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Labor has no mandate

Anna Pha & Marcus Browning

The Albanese government has no mandate to implement its anti-people agenda. Behind the swing to Labor in terms of seats in the Lower House, the election reflects a growing disaffection with both Labor and the Coalition. The two-party system took a big hit but when preferences were allocated Labor leaped ahead with a third of the electorate giving it their first preference vote.

The major parties and pro-ruling class, corporate media did their best to bury the Greens and promote the two-party system. They gave the Greens little publicity, and most of that was very negative. Socialist candidates got even less coverage. Labor's win is in large part due to an exchange of preferences with the Greens.

Labor is being enthusiastically supported by the capitalist mass media which has not lost sight of its class interests. The two-party system has for some time been in its death throes. It has been kept alive with artificial respiration through laws biased against third parties, by protections sold to the public as 'electoral reform' and by a mass media that backs it all the way along the two-party line.

Right-wing social democracy (the ALP leadership) has always been a major roadblock on the path to the forward development of political and class consciousness in Australia. The path must be cleared. It is a slow process but it is happening. The disillusionment now taking place in the trade union movement – most recently over the government's takeover of the CFMEU – and among more workers is part of that process.

Then there is the social and economic crisis that is steadily overtaking the capitalist economic and social system. Another depression as devastating as the Great Depression of the 1930s is not to be ruled out.

It would have devastating consequences for the lives and living standards of millions of people.

Forty years ago, the major parties received 92.3 per cent of votes with 7.7 per cent going to non-major parties. Since then the trend has seen support for Labor and the Coalition decline to the point where non-major parties and independents received approximately one in three votes.

This is not reflected in the seats won because of the preferential system of voting (See page 5 'Need for electoral reform').

Of the major participants in the election the Greens were the only ones putting forward policies that actually address many of the issues facing the working class.

They promote public housing. They stand for Medicare, public education, genuine action on climate change, and an increase in JobSeeker, the age pension, and other social security payments above the poverty line. The Greens support free childcare, cancellation of student debt, outlawing of price-gouging, progressive tax reform, and the right to strike. They oppose the government's takeover of the CFMEU.

They stand against the AUKUS war-making alliance, support an independent foreign policy, and call for an end of the occupation of Palestinian territories.

The Greens have also campaigned consistently in support of Truth, Treaty and Justice, and supported the Indigenous Voice to Parliament. They have strong policies on women's issues, people with disability, and support for the LGBTQ+ community.

Their policies provide a genuine alternative to the Lib/Lab failure to govern in the interests of the people, but in this election the media made sure almost none of them saw the light of day.

LABOR'S GREATEST ASSET

Opposition leader Peter Dutton was one of Labor's greatest assets, resulting in him losing his seat in a US presidential-style campaign promoted by the media.

One of the Coalition's most unpopular policies was their commitment to fossil fuels and nuclear energy. Dutton also attempted to turn the Aboriginal Welcome to Country ceremony into a political football with what amounted to a dog whistle to racist and neo-fascist elements.

In contrast, the teals and other independents have worked hard in their electorates since the 2022 elections and built up a large base of supporters.

In the main they are small "L" Liberals with progressive policies on the environment and social issues. Their hard work is reflected in their re-election and (for most) an increase in numbers.

ISSUES NOT RAISED

The two existential threats facing humanity – climate change and nuclear war – were not debated by the major parties. Neither have stepped up to take on climate change and both support the US-Australia military alliance, AUKUS, US war preparations, and Australia's surrender of its independence and sovereignty to the US.

Overall, the result is a washout for the Coalition, but not a vindication of Labor. It will be several weeks before the final results are known in the Senate. We can only hope for a crossbench there with some power.

See page 5 for more election analysis

the two-party system ... kept alive with artificial respiration

5

Need for electoral reform

8

Always was, always will be

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Guardian

Issue 2144 12 May 2025

Dutton's collateral damage

Peter Dutton is history after a catastrophic loss in the federal election. He's being given some points for being 'gracious' in his acceptance speech. The media are going over various mistakes he made during the election campaign, with disenchanted Liberal Party hacks chiming in.

All good fun if that's what you're into. What's receiving a lot less focus is Dutton's perennial interest in race.

Despite his 'Temu Trump' nickname in the run-up to the election, Dutton has long been passionate about using race to divide the community and as a way of whipping up anger. When he was a government minister, he floated the idea of deporting dual citizens. Most of the people he had in mind were of Middle Eastern backgrounds. There was his enthusiasm for the 'African Gangs' scare campaign. More recently, he's been keen on importing white South Africans and white Ukranians. Dutton obviously felt that white Christians would be a good fit.

So far, so Dutton, but this isn't just about him. A lot of the Australian ruling class are quite capable of getting into race-based hatred if it suits them. A group of Neo-Nazis loudly booed Anzac day, and, while condemning the booing, a lot of the mass media got into their talking point, which was opposition to the Welcome to Country tradition. Labor under Kevin Rudd ran 'you will never live here' ads, ostensibly to repel refugees, but really aimed at voters who liked the Coalition's anti-foreigner rhetoric.

Under Anthony Albanese, now appointed a Labor saint for the election win, the ALP moved to suppress international student numbers. There's no good reason for this. International students are worth a lot to our economy, do not make housing more scarce, and (although we shouldn't use them for this) prop up the university sector. What Labor was doing was leaning into a Coalition campaign to blame non-white foreigners for Australian problems with housing.

For Dutton and Albanese, it's all about what helps them, but the loose talk has consequences. Black Victorians were bullied and harassed after the 'African Gangs' disgrace. Asian people here face daily aggression, which gets worse in response to politicians using race for advantage. Some readers may remember when John Howard was PM, dog-whistling his support to racists and saying that he would never criticise someone for wearing an Australian flag. He was talking about people who were wearing Australian flags while violently assaulting Lebanese Australians; it wasn't very subtle.

Communists are deeply against racism. Not because that's the nice thing to do, but because we know that as Lenin said, complete equality is impossible if there are other forms of inequality. Marx knew this too.

Communists are also anti-distractions. We're against 'divide and rule,' a strategy which has worked all too well for the people who own the wealth working people produce. If you're an Anglo-Australian worried about the cost of living, your kids' future, and climate change, it's not people who look different from you who are the problem. It's capitalism.

No matter who's in government, capitalism has given us worsening climate change and unaffordable housing. Opportunistic politicians will continue to tell you that the problem is 'them' meaning other ethnic groups, but the enemy is the class that puts profit ahead of human needs.

Communist Party of Australia

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CPA Statement on UK ruling on the definition of a woman

The Central Committee analysed the implications of the UK ruling on the definition of a woman.

It was important that the issue be seen in a broader perspective than the narrow scope which is being applied. This is part of the broader attack on diversity which could affect Australia as well.

We believe that the UK ruling has potential for negative consequences, emotional, psychological and even physical, endangering Trans people.

The Central Committee wants to assure our trans members of our ongoing support in the spirit of an injury to one is an injury to all.

Should a situation arise in Australia for similar rulings to be considered we will face it front on together.

Communist Party of Australia
Central Committee
30 April 2025

Sydney Vigil

STOP USA BLOCKADE ON CUBA

12:30pm Saturday 17 May
Sydney Town Hall

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CPA CC Statement on the federal election

The Communist Party of Australia welcomes the electoral defeat of Peter Dutton and the Coalition on Saturday 3 May 2025.

It is clear the electorate rejected the policies proposed by the Coalition. The Trum-like politics, nuclear energy, small government proposal with cuts of more than 40,000 public servants, attacks on Medicare, TAFE, Indigenous Australians, and migrants, did not work on Australian voters.

The former leader of the opposition Dutton showed his arrogance, racist views on Indigenous issues and warmongering. He also threatened deregistration of the CFMEU and the reinstatement of the Australian Building and Construction Commission, ABCC. He was penalised by his electorate who unseated him in Dixon. The consistent and hard work by ALP candidate Ali France will be recorded in the history books.

The re-elected Albanese government is predicted to return with a majority of about 89 seats; counting for the last few seats still ongoing at the time of writing. The Coalition was reduced to historic lows. The vote for both the majors was low. Despite having a relative stable primary vote the Greens suffered from a black-out of their policies and how the exchange of preferences panned out.

The Greens lost their seats of Brisbane, Griffith, and Melbourne.

However, the Greens had a strong showing in the Senate vote and will have at least 11 seats in the upcoming Senate which will give them the balance of power. This is a good outcome for the community.

The CPA Central Committee believes that Greens, left, progressive and independents should work in a more coordinated and united way to confront the undemocratic, Two-Party electoral system.

The Australian electoral system is sponsored by millionaires who can only be defeated by working together in an electoral coalition for People's democracy.

The Albanese government has no mandate but could immediately deal with the cost-of-living crisis, public health, housing, and the environment. The popular policy for dental under Medicare proposed by the Greens proved popular and should be adopted by the ALP government. The CPA calls on the Albanese government to scrap the unaffordable AUKUS, work towards an independent and peaceful foreign policy, and strengthen economic relations and trade with our neighbours in the Asia-Pacific area as a way to confront Trump's erratic policies on trade and harmful tariffs.

We consider that the majority afforded to the Albanese government is a loss for Palestine in favour of genocidal Zionist state of Israel. Australia should use its international influence to champion peace rather than warmongering. The Central Committee reiterates its demand for a permanent ceasefire and the recognition of an independent Palestinian state and an end to the sale of weapons components made in Australia and destined for Israel regardless of the sleight of hand tactic of using intermediate countries to hide complicity in the genocide.

The CPA stands in solidarity with the Australian people and demands from the government to do more to end violence against women, close the gap with Indigenous Australians, phase out fossil fuels and accelerate action on renewable energy zero emissions economy, fully fund public education and training, and strengthen rights at work.

Central Committee
8 May 2025

Photo: EC images – flickr.com (CC0)

The Trump-like policies did not work on Australian voters

More than half want an independent Australia

A new poll has found that 54.2% of Australians want a more independent foreign policy.

In February a poll for The Australia Institute revealed 44% support for a more independent foreign policy.

Since then, the Trump Administration has imposed a 10% tariff on imports from Australia.

The national survey of 1,500 people also found that 44.2% of voters thought former Opposition Leader Peter Dutton was either similar or very similar to Donald Trump.

Key findings:

57.7% of respondents believe the election of Donald Trump is a bad or very bad thing for Australia. 65.6% believe it is a bad or very bad thing for the world.

While many respondents believe AUKUS makes Australia more safe, 56.8% support or strongly support a Parliamentary Inquiry into AUKUS.

44.2% of voters believe Peter Dutton is similar or very similar to Donald Trump, while 10.4% believe the same of Anthony Albanese.

"As the Trump administration radically re-shapes the United States, more Australians are reconsidering our relationship with America," said Dr Emma Shortis, Director of The Australia Institute's International & Security Affairs Program.

"Over half of Australians now support the pursuit of a more independent foreign policy – a jump of 10% in just a few months.

"Australians are increasingly concerned about what the Trump administration is doing at home and abroad. 66% of Australians now think Trump's election was a bad or very bad thing for the world.

"After this weekend's election, the Australian government has a chance to re-imagine our relationship with the United States, with the clear support of the Australian people."

The Australia Institute

Riverina Water dispute still on

Workers at Riverina Water have returned to work following a walkout over unequal working conditions after CEO Andrew Crakanthorp called an extraordinary meeting of the board for 13 May to address workers' demands in response to the unprecedented industrial action.

Union representatives have made it clear their members' expect a prompt resolution of this matter otherwise all options are on the table.

The overnight industrial action, led by members of the United Services Union (USU), was sparked by a long-running disagreement over working hours.

While indoor staff at the council work a 35-hour week, outdoor workers are required to complete 38 hours, despite being on the same salary band.

The union argues this discrepancy equates to nearly a month of unpaid work per year and undermines the principle of equal pay for equal work.

Following a report-back meeting held early this morning, union members voted to return to work "in good faith" but resolved to reconvene next week to assess any progress on their claims.

USU Acting General Secretary Daniel Papps looks forward to learning the results of the board's deliberations.

"Our members have shown they're prepared to stand up for what's fair," Papps said.

