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Israel's nuclear threat

M Santos

The ceasefire between US/Israel and Iran does not mark the end of imperialist hostilities against the sovereign state of Iran. The debate around the damage inflicted on the nuclear energy facilities is cover for the real US agenda; regime change in Iran.

Both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Donald Trump used the lie that Iran is days away from acquiring a nuclear weapon and that it was necessary to immediately dismantle Iran's nuclear facilities.

The claim is similar to the excuse for invading Iraq in 2003 when the Bush administration along with Australian Prime Minister John Howard and British PM Tony Blair asserted that Iraq possessed nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and that these "weapons of mass destruction" posed a threat to the United States and its allies. No such weapons existed.

For decades Iran has denied accusations by Western leaders that it is seeking nuclear arms. It has been a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) since 1970. Iran's nuclear energy facilities are legal and have continued to be inspected and validated by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) until now.

Israel has refused to sign the treaty and is the only nuclear armed state in the Middle East. As such, it's a threat to world peace.

From 13 June to 23 June, Israel launched unprovoked, deadly air strikes and bombings on Tehran and other parts of Iran targeting the Iranian military and nuclear energy facilities, killing nuclear scientists, military figures, and civilians. Iranian authorities say 935 people were killed and nearly 5,000 injured there. Iran retaliated with missiles strikes, reportedly killing 28 people in Israel.

On 24 June, the US dropped 17 Massive Ordnance Penetrator bombs and two dozen cruise missiles on Iran's nuclear facilities at Natanz, Fordow and Isfahan. Iran retaliated launching 14 missiles aimed at the US Air Force's Central Command in the Middle East, at Al Udeid in Qatar, after giving the US a warning to evacuate personnel.

Only then did the US and Israel agree to a ceasefire.

Al Jazeera notes: "The US has 40,000 troops in the region [on] 19 US bases, eight of which are permanent, and Iran has said previously they will become legitimate targets if the US strikes Iran."

The US and Israeli strikes against Iran are gross breaches of international law and undermine the authority of the United Nations.

AUSTRALIA COMPLICIT

The Albanese government has made Australia complicit in Israel's crimes.

The Australian government shows blind allegiance to the US. The warmongering defence and foreign affairs ministers continue to trot out the "Israel has a right to defend itself" line as Israel's genocide against the Palestinians happens before the eyes of the world.

The US's top secret Pine Gap base plays a critical role, including monitoring military communications, geolocating individuals for targeting, detecting troop movements, and detecting missile and rocket launches for targeting.

The NW Cape surveillance base near Exmouth in Western Australia provides communications and monitoring. Airbases in northern Australia have been provided for US refuelling tanker planes supporting B-2 bombers heading to bomb Yemen.

Australia also exports vital components for military equipment to Israel.

US imperialism sees Iran, along with China and Russia, as a threat to its pursuit of global hegemony. Iran has consistently supported the rights of Palestinians and opposes the Zionist state of Israel, the US's proxy in the region, and its expansive agenda for 'Greater Israel.'

Netanyahu has promised to "change the face" and "redraw the map" of the Middle East. Regime change in Iran is part of that agenda on behalf of its patron, US imperialism.

The military support provided to Israel by the US is both comprehensive and massive – more than US$17 billion in military aid from October 2023 to October 2024. It is coming in the form of aircraft, weapons, munitions, and refuelling capabilities, as well as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

STAGED PROGRAM

"An analysis of data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) shows that between 7 October 2023, and just before Israel attacked Iran on 13 June 2025, Israel carried out nearly 35,000 recorded attacks across five countries: the occupied Palestinian territory, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Iran," says Mohamed A Hussein in *Al Jazeera*.

Graphic: SZERVÁC Attila – wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 4.0)

"The majority of attacks have been on Palestinian territory with at least 18,235 recorded incidents, followed by Lebanon (15,520), Syria (616), Iran (58) and Yemen (39)."

Israel's assassination of Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah, the Western-backed toppling of the Syrian government, the attacks on Yemen and the genocide in Gaza paved the way for its attack on Iran.

Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has called the war on Gaza "one of the most egregious, deadly and ruthless wars waged on a people. ... ethnic cleansing, wrapped in the rhetoric of security defence, but executed with complete disregard for International Humanitarian and Human Rights Laws."

Israeli settlers and soldiers continue to launch deadly raids on Palestinian towns across the illegally occupied West Bank, murdering Palestinians, including children, displacing occupants and bulldozing or setting property on fire.

It's what Trump calls "peace through strength" – a euphemism for brute force to achieve the US's aims. War is not the path to peace.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

Iran is an independent, anti-imperialist country and critical supporter of Palestine. It has close ties with China and Russia.

Iran joined the BRICS grouping of countries last year and the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation in 2023. It is an important partner in China's Belt and Road Initiative. Britain's *Morning Star* says Iran "can be considered as being closely aligned with China's vision of a Global Community of Shared Future and its proposal for a multipolar system of international relations."

"Installing a proxy regime in Tehran would be a major blow to the Belt and Road Initiative, and it would potentially compromise China's energy security, giving the US de facto control over the flow of oil and other resources through the Persian Gulf."

Iran is of strategic importance to China and Russia and critical to the stability of the Eurasian region. Under US control, it would weaken the security of Russia and China by opening up fronts for attack against Russia and China via Central Asia.

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Deception: how they do it

You're being lied to, but they're being smart about it. Nobody is saying that nothing is happening in Palestine. Nobody is saying that AUKUS isn't expensive. You're not being told that two plus two equals five – at least not by the trusted parts of the media, the big news sites.

They're twisting the truth though. Events are re-labelled and exaggerated or minimised. There's misdirection. There are also things you're not being told.

Re-labelling is common. It happens every time Israel's actions in Palestine are described as a "conflict," talked about as though there are two roughly equal nations engaging in a war. In fact what's happening is a nation conducting a genocide on a people it's been subjecting to apartheid. Israel has the tanks, the guns, the fighter planes and the support of the USA.

Use of the passive voice happens a lot too – saying a Palestinian journalist 'died' rather than 'was killed by Israeli snipers.' Zomi Frankcom, an Australian aid worker was murdered by Israelis. We had an example of this recently, when a Nine reporter was shot in the leg with a rubber bullet by an LA police officer. The passive voice habit was so ingrained that the Nine websites described her as "caught in the crossfire," despite publically available video of the officer looking at her, registering that she was a reporter, and deliberately shooting at her.

Exaggeration? It's routine for news outlets to describe pro-Palestine demonstrations as "anti-Israel," or 'pro-Hamas' as if the media outlets had interviewed every last person present and asked their opinion of Israel's existence, as distinct from their feelings about the murder of large numbers of civilians.

Misdirection, is the magician's truck of making people look away from what's really happening at an important moment. One recent case is media outlets – along with Australia's government – going along with Israel's contrived narrative about its attack on Iran. News outlets are full of details about Iran's nuclear 'threat,' even as they acknowledge that US intelligence had said at the highest levels that Iran's non-existent nuclear weapons weren't a threat. A similar misdirection is the pretence that Palestinians are Hamas and vice versa. Again, they're smartish about it. The misdirection is done slyly by describing the Israeli war on Palestine as a war with Hamas.

There's the things you aren't told. Australian media silences pro-Palestinian voices. We've just seen the ABC try to do that in the Lattouf case, giving in to an organised campaign to silence a woman who had the gall to post a report the ABC had reported on. We can see it in the way media reports on what Israel is doing to Palestinians as though it started on 7 October 2023, instead of in 1948 with the first Nakba, the catastrophe of Palestinian dispossession.

