part here is when commentators who worry about threats to Australia's sacred negative gearing system or capital gains discount talks about exiting the market as though it would be a bad thing. It's not like the landlords will somehow take the house with them when they exit, but the badness is never explained. Just say "this could lead to landlords exiting the market" in a concerned voice, and your job is done.

Establishment (Western)

Liz Truss is the former British PM who famously didn't last longer in the job than a fresh lettuce out of the fridge, and who tanked the British economy in real time. She's learned from her experience. Unfortunately, what Truss has learned is that she was right about everything and that it was all someone else's fault. In a post-Prime Ministerial search for relevance, Truss has been hanging out at far-right CPAC events in the US, and writing opinion pieces for the UK *Telegraph* and anyone who'll have her. In an opinion piece titled "Why Trump was right about almost everything," Truss (who was wrong about almost everything) has continued the 'it's everyone else's fault' line of thought, saying that the "entire Western establishment cannot bear to admit how wrong they got it".

The establishment doesn't include Truss herself of course. Despite being an Oxford-educated former Prime Minister, she's somehow outside of it.

Prospect (very real)

Peter Dutton, always on the lookout for ways to scare us and assert his superior military credit, has said that the "prospect of having Russia with a greater presence in our region is very real". Does this mean we should all start practicing our Russian?

Not unless we want to eventually read *Crime and Punishment* in the original Russian. Just because a prospect is real, doesn't mean it's likely.

Free Palestine!
End the occupation!

Peter Farmer

Demonstrations in support of Palestine have kicked off again in Australian cities. Communist Party members are turning out in support of Palestine and in protest against the occupation, Israel's mistreatment of Palestinian people, and the system of apartheid which goes back a long way before the 7 October 2023 attack. In fact, it goes back all the way to the first Nakba in 1947-49, when Israel instigated the removal of Palestinians from their own homes and villages.

The renewed demonstrations in Melbourne and Sydney had a huge turnout. As usual, an array of progressive forces turned out, including Jews Against Occupation.

There are good reasons for the renewed marching.

ISRAEL ATTACKS

Israeli bombardments have killed at least 17 Palestinians in Gaza in a recent attack, hospital workers said, hours after Hamas formally rejected Israel's latest ceasefire proposals.

Amongst the dead were 10 Palestinians who had been sheltering in Jabaliya refugee camp, including eight from the same household, according to the Indonesian hospital, which received the bodies.

Seven more were killed in the southern city of Khan Younis including a pregnant woman, according to the Nasser hospital, where the bodies were brought.

Israel is demanding that Hamas release more hostages at the start of any new ceasefire and ultimately agree to disarm and leave the territory.

Israel has said it plans to occupy large "security zones" inside Gaza.

Hamas negotiating delegation leader Khalil al-Hayya said the group had rejected Israel's latest proposal along those lines.

He reiterated Hamas's stance that it will return hostages only in exchange for the release of more Palestinian prisoners, a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a lasting truce, as called for in a now-defunct ceasefire agreement reached in January.

Hamas holds 59 hostages, 24 of whom are believed to be alive.

Officials from Hamas had indicated earlier in the week that they were likely to reject Israel's plan.

Hayya said the far-right Israeli coalition government "use partial agreements as a cover for their political agenda, which is based on continuing the war of extermination and starvation, even if the price is sacrificing all hostages."

He added that Hamas was "ready to immediately negotiate a deal to swap all hostages with an agreed number of Palestinians jailed by Israel" and end the war.

After Tel Aviv's plan was rejected Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said it was time "to open the gates of hell" on Hamas.

DISPLACING FAMILIES

Israeli occupation forces have also carried out demolitions in the Abu Hindi area of Abu Dis, east of Jerusalem, citing the absence of Israeli-issued building permits. The move, which involved multiple facilities supporting local livelihoods, has sparked concerns over its impact on residents.

Among the demolished structures was a stable that housed over 30 horses and served as a source of income for three families. Several sheds and fences were also dismantled during the operation, according to the Jerusalem Governorate.

Additionally, authorities issued a demolition notice against a vehicle wash facility in the same area, giving the owner 48 hours to tear it down voluntarily or face forced demolition accompanied by heavy fines.

These demolitions come amidst growing criticism of Israeli policies in occupied territories, where local communities frequently face displacement and economic hardship due to restrictive building regulations. The incident further highlights the ongoing tensions in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas, with families left vulnerable and livelihoods disrupted.