"We've returned to work today out of respect for the community and our shared commitment to public services, but we are absolutely clear: the status quo is not acceptable."

The USU has reiterated that its members are not seeking additional pay — only parity in hours worked compared to colleagues in similar roles.

"We are simply asking that workers doing equally graded work receive equal treatment," said Papps.

"This is about basic fairness, and it's time Riverina Water recognised that."

The union will hold another mass meeting to decide on next steps following the outcome of the board meeting.

United Services Union

UTS staff reach breaking point

National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) members at University of Technology (UTS) have exposed a litany of serious management failures that are threatening the institution's fabric.

The *Australian Financial Review* has exposed glaring examples of the overwhelming crisis at UTS, reinforcing staff concerns about governance failures.

Unaccountable senior university leaders have bungled restructures and major projects, leading to budget blow-outs and soaring workloads.

VC Andrew Parfitt has faced disgruntled staff at town halls on multiple occasions to justify these changes. Despite a lack of evidence and logic, he insists the University must cut 400 jobs.

In the midst of this turmoil, 2 executives within the senior leadership team have exited abruptly since the start of the year. The departure of Provost Vicki Chen was the latest.

Poor problem-solving and decision-making that fails to involve staff, often preferring consultants with almost no experience in the sector, has led to 'solutions' that are far removed from the realities on the ground.

This has created a culture of fear and mistrust between employees and management.

In 2024, university leadership claimed a $100 million budget deficit blowout, from an earlier predicted $45 million.

(editor's note: This parallels a similar issue at the Australian National University, where management reported a deficit of $200 million justified staff cuts and closures, only to admit later that they were $60 million out.)

Requests from staff for transparency and key financial documents were refused by UTS executive despite damaging job cuts being proposed.

A national NTEU campaign exposing the serious governance crisis in universities has sparked a federal parliamentary inquiry, which held a hearing earlier this year.

Sarah Attfield, NTEU UTS Branch President says staff mental health and morale are at an "all time low."

She asked "When are university leaders going to take real accountability for their errors, instead of making staff and students face the consequences of decisions they had no role in?"

"I work at UTS because I believe in the value of public education and research. Public universities are pillars in our communities, educating the next generations on how to make our society better for all."

"As staff at UTS, we care so much about the quality education we provide, but it is getting harder by the day to maintain that quality, and it is coming at the cost of our health."

"NTEU members are pushing back against these cuts, raising concerns, keeping staff and students informed, and mobilising hundreds to rally against these ignorant and ill-conceived plans. And we're not done yet."

Vince Caughley, NSW Division Secretary of the NTEU, calls what UTS workers are going through "yet another example of the governance failures and lack of accountability that have become entrenched in Australian universities. Senior executives and management appear more focused on shielding themselves from scrutiny than ensuring the effective operation of the institutions they are meant to lead.

"This pattern of decision-making – where executives sideline staff expertise, isolate decision-making, and ignore internal warnings – has led to serious consequences, not just for ITU and UTS but across the sector. It underscores the urgent need for the senate inquiry into university governance and accountability."

According to Caughley university management is increasingly operating in ways that alienate staff and suppress dissent. Reports of bullying, intimidation, and the erosion of proper decision-making processes are becoming more frequent. He says it's a systemic issue

"The crisis at UTS is not an isolated case – it's part of a broader trend of university executives prioritising their own interests over the public institutions they are supposed to serve."

NTEU

Minns attacks injured workers

The anti-worker, pro-developer Labor government in NSW is pushing changes to the state's workers' compensation laws to severely restrict employees who suffer psychological injuries on the job from claiming compensation. This includes compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Minns government intends to give the Industrial Relations Commission the means to decide on mental health injuries from work before claims can be made, essentially using the IRC to block compensation. Craig Tanner – a barrister who worked as an arbitrator in the Workers' Compensation Commission from its inception in 2002 – noted the IRC was "intended to serve as a procedural barrier which will prevent workers from making claims."

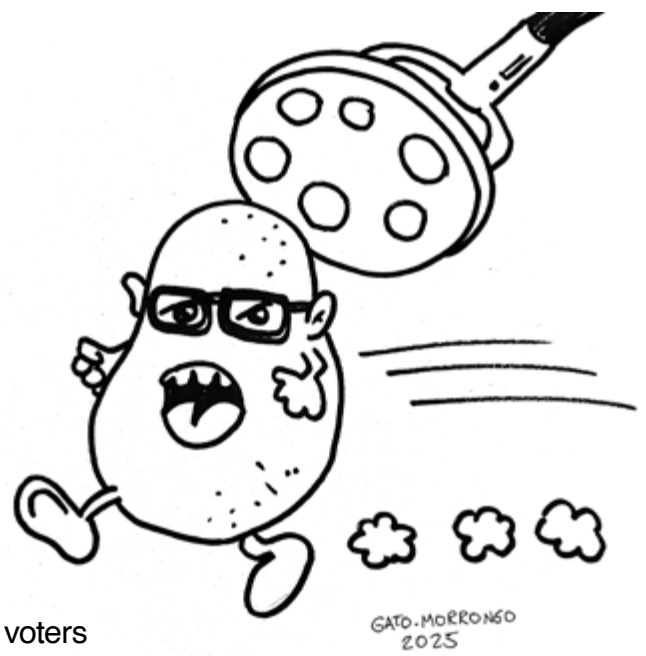
It intends to also double the psychological impairment threshold for workers to claim lump-sum payments from 15 per cent to 30 per cent. The changes would lead to seriously injured workers being left without long-term support; the overwhelming majority of people with psychological injuries arising from the workplace would not be entitled to make a claim.

Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey said addressing the root causes of psychological injury must be the first priority in any workers' compensation reform process, with support for traumatised workers taking precedence over accounting concerns.

"The greatest increase in psychological injury claims is occurring within the NSW government's own workforce," Morey said.

"Nurses who have witnessed hospital stabbings, child protection workers confronting family violence, council, community sector workers, teachers and other essential workers are bearing the brunt of trauma, occupational violence, and assaults. This isn't speculation – state insurer iCare's 2024 report explicitly identifies these factors as driving the increase in claims."

Unions NSW



Dutton meets the voters

An activist-run ship on a mission to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza was attacked by drones in international waters off the coast of Malta last week, its organisers said.

The *Conscience*, a 68-metre-long passenger ship carrying volunteers from the Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC), had set sail from the Mediterranean island nation to the besieged Palestinian territory.

The grassroots solidarity movement whose goal is to end Israel's two-month illegal blockade of Gaza said they had been organising the non-violent action under a "media black-out" in hopes of avoiding any potential sabotage.

At 12:23am, two weaponised drones "attacked the front of an unarmed civilian vessel twice, causing a fire and a substantial breach in the hull," the FFC said.

Prominent climate activist Greta Thunberg, who has been involved with FFC's humanitarian mission, called on supporters to demand action from the authorities. "Attacking a humanitarian mission is a war crime," the Swede said in a video posted online. "We need you to demand your government stops all aid to Israel and demands an end to the illegal siege."

Fellow FFC activist Rebeca Ruiz said the boat was carrying family members of humanitarian activists on the *Mavi Marmara* – one of six civilian ships delivering aid to Gaza that the Israeli military attacked in 2010, killing 10 activists and wounding 30.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is aged care provider Illawarra Retirement Trust (IRT) which has failed to pass on government funded pay rises resulting from the Fair Work Commission Aged Care Work Value Case decision.

IRT, which operates 19 aged care facilities across NSW including southeast Sydney, the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, and the south coast, has refused to provide its employees with the March work value increase that other registered nurses (RNs) and enrolled nurses (ENs) working in aged care facilities across Australia have received.

IRT has also failed to commit to pass on the additional government increases for nurses and carers occurring in October 2025 and August 2026.

NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) General Secretary, Shaye Candish, said the federal government had been clear that this should be additional to any increases from the employer through the enterprise agreement.

"It's deeply disappointing to see not-for-profit provider IRT refusing to pass on pay increases to their incredibly hardworking nurses and carers," said Candish.

"It is our expectation that the federal government's funding will be passed on in full to workers following the Fair Work Commission's ruling which highlighted the historic undervaluing of the female-dominated care industry.

"The NSWNMA is not aware of any other providers refusing in this manner. In tough economic times, our members desperately need this income boost. Anything less than passing this funding on in full is pocketing money which should be going to nurses and carers.

"As part of the March tranche of funding, RNs and ENs across the country are receiving up to $6 extra an hour, but IRT employees are missing out. The October increase is also at risk of not being delivered to our members, with IRT refusing to commit to it."

Candish said residents would want their nurses and care staff to be compensated for the incredible work they do and that failure to pass on these increases are likely to impact IRT's ability to attract and retain nurses and care staff and meet mandatory care minutes.

"We call on IRT to do the right thing and show they value their workforce by ensuring nurses and carers receive the pay they deserve."

IRT's enterprise agreement, which includes a proposed offer of 7.5 per cent over three years, will be put to members to vote on soon.

Need for electoral reform

Parliament and parliamentary campaigns have an important place in the whole process of the struggle to advance the interests of the people – provided that parliamentary activity is combined with vigorous struggle by the people outside parliament.

The existing political system in which government is alternately shared between the Coalition and the Labor Party (ALP) obscures and protects the dictatorship of capital over our economic and political life.

Australia's electoral system has allowed state and federal governments to be dominated for the last century by the two-party system, in which both major parties act mainly for the dominant vested capitalist interests. This situation holds back political development and acts as a conservative brake on the whole of society.

UNDEMOCRATIC

The House of Representatives has a preferential system of voting. Although in this election Labor received a small majority of votes compared to the Coalition – 34.8 per cent to 32.1 per cent – Labor had a massive win more than twice as many seats as the Coalition (based on count at time of writing).

If the voting system were democratic then the Coalition would have around 47 seats – a few more than it has gained. Labor on the other hand should have around 50 seats, not close to 90 or more.

The Greens with 11.8 per cent of the vote are not certain of winning any seats in the Lower House. If the system were democratic they would be expected to win 12-13 seats.

Labor's big win is to a significant degree due the way preferences flowed, in particular its exchange of preferences with the Greens. It only had an overall swing of 2.2 per cent and the Coalition a swing against it of 3.6 per cent.

The system is designed to perpetuate the two-party system – two parties of capitalism serving the interests of big business.

The present electoral system does not adequately provide for the representation of significant streams of political thinking in Australia, particularly in the most important lower house of Parliament.

The Senate was formed as a House of review and as a body to look after the interests of the states and territories. The 76 Senators are elected for six-year terms – six every three years in the states and two in the territories.

The system is proportional-preferential and this is reflected in more democratic election outcomes where the Greens are set to hold the balance of power with 11 seats.

MONEY TALKS

But for both Houses, candidates have historically been selected by the major parties. In more recent years smaller parties have also selected candidates to stand. Independent candidates such as the teals are community-based.

Prohibitive costs of registration and the process of registration make it difficult for smaller parties to stand candidates with the Party's name on the ballot paper.

The major parties have a campaigning advantage with millions of dollars donated by their corporate patrons and in the case of the Labor Party also from the trade unions.

The Lib/Lab alliance recently legislated for a framework to provide the quarterly funding to registered political parties and independent MPs who receive 4 per cent or more of the primary vote to be increased from the current $3.346 to $5.00 per vote.

The Communist Party proposes the following reforms to the electoral system:

- The election of representatives in accordance with the proportion of votes received, that is, proportional representation.
- Multi-member electorates which are larger than single member constituencies for the Lower House to enable proportional representation.
- The requirement to produce membership lists for a party to be registered be repealed.
- The number of signatures required for a party to achieve registration as a political party for electoral purposes to be limited to 500 who do not need to be members.
- All candidates in each electorate to be given equal free time on public media to present an election statement.
- Reduction in the size of deposits to be paid by candidates to $250. Large deposits currently act as obstacles to smaller parties and individuals participating in elections.
- The permissible voting age to be lowered from 18 to 16 years.
- Elimination of all public funding for election expenses. All political parties should be dependent on their own resources and popular support and not subsidised by taxpayers' money.

Allegations that the election of more candidates from small parties and independents will "destabilise" our political system are nonsense. We need a political system that reflects the different political views of the electorate.