With all this effort being put into deception, it's no wonder so many people think that what's happening in Palestine is the fault of conflict-loving Muslims, or that it's anti-semitic to oppose the slaughter and dispossession being practiced.

There are honourable exceptions to this: Deepcut and Crikey are two that come to mind, but the torrent of misrepresentation won't stop any time soon. It won't stop because it serves the interests of capital – the moneyed class that runs Australia and that serves the interests of the capital that runs the USA.

The alternative will have to be worked for. That's why this paper is proud to promote community radio 3CR, and that's why we work with socialist media outlets worldwide. That's why this paper is produced by the Communist Party of Australia to give a working class perspective. We have a Press Fund, so if you can, please donate! If you have views on the material in this paper, please write in.

More union action across Australia

Graham Holton

Unions are getting active. Across Australia a number of unions are currently involved in industrial action, including strikes. These actions are in support of ongoing collective bargaining on pay increases and improved working conditions.

Sixty workers represented by the Transport Workers' Union (TWU) and the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) have threatened to disrupt transportation networks in Australia. They voted to take protected action to call for a pay rise and improved conditions.

The Rail, Tram, and Bus Union (RTBU) has threatened to strike in NSW if their pay demands are not met. Bans are still being considered, but will coincide with separate "go slow" action scheduled to commence in coming days.

Waste Workers in several council waste stations in Queensland are on strike as workers demand a pay rise and improved conditions. Nearly 30,000 homes may not have their rubbish bins collected. The workers are asking Ipswich City Council for a pay rise of 15 per cent over three years and allowances for handling toxic substances. Transport Workers' Union Queensland director of organising, Josh Millroy, said the strike can be stopped "if a fair deal is reached."

Members of the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) members in Services Australia will be participating in a twenty-four-hour strike to increase pressure on the Albanese Labor government to improve the pay offer for public service workers.

In Australia's first fast-food strike, young members of United Workers' Union (UWU) are taking strike action with Grill'd in Flinders Lane, Melbourne, over low pay and exploitation. The twelve-hour protected strike action is an effort to uplift all Grill'd workers across Australia.

Over 1,200 warehouse workers for delivery service DHL, from 23 sites across New South Wales and Victoria, are striking for cost-of-living wage increases, according to the United Workers Union, as part of a push for higher wages. The strike will slow down package deliveries.

Hundreds of Maritime Union of Australia members are preparing for industrial action in the Pilbara, the first time in seventeen years.

Quote of the Week

"Zionism hasn't brought safety for Jews but in fact the complete opposite."

Antony Loewenstein, author of *The Palestine Laboratory*

Israel's nuclear threat

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POLICY

"It's an alarmingly dangerous time – the non-proliferation regime is under severe threat," says Dr Tilman Ruff, co-founder of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a Nobel Prize-winning advocacy group founded in Australia.

He describes the attack on Iran as a "frightening escalation" that dealt a "body blow to the peaceful non-proliferation regime ... which was already in a parlous state."

The Australian government must:

- Carry out its commitment to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
- Use its influence in international arena to push for nuclear disarmament.
- Withdraw from the ANZUS Alliance.
- Demilitarise Western Australia and Darwin.
- Close US military facilities and bases.
- Ban exports to Israel.
- Cancel AUKUS.
- Assert Australia's independence and protect our sovereignty.

A Revolutionary Life: Remembering Hannah Middleton

As most of you will have heard, long-time Communist Party of Australia member and formidable activist Dr Hannah Middleton passed last month.

The CPA will be holding a public event on the 19th of July to commemorate the life of Hannah.

Saturday the 19 July – 3pm-5pm

NSW Teachers Federation Conference Centre, 37 Reservoir St, Surry Hills, NSW

We encourage all to attend. Hannah dedicated her whole life to the struggle to liberate humankind and worked with countless individuals through that time. All people, party members or not, should attend to commemorate the amazing life and contributions of Dr Hannah Middleton.

Support the *Guardian* by donating to Press Fund

Victorian bail laws a 'disaster waiting to happen'

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, (VALS), the Aboriginal Justice Caucus (AJC), the Koorie Youth Council (KYC), the Federation of Community Legal Centres (FCLC) and the Human Rights Law Centre (HRLC) are urging the Victorian government to not proceed with tranche two of the proposed bail amendments being introduced in the final sitting week of July, as announced by Premier Allan.

The numbers of people incarcerated have already increased significantly due to the Tranche one amendments, with over 60% of the youth justice population being unsentenced and 40% of the adult population. VALS' Balit Ngulu program for young Indigenous people has seen a 300% increase in the number of clients being denied bail since June last year, and our Criminal Practice has seen a 216% increase in the same reporting period.

Tranche two of the Victorian government's 'tough' bail laws are a disaster waiting to happen. The prison system is already overwhelmed and inundated, with base levels of care not being met for people who are currently incarcerated. The amendments of tranche two are reckless and will inevitably result in more Aboriginal deaths in custody.

The Allan Labor government is wrongly viewing the increased numbers of people locked up before trial as an achievement and a move towards safer communities, rather than a policy failure which is driving up over-incarceration rates of Aboriginal people yet again. Prolonged detention of people who are unsentenced violates international human rights and rights protected under Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. Remand centres are overpopulated and prisons are experiencing unprecedented lockdowns due to staffing shortages which have a direct link to the Victorian government's ill-informed policy decisions.

The proposed High Harm test will drive up remand rates in Victoria even further. Since similar tests were introduced in NSW, the Aboriginal Legal Service in NSW has seen over 90% of Aboriginal children being denied bail and locked in youth prisons, causing even more undeniable harm. The proposed Two Strike test reintroduces a previously scrapped uplift mechanism described by the Coroner's Court of Victoria as an "unmitigated disaster" after the tragic death of Veronica Nelson, who died alone in a cold prison cell for minor charges she should never have been locked up for. We do not need another coronial inquest to tell us how disastrous these amendments will be for Aboriginal people, who are already at higher risk of criminalisation.

The government by its own admission has acknowledged ongoing lockdowns across corrections facilities, due to staffing shortages. These lockdowns are causing protracted disruptions in peoples' access to essential programs and healthcare, with significant impacts to their mental and physical health with noticeably higher rates of self-harm and suicidal ideation. The Victorian government, as well as corrections staff, have a duty of care to everyone who is incarcerated and to ensure their rights are upheld and protected. We are open to working with the Victorian government to develop and implement community-led solutions that will address the underlying causes of offending behaviour, by providing holistic, wrap around therapeutic supports. Given that much of the Youth Justice Act is coming into effect in September this year, the government should honour the significant work that led to its passing and give time for the reforms to take effect, including the Enhanced Bail Support Service.

We urge the Victorian government to stop the introduction of Tranche Two amendments before it's too late. If they proceed, it is only a matter of time until we have another preventable Aboriginal death in custody. That is a devastating loss for any family and community. This would be a damning indictment on a government that has committed to the development of the 5th Aboriginal Justice Agreement, and is on the cusp of announcing Victoria's first treaty and its commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and Wirkara Kulpa.

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service

Photo: luke.anscombe – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

SASMOA votes for strike across Adelaide hospitals

Graham Holton

On 25 June, in a one-hour stop work meeting in Adelaide, 2,800 medical professionals discussed future industrial action. Stage three surgeries were cancelled. Doctors have been in negotiations with the South Australian government for the past eight months regarding a new enterprise agreement.