STARVATION AS A WEAPON

Aid groups have raised the alarm over Israel's blockade of Gaza, where it has barred entry of all food and other goods for more than six weeks.

Thousands of children have become malnourished, and most people are barely eating one meal a day as stocks dwindle, the UN said.

But Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz was adamant that the blockade is a "central pressure tactic" against Hamas, which Israel accuses, without evidence, of siphoning off aid to maintain its rule.

Aid workers deny there is significant diversion of aid, saying the UN closely monitors distribution.

Rights groups have accused Israel of engaging in a "starvation tactic."

CLOSE TO HOME

So why should Australians demonstrate about a conflict so far away?

Reason one: we dislike mass murder. What Israel is doing to Palestinians is often described as 'complex' by people who don't want any protests here. In fact it's simple, Israel is killing a lot of men, women, and children.

Reason two: we are involved. Parts for the F35 fighter-bombers Israel uses to bomb Gaza and Lebanon are made here. Australian arms company EOS has demonstrated a "lethal and effective" anti-drone system in Israel. Australia also supports Israel though generous contracts given to Israeli military company Elbit Systems. Elbit software was stripped from Army IT systems in 2021 due to security concerns, but the company scored contracts worth 917 million in 2024.

Australia has made feeble noises of disapproval of the mass killing, but it could do so much more. This country could stop the manufacture of any weapons components that will be used by Israel. It could end contracts with Israeli weapons countries. It could directly and clearly condemn the mass murder and ethnic cleansing that Israel is engaging in right now.

To get anywhere near these necessary measures, there will have to be a lot of pressure to overcome the timidity of the Australian government. We need to be on the streets when the demonstrations are on.

As CPA President Vinnie Molina says (see page 11, this issue) the media in Australia plays a large part. Too many people think that the 'conflict' is between two equal groups. Too many people think that opposing Israel's genocidal attacks is the same as supporting terrorism. People don't believe these falsehoods because they're stupid, there is a concerted media campaign to 'both-sides' the conflict and demonise Palestinians.

That's harder to fight, but there are a lot of people up for the fight.

Write to your papers. Call up talkback. If you can, be there at the next demonstration.

As the Party banners say: Palestine will win!

Israel calls 15 assassinations 'errors'

The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), blatantly acknowledged "operational misunderstandings" and "errors" in the killing by Israeli fire of 15 paramedics, rescuers and UN personnel in Gaza on 23 March.

In a summary of the military investigation into what happened that day in the southern town of Ráfah, the findings of which will be forwarded to the Israeli Public Prosecutor's Office, it is explained that there were several Israeli shootings against the ambulance convoy, the fire truck and UN vehicle that were attacked, in which members of the Gaza Red Crescent and Civil Defence were travelling.

The report investigates two shootings by Israeli troops in Gaza: the first, allegedly against vehicles of the resistance movement to the Zionist occupation, Hamas, and the second, an hour later, against ambulances and a fire truck that came to the scene.

The sub-commander who ordered the attack justified the second shooting by perceiving an "immediate threat" by the rapid approach and descent of people from medical vehicles near his troops.

The sub-commander maintains his version that the vehicles belonged to Hamas even though they were properly marked as equipment for health workers with their respective emergency lights.

"In the face of this impression and sense of threat, he ordered to open fire," he says, and accuses the "poor night visibility" of not initially recognising the vehicles as ambulances." Only later, after approaching them and examining them, it was discovered that they were indeed rescue teams," the report says.

A third attack took place 15 minutes later, when a UN vehicle arrived and was also shot at. One of the dead that day was a UN member. The investigation said that this third incident involved a "violation of orders during combat."

On the handling of the bodies and vehicles after the deadly attack revealed that, while the removal and covering of the bodies was considered reasonable, the shredding of the vehicles was a mistake.

The bodies could not be rescued from the site by the affected organisms until a week later, when they were found buried in sand and next to destroyed vehicles.

The IDF dismissed the Deputy Commander of the 14th Brigade of the Golani Reconnaissance Battalion because of his responsibilities as field commander in an unspecified incident and for providing an "incomplete and inaccurate" report. The dismissal occurred after it was revealed that initial information provided by the military on the ground about the incident was erroneous, contradicting evidence from a video recorded at the site.

Telesur

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