The CPA calls for a compulsory, proportional-preferential voting system which gives the people a wider choice of candidates through multi-member electorates and a choice of local members to whom they can take their concerns.

Op-Ed: a win for the band-aid solution

A Carruthers

A burning question, one that the Communists will be answering in the next few months, is this: can Social Democracy hold off the tide of discontent that is partly its own making? What does a Labor victory mean for the working class movement?

In his address to the press Sunday morning after the election Anthony Albanese immediately tracked to the Greens and their "obstruction" on housing, saying that if they just "got out of the way and let the private sector build it," all would be well. Wayne Swan said this was a victory for Social Democracy. The ALP is brimming with confidence.

We know already that progress has been at a snail's pace. Before the election we were pointing out that the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) was falling well short of what was needed precisely because it was reliant on the private sector. That had nothing to do with Greens obstruction. We also know that Swan's great 'Social Democracy' has failed to deliver for decades, for even a century now. The people have been patient with it, and given it every chance to succeed, and yet by colluding with capitalism it has left us in this hole. The cost-of-living crisis has arisen under Labor and Liberal governments, not the minor parties. Why should we be so hopeful about Social Democracy now?

Did the ALP win the election or did Dutton lose it? While it's true that large sections of the working class voted Labor, let's not forget that Dutton also frightened large swathes of the population by proposing to build nuclear power stations in people's backyards. The election was also spectacularly *lost* by the Liberals. Albanese and the ALP often note their "respect" for the Nationals and the Coalition, and don't hide their contempt for the left. Let's not forget about the political duopoly. The major parties look out for each other.

The Labor victory points directly to the fact that "Social Democracy" is a fragile phenomenon that is not built from the ranks of the Australian working class. It points to the fact that the path is beyond Labor. The future is socialism, with the Communist Party and the push for a worker's government that can bring about large-scale change, not snail's pace reform.

We see progress where it exists. Our interests are not separate from the interests of the working class as a whole. We were pleased to hear mention of 65,000-year civilisation of First Nations peoples and the insistence on Acknowledgements of Country, and hope that this can translate to Closing the Gap and genuine material changes in the lives of Aboriginal people. We are pleased to see better funding for TAFE, and pride in Medicare.

We are scientific socialists, which means we look at situations objectively. We think materially. We know that the solution is materialist, about things and how to deliver things. When Labor refers to "the Australian people" we want to know how that translates in reality. How are the Australian people faring under the political duopoly? If Labor can build a million homes in a planned manner using the private sector and Future Funds, and bump up home ownership to the same level as socialist countries (in the 90 per cent range), then we'll congratulate them. If they can end the cost-of-living crisis by writing to Coles and Woolworths with a voluntary "Code of Conduct," we'll congratulate them. If they can build High-Speed Rail (HSR) network on par with the latest technology and in the 500kmph range and revitalise Australian science, we'll congratulate them. If they can stop the flight from public education and end the exodus of teachers, and respect union democracy, we'll congratulate them. If their methods truly work, we will pay heed to those methods.

The only problem is this: the tried and tested art of socialist governance is the only way those challenges mentioned above have been met and solved. Reformism is, and always has been, a band-aid solution. Since the ALP does not possess the tools of scientific socialism, we can only hope that, through their meagre "reforms," the people's discontent will turn to political organisation, and that from this disappointment an organised Worker's Party can once and for all take power. Because we know that the "alternative" to Labor is the likes of Dutton; fascism and the far-right. That has always been our 'choice' in this system. While it's always a joy to avoid another far-right government, we would also like to live in a nation where fascism is never on the cards.

May Day Naarm

Peter Farmer

Naarm/Melbourne had two May Day events this year. On the day itself, a feast of music, speeches and performance at Trades Hall, featuring the Trade Union Choir, and a very energetic group of young comrades from the Phillipines. Comrade Agapi Pashos from the Greek Democritus Workers League spoke eloquently about the Tempi train crash in 2023.

Andrew Irving, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Australia spoke passionately about the need for a united workers' movement in line with the spirit of the first May Day. Speakers also explained what was happening with imperialism in Latin America and the Philippines, and there was a big hand for union representatives from Timor L'este who had come to celebrate May Day with us.

On 4 May, Trades Hall had a May Day festival and march. Exhausted from election work the day before, the crowd was addressed by a very passionate Zach Smith of the CFMEU, who spoke about the treachery of the Labor-imposed administration, and the need to keep fighting for workers' rights.

Melbourne Branch members kept busy selling Party literature and discussing politics with members of the crowd, as well as carrying the Party banner in the march.

80 years ago this year, fascism was defeated. Most Australian and other English-language media focusses on the role of the UK and the USA in the Second World War, but it was the socialist Soviet Union that bore the vast brunt of the fighting and which raised the hammer and sickle flag over Berlin. Comrades in Boorloo (Perth) WA marked Victory Day in style.
(for a report on the world anti-fascist forum, see page 9)

On JobSeeker or Youth Allowance? Nothing's affordable

Anglicare's latest Rental Snapshot again shows there are no affordable rentals for someone receiving JobSeeker or Youth Allowance nationwide.

Of the 51,238 rentals listings Anglicare reviewed, just three rooms in share-houses were affordable for someone receiving the $56 a day JobSeeker Payment and the maximum rate of rent assistance. None were affordable for someone on Youth Allowance, which is just $48 a day. Only 73 (0.1 per cent) listings nationwide were affordable for a single parent with one child under 5 years of age.

"This is another damning report that shows how inadequate social security payments like JobSeeker are, and how it exacerbates the housing crisis," said Australian Council of Social Service CEO Dr Cassandra Goldie AO.

"If you receive JobSeeker or another social security payment, the data shows you have virtually no chance of avoiding housing stress if you need to rent in the private market.

"People end up going without food, medication and essential healthcare to try to keep a roof over their head.

"The most important thing the next federal government should do to reduce the deep financial stress experienced by more than 1.5 million people in Australia is to raise the rate of social security payments like JobSeeker so that they meet basic needs. This should be the first priority of all candidates concerned about cost of living in this election.

Goldie called on all parties to commit to lifting JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment, and related income support payments to at least $82 a day "so that people have a chance of keeping a roof over their head."

ACOSS

Housing crisis deepens in WA

New figures show Perth has become one of the most unaffordable cities for renters, second only to Adelaide, prompting Shelter WA to call on the next federal government to deliver more housing funding for the state.

CoreLogic data released recently reveals Perth renters are paying an average of 33.2 per cent of their income on rent, above the 30 per cent threshold that defines housing stress.

CoreLogic's analysis also shows all WA federal electorates have faced significant increases in rent since the COVID-19 pandemic, with rents jumping between 50.3 per cent and 74.3 per cent over five years.

Shelter WA CEO Kath Snell said: "These figures reinforce what Shelter WA and other advocates have been saying: leaders of the major parties must not forget renters in next week's federal election.

"Perth used to be Australia's most affordable capital city, but in just a few years we've watched as affordability has fallen off a cliff.

"Tens of thousands of West Australians are being priced out of safe, stable homes. We're seeing families facing unprecedented pressure caused by skyrocketing rents, years-long waitlists for social housing and unsafe living conditions.

"With an estimated 53,800 WA households experiencing homelessness, housing stress or living in overcrowded homes, it's clear we need immediate and substantial action.

"Current policy approaches aren't doing enough to address the underlying issues affecting housing affordability. The scale of the crisis requires bold government intervention to address the imbalance of supply and demand."

Shelter WA is calling on the new federal government to invest more funding for additional social and affordable homes and do more to protect renters.

"The WA government can't solve our state's housing crisis alone, we need the federal government to deliver bold and ambitious solutions as well," Snell said.

Shelter WA

Guardian comment: The Communist Party of Australia supports a massive increase in public housing – owned and managed by the state for the people. 'Social and affordable' housing sounds nice, but is often a way for governments to sell responsibility for housing to relatively unaccountable charities and NGOs. Those organisations can off-load the housing to the private market or jack up the rent as they choose. 'Affordable' is a weasel word; it often means that the housing is below market rates, so *not* affordable for many renters in need.

ABC: Arrogant Williams censured

Statement from Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) members at the ABC

Journalists at the ABC are beyond disappointed by revelations on *Media Watch*, showing that the ABC Chair, Kim Williams, has inappropriately intervened to gain promotion for an old acquaintance of his, overriding the editorial judgement of staff.

We are also shocked by his arrogant attitude to the professional staff that work in our regional bureaus, who work every day to uphold the MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics, which demands independence.

The fact that this comes just months after staff expressed disgust at the previous Chair and MD breaching the ABC's independence around the sacking of Antoinette Lattouf, makes the revelations all the more galling.

Since the airing of *Media Watch*, MEAA delegates have heard more stories of a similar nature and are now consulting members to confirm their experiences.

These are not appropriate actions for the chair of the ABC – a position that is appointed directly by government.

In February, a meeting of 200 ABC staff said: "ABC staff work tirelessly to build and maintain the ABC's independence and integrity. It is the board's legal duty to protect that independence and integrity. But time and again we see ABC chairs and managing directors do the opposite."

In that instance, MEAA members demanded an independent inquiry to examine the breaches of independence under the leadership of Justin Milne and Ita Buttrose. The ABC MEAA National House Committee reiterates that call, and demands any such inquiry be given broad-ranging powers to investigate potential breaches by Kim Williams too.

The House Committee will begin consulting widely to determine the appropriate form of such an inquiry.

In the meantime, ABC staff need a commitment from Kim Williams that he will cease these inappropriate actions that undermine the ABC's independence.

Members are also deeply concerned about the attitude shown by senior managers, who appear to have aided Williams' efforts on some occasions. We were also disappointed to see that Gutman sent an abusive text message to an ABC staff member, and call upon managers and senior leadership to do better to support staff and allow them to do their jobs without harassment or interference.

*Alexander Gutman, aka Austen Tayshus, 80s comedy one-hit wonder and Kim WIlliams' old acquaintance

'Kindergarten of the Air' at a Sydney kindergarten 1962. Photo: ABC Archives – flickr.com (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Noosa Council workers locked out ahead of Labour Day

AWU

Potholes went unfilled, parks unmowed, and 'rhyme time' was cancelled at libraries in Noosa for two days after the council took the extraordinary step of locking out its entire workforce for two days – just before Labour Day, a public holiday meant to celebrate workers' rights.

Over 100 workers at Noosa Council represented by the Australian Workers' Union and the Australian Services Union lost two precious day's pay during a cost of living crisis after the council informed them they would not be required to turn up to work on Thursday the 1st of May and Friday the 2nd.

Each worker, who earns roughly $60,000 a year, lost two entire days of pay immediately before the Labour Day weekend – a holiday that is meant to celebrate the rights and achievements of workers in Queensland.

"A lock out is an extreme tactic used by an employer to intimidate their workforce into accepting a bad offer they do not want to accept," said Michael Anderson, an organiser from the Australian Workers' Union who represents these workers.

"It is about depriving workers who are already earning some of the lowest wages you could find at a Council in South East Queensland of two days of pay ahead of a long weekend."

"It's mean, it's nasty, and it's designed to punish workers who have found their voice and are asking for their fair share."

"The Australian Workers' Union will not accept such heavy-handed tactics from this employer, or any other – all this has done is take this industrial dispute to a place that Noosa residents cannot afford."

"Noosa Council could end this dispute at any time and get services back online across our region by swallowing their pride and making their workforce a fair pay offer that keeps pace with the cost of living and the wages offered by neighbouring Councils."

"Our members live in this community, but with these wages they won't for much longer. The people who do the grunt work to keep Noosa thriving are drawing a line, they've being priced out, they're making real life decisions and soon they will just leave."

"Noosa Council has a vacancy rate of 20 per cent, that's one in five positions, no-one can afford to live in this community on these wages."

"Our members will meet to discuss their employer locking them out of their livelihood today and from the phone calls I've already had I can tell you it ain't going to be pretty."

Australian Workers Union

GREEN NOTES

AI-energy interconnections

Anna Pha

Energy-hungry data centres are among the fastest growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions. The energy sector is at the heart of one of the most important technological revolutions today – artificial intelligence (AI). The development of AI and the energy industry are becoming increasingly intertwined.