The stand down culminated in a request from the South Australian Salaried Medical Officers Association (SASMOA) union for a final round of negotiations. Thousands of hospital doctors will strike for 24 hours in July unless the SA government revises its offer of a 10 per cent pay rise spread over three years. Union members are pushing for an annual 10 per cent pay increase over the next three years, similar to what the police were offered. The pay for junior doctors is also being negotiated.

Dr Laura Willington, president of SASMOA, said union members voted to reject the government's current offer. SASMOA and the SA government have been in negotiations for eight months regarding a new enterprise agreement. Fair pay is essential to retaining trainee doctors in South Australia and securing a future medical workforce. Dr Willington said more stop work action across local health networks had been planned for the week of 21 July. Members have voted for a full-day strike on 30 July if the government did "not come to the negotiating table with a more appropriate offer." Bernadette Mulholland, SASMOA chief industrial officer, said any strike action would factor in "safe levels of medical staffing," but it shows "how angry they are."

South Australia's Attorney-General, Kyam Maher, told *ABC Health*, the government appreciated the "crucial work" of those in the public health system and believed the government had made a "fair and reasonable" offer. Maher said: "We think doctors should be well paid and should get reasonable pay rises and that's why our revised offer sees junior doctors in particular awarded more." He called a 30 per cent pay rise over three years for senior doctors "not tenable." Maher called on union leadership to "absolutely guarantee that any [strike] action they take will not have health impacts on South Australians."

Ashton Hurn, opposition health spokesperson, said: "Our hospitals are under huge pressures and we can't afford to lose any doctors – in particular it is critical that we ensure the next generation of medical staff stay here in South Australia." Negotiations are ongoing.

'People aren't percentages' – council staff to meet with Shoalhaven Mayor

Shoalhaven City Council Mayor, Councillor Patricia White, will meet with representatives of council staff to put a number on how many of them will be shed after a council meeting voted to cut jobs.

Council workers were blindsided by the plan after the Mayor personally assured staff at a meeting in December their jobs were safe.

The job shedding plan was opposed by many Councillors, though not a majority.

Stuart Geddes from the United Services Union, which represents employees at Shoalhaven City Council, says staff are anxious to hear how many jobs are to go.

"I look forward to meeting with Mayor White to find out on behalf of our members how many of their jobs she plans to cut," said Geddes.

"The Mayor has been talking about percentages thus far, she says the council is 31% overstaffed and she wants to bring that down to 22%, but people aren't percentages, they're human beings and they deserve to know if they're being shown the door.

"We need to know how many jobs the Mayor wishes to cut and from what departments, will they be the people who conduct rhyme time at the libraries, will they be the road workers who fix potholes in the district or will they be the people who mark the fields for Saturday sport?

"We're still dealing with the fallout from the Mayor's decision in February to privatise local child care services leaving local children and parents facing lesser services for higher costs and six council staff at Centrelink."

United Services Union

Sydney Vigil
STOP USA BLOCKADE ON CUBA
4:15pm till 5:00pm Thursday 17 July
US Consulate, 50 Miller Street North Sydney
Call 0418 270 885

3CR RADICAL RADIO
The *Guardian* encourages readers to donate to the 3CR Radiothon. 3CR is a Melbourne Community Radio station, but anyone can hear its programs via podcast. If you donate, please nominate 'Alternative News' as the show you support.

Unions alive and kicking!

Graham Holton

The Australian media tend to show union industrial action as uncommon, and that unions rarely win. This is far from the truth. There was a decline in protected industrial action from a high in 2015, down to 106 industrial disputes in 2017. However, since 2020 there has been an increasing trend in the number of industrial disputes, employees involved, and working days lost. Such actions reflect a growing worker dissatisfaction with low wages, lack of job security, and poor working conditions.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reported that in the March Quarter of 2025, there were 44 industrial disputes across eight industries, with 10,300 employees involved, producing 13,900 working days lost. This is down from the December Quarter of 2024, which saw 25,200 employees in 69 disputes, producing 53,800 days lost. In the first quarter, the number of working days lost per thousand employees was highest in Victoria with 1.7, followed by Queensland with 1.5. The lowest was Western Australia at 0.3.

Most industrial disputes are Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related. Over the past ten years, disputes over employment conditions have been the most common. In the December Quarter, EB related issues were the cause of 90 per cent of disputes.

Industrial law plays a part in the under-reporting of union activity. Union wins are often not made public due to strict confidentiality clauses, but there are a number of cases where the outcome was published. In Victoria, AMWU (Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union) members working at the Hazelwood power plant took action. The union recovered an extra $367,000 for the superannuation funds of 440 maintenance workers at the site. In Echuca, Victoria, Parmalat, a French dairy conglomerate, applied to Fair Work to have the current EBA cancelled, and then locked out more than 70 workers who had taken protected action. Two months later AMWU members won their case.

Thanks to the strength of collective bargaining, unions have won higher wages, better working conditions and improved superannuation for workers. According to the ABS, union members earn an additional $251 per week than non-members. Important union wins will come into effect from 1 July 2025. Union members fought hard to increase the minimum wage and award wages by 3.5 per cent. This will bring the minimum wage to $24.95 (before tax) per hour, a pay increase of $1,666 each year for those working full-time. Nearly three million workers receive the minimum wage and award wages, so this rise will flow onto millions of workers who are on agreements.

On 1 July, superannuation rose to 12 per (up from 11.5 per cent) for permanent and casual workers. Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme offers up to 22 weeks of paid leave for workers, and will increase to 24 weeks on 1 July. Workers on PPL will also receive 12 per cent superannuation. Unions also continually win unpaid superannuation cases for members, and stand by individual workers when they are mistreated by management.

Liam Byrne, author of *No Power Greater: A History of Union Action in Australia*, said that unions are always on members' side. "That we are not powerless. That we are not alone. That we don't have to accept what the rich and powerful tell us we must. That there is a collective power we have to reshape our own world for the better. A power that has made that change before. A power that is making that change right now. That is what the union movement is."

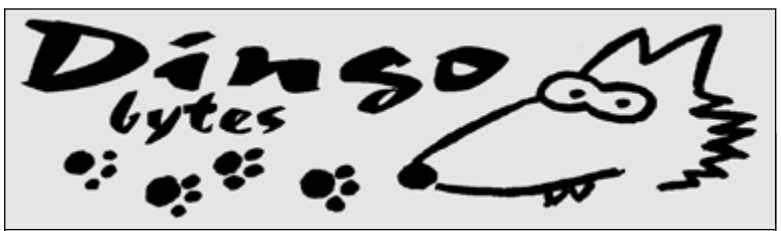
Worth reading?
Worth writing in!

Writers wanted!

Our 'Worth Reading' section needs short reviews. All we need is the name of the book and author and a couple of sentences on why you like it. Reviews are invited on the following themes:

- Crime/suspense
- Science fiction
- Politics

All entries published will receive a book voucher



The Australian Conservation Foundation says the CSIRO's report-*Towards a state of the food system report for Australia*, should inform a new approach to how we manage Australia's food system, which is costing as much as $274 billion in negative environmental and health outcomes.

The report calls for regulatory reform and a rethink on how a more sustainable food system can be achieved, to help farmers become more resilient and deliver healthier food.

It also reveals the hidden costs of Australia's food system, with the environment and human health among the biggest losers and up to 82% of those costs coming from environmental degradation.

Nathaniel Pelle, who leads ACF's food systems work, said while reports like these are welcome, it's essential they lead to action.

"What is clear from this report is that the Australian food system isn't working for farmers, for consumers, or for nature," he said.

"Given the Albanese government's recent commitment to a national food strategy, this report provides a clear signal that consideration must be given to the long-term public interest over vested interests."