The International Agency's (IEA) World Energy Outlook Special Report on *Energy and AI*, notes that: "AI is the science of making machines capable of learning to perform tasks that traditionally required human intelligence. AI is emerging as a general-purpose technology, much like electricity. Today, it can generate text and videos, accelerate scientific discovery in fields like medicine or materials science, make manufacturing robots smarter and more productive, drive commercial taxis in complex city landscapes, and detect threats to critical infrastructure." The report was launched on 10 April 2025. AI also plays a critical role in the military sector, espionage and war preparations.

In the past few years, AI has gone from an academic pursuit to an industry with trillions of dollars of market capitalisation and venture capital at stake. The total value of investments in AI-related firms on the US S&P 500 stock-exchange has grown by around US$12 trillion since 2022.

There has been a qualitative change in the capabilities of AI and expansion of its use. This has been driven by falling computation costs, a surge in data availability and technical breakthroughs. Global investment in data centres has nearly doubled since 2022 and amounted to half a trillion US dollars in 2024. This boom is raising growing concerns about skyrocketing electricity demand.

"AI-focused data centres can draw as much electricity as power-intensive factories such as aluminium smelters, but they are much more geographically concentrated. Nearly half of data centre capacity in the United States is in five regional clusters. The sector accounts for substantial shares of electricity consumption in local markets."

Electricity demand from AI-optimised data centres is anticipated to more than quadruple by 2030. The development of AI has brought contradictory outcomes. For example, because of AI, cyberattacks on energy utilities have increased and become more sophisticated in the past four years – but thanks to AI energy companies are better able to defend themselves against such attacks. In other words: "AI compounds some energy security risks, but it also offers solutions in both the cyber and physical domains."

The report also notes that AI can be used as a tool in reducing emissions, **"but it is not a silver bullet and does not remove the need for proactive policy."** Half of the global growth in data centre demand is met by renewables, supported by storage and the broader electricity grid. However, the IEA claims "Dispatchable sources, led by natural gas, also have a crucial role to play, with the tech sector helping to bring forward new nuclear and geothermal technologies as well." The IEA expects the first small modular reactors to come online around 2030.

Electricity grids are already under strain in in Australia and elsewhere, as recently witnessed in the devastating blackout that hit Spain, Portugal, and parts of France. This raises questions about AI-related electricity demand being met and if so at what cost to domestic supplies and the environment.

Algorithms already haunt our every move. If you have ever gone online to purchase a product, then you are likely to have experienced ads for that product for days after, regardless of whether you bought anything. AI is likely to make that worse.

Who controls AI, what uses it is put to, and whether renewables are used are imperative for the well-being and safety of humanity and its future. It is vital that AI is used for public good; not for private profit, use in warfare or cyber-attacks, the collecting and trading in personal data or abuse of that data. This can only be achieved with public sector control of its development and uses.

Always was, always will be

Marcus Browning

Last year as the country's racist elements turned up the hate by targeting Indigenous Welcome to Country ceremonies, Brendan Kerin from Sydney's Local Aboriginal Land Council, conducted the ceremony at the AFL match between GWS Giants and Brisbane: "A welcome to country is not a ceremony we've invented to cater for white people," he said. "It's a ceremony we've been doing for 250,000 years BC. And the BC stands for Before Cook."

The Communist Party supports the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to communal, inalienable land rights, based upon traditional ownership, religious association, and long occupancy and/or need. Aboriginal land titles should include full rights to minerals and other natural resources on or below ground level as well as to all sacred sites, heritage areas, and areas of traditional significance. This right should extend to the adjacent sea.

The Indigenous people were the prior owners and occupiers of all Australian territories and were deprived of their land and their rights upon the invasion of the Australian continent by English colonisers in 1788.

The forcing of Indigenous people onto reserves and the breaking up of families by the separation of Aboriginal children from their parents, the neglect of health services, education, and job opportunities were and continue to be discriminatory and racist in character.

Little by little, the prior occupancy and ownership by the Indigenous people has been recognised, for example in the High Court's Mabo decision and in the Crocker Island decision which concerned sea rights. Although some land rights have been won after many years of struggle by Indigenous people and their supporters, these rights have often been limited and attempts have been made by governments to wind back legislation which went some distance to recognise their right to land.

Life expectancy for Aboriginal people is 15 to 20 years less than the general population. Infant mortality is three to five times higher. Infectious diseases are 12 times higher than the Australian average. The unemployment rate for the Indigenous population is far higher than the national average, as is their imprisonment rate.

Amendments to the Native Title Act by the former Howard government stripped back the rights of Indigenous people to pursue land claims in order to satisfy the greed of the big and powerful mining, pastoral and tourism industries.

Land rights do not threaten the property or possessions of ordinary Australians, such as individual home owners, nor would land rights stop mining, as the big mining companies and opponents of land rights claim. Land rights are essential to provide jobs and economically viable communities. They would strengthen Aboriginal culture and enrich Australia's cultural heritage.

The Communist Party calls for:

- The conclusion of a treaty between the Australian government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders via an appropriate Aboriginal representative body. The treaty to be concluded after public consultation with both the Aboriginal and non-Indigenous communities and to incorporate recognition of the prior occupation and ownership of the Australian continent before the first white occupation.
- Land rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders together with control of the natural resources of the land and the adjacent sea.
- Land rights to be communal and inalienable, based on traditional ownership, religious association, long occupancy and/or need.
- Indigenous communities to be able to develop communally owned land as autonomous areas where they can develop their own economic, social, and cultural life.
- Land Councils to be supported by legislation and funding to research and determine land claims and, where desired by local communities, to administer Aboriginal land.
- Title to all areas of sacred and traditional significance to be transferred to the local Aboriginal communities or the body of their choice.
- Strict implementation of the steps recommended by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody,
- Necessary funding to assist members of the Stolen Generation of Indigenous people to find their families.
- Study of the history of Aboriginal people to be included in education curriculums.
- Medical services to be expanded with increased and secure funding, in consultation with Indigenous communities.
- Greater funding for Indigenous housing, welfare and employment.

'Never tried to understand working women': Coalition's plan for $1.2 billion cut

The Coalition's long-awaited election costings came very late. One reason why might be that they revealed a $1.2 billion cut to programs aimed at Australia's working women.

Programs that women need to support their employment were due for savage cuts. The plan was to reverse Labor's commitment to pay super on paid parental leave represents a large Coalition hit on working women and their families.

The Coalition's policy would have meant $158 million will no longer flow into the super accounts of working women and their families over the next four years to help build more secure retirements.

The Coalition's costings also contained a $556 million cut to Commonwealth Prac Payments – stripping away cost-of-living support for those studying to become teachers, nurses, midwives, and social workers over the next four years.

Restoring the activity test on childcare would save a Coalition government $420 million over the forward estimates, but make it much harder for women to get enough guaranteed childcare to look for work or increase their hours.

The Coalition's pledge to wipe out free TAFE, taking $431 million out of the education system, would have closed off skilled career pathways for women, particularly in outer suburban and regional areas where women are signing up to courses in large numbers.

The Coalition's other big savings initiative – cutting 41,000 public sector jobs – would have lead to unemployment for many women in public sector jobs well outside of Canberra, such as in Tasmania, the NSW South Coast and the Hunter Valley, and in Cairns in Far North Queensland.

ACTU President Michele O'Neill said "The Coalition has never tried to understand working women or cared about what support families need to be able to run their lives, and to hold down jobs – because if they did, making it harder to get childcare would not be the solution.

"Neither is taking paid super off paid parental leave, as it's still mostly women, who take the hit to their super balances when they have children, and that unfairness must end.

"Cutting super on paid parental leave not only hurts women, it makes no sense if the goal is to lift workplace participation.

"If boosting productivity was the real issue, why would the Coalition drop funding for free TAFE? Thousands of women in outer suburban and regional areas are embracing this initiative and it is wrong to strip it away so the Coalition can spend $5.7 billion on business lunches and tax breaks for millionaires."

ACTU

NSW starts work

You've heard about Stop Work meetings. This is something else.

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) staff have held a 'start work' meeting to stress test the department's 'Workplace Presence' arrangements.

NSW Premier Minns recently issued an edict to his departments to force public servants back to the office. This is despite the fact NSW government departments reduced their office footprints to save money as working from home arrangements went mainstream during COVID.

"Our members accept they are required back in the office at least some of the time," said Public Service Association Acting General Secretary, Troy Wright.

"We have engaged in consultation department by department to shape a fair policy.

"One major concern with the policy as it stands is that our members are going back to the office and finding there isn't a desk for them to sit at.

"We've had members travelling across Sydney in peak hour, adding to traffic congestion, merely to sit in a cafe downstairs on a laptop because there's no room in the office – that serves no one.

"We don't want our members feeling like unwanted house guests, lingering around a party they weren't invited to.

"What we're doing is essentially stress testing the arrangements, departments are telling us there is adequate accommodation for all their staff, we're encouraging our members to attend the office and test whether that's correct.

"And it's not just having a seat and desk, it's the lack of personal lockers, peripheral keyboards, large screens and other productivity enhancing devices.

"Four in five members told us in a recent survey they have a dramatic drop in productivity when they come into the office as they have better equipment and workstation setups at home. Instead they are hot-desking hunched over a tiny laptop screen trying to log onto the WIFI.

"The default arrangement in the TfNSW policy is that staff are to attend the workplace 5 days a week, with ad hoc requests to work from home considered.

"Any other arrangement when it comes to flexibility will be completely up to the discretion of an individual's manager.

"The PSA believes that flexibility to work from home 50 per cent of the time should be enshrined in the policy as a true default arrangement, without it being at the discretion of whoever might be someone's manager that week."

Public Service Association

The struggle against fascism is the common and urgent task of the progressive forces all over the world

Appeal of the II International Anti-Fascist Forum Moscow, 23 April, 2025

We, the participants in the II Anti-Fascist Forum in Moscow, reaffirm and support the Manifesto for the uniting of the world's peoples "Safeguard Humanity Against Fascism" adopted on 22 April 2023 in Minsk by the I International AntiFascist Forum.

The course of events has indicated the proposition that the cause of imperialist aggressiveness in the modern world is the aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism. At the end of the 20th century the counter-revolution in the USSR and in the countries of Eastern Europe temporarily weakened the planet's socialist pole and untied the hands of reaction. Fully in accordance with the Leninist theory of imperialism, the USA and the other capitalist predators are making a bid for world hegemony by the most heinous of methods, including the fostering of neo-Fascist regimes.

In accordance with the Fascist ideology of enslavement of the peoples the imperialist regimes have stained their reputations by barbaric aggressions against Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria, and supported the Israeli Zionists who have unleashed the slaughter in Palestine which has practically developed into a genocide of the Palestinian people.

Threatening a new world war, international imperialism is stoking up tensions in various regions of the world and igniting new conflicts.

NATO countries set the task of demonising Russia, defeating it militarily and dismembering it in the same fashion as they did the Soviet Union. To achieve this goal an aggressive bridgehead was being created in Ukraine. Banderovism, a form of Nazism which has formed the basis of Russophobia and the spread of Fascist ideology, was being nurtured there. By February of 2022 the US-led anti-Russian policy of the NATO military involved nearly 50 satellite countries. The economic, political, and military resources of the world capital, including war mercenaries, were committed to the attack against Russia. Further strengthening of the Neo-Nazi regime in Kiev and pumping it full of weapons must be prevented. The Bandera thugs and their principals in the West must be justly condemned and the Fascist regime in Kiev must be fully liquidated.

Revanchist motives are increasingly evident in the ideology and policy of the Western bloc. They are being instigated by the same forces which suffered a defeat at the hands of the Soviet Union and its Red Army in 1945. Anticommunism is one of the main signs of the resurgence of Fascism in Ukraine, the Baltics and other Western countries. This is totally in line with the practice of Hitler's Fascists who created an Anti-Comintern Pact. Everything that is happening in the European Union is essentially a prelude to the creation of the Fourth Reich.

The peoples of the world must stem any attempts of a Nazi revenge. We demand total renunciaton of all forms of de-communisation in state ideology and policies. The struggle against neo-Nazism is the task of all the thinking, courageous and decent people of the planet. It cannot be put off until later. It must be waged here and now by all available means and by bringing together all possible allies!

On the eve of the 80th anniversary of the Great Victory over Hitler's Nazism and Japanese militarism in the Second World War we declare: a final end to Fascism and the threat of world wars can be put only by putting an end to imperialism. We support without reservations the transformation of the struggle against Fascism into the struggle for the socialist renewal of all the countries on the planet.

The battle against Fascism cannot tolerate pauses and armistices!

Join the ranks of the fighters against Neo-Fascism, for social progress and socialism!

We will not allow the world to be blown up! ¡No pasarán! They shall not pass!

Long live the united front of the progressive forces!

May Day in Cuba

Richard Titelius

May Day in Havana is something special to look forward to as a member of the organised working class, and as a member of a union and a member of the Communist Party.

I remember attending May Day in Cuba in 2009 as part of a large delegation of Australian trade unionists from all Australian states.

On this occasion I would be the only trade unionist formally attending May Day at the invitation of the Cuban Workers' Federation (CTC).

I joined a group of trade unionists from a number of other countries including Canada, South Africa, Italy, and Colombia.

In the early hours of the morning we boarded our bus and made our way to Revolution Square.

There we meet with trade unionists from 39 countries and shared our struggles of the organised workers, a true representation of the international solidarity of the working class, for which May Day is celebrated.

Before 7:00am, the official guests arrived, including the General Secretary of the Cuban Workers Federation, Ulises Guilarte de Nascimento, the President of the Republic of Cuba, Miguel Dias Canel and the Commander of the Armed Forces of Cuba, Raul Castro.

At 7:00am we all stood for the Cuban National anthem. The MC welcomed distinguished guests and working class representatives. Once again we were there to condemn the illegal and unjust US blockade. Once again Cubans showed their desire to be sovereign, free, and proud.

General Secretary of the CTC, Ulises Guilarte began his speech by announcing that Cubans are not scared of threats and will continue to defend what is important to them. The world is threatened by imperialism in the world today and Cuba will continue to maintain its presence in the world during this struggle to resist the effects of imperialism. It will do so through unity and working for peace and justice.

Guilarte continued, "Workers, the fact that the Revolution remains as strong as ever is not a miracle. It is the result of the contributions of every compatriot, and especially the workers, who support the economic transformation and development of the country, focused on meeting the needs of the people."

New coercive measures have been introduced by the United States to try to destabilise the island and to destroy its will to resist. But here in Cuba no one is surrendering.

To great applause, Guilarte affirmed that Cuba joins with the people of Palestine in its fight for survival and to be free.

The theme of the parade this year was that it is the workers who create wealth and opportunity.

There were lots of colourful banners and placards with passionate exhortations of worker struggle and unity.

Workers from industry, agriculture, schools, social and community groups, and men and women's groups, especially the Federation of Cuban Women, joined office and farm workers, military and civilian workers in the parade.

One of the last groups to pass was a group of military personnel who stopped in front of a happy Raul Castro to acknowledge his presence and the history of the nation. His brother Fidel historical leader of the Revolution was also acknowledged on the 25th anniversary of his speech at May Day 2000, "What is Revolution".

More than half a million people sang the Internationale and then slowly left into the warm and partly cloudy morning, with the knowledge that they had contributed to and were part of a special celebration to make the world a better place for all. Across Cuba 5.3 million people had joined in the celebration of May Day.

Letters to the Editor
The Guardian
74 Buckingham Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

email: editor@cpa.org.au

Letter from Longman

Dear Comrade Editor,
The Labor victory on 3 May 2025 will be long remembered as one of the greatest sweeps to power since Gough Whitlam's victory in 1972. In 2007 I was amongst the crowd at Trades Hall in Melbourne when John Howard lost his seat in Bennelong. Comrades cheered, as street theatre was performed to celebrate victory. Now Labor has torn down the battlements to seize long held LNP seats, including Peter Dutton's seat of Dickson, which covers a rural area.

Labor had a great victory in Queensland, including my electoral district of Longman, which lies on the outskirts of Brisbane, covering Caboolture, Burpengary, Narangba, and rural areas. A 3 per cent swing to Labor saw Rhiannyn Douglas narrowly defeat the LNP, receiving 36 per cent of the vote. Greens received 9.6 per cent.

Queensland has long been known as a conservative LNP state, following the wilderness years of Joh Bjelke Peterson's Country Party, which allowed unfettered mining, prospecting for oil on the Great Barrier Reef, and strike breaking.

I went to the electoral booth in the morning. There were a large number of ALP posters on walls and the happy people handed out how to vote cards. There was a positive shine that something was about to change. In comparison the LNP people looked dour, already defeated. I was told that large crowds had been voting since opening. Even in cafés and shops people were positive.

Over the past three weeks there had been plenty of fliers from the LNP in my letter box. Watching TV shows I was constantly barraged with Advance Australia's Trump style campaign ads viciously attacking the Greens, bringing up cases of sexual assault without permission. In the end the ALP had a great win in Qld, including in rural areas. There is an air of optimism that had been missing for years. The Sunshine State now has something to shine about.

Graham Holton

Waste Wars

Dirty Deals, International Rivalries and the Scandalous Afterlife of Rubbish

by Alexander Clapp

Sue Turner

It has always been thus; dangerous, filthy and smelly trades have been conducted downwind or out of sight of more salubrious neighbourhoods – dyeworks, tanneries and slaughterhouses spring to mind.

Today waste management fits into this list. Instead of "salubrious neighbourhoods" read affluent nations of the global north and for "downwind and out of sight" read countries of the global South.

With the increasing use of plastics after WW2, waste disposal has become a trillion-dollar industry involving billions of tons of rubbish which is dumped both legally and illegally on developing countries, creating devastated landscapes, polluted waterways and stunted, ruined lives.

Raw materials such as gold, copper, and lithium are extracted from developing countries to be manufactured into high-tech goods in rich nations, and when these goods become obsolete they are returned to poorer countries for the usable materials to be extracted again for resale, while any plastic components are dumped or burnt in the open.

Countries that believed they had freed themselves from colonialism have become rubbish bins for northern over-consumerism. The Netherlands, once Indonesia's colonial master, is now its greatest supplier of plastic waste. In 2000 California decreed that in order to maintain its environmental credentials 50 per cent of its discarded plastic must leave the state making it one of the world's leading international exporters of rubbish.

Of the world's 50 largest dumpsites, 48 are in developing nations.

In his 1988 address to the UN Robert Mugabe said: "Africa has enough problems of her own without becoming the garbage bin of the wealthy northern nations. It is unfair that the poorest nations should ... suffer the worst effects of a program they do not share."

How the world has arrived in this situation which Clapp calls "garbage imperialism" is the subject of this book, and the result of two years' global research.

He charts the rise of consumerism and the use of plastics by referring to Vance Packard's famous book *The Hidden Persuaders* (IG Publishing, 2007) and the lesser-known *The Waste Makers* (IG Publishing, 2011) which argues that US citizens were being encouraged to overconsume, and particularly products with built-in obsolescence, leading to a throwaway society which today has 1.5 billion plastic cups and 220 million aluminium cans discarded daily worldwide.

Every minute one million plastic bottles are thrown away and one refuse truck full of plastic enters the sea.

Clapp moves along at pace explaining how and why rubbish began to be exported for processing, emphasising the lack of adherence to national and international laws.

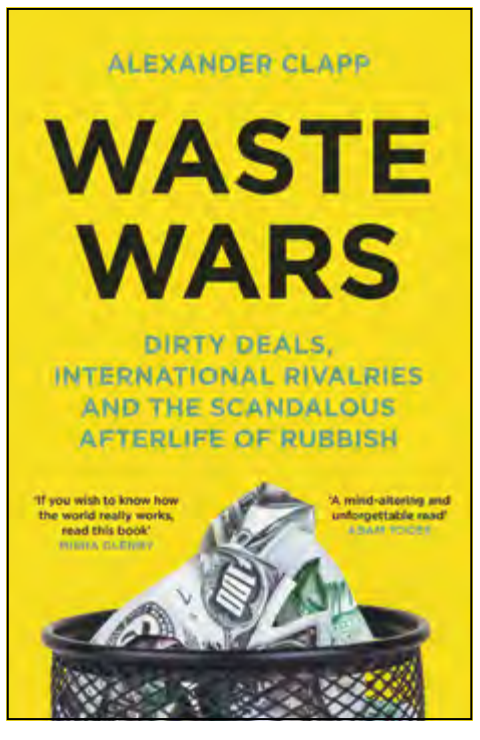
He writes that due to improved environmental laws in the US in the 1980s, the price of burying a ton of asbestos rose from $15 to $250, while the cost of disposal in some African states could be $3. Some local elites in developing countries were bribed to accept toxic waste with promises of schools, weapons, or a stake in the waste operations although these promises often failed to materialise.

The European Anti-Fraud Office estimates that illegal waste trafficking is more lucrative than the trafficking of humans. Many operators are moving from the drugs or weapons trade into international waste disposal as the risks are lower and the financial rewards are greater.

Clapp balances his analysis of the processes and problems with description of the daily working lives and living conditions of the labourers. Many have left agricultural villages to seek a better living only to find themselves in unregulated work conditions, and falling prey to cancers and respiratory diseases.

Some of Clapp's most harrowing writing is found in his description of the dangerous, back-breaking work in the ship-breaking yards of Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India. Equally shocking is his exposé of the handling of plastics in Java which are used as fuel in tofu factories: one room family businesses which can't burn the plastic at high enough temperatures to eliminate the toxins which end up baked into the tofu. Clapp has produced a thoughtful, engaging book which has all the elements of investigative journalism – a fascinating if troubling read.

Morning Star



Niemöller time

Martin Niemöller was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian born in Lippstadt, Germany, in 1892. He was an anti-communist and supported Adolf Hitler's rise to power. When Hitler rose to power and insisted on the supremacy of the state over religion, Niemöller became disillusioned. He became the leader of a group of German clergymen opposed to Hitler.

In 1937 he was arrested and eventually confined in Sachsenhausen and Dachau. He was released in 1945 by the Allies. He continued his career in Germany as a cleric and as a leading voice of penance and reconciliation for the German people after World War II. With the rise of far right groups forces now, the following poem by Niemöller is relevant. It speaks to the dangers of placidly accepting discrimination and targeting of minorities.

First they came for the communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Communist

Then they came for the Socialists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Socialist

Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist

Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew

Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me.

Something to say?
Write to the Editor!
editor@cpa.org.au

Solutions to Palm Sunday Crossword

Guardian 5 May 2025 #2143

Across

2 **Sheep** – This animal and its industry caused one of Australia's earliest and most important industrial disputes in 1891

4 **Waterfront** – In 1928 Adelaide's most violent industrial dispute broke out in this industry

7 **Launceston** – Tasmanian non-capital city where the first union meeting was held

8 **Weils** – Name of disease that infected Queensland Cane cutters, causing multiple strikes

9 **Pilbara** – Site of major industrial strike in WA's mining sector during the 1940s led by First Nations pastoral workers

10 **Union shop** – Company only hires union members

Down

1 **White collar** – Term used to describe office/administrative jobs

3 **Stonemasons** – Profession that had a strike in 1856 in Melbourne

5 **Dray** – Vehicle carrying banners during early 20th-century marches

6 **WeeWaa** – Name of regional town in NSW, where in 1973 Indigenous cotton workers went on strike causing mass hysteria

Leg glance

Cricket can be played over five days or one hour

Vijay Prashad

The Indian Premier League (IPL) can be exasperating. The quiet diligence of test cricket, and even the relative soberness of the one-day games, are overcome by the sound and light, the drama of the high-stakes game. All the fireworks made sense on 28 April 2025, however, when Vaibhav Suryavanshi (only fourteen years old) and Yashasvi Jaiswal came to the crease for the Rajasthan Royals to chase the decent 209 total by the Gujarat Titans. Over their twenty overs, the Titans were led by Shubman Gill – one of India's most solid opening batsmen – who made 84 runs in 50 balls. Suryavanshi was unrelenting. He played every ball, regardless of where it was pitched and how fast it came to him. In an astounding thirty-five balls, this young boy scored a century. Ninety-four of his runs came from boundaries (eleven 6s and seven 4s). This was just his third IPL match.