The report acknowledges that the main way Australia's food system harms biodiversity is through land clearing and habitat fragmentation.

"No activity has shaped the Australian landscape more profoundly than agriculture, while no industry has more to lose from environmental decline.

"We should not expect that growing food will have no impact on nature, but those impacts need to be managed so that they do not erode the capacity of the natural world to continue to support future generations' right to food security and a healthy environment.

"Ongoing deforestation, over-extraction of water and overuse of chemicals and fertiliser in Australia may have increased yields, but it is putting long-term food security and the economic security of the people who work in the food system at risk, as well as wildlife.

"Protecting and restoring nature offers the best solution to making farmland resilient to climate impacts such as the drought we are witnessing in parts of Southern Australia."

Previous ACF-commissioned research has found food system sectors from traditional agricultural production to food product manufacturing and retail, have the highest direct and indirect dependence on ecosystem services of any Australian economic sectors.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is coal giant, Peabody, which locked out 160 Mining and Energy Union members at its Helensburgh mine on 18 June leaving the workers and their families without pay.

The lockout is due to remain in force for almost three weeks, financially impacting workers and the local community of Helensburgh where the mine is based.

The actions of the US coal giant are extraordinarily harsh and out of step with workers simply exercising their legitimate bargaining rights over the course of an hour.

ACTU Secretary, Sally McManus said: "Locking out 160 mine workers without pay is unfair and unreasonable. It is hurting workers, their families and entire south coast communities.

"Whenever a multinational attempts to crush a workforce, the union movement will oppose the sort of heavy-handed punitive action we're seeing being exercised by Peabody mining.

"We saw it earlier this year, when the Japanese multi-national, Opal locked out 300 pulp and paper mill manufacturing workers in Victoria's Latrobe Valley.

"These completely disproportionately harsh lock outs need to stop; and our outdated lockout laws reviewed so that employers can't unilaterally shutout workers taking protected industrial action.

"Working people around Australia are fed up with the corporate arrogance of some multi-nationals who deny local workers an income and the ability to exercise their lawful bargaining rights without being shut out of their workplaces."

NSW Greens candidate injured in protests

Peter Farmer

"Close to 50." That's how many police a witness estimated attended a peaceful picket in Belmore in Western Sydney on 27 June. Approximately 35 protesters were picketing SEC Plating, an electroplating company they alleged manufactures parts used in F-35 fighter jets. Israel has been using its F-35s as part of an ongoing genocide in Gaza. The company has denied supplying components for the jets, but its website lists 'aerospace' as an area of activity without giving details.

Police described the protest as "unlawful" and directed the protesters to leave the site. According to the witness, the crowd was complying with police orders to move on and beginning to disperse when the police started pulling people out of the crowd and making arrests. One witness told Deepcut news that the police "immediately became aggravated."

NSW police have said that "a scuffle ensued" and that protesters were not complying with the directions to move on. Former Greens candidate Hannah Thomas was injured and required eye surgery. Police have charged her with refusing to comply with a direction to disperse and with hindering or resisting a police officer.

Greens Senator for NSW, David Shoebridge criticised the arrests and the protest laws that enabled them. NSW Premier Chris Minns had earlier rushed through draconian protest laws on the back of the Dural caravan hoax. A caravan laden with decades-old explosives and the address of a Sydney synagogue was found in January this year. It turned out to be a hoax, but Minns, backed by Prime Minister Albanese described the caravan as "a potential mass casualty event," saying that there was "only one way of calling it out and that is terrorism." It turned out that a more accurate way to describe the caravan was a "set-up," and it has been alleged that Minns knew this when he rushed through new protest laws. The laws restrict protests outside a "place of worship."

There's a reference to that in one of the arrest documents, seen by ABC news. SEC Plating is across the road from a mosque, but the NSW police say they have not used the new anti-protest laws in this incident.

Greens NSW MP described the incident as "an act of brutality."

Hannah Thomas (Photo supplied by Hannah)

'Cash-grab' on people working from home

The Australian Services Union (ASU) has condemned a new attempt by big business to rip away hard-won rights from workers who work from home, calling it a "cynical and backward step that would drag workplace standards back decades."

In a case before the Fair Work Commission, the Australian Industry Group (AIG) is pushing to gut existing protections for workers based on where they do their job.

ASU National Secretary Emeline Gaske said the attack was a "massive dummy spit" from big business after their anti-worker agenda was rejected at the last federal election.

"Even discussing the idea of employers refusing to pay overtime, remove penalty rates, eliminate breaks, and roster staff for as little as 30 minutes a day, all because someone works from home, is an outrage."

"To try and axe basic workplace rights just because people are working from home is completely out of step with modern workplaces and community attitudes.

"This is a 'rights and cash grab,' plain and simple. This is big business coming into people's homes and taking their hard-earned pay and right to reasonable hours work.

"After Peter Dutton's spectacular misstep on work from home in the election you would think big business would have learned.

"Instead, they are trying to sneak in through your back door to do what the Liberals couldn't. Stripping away your rights, starting with those who work from home.

"This isn't about asking for new rights. It's about stopping the biggest employers in the country from ripping away the rights people already rely on to balance work and life."

The AIG's proposal would see working from home used as an excuse to strip away basic entitlements, from overtime to penalty rates, rest breaks, and even minimum shift lengths.

"This isn't the thin end of the wedge – it's the thick end of it. If the AIG successfully rips away workers' rights in the Clerks Award just because you work from home, what can't they come after?

"Now is the time to lock in national workplace protections and guarantee the right to work from home for all Australians that can do so."

Gaske said the case shows once again that without legal safeguards, big business can't be trusted to do the right thing.

"We've seen this playbook before, cut wages and conditions bit by bit until there's nothing left. That's what the AIG is trying to do here. And the ASU will fight tooth and nail to stop it."

Australian Services Union

Health support workers strike in SA

Graham Holton

UWU (United Workers Union) health support workers across South Australia have taken strike action at Glenside Hospital and Royal Adelaide Hospital, and Queen Elizabeth Hospital, as part of their campaign for fair pay and against under-staffing. Workers demand a 20 per cent pay increase to bring them in line with counterparts in other states. Health support workers in theatres, patient transport, cleaning and sterilisation, and disability services are paid 20 per cent less than workers in other states. The union warned that underpayment, and resultant short-staffing, have produced a chronic ambulance ramping crisis, which State Premier Peter Malinauskas has still not fixed.

Roger Kay, Catering Attendant at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, said: "Every day, we see the impact of short staffing. When there's no one to clean a cubicle in emergency or on a ward, South Australians are unnecessarily ramped in ambulances – sometimes for hours. "People are leaving these jobs because they simply can't afford to stay. Some of my colleagues have cancelled health insurance or moved back in with family just to survive. The Premier says he wants to fix ramping – well, he can't do that without fixing staffing, and he can't fix staffing without fixing our pay."

Demi Pnevmatikos, United Workers Union SA State Secretary and National Public Sector Director, said: "A 20 per cent pay adjustment to match other states is the fastest, cheapest way to end chronic short staffing and deliver on the Premier's commitment to fixing ramping." UWU delegate and Disability Services Officer, Sam Bannon, said: "We are some of the highest-trained disability services officers, but we receive some of the lowest remuneration possible."

These actions are part of a broader state-wide industrial campaign by UWU members. Since February, more than 1,000 health support workers and over 1,100 Department of Human Services (DHS) disability support workers have implemented work bans to demand fair pay and to end chronic understaffing.