Showing that he is after all a young boy and that cricket can be a game of chance, Suryavanshi went for a duck in his fourth outing, this time against the Mumbai Indians. If you try to go for a big hit every ball, as the IPL insists, there is a strong chance that even a poor ball can get you out; Suryavanshi chased a wide delivery from Deepak Chahar, which went straight to Will Jacks at mid-on. This says nothing about the abilities of Suryavanshi, a talent that will blossom in the years ahead.

The word 'temperament' is closely associated with test cricket. The only other game that runs beyond a few hours, over the course of days, is chess when it is played at the very highest level. No other game goes beyond a day, and certainly not for five days. In the 1800s, the only limit to a cricket match was that each side of eleven players would get two innings to bat, and if these innings went on and on, the game stretched on. These were called 'timeless tests.' In the 1870s, the English and Australian clubs decided on a new set of rules: a five-day test, which would result in either a victory or a draw. The first official test was played between Australia and England in 1877 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). It resulted in a victory for Australia. South Africa played England in 1889 to be the third test playing nation, and then the league was joined by the West Indies (1928), New Zealand (1930), and India (1932) – before World War 2.

The mystery of the test match is that it is not merely about using one's skills with bat and ball, but it is about the strategy and tactics of the team against their opponents and about how best to understand and utilise the pitch in the weather conditions for the five days. There is now such a deep science to all this at the highest level, with teams packed with people who have developed deep knowledge about the geography and history of the venue and of the other players. The team's advisors watch videos of their adversaries as well as videos of how the pitch in a certain venue behaves to know what to do when against whom. The test is not just a five-day match, but an unfolding of the knowledge of two teams about each other and their weaknesses.

If a player has a habit of trying to flick a ball that seems to be going down the leg side, then it is a good idea to put in place either a leg slip or a short fine leg and for the bowler to pitch the ball a little more than usual with a line just outside the leg stump. Temptations against weakness are what break the concentration of players and slip them into traps. The mature player, like Suryavanshi, knows their own weaknesses, knows the strengths of the bowlers coming at them, understands the field that has been set for them, and plays the long game to amass a large score in hours rather than in seconds. In a test, Suryavanshi would know to leave that ball going down the leg side, while in a IPL match, he would likely take a step back, expose his stumps, and hammer the ball over between Extra Cover and Point for a boundary. There is as much joy during a cricket match to watch a smart bat leave a ball that would have got them into trouble as it is to watch them smash the ball beyond the boundary.

The pressure against old cricket began in the period after World War II. It required leisure to be able to sit at a field and watch a five-day game. And it was not attractive for the advertisers or the television companies to run such a long game on their channels (when there were only one or two channels, it was impossible to surrender the airwaves to cricket alone – although in 1938, the BBC ran parts of an Australia versus England test match from Lord's). So, the English succumbed to the pressure and set up a Gillette Cup in 1963 as a domestic tournament that was sponsored by the US multinational Gillette. Each side batted for 65 overs, and the game was broadcast on television. This inspired the first One-Day International in 1971 between Australia and England, which was a strange forty overs (of eight balls and over) for each side. Four years later, the World Cup was held in England, with sixty overs per side (six balls per over). Clive Lloyd led the West Indies from the front with a century in 85 balls, while Viv Richards – who didn't do much with the bat – was scintillating in the field, effecting three crucial run outs. Two years later, both Lloyd and Richards – childhood heroes of mine – walked out of the official cricket circuit to join the Australian Kerry Packer's World Series Cricket (WSC) circus. No more white clothes, no more red balls, the entry of night games under the lights to attract audiences after work, the remarkable multiple cameras catching the ball on its journey across the field: rapid changes to the game driven first by commercialism but in fact also providing new tests for players to play faster and play with abandon. Without the WSC there would be no IPL.

The debate between tests and T20s is tiresome. There is no contradiction between the many forms of cricket. Each brings something fascinating to a fascinating game. A good player will learn to deal with each format differently, play to the format rather than just to their skill set. So many of the younger players, such as Vijay Zol and Suryavanshi, already know how to play in a range of formats. Most of them grew up like us, playing a ten over a side match on a side street with a tape ball and a lack of concern for either the big hit or the big score. Our cricket was a game of flicks and angles, the wrist work that trains the bat to annoy the bowler whether the game lasts only two hours or five days. ✪

Vaibhav Suryavanshi. Photo: cricinfo – facebook

The Test is not just a five-day match, but an unfolding of the knowledge of two teams about each other and their weaknesses

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Escape from a world of debt?

Vijay Prashad

In the past two decades, the external debt of developing countries has quadrupled to USD 11.4 trillion (2023). It is important to understand that this money owed to foreign creditors is equivalent to 99 per cent of the export earnings of the developing countries. This means that almost every dollar earned by the export of goods and services is a dollar owed to a foreign bank or bond holder. Countries of the Global South, therefore, are merely selling their goods and services to pay off debts incurred for development projects, collapsed commodity prices, public deficits, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the inflation due to the Ukraine war. Half the world's population lives in countries that allocate more of their budget to pay off the interest on debt than to pay for either education or health services. Of fifty-four African countries, thirty-four spend more on debt servicing than on public healthcare. Debt looms over the Global South like a vulture.

Why are countries in debt? Most countries are in debt for a few reasons:

- When they gained independence about a century ago, they were left impoverished by their former colonial rulers.
- They borrowed money for development projects from their former colonial rulers at high rates, making repayment impossible since the funds were used for public projects like bridges, schools, and hospitals.
- Unequal terms of trade (export of low-priced raw materials for import of high-priced finished products) further exacerbated their weak financial situation.
- Ruthless policies by multilateral organizations (such as the International Monetary Fund – IMF) forced these countries to cut public spending for both consumption and investment and instead repay foreign debt. This set in motion a cycle of low growth rates, impoverishment, and indebtedness.

Caught in the web of debt-austerity-low growth-external borrowing-debt, countries of the Global South almost entirely abandoned long-term development for short-term survival. Typically, the following methods were promoted in place of a development theory:

1. **Debt relief and debt restructuring.** Seeking a reduction in the debt burden and a more sustainable management of long-term debt payments.
2. **An appeal for foreign direct investment (FDI) and an attempt to boost exports.** Increasing the ability of countries to earn income to pay off this debt, but without any real change to productive capacity.
3. **Cuts to public spending.** Shifting the fiscal landscape so that a country can use more of its social wealth to pay off its foreign bond holders and earn 'confidence' in the international market at the expense of the lives and well-being of its citizens.
4. **Tax reforms that benefit the wealthy and labor market reforms that hurt workers.** Tax cuts to encourage the wealthy to invest in their society – which very rarely happens – and a change in trade union laws to allow greater exploitation of labor to increase capital for investment.
5. **Institutional reform to ensure less corruption by greater international control of financial systems.** To open the budgetary process of a country to international management (through the IMF) and allow foreign economists to control fiscal decision-making.

These approaches provided no assessment of the underlying problems that produced debt, nor did they offer a pathway out of debt dependency.

If this is the best approach available, then developing countries need a new development theory.

A NEW DEVELOPMENT THEORY

The entry of FDI and the export of low-priced commodities do not by themselves increase the gross domestic product (GDP) of a developing country. Indeed, FDI – in an age of financial liberalisation and without capital control – can create enormous problems for a poor country since the money can operate to destabilise the economy. The latter requires long-term investments rather than hot-money transactions.

Research shows that it is not FDI that increases GDP over long periods, but that there is a high correlation between an increase in net fixed capital investment and GDP growth (net fixed capital investment is the increased spending on capital stock above depreciation). In other words, if a country invests money to increase its capital stock, it will see a secular rise in its growth rate. That is the reason why countries such as China, Vietnam, India, and Indonesia have sustained high growth rates in a period when most countries (illustratively in the Global North) have had low to negative growth rates (particularly when considering rising inflation). Even the World Bank agrees that the exit from the 'middle-income trap' is to increase investment, infuse technologies from abroad, and innovate technologies internally (they call it the '3i method'). At the heart of the project must be an increase in net fixed capital investment.

As GDP grows, life expectancy rises as well. There are many elements here that require investigation: for instance, if the quality of GDP growth improves (more industry, better social spending), what does this do for social outcomes? To talk about the quality of GDP is to raise issues of allocation of social wealth into specific sectors, which brings up the importance of both robust economic planning and proper fiscal policy that is not motivated by paying off foreign bondholders but by building the net fixed capital in a country over the long-term.

But how does one get the finance to both service debts and build capital stock? That is not an impossibility since most developing countries are rich in resources and solely need to build the power to marshal those resources. The answers might be found less in the laws of economics than in the unequal relations of power in the world. With the churning of the global order, there might now be an opportunity to create new financial strategies for development.

The basis of a conversation about development theory should not be how to sustain an economy in a permanent debt spiral that leads to deindustrialisation and despair. It should instead be about how to break that cycle and enter a period of industrialisation, agrarian reform, growth, and social progress. It is this insight that motivates us to begin a fresh conversation, not about the need for this or that economic policy to salvage a bad situation, but for a new development theory altogether.

People's Dispatch (edited for space)

Graphic: www.ccPixs.com – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

Battleship Potemkin at 100

Graham Holton

This year marks the centenary of one of the greatest films of the 20th century, Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*. This great Soviet silent film influenced Hollywood and European film making, and is still being used in cinema courses today on how to construct films. It is film as great art. No one who has seen the film can forget the famous massacre on the Odessa Steps scene, with the baby in the pram rolling down the steps. 'Potemkin' is so powerful in its jolting images and Communist messages that it was banned in the UK from 1926 to 1954, fearing it would start a workers' uprising.

The Soviet government ordered the movie, produced by Mosfilm, to mark the 20th anniversary of the 1905 Potemkin uprising, which Lenin had seen as proof that troops would join a proletariat revolution. Eisenstein believed that political revolution demanded a revolutionary aesthetics and cinema.

The film begins with the battleship cruising the Black Sea when the crew rebel against its officers. It then shows Czarist troops marching down the long flight of the Odessa steps, firing on citizens fleeing before them, killing a countless number. News of the uprising reaches the Russian fleet, which speeds toward Odessa to put the rebellion down. The sailors of the *Potemkin* take the battleship out from the port of Odessa to face the fleet of the Tsar, flying the red flag along with the signal "Join us." No shots were fired.

Eisenstein was an advocate of Soviet theories of film montage, something we're used to now, in which scenes are juxtaposed to build tension and pace through rapidly showing different images, from different camera angles and viewpoints, thereby creating suspense. The fear-filled faces of unarmed citizens are seen with the faceless troops in uniform, marching down the steps. A military boot crushes a child's hand as a woman is shot, a bullet entering her glasses, to enhance the feeling of the helplessness of the crowd.

The film had a great impact on various art forms. The original musical score, composed by Edmund Meisel, has influenced diverse musicians from the Pet Shop Boys to Michael Nyman. The arrangement of the Soviet composer, Dmitri Shostakovich, underlines the shocking violence displayed on the screen. The British artist Francis Bacon developed the motif of screaming in agony and terror into the "Study for the Nurse in the Film Battleship Potemkin" in 1957. The posters for *Battleship Potemkin* created by Aleksandr Rodchenko in 1925, were masterpieces of Soviet constructivist art.

Battleship Potemkin was voted "the greatest film of all time" by an international panel of critics in Brussels in 1958. Pauline Kael wrote that no other film has ever created such graphic strength in its images, using "psychological stimulation" through montage.

On seeing the film for the first time, and remembering how primitive film technology was in 1925, the modern audience is staggered by the impact of this film, black and white and silent though it is. A true masterpiece, well worth watching, Potemkin is available online.

‘Heroic resistance’ of Chinese people in anti-fascist war

Liu Ming and Luo Run

The sufferings endured by the Chinese people and the heroic resistance they demonstrated during the anti-fascist war deserve to be remembered, and must be told to the world, José Luis Centella, president of the Communist Party of Spain, has told the *Global Times*.