On 26 June UWU delegates addressed workers on the stairs of Parliament House as part of the state-wide industrial campaign. Work bans continue.

www.cpa.org.au

ACTU supports police industrial action

Graham Holton

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) Executive formalised their support for the ongoing Police Association of NSW (PANSW) industrial action. On 30 June, NSW police officers decided not to provide assistance to the Australian Federal Police, ASIO, Border Force, and the Australian Attorney-General's Department, unless there was a risk to the life or welfare of a person.

The industrial action is in response to the federal government's failure to resolve a tax problem that prevents police officers from making superannuation contributions and denies police access to childcare rebates, child support, parental leave and health rebates. The police are covered by a mandatory Death and Disability insurance policy which the federal government counts as contributions to police officers' superannuation, even though that money is paid straight to the insurance company. This disproportionately effects female police officers and police officers with children, especially single mothers.

Paul Farrow, National Secretary of the Australian Workers Union (AWU) said: "Workers in dangerous occupations deserve the same protections as every other worker. Punishing those workers because protection is expensive is unfair and unacceptable." The federal government can "deliver on the promises that have been made to police by previous governments for the last 10 years."

The Commonwealth Public Sector Union said it is unacceptable that the "system disproportionately impacts policewomen and especially those with families. The federal government "should implement the solution urgently." The ACTU called on Senator David Shoebridge and the Australian Greens, Senator Jacqui Lambie, NSW Premier Chris Minns, NSW Treasurer Daniel Mookhey, NSW Police Minister Yasmin Catley, and Aware Superannuation and the Welfare Rights Centre to correct the problem.

PANSW Secretary, Pat Gooley said the federal government is "punishing those who risk their lives to keep us safe," by issuing 11,000 debt notices "to NSW Police Officers simply because their job is so dangerous that their Death and Disability insurance is very expensive." Gooley continued: "To have widespread, unwavering support, including the support of the entire national union movement, inspires our members to maintain their industrial action, but also go on keeping the community safe". The PANSW has provided the Assistant Treasurer and the Prime Minister with draft legislation they say will fix the issue.

CFMEU High Court Decision: a lawyer explains

Comrade Jay

The High Court has delivered its decision on the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Administration) Act 2024* – the legislation which places the union's general and construction division into the control of an independent administrator appointed by parliament.

In a unanimous judgment, the court upheld the constitutional validity of the legislation. Its reasoning is to be expected from a judiciary built upon the preservation of capital; one that prioritises the idealistic protection of individual rights and corporate power over an analysis of the material consequences of these laws.

The core grounds that the court considered and ruled against the union were as follows:

There was a legitimate purpose for the legislation, as gauged by the discussions in parliament

The parliament was correct in limiting the activity of the union (manifesting in the bourgeois concept of an 'implied right to political communication')

The legislation itself cannot be considered punitive

Ultimately, the most concerning element of the decision is the precedent it has set for the enabling of government control over unions. Due to this decision, successive governments are able to enact legislation which would place the activity of unions into the hands of our capitalist government at the first allegation of "improper conduct." Whilst it is the administrator that appropriates the union's property and controls their operations, it is the government of the day which enables the administrator to do so by giving consent to a proposed scheme. The relevant minister, whether they represent our reactionary Liberal or Labor parties, ultimately determines whether placing a union within the hands of an appointed administrator would be within the "public interest."

What does this mean? Ultimately, whatever the minister at the time decides the public interest is may involve further restricting the activity of industrial advocacy groups in a reactionary response/exercise. The CPA understands that the public interest cannot be shown just by looking at the media, nor can it be dictated and applied by the capital-representing state. The only true "interests" of the working class are the growth of its economic and political power; it can only be fulfilled if the means of production is under proletarian control.

The nature in which the Administration Act burdens the CFMEU's ability to "communicate politically" was contested, but the bench unanimously believed that there was a just cause in limiting the bench due to prior attack pieces by the capitalist press, as well as the union's history of industrial disputation.

Further, the bench held that while the union's operations may be at the control of the government – the individual officers which make up the union are still free to engage in campaigning, bargaining and communications. That's disingenuous – those officers had been sacked, and prohibited from engaging in communications as union officials. They were only 'still free' to communicate in the way other individuals are free to comment on the union and/or the building industry from the outside.

This approach should be wholly rejected by workers and the trade union movement. Our power as a political force comes not primarily from each individual's right to communicate, but from the will of an organized and conscious working class. To deprive delegates and officers unrestricted access to union infrastructure depletes their capacity to negotiate for better wages and conditions, build membership and weaken the union movement as a whole.

What was the purpose of the legislation to begin with?

Labor phrased the purpose of the act as to "restore the functionality of the union" as it had failed to act in the members' best interests. This is an abject falsity. Irrespective of the alleged conduct of certain *individuals, the union continued to effectively negotiate agreements and build its membership during this period; leading to some of its highest hourly wage and allowance rates in the labour market*. It's obvious that the union was functional in terms of doing what unions are supposed to do.

Obviously the stated purpose of restoring the union to working in the "best interests of its members" does not correlate with the material, real gains of the CFMEU's work. It is clear that placing the entity under the control of a capitalist government seeks merely to appease the bourgeoisie by capitulation. It doesn't enhance the union's ability to negotiate or campaign for their members' interests. It rescinds their ability to engage in both legal and illegal forms of activity (strikes, sit-ins, pickets, etc.) to the benefit of the stewards of Australian capitalism.

In short the Court endorsed the undemocratic takeover of a union from its members.

Finally, the Commonwealth – ratified by the court – claimed that the legislation was not punitive in its nature.

As per the courts, a law will be unconstitutional if the legislation itself is or the law confers on the Executive or the legislature a power "*to impose a measure that is properly characterised as penal or punitive*". In finding that the legislation was not punitive, the court affirmed that the act of placing the union itself in administration fulfilled a "reasonably appropriate purpose."

The court itself adopted a more individualistic interpretation; comparing the burden imposed on the union to an individual's own deprivation of bodily liberty. It should come as no surprise that the judiciary adopted an approach that couldn't see how the administration was punitive to the union as a collective.

Because the union could not be punished in the same way an individual could, coupled with parliament's own limiting purpose, it was found that there was not a punitive measure.

The court should have consulted with union members and other unions to truly ascertain how punitive this legislation could be. This administration runs the risk of further dividing and alienating the Australian working class in the construction sector. It will deprive them of the ability to increase their productive power, their livelihoods, their conditions, including safety. The administration will reduce the ability of workers to organise and build power. If that's not punitive, what is?

CFMEU members should continue the campaign to return the union to its members.

Strike at Sydney's Westmead Hospital

Graham Holton

Nurses in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Western Sydney's Westmead Hospital went on strike on 23 June, over grave concerns about patient safety and staffing levels. The NSW Nurses and Midwives Association (NSWNMA) is calling on the Health Minister, Ryan Park, to intervene, as incidents of sick babies requiring 1:2 nursing care have tripled. Although the hospital NICU is funded as a 44-bed unit, it surges to 50 beds during high demand. Some babies are placed in former storerooms and corridors due to a lack of space and staff. The nurses are requesting the NSW Health Minister to increase staffing from 21 nurses to 26 nurses per shift.

NSW Premier Chris Minns said retention of staff has improved: "We are saving over 90 per cent of people, year on year, from retiring or resigning from the public health system." This does not solve the problem of hiring new nurses.

Michael Whaites, NSWNMA Assistant General Secretary, said the situation was dire, with nurses highlighting issues with hospital management and the Western Sydney Local Health District. "The critical care nurses working in the NICU at Westmead Hospital are some of the most highly skilled clinicians, but they are at their wits end, after their repeated calls for help have gone unanswered." The unit is staffed for 80 per cent capacity but surges to 140 per cent with the increase in babies needing critical care. Whaites said, "We're hearing that there are insufficient neonatal intensive care beds across the state, and nurses like our members at Westmead, are bearing the brunt of underfunding in this area."

NSWNMA President, O'Bray Smith, said the Hospital's NICU was the only Level 6 referral unit in metropolitan Sydney, other than the Royal Hospital for Women's NICU in Randwick. Smith said: "Demand on the service has ballooned, and the babies being referred are much sicker but there is simply not enough staff to provide the 1:1 care at the level that should be given to these babies and also to support their families." The NSWNMA has called for increased funding to provide the care local families expect in a major metropolitan hospital.

Something to say?

Write to the Editor!

editor@cpa.org.au

UWU ongoing industrial action at Quantem terminal Geelong

Graham Holton

Terminals Pty Ltd (Quantem Bulk Liquid Storage & Handling) in Geelong, Victoria, provides bulk aviation fuel to Tullamarine, Australia's second largest airport. United Workers' Union (UWU) workers have escalated industrial action in protest to management's attempts to slash real wages. Despite union members bargaining in good faith to maintain current work conditions and a modest inflation-aligned pay rise, management tabled an agreement which would effectively see each worker $33,000 per year worse off in wages and superannuation. Following management aggression, on 15 June UWU workers implemented stoppages and a 50 per cent slowdown on unloading liquids from ships.

Godfrey Moase, UWU executive director, said Quantem "is one of the most recalcitrant bosses I have encountered." Quantem management walked into the room, "set the nuclear option on the table and hit the red button." Management's behaviour is irresponsible in order "to punish the workers." Moase said: "My strong advice to Quantem would be to pull-their heads in before they embarrass themselves further."

This is a long-term industrial dispute. On 12 August 2024, the UWU made an application for bargaining orders with FairWork Australia directed at Quantem in "the context of negotiations for two enterprise agreements." Quantem operates nine terminals for bulk liquids shipping and distribution infrastructure at Geelong, Port Botany, Pelican Point, Largs Bay, North Fremantle, Port of Melbourne, Pinkenba, and Devenport. The company, with headquarters in Melbourne, employs more than 200 staff in Australia and New Zealand. Industrial action has now spread to Quantem sites in Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia.

The CFMEU, the Maritime Union of Australia and the United Workers Union announced a coordinated strike action on 20 June by workers in Bulk Liquids Shipping Terminals around Australia, at Pinkenba, Geelong, Fremantle, and Adelaide.

Young people racking up greater debt

Young Australians are barely earning more than their predecessors but are racking up much larger student debts and taking longer to pay them off, new research by the e61 Institute has found.

The analysis of tax return data found that, in 2022 dollars:

- Real average incomes for 30-year-olds increased just 6% over a decade, from $59,496 in 2012 to $62,987 in 2022
- Meanwhile, the average HELP debt jumped by 45%, from $19,485 to $28,260
- The average age of final HELP repayment also rose from 33 in 2012 to 35 in 2022
- The percentage of 30-year-olds with a HELP debt increased from 15% to 23%

"Since the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, the wages of workers under 40 have grown at less than half the rate of older Australians," said e61 Institute Research Economist Matthew Maltman.

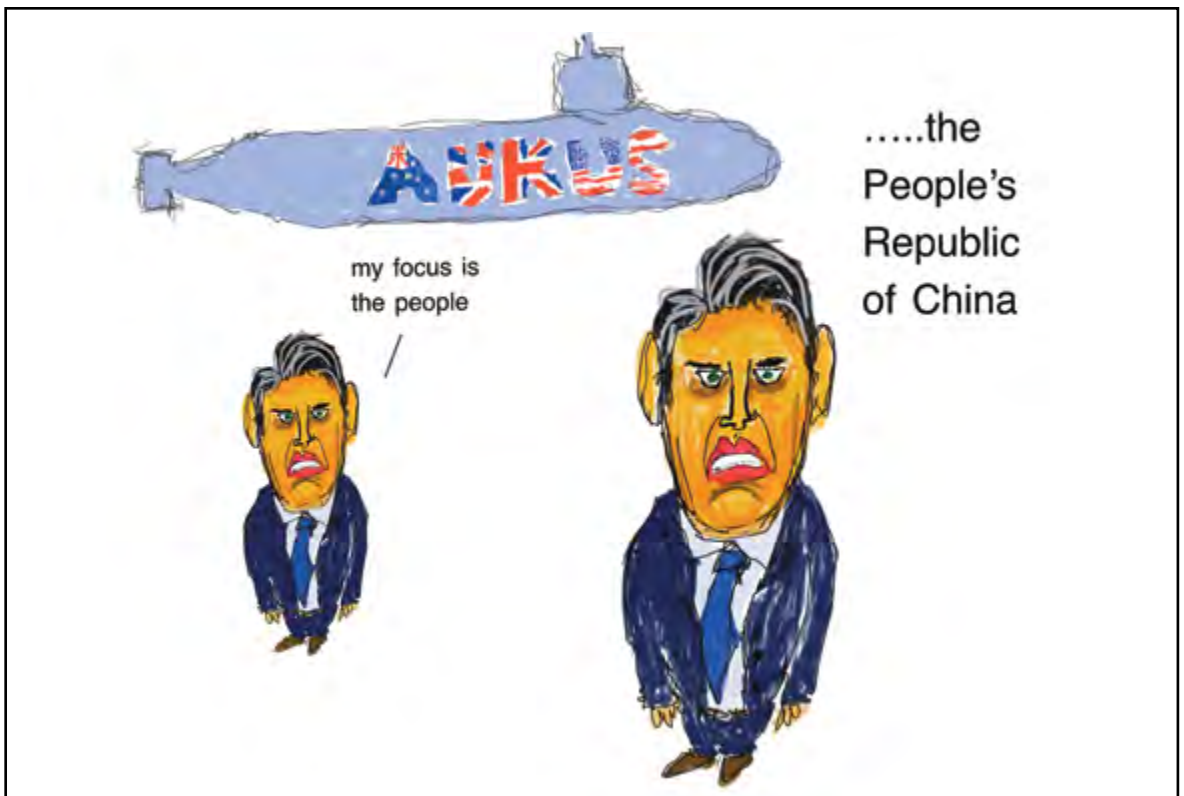
"Some explanations include rising underemployment, a shift toward insecure and lower-paying service jobs, award decisions, and an oversupply of workers relative to available high-quality jobs – driven in part by older Australians working longer – which weakened bargaining power and suppressed wage growth.

"Rising employer concentration and a decline in job mobility may also have weakened young workers' ability to climb the job ladder and move into higher-paying positions."

Meanwhile, young people are taking on more student debt which is taking longer to pay off.

"Young people are seeing up to 10 per cent of their income diverted to HELP debt repayments well into their mid-30s, just when many are trying to buy their first home and start a family," said e61 Institute Senior Research Economist Jack Buckley.

e61 Institute



Our Geelong-representing, expensive submarine-loving Defence Minister Richard Marles spells it out.