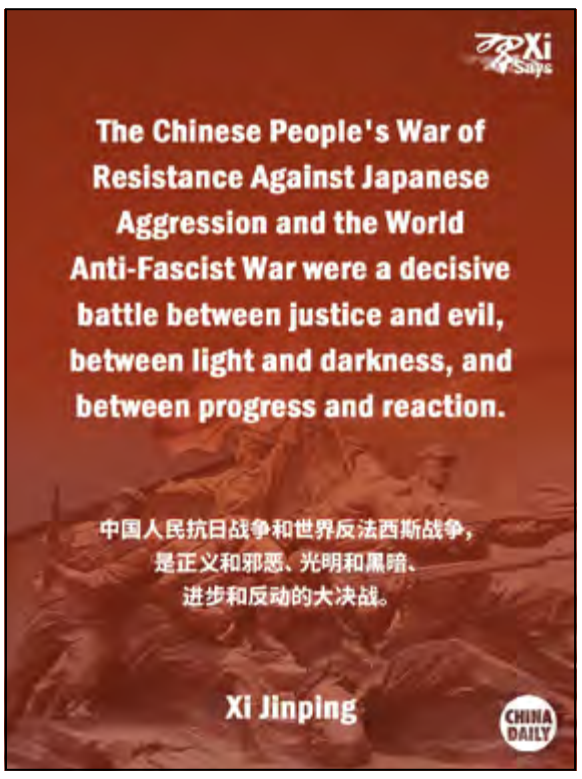
2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People’s War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. As an important force in the global anti-fascist fight, China’s history of resistance should be remembered accurately and authentically, said Centella.

“In this war, numerous Chinese people were brutally killed in bloody tragedies like the Nanjing Massacre,” Centella said. “... it is heartbreaking that many Europeans are unfamiliar with this history, and even far-right fascists attempt to distort or erase it.”

Centella called for the further implementation of relevant resolutions, such as “condemnation of the glorification of fascism,” on international platforms like the United Nations, firmly exposing the barbaric actions of fascism. “We must not forget that, fascism is the greatest enemy of peace,” he told the *Global Times*.

Centella suggested that the Spanish and Chinese governments collaborate to delve deeper into the history of the anti-fascist war by organising events including youth forums, enabling the younger generation to remember this important history. He believes that only by remembering can people remain vigilant, as “the tragedy of fascism may reoccur at any time.”

Global Times (edited for space)



Pope Francis and the Mothers

Graham Holton

In 1998, Father Jorge Mario Bergoglio was made archbishop of Buenos Aires. Three years later he became a cardinal. In 2013 Bergoglio was elected pope, raising questions for some about what the new Pope Francis had done as a priest during Argentina’s violent military dictatorship. Allegations quickly emerged that he withdrew protection from two fellow Jesuits, resulting in their arrest and torture. Bergoglio was then head of the Society of Jesus in Argentina. The Vatican swiftly denied the claims. In court, Bergoglio said under oath that he did not learn of the atrocities until 1985.

That’s an extraordinary claim as the torture and ‘disappearance’ of thousands was public knowledge in Argentina at the time. Argentina’s bishops later issued an apology for the Church failing to protect the public during the Junta.

In 1977 the husband, brother, pregnant sister, and brother-in-law of Estela de la Cuadra disappeared. For de la Cuadra the election of Cardinal Bergoglio as Pope, was “awful, a barbarity.” On 30 March 1977 the “Madres de Plaza de Mayo” (Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo) began when fourteen courageous women publicly defied the military government, facing violence and arrest as they demonstrated in the iconic Plaza de Mayo public square in Buenos Aires. Three of the leaders of the group, two French nuns, and seven young helpers, were abducted and loaded on to aircraft, then thrown alive into the icy waters of the South Atlantic. Other young women were murdered shortly after giving birth, their babies handed over to be raised by military couples as their own.

The annual protests mark the disappearance of children during the Dirty War (1976-1983) under the Junta, in which over 30,000 people were “disappeared” by the military. These activists are still trying to trace the hundreds of babies that were snatched from political prisoners. The leader of the movement met with Pope Francis in 2013 and handed him a letter asking for the church archives to be opened to find out where some of the children were.

In 2005 *The Silence*, by journalist Horacio Verbitsky, claimed Bergoglio had turned in the priests.

In 2013 the Argentine judiciary issued a ruling that the Church was complicit in the abuses, and that the Church was still refusing to investigate those responsible. Gabriel Pasquini, editor of *El Puercoespín*, wrote of Bergoglio: “Never in the years he headed the Catholic Church in Argentina did he acknowledge its complicity in the dictatorship, much less ask for forgiveness.”

On 1 May 2018 Pope Francis sent an audio message marking the 41st anniversary of the “Madres de Plaza de Mayo.” It was broadcast on *Ahora y Siempre* (Now and Forever), Radio Caput in Buenos Aires. “They are fighters,” the Pope said, who have “fought for justice and they have taught us the way forward.” The greeting was addressed to Ana María Careaga, daughter of the foundress of the association, Esther Ballestrino de Careaga, who was kidnapped by the police in 1977.

Today the mothers still march trying to find what happened to the stolen children.

3CR RADICAL RADIO

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Global Briefs

MEXICO: Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum rejected US President Trump’s proposals to send US troops to Mexico to help her administration fight drug trafficking. Speaking at a recent university event she explained her refusal. “And you know what I told him? No, President Trump, the territory is sacrosanct, sovereignty is sacrosanct, sovereignty is not for sale, sovereignty is lived and defended.” The Mexican President also pointed out that while the two countries can collaborate, “we will never accept the presence of the United States military in our territory.”

UN: The United Nations special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories Francesca Albanese said that European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and other top EU officials should face prosecution for complicity in war crimes committed during Israel’s war on Gaza. “They will have to understand that immunity cannot equate with impunity,” Ms Albanese said. “I am not someone who says ‘History will judge them’ – they will have to be judged before then.” A complaint was filed at the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Ursula von der Leyen for complicity in war crimes in Gaza, as critics accuse top EU officials, including foreign affairs chief, Kaja Kallas, of supporting Israel’s actions despite international legal obligations to prevent genocide.

ROMANIA: George Simion has topped the first round of Romania’s presidential election re-run. Simion, who leads the Alliance for the Union of Romanians, will face off against the mayor of Bucharest, Nicusor Dan, in a 18 May run-off. With 99 per cent of the votes counted, Simion had 40.5 per cent of the vote, compared to Dan’s 20.9 per cent. Simion opposes military aid to neighbouring Ukraine, is critical of the European Union leadership and says he is aligned with United States President Donald Trump’s “Make America Great Again” movement. The Constitutional Court earlier nullified the result of the last election won by NATO critic Cailin Georgescu, who was also banned from contesting last Sunday’s re-run.

ISRAEL: Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu was forced to abandon a planned visit to Azerbaijan after Türkiye refused to allow his plane to enter its air space. Netanyahu was supposed to travel to Baku for talks with President Ilham Aliyev. However, his office said that the visit had been cancelled due to a “tight political and security schedule” and developments in Gaza and Syria.

SINGAPORE: Singapore’s ruling People’s Action Party (PAP) won another landslide in last week’s general elections, extending its 66-year unbroken rule in a huge boost for Prime Minister Lawrence Wong. The Election Department announced the PAP won 82 Parliamentary seats. The Party had earlier won five seats uncontested, giving it 87 out of a total of 97 seats. The opposition Workers Party maintained its 10 seats.

TÜRKİYE: Ozgur Ozel, the leader of Türkiye’s main opposition party, the Republican People’s Party, was attacked as he left the Ataturk Cultural Centre in Istanbul. He was attending a memorial for Sirri Sureyya Ouder, a pro-Kurdish politician. The attacker was detained, according to the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office. Ozel was not harmed.

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CPA greeting on the 60th anniversary of JVP

Anura Kumara Dissanayake
President of Sri Lanka
People's Liberation Front, JVP

Dear comrade,

The Communist Party of Australia conveys its warmest greetings to the JVP leadership and its membership on the 60th anniversary of foundation of the People's Liberation Front, JVP.

It has been a historical development since its formation as a movement to today as the governing party in Sri Lanka.

We had the opportunity of meeting you during your tour in Australia hosted by the NPP Australia. The CPA was honoured to work with the NPP in several states in Australia attending several events and getting to know the Sri Lankan community in our country.

The work of the JVP in developing a mass movement that was supported by the Sri Lankan people during the presidential and parliamentary elections is a lesson for many on how to build support from the bottom up among the working people.

The achievements of today are a tribute to the memory of those who fought hard for social change. Many of those activists made the ultimate sacrifice for a brighter future in Sri Lanka and its people.

We congratulate you on the 60th anniversary of the JVP and wish your hard work translate in the social transformation for a better society for all the Sri Lankan people.

In peace and socialism,

Vinnie Molina

International Department
Communist Party of Australia

20th April 2025

World Federation of Trade Unions marks May Day

On the occasion of the 136th International Workers' Day, or May Day, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) – representing over 105 million workers – issued a statement honouring the historic struggles of the working class and condemning the escalation of militarism, austerity, and exploitation faced by workers worldwide.

The WFTU celebrated its 80th anniversary this year. Founded in the aftermath of World War II to unite the international trade union movement against fascism and war, the federation once again reaffirmed its commitment to class struggle unionism, anti-fascism, peace, and the fight for workers' democratic rights.

The WFTU's statement paid tribute to the 1886 Chicago Haymarket martyrs whose fight for the eight-hour workday laid the foundation for International Workers' Day – established in 1889 to commemorate the struggle and to build international working class solidarity.

"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 federation said.

The statement highlighted the deepening crisis of capitalism, marked by growing social inequality, repression of labour and democratic rights, and the diversion of public resources towards militarisation instead of workers' needs.

"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 WFTU also condemned the ongoing genocide in Palestine, bombings in Lebanon, and broader imperialist aggression in the Middle East that is destabilising the region. It condemned the staggering US $2.46 trillion in international military spending, including NATO's push for increased defense budgets and the EU's €800 billion so-called "ReArm Europe" project.

"War economies serve only the profits of monopolies and imperialist powers," the statement declared. "Workers and oppressed peoples bear the cost – through austerity, poverty, and repression."

The WFTU called for a reallocation of resources from war to social needs – including adequate wages to combat inflation and rising living costs, public healthcare and education, safe and stable jobs, and trade union freedoms. For May Day, the federation called on trade unions and workers to rally under the following slogans:

- "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!

People's World

Italy marks 80 years since liberation

Many European countries have marked the 80th anniversary of liberation from Nazi-fascist occupation. Italy was among the first, with dozens of events organised for 25 April – Liberation Day – despite ongoing attempts by the Meloni government and right-wing forces to rewrite or erase the memory of the Resistance.

For most grassroots groups, this year's events aim to locate the values that inspired partisan fighters in the 1940s into today's context, marked by an aggressive rearmament agenda, support for Israel's genocide in Gaza, and domestic repression of civil rights.

"80 years ago, our grandparents freed us from the grip of fascism. But remembering the past is not enough, especially not in the stale, institutional way the Democratic Party and centre-left do," Giuliano Granato of Potere al Popolo said during the demonstration in Naples.

Along similar lines, the Unione Sindacale di Base (USB) stated that 25 April should not be reduced to a mere ritual or commemoration. "It should actualise the values and ideals of the partisan Resistance, which freed, perhaps not once and for all, this country from the barbarity of war and Nazi-fascism and provided an inescapable push toward better democratic, working, and living conditions for the people of this country," the trade union declared in its call to action.

Peoplesdispatch.org (edited for reasons of space)

‘Lives will be lost,’ US cuts risk malaria resurgence

Pacific Friends of Global Health

On this year’s World Malaria Day, 25 April Pacific Friends of Global Health and the Australian Global Health Alliance have raised the alarm over the potential for a resurgence of malaria throughout the Indo-Pacific region as a result of the US government’s decision to cut around 90 per cent of funding for global public health programs.

A new report, *Red Alert: Malaria risks to the Indo-Pacific following US aid funding cuts*, outlines the success of US and Australian investment in programs to tackle malaria throughout the Indo-Pacific since 2002. This investment has seen incidence rates across the region fall from 18 per 1,000 people in 2000 to less than 5 per 1,000 people in 2020, and has brought elimination within reach for several countries, including Timor-Leste and the Philippines.