GREEN NOTES

'A survival imperative'

Extreme weather events are no longer 'one-in-a-hundred-year' or 'one-in-five-hundred-year' events. They are becoming more frequent and more extreme with records constantly being broken. Yet the federal Labor and the state governments continue to recklessly promote and approve the expansion of fossil fuel production. They act as if the burning of exported fossil fuels will not have an impact on Australia's climate. As the atmosphere heats the extra moisture and energy it can hold results in more rain and storms as the moisture and energy are dispersed. Some parts of the east coast have flooded numerous times in the last two years. In some areas insurance companies are either refusing to insure homes and businesses or charging unaffordable premiums in the tens of thousands of dollars.

Warnings by scientists, including those of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), are proving to be out of date. David Spratt, Research Director at the Breakthrough National Centre for Climate Restoration, notes that, "Victoria's Black Saturday bushfires were of an intensity not projected to occur till towards the end of the century. Parts of inland Australia are experiencing heat extremes several decades ahead of expectations."

Assumptions by governments that warming would be in the range of 1.5°C to 2°C by 2050 are way out of date, yet governments are still using them as the basis of climate policy. "Just seven years ago, IPCC scientists projected global average warming of 1.5°C would not occur till 2040. But that warming level has now been reached, 15 years earlier than forecast. Both 2023 and 2024 reached 1.5°C, and the running average for the last 24 months has been close to 1.6°C." The World Meteorological Organization says that there is a "70 per cent chance that the 2025-2029 five-year mean will exceed 1.5°C above the 1850-1900 average."

"Acknowledging that a level of warming not expected till 2040 is here right now in 2025 means facing the bitter reality that 15 years have just been 'lost' from the emissions-reduction timetable. What does that practically mean? At the 2015 Paris climate policymaking conference, the goal of holding warming to 1.5-2°C was agreed to, together with actions (in theory) to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, based on the now-superseded warming projections. So the 'lost' 15 years means that **this net-zero-by-2050 goal now needs to be net-zero-by-2035**." (emphasis added)

The Australian government considered medium-term (2041-2060) global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C and long-term (2081-2100) global warming of 2°C and 3°C in its National Climate Risk Assessment report. The report fails dismally to recognise that we are already at 1.5°C. Spratt notes that the rate of warming has accelerated from less than 0.2°C per decade to 0.3°C or more per decade. That's an increase in the rate of warming of 50 per cent! The rate of warming is far beyond anything that climate scientists had ever estimated.

Scientists are now warning that tipping points have been reached at both poles and that permafrost, boreal forests and the Amazon are becoming net carbon emitters.

"All of this leads to one conclusion: we are on the edge of a precipice and humanity now needs to throw everything at the climate threat, literally 'all hands on deck'. The late Professor Will Steffen's call to make climate the primary target of policy and economics is now a survival imperative. The business-as-usual delusion embraced by policymakers that climate is just another issue is laid bare by the 1.5°C time-bomb," Spratt said.

The expansion of gas production is not the path to survival. Australian governments **MUST** recognise this emergency and immediately phase out fossil fuels and accelerate their replacement with renewables.

ISDS: Trade in corporate power

M Santos

One of Clive Palmer's companies is suing the Australian government for $300 billion over the West Australian government's refusal to grant an iron ore mining licence. The case is being heard in a secretive international arbitration process in The Hague in the Netherlands. Palmer had previously appealed to the High Court and lost.

In another two cases Palmer is claiming $110 billion because a court refused his company Zeph Investments coal mining permits in Queensland on environmental grounds, including the increase in carbon emissions that would result.

How can his company bypass Australian court decisions and then sue the Australian government?

Palmer has registered Zeph Investments in Singapore, and is using what are known as Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) rules in the Australia-NZ ASEAN Free Trade Agreement and the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement to claim a total of $410 billion in compensation from the Australian government for alleged loss of future profits.

Even if Palmer loses, it will cost the government tens of millions of dollars in legal fees.

ISDS are found in many international investment agreements. They enable foreign (but not local) corporations to claim compensation if they can convince an international tribunal that a decision, or change in law or policy reduces their future profits, even if that change was in the public interest.

ISDS are a vehicle for corporations (investors) to defend and increase profit-making at the expense of sovereign states that are making policies in the interests of their domestic economy, public health and safety, and environmental protection.

According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Foreign investors use the dispute settlement process to seek exorbitant compensation from States that strengthen environmental protection, with the fossil fuel and mining industries already winning over $100 billion [AU$153b] in awards."

In the last decade, the number of ISDS cases has more than doubled. The UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which keeps a record of ISDS cases, reports that investors involved in extractive industries and the energy sector are the most frequent users of ISDS.

One of the largest payouts so far was in a case where the Dutch-based ConocoPhillips sued Venezuela for US$30.3 billion and was awarded US$8.4 billion in 2007 under ISDS in a bilateral investment treaty between the two countries. The claims arose out of Venezuela's nationalisation of three oil projects in which ConocoPhillips had interests.

HUMAN RIGHT

The UN has recognised as a human right that everyone, everywhere, has the right to live in a clean, healthy and sustainable environment: "As humanity confronts an unprecedented planetary crisis, it is our genuine hope that the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment will serve as a catalyst for systemic and transformative changes to produce a just and sustainable future in harmony with nature." ISDS provisions threaten to override that right.

The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) – a free trade agreement between Australia and 10 other countries in the Indo-Pacific region – contains ISDS provisions.

Australia also has ISDS provisions in its free trade agreements with China, Korea, Chile, Singapore, Thailand, Türkiye, Argentina, and Pakistan.

When Australia entered into free trade agreements with those countries, the stated aim was to benefit domestic industries and encourage foreign investment. But the inclusion of ISDS in agreements gives foreign-based corporations powers beyond those of domestic corporations, elected governments, and the courts.

ISDS are frequently used against heavily indebted poorer nations that cannot afford the legal costs let alone any damages awarded to corporations.

So far there have been 1,401 ISDS cases, with corporations winning more than 300. Another 326 cases are pending. There are reports that governments have avoided or weakened measures relating to climate change for fear of being sued.

It is anticipated that the number of ISDS cases challenging climate-related industrial policies will rise as governments begin to take more direct action to address the climate crisis.

Photo: Public Citizen – flickr.com (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

the threat of ISDS could deter governments from regulating carbon-intensive industries and phasing out fossil fuels

There is concern that the threat of further cases could deter governments, particularly in poorer nations, from regulating many carbon-intensive industries and phasing out fossil fuels. One prominent lawyer has suggested that many investors see ISDS as a means by which they can profit from government action on climate.

The Australia Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET) has campaigned hard against ISDS. It says: "The re-elected Labor government has a long-standing policy to reject ISDS in future trade agreements and review existing ones to remove ISDS. This review process has started but needs to be prioritised to prevent cases like this one [Clive Palmer]. ISDS favours corporate interests over public welfare and strengthens corporate power while undermining governments' ability to regulate in the public interest."

The Labor government is presently carrying out a review of existing agreements that contain ISDS. AFTINET is campaigning for this review to be accelerated to prevent more cases.

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NDIS inbuilt rorts: a user's view

B Hall

The National Disability Insurance Scheme has private providers and rorting built in. This is our experience.

We have written several letters of complaint about company providers rorting the NDIS system. By now we wonder if the private system can be made to provide honest services to recipients. Our view since our grandson has used them is that most are vultures, swooping in and ripping off the tax payers' money and the government for unbelievable amounts. Since he has been self-funded we can see how much services charge and how little they provide.

There are three processes in which funding is provided and claims can be made. One is direct government National Disability Insurance Agency funded. The second is through using Plan Managers, and the third by self-funding.

Self-funded NDIS recipients receive invoices and then have to apply to NDIA through the Mygov portal. However this places a great deal of pressure on the recipient, particularly when demand for payments are within a couple of days. It takes a couple of days for the invoiced funds to be paid into the recipients bank account to enable them to then pay the service provider.