The sudden withdrawal of US funding for malaria control threatens to reverse this progress, and could lead to cases of the disease surging throughout the region, Pacific Friends of Global Health warns.

“Malaria-control programs in the Indo-Pacific have helped ‘flatten the curve’ of incidence rates since 2002; however, constant effort and investment is needed to sustain this progress and keep case numbers down,” says Professor Brendan Crabb AC, chair of Pacific Friends of Global Health.

“If control efforts are relaxed due to funding cuts by the US, malaria cases will surge, lives will be lost, and illness will be widespread.”

“Malaria is not just a health issue – it’s an economic and security issue for the Indo-Pacific. A resurgence would have numerous flow-on effects for Australia, including disrupted trade and tourism and increased regional instability.”

As a result of the US aid cuts, the World Health Organization (WHO) has already reported severe disruptions to its malaria programs globally. If these disruptions continue, the WHO predicts an additional 15 million malaria cases and 107,000 deaths this year alone. Modelling is currently underway to establish the likely number of additional malaria cases and deaths in the Indo-Pacific region if the shortfall from US funding cuts is not met by increased support from Australia and other donors.

“Australia has long been a leader in malaria elimination efforts. Now, with the US stepping back, we have a critical choice: either step up our efforts or risk seeing the disease spiral out of control,” Prof Crabb says.

“It’s crucial that Australia works with other international partners, such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, and commit to pledging $351 million to the Global Fund during the 8th replenishment to fill funding gaps so that malaria-control programs can be sustained. This is the only way to prevent a resurgence of the disease throughout the region and reduce the likelihood of a malaria outbreak in Australia.”

Filipino journalist Juan ‘Johnny’ Dayang shot dead

On the cusp of World Press Freedom Day it emerged that veteran Filipino journalist Juan “Johnny” Dayang has been murdered.

The International Federation of Journalists and the National Union of Journalists Philippines (NUJP) have strongly condemned his killing and urged the authorities to ensure an urgent, impartial and transparent investigation.

Dayang, the long-term publisher of the *Philippines Graphic Magazine*, was shot dead at his home in Kalibo, in Aklan province, on April 29.

According to his housekeeper, Dayang was watching a news programme when a masked gunman fired three shots from outside his home through the living room window.

Dayang had reportedly contacted police recently about seeing suspicious individuals circling his house.

The Philippines National Police described his murder as a “senseless killing”.

Dayang was a champion of media freedom, chairman emeritus of the Aklan Press Club and a former president of the Publishers Association of the Philippines Inc and Manila Overseas Press Club. He was also the Mayor of Kalibo from 1986 to 1987 following the 1986 Edsa revolt and People’s Power revolution.

Dayang’s death marks the first journalist killing in the Philippines this year. He is the sixth journalist to be killed since Ferdinand Marcos Jr. took office in June 2022.

The NUJP said:

“The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines joins the media community in condemning the killing of veteran journalist Juan ‘Johnny’ Dayang. We appreciate the swift action of the Presidential Task Force on Media Security on this matter and join the community on calling for a thorough investigation and resolution of this killing, which happened as we are about to mark World Press Freedom Day.”

The IFJ said:

“The IFJ strongly condemns the killing of journalist Juan ‘Johnny’ Dayang. This is a heinous crime and authorities and the Marcos government must do more to ensure the safety of Filipino media workers across the country.”

NUJP

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Friend

In the hands of Donald Trump, pretty much any word can be weaselly, also meaningless. The US President has called Anthony Albanese “A friend of mine.” We all know what friends are, but it’s unclear if Trump does. What “a friend of mine” means here is that someone asked Trump about Albanese, and ‘The Donald’ made noises in response.

Amazing

Like ‘awesome’ and ‘excellent,’ ‘amazing’ has had a journey from meaning something extraordinary to just ‘good’ or ‘okay.’ Former Opposition Leader Peter Dutton (now working from home if he can find a job), has said of the Liberal Party that “We have an amazing party.” It’s kind of amazing that an outfit that promises to serve the rich better than Labor can do so badly in an election here, but that’s probably not what Dutton meant. He added “we will rebuild,” begging the question of why, if it’s so amazing, the Liberal party needs changing.

Pedigree

We know that this word can refer to dogs and people, and that it can be metaphorical, but it’s still funny to read that Michaelia Cash, wrong as ever, has praised WA MP Andrew Hastie for his “great pedigree.” This isn’t a way of telling us that Andrew Hastie has a nice cold nose, a shiny coat, and sits when he’s told to. No, what she means is that Hastie was once in the SAS. Cash didn’t clarify whether Hastie is a good boy or a very good boy.

Opportunistic

John Kehoe, at the *Australian Financial Review* says that Labor “opportunistically exploited” the Coalition’s plan to stop public servants working from home as “anti-women.” Weasellishly, Kehoe implies without spelling it out, that Labor invented the anti-women effect of the policy.

The Liberals wanted to implement a policy which would disproportionately affect women. When that policy was called out as anti-women, Dutton said women could just job-share (ie settle for half the work and half the pay).

Yes, Labor saw an opportunity, but – this paper doesn’t say this very often – it looks like they got it right.

(not) the time

Weaselly because ‘now is not the time’ suggests that there will be a time when it’s okay to talk about the topic – but there never is. None of the people who spring up during bushfires to insist that “now is not the time” to mention climate change have a time in mind when it would be fine. Likewise in the US, the serious people who say that a massacre of children is ‘not the time’ to talk about gun control never tell us when would be ‘the time.’

If there is a better time to dance on Peter Dutton’s (political) grave than just after he’s lost his seat and a general election after failing to sell some awful policies, we’d love to hear about it.

The (left) media

Mining magnate and inherited wealth fan Gina Rinehart is Australia’s richest person. That’s why her opinions get aired and yours don’t; it’s that kind of democracy here. Rinehart has thought deeply about the Coalition’s history-making loss and decided that insufficient Trumpiness is to blame. Not everybody sees it that way, but according to Gina, that’s down to “the left media” (boo), and not the fault of those annoying non-billionaire voters.

Gaza humanitarian aid ship attacked by drones

C Bartholomew

On Friday, 2 May, in the dark of night, the *Conscience*, a ship operated by the Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC), was hit by two drone strikes in international waters near Malta. The strikes blew a hole in the vessel and set fire to its engines. The unarmed civilian ship was carrying aid intended for Gaza, as well as 30 Turkish and Azeri activists, who were left stranded and bailing water to keep the vessel afloat.

The FFC is a grassroots, international movement aiming to end Israel's illegal blockade of Gaza. Following the strikes, the FFC stated: "Armed drones attacked the front of an unarmed civilian vessel twice, causing a fire and a substantial breach in the hull. The last communication in the early morning of the 2 May, indicated the drones are still circling the ship."

The FFC also said that the drone attack "appears to have deliberately targeted the ship's generator, leaving the crew without power and placing the vessel at great risk of sinking." They called for "Israeli ambassadors [to be] summoned and answer to violations of international law, including the ongoing blockade and the bombing of our civilian vessel in international waters." Israel has yet to take responsibility for the bombing.

This is not the first time the FFC has been targeted by the Zionist regime. Israel stopped and boarded an FFC ship in 2010, killing 9 activists on board. Numerous other FFC ships have been stopped and boarded in the past.

Lebanese activist and writer Dyab Abou Jahjah denounced the attack as a "blatant act of terrorism and piracy by Israel," while National Lawyers Guild President Suzanne Adely said that the FFC were "fulfilling an international legal and moral duty, to stop the genocide by breaking a deadly blockade currently causing mass starvation in Gaza, in the face of the utter failure of international institutions and governments to take the necessary action to bring the Israeli genocide, blockade, and deliberate starvation policy to an end." Dr Luigi Daniel of the Nottingham Law School labelled the drone strike in defence of Israel's blockade, which is itself in defence of Israel's genocide and settler regime, as a "crime, within a crime, within a crime."

State authorities have been far less outspoken. Malta released a statement on the day of the attack saying that the fire had been put under control and the ship placed under supervision by authorities. The FFC themselves, however, have reported that the Maltese Coast Guard has refused the damaged ship safe entry. CNN reported that an Israeli Air Force C-130 Hercules flew towards Malta immediately before the attack. An FFC delegation of volunteers from 13 countries attempted to support the crew of the *Conscience* on Saturday, only to be intercepted by Maltese armed forces.

The Times of Israel has claimed that the "reportedly Hamas-affiliated Gaza-bound humanitarian aid ship" has been targeted by warnings from Malta, Greece, and Türkiye that the ship will be seized if it comes to port. *The Times of Israel* also claims, citing Saudi news sources who supposedly received word from a "Western security source", that the *Conscience* was actually controlled by Hamas and planning to attack IDF soldiers. Palau reportedly revoked its flag from the *Conscience* prior to the attack, leaving the vessel stranded. Türkiye commented that, given the presence of Turkish nationals aboard the ship, it is working with Maltese officials to transfer them to a safe location. The Turkish foreign ministry has "condemned in the strongest terms this attack on a civilian ship," noting the allegations of Israeli responsibility and reporting that "All necessary efforts" will be made to identify and bring the culprit to justice.

EU officials have had little to say about the illegal attack. Instead, officials such as President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen have bragged about the activation of the European Civil Protection Mechanism and the sending of firefighting planes from Greece, Cyprus, Croatia, and Italy to aid Israel as they face wildfires. The President called the support "EU solidarity in action." No such support is provided for the inhabitants of Gaza being starved and massacred in Israel's genocide.

The actions and inaction of European nations in response to the drone strike and the illegal blockade it aimed to defy represent a clear indictment, exposing their support for genocide and settler colonialism. Australian PM Albanese and Foreign Minister Penny Wong have consistently lied to the Australian public about Australian complicity in this genocide. Following their historic electoral victory, it will now be seen whether this complicity shall continue.

Climate and Palestine activist Greta Thunberg, who was scheduled to board the *Conscience*, said "what is certain is that we human rights activists will continue to do everything in our power to fulfill our responsibility and stand in solidarity with the people of Gaza." The FFC has called on the Maltese government to allow the stranded activists safe and unhindered passage, allow FFC support teams access to the vessel to provide assistance, and fulfil its obligations under international maritime law to aid a civilian vessel in distress. The FFC has also released a statement reiterating their position "affirming the full political and human rights of the Palestinian people, including their Right of Return, and exposing the complicity of governments and corporations in maintaining Israel's system of apartheid." ✪

Rally for Palestine in Boorloo/Perth.

'a blatant act of terrorism and piracy by Israel'

Gaza siege 'catastrophic'

Peter Farmer

Israel ordered a halt to all humanitarian aid entering Gaza in March this year. The effects are predictable and awful: starvation, and people dying from treatable diseases, either because they can't get medicine they need and/or because they can't eat what they need to recover.

Israel claims that Gaza has enough provisions, and that the blockade is a lawful one. Neither claim is true.

In the first place, Gaza has spent around twenty years under a partial blockade that Israel imposed after Hamas took over Gaza in 2007. The blockade was supported by Egypt. Gaza doesn't have a lot in the way of reserves. UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher has described the blockade as "brutal" saying that no apology can suffice to the civilians suffering in Gaza. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has warned of a total collapse in the humanitarian response in the enclave.

The World Food Program reports that it has no more supplies for its kitchens in Gaza.

The United Nations has said that most of the population it analysed is enduring "catastrophic" levels of food insecurity.

According to the Gaza Doctors Without Borders, the blockade has made production of clean water inadequate, because Israel has stopped electricity supplies as part of its blockade. That means that the desalination plant Gazans rely on is only producing 10 per cent of its normal supply, leading to an increase in consumption of dirty water and of the diseases that go with drinking it.

As well as just denying that the shortages exist, Israel has been blaming them on Hamas 'hoarding' supplies for its own people. This is contradicted by people living in the enclave, who are saying the supplies just aren't there.

It is a war crime to use starvation of a population as a tactic. That's what Israel is accused of.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Israeli reservists have been called up by the Israeli Defence Forces, to "intensify and expand" the assault on Gaza.

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