Using a plan manager requires the NDIA to provide extra funding to a system that has numerous "companies" who have set up a business. These businesses basically rubber stamp any request without investigating or demanding accountability. One local company which assisted more neurodiverse NDIS recipients was not only charging twice but charging a week in advance. They claimed that agreements were made with the NDIS recipient and that they notify any charge within 48 hours, but charging already four to five days prior means the recipient has no chance to change any arrangement. One company went behind our backs to NDIS to claim that our grandson needed more funding for a plan manager and coordinator that they had lined up. This group not only had a bullying approach but didn't have any idea how to involve neurodivergent participants to enhance their skills.

The other concern we have was that this company has its base in the US. Already the US is trying to move in on the PBS schemes. Foreign companies have been allowed to enter into the NDIS market and cream off Australian tax payer funds while providing minimal services. NDIS services should be Australian government-owned and run if there is any chance for the rorting to be stopped and decent services provided for disabled people.

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Canadian bill attacks rights

The Communist Party of Canada issued this urgent warning against the Liberal government's Bill C-2, which the Party describes as "the deceitfully named 'Strong Borders Act'." The 140-page omnibus bill proposes sweeping changes on border security, immigration, customs and law enforcement, and has been called an attack on democratic rights.

"This legislation escalates state surveillance, entrenches xenophobic scapegoating, and deepens Canada's subordination to the US government, continuing the authoritarian legacy of Harper's Bill C-51 [the 2015 Anti-Terrorism Act]. Far from protecting Canadians, Bill C-2 criminalises dissent, eviscerates privacy rights and abandons refugees to violence, serving monopoly capitalism's drive toward repression and war.

"Bill C-2 unleashes mass warrantless surveillance, granting police and CSIS (Candian Security Intelligence Service) unchecked access to Canadians' private communications, online activities and personal data based on flimsy 'reasonable suspicion.' This shreds decades of privacy rulings in the courts and targets workers, migrants, Indigenous peoples, and activists for profiling. Communications corporations will be forced to spy on users under secret ministerial orders, while Canada Post gains powers to open mail without judicial oversight. These measures deliberately surrender Canadian sovereignty, facilitating US and foreign agencies' access to sensitive data, aligning with Trump's racist anti-immigrant agenda and violating Charter rights.

"The Bill's cruelty toward refugees exposes its reactionary core. It imposes a retroactive one-year deadline on asylum claims, stripping protection from those fleeing wars or repression that erupt after their arrival, a gross violation of international law. The Immigration Minister gains dictatorial powers to cancel residency applications and deport entire groups without due process. Simultaneously, Bill C-2 eliminates the exception in the 'Safe Third Country Agreement' that allowed refugees crossing from the US between ports of entry to seek asylum after 14 days. This traps vulnerable people in Trump's racist deportation machine, despite the US being demonstrably unsafe for refugees.

"The wars refugees flee, from Haiti to Afghanistan, are often fueled by US, NATO and Canadian imperialism. Canada's support for US aggression, coups and resource plunder has displaced millions. Now, as climate catastrophe and war accelerate, Bill C-2 slams the door on those seeking safety.

"This assault coincides with capitalism's crisis. Hundreds of thousands of temporary migrants, deliberately imported to address a tight labour market during the pandemic, now face discardment as unemployment rises. Instead of addressing the real causes of inflation and austerity, price gouging by monopolies, gutted rent controls, and corporate tax cuts, the Liberals have decided to scapegoat migrants.

"Undocumented workers fighting wage theft or exploitation will face deportation when employers weaponise new information-sharing powers between border agencies and all levels of government. This collusion is an attack on labour organising and shields exploitative bosses. An attack on labour rights, for any group of workers, lowers wages and attacks working conditions and labour rights for all workers.

"Police and CSIS cannot be trusted with these powers. The McDonald Commission exposed RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) crimes: arson, illegal detention and sabotage of democratic movements. Today, CSIS fabricates 'foreign interference' scandals targeting Chinese Canadians while ignoring blatant US meddling in Canadian affairs. These agencies are not neutral: they serve ruling-class interests, break laws with impunity, and criminalise dissent.

"From the War Measures Act and the October Crisis to G20 mass arrests and CSIS covert operations, 'national security' has always masked attacks on democratic movements. Bill C-2 continues this tradition. It cannot be amended; it must be withdrawn entirely.

"In addition, we demand the abolition of CSIS, the CSE and the RCMP; full status for all migrants, an end to deportations, and withdrawal from the Safe Third Country Agreement; protection for workers asserting labour rights, regardless of immigration status.

"Bill C-2 proves the ruling class unites behind repression as capitalism's crises deepen. The Liberals, despite promises to reject Conservative policies, are now accelerating austerity, militarism and expanding police powers. The expansion of surveillance and border militarisation serves Canada's monopoly corporations, whose short-term profits depend on deeper US integration, sacrificing sovereignty and working-class interests.

People's Voice (edited for space)

'We have to dramatically expand this movement': US anti-war activists

Joe Maniscalco (Work Bites)

War has never been good for working-class people anywhere and it isn't good for working class people now.

Roughly two hundred people assembled in New York's Times Square recently for an emergency street action challenging the Trump administration's unconstitutional bombing of Iran. Similar emergency demonstrations against the bombings were also held in dozens of places around the United States.

"This is a bipartisan war on the people of Iran," a spokesperson for the Answer Coalition told the Times Square crowd as a small knot of pro-war demonstrators blasted airhorns nearby and police officers stood by. "We are not going to get our solutions from Congress, from the courts – the only solution is you. The only solution is the working people of this country becoming organised and daring to take back control of our politics."

Others speakers jeered Senator Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, as well as House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries for their anaemic response to the Trump administration's bombing of three sites purported to be nuclear facilities inside Iran

A spokesperson for the People's Forum told demonstrators in Times Square that working class people hold the real power in the country – and can determine whether or not we are all plunged into a possibly civilisation-ending world war.

"We are going to show Donald Trump and his billionaire friends what real power looks like," the spokesperson said. "We are the ones who run this country. We are the ones who run the economy. Without us, there would be no billions and trillions of dollars that keep lining the pockets of these billionaires who use it just to kill children and kill families and spread war."

A People's Forum spokesperson said that it's now "more urgent than ever before" for working class people to mobilise.

"So many people have been marching and mobilising and organising," the spokesperson said. "So many people have been standing up against the genocide in Palestine – but now we have to dramatically expand this movement. We have to bring people who haven't marched before, we have to convince them, we have to go with them – we have to show everyone that in fact, if we stand up, we are the ones who will determine the future of humanity."

B-2 stealth bombers launched from an Air Force base near Kansas City, Mo. reportedly dropped 14 "bunker-buster bombs" on multiple targets inside Iran, according to Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Gen. Dan Caine who briefed reporters following the attack. Each of the bombs used in that attack costs millions of dollars to produce.

LaborTodayInternational

Op-Ed: Trump and MAGA imperialism

So extreme is the shift in US power projection, and so great the confusion that this has generated, that even some figures long associated with the left have fallen into the trap of seeing Trump as isolationist, anti-militarist, and anti-imperialist. Thus, Christian Parenti has argued that Trump "isn't an anti-imperialist in the left-wing sense.

Rather, he is an instinctual America-First isolationist," whose goal, "more than any recent president," is "to dismantle America's informal global empire," and to promote a new "anti-militarist" foreign policy "opposing empire."

Yet, far from being anti-imperialist, the global shift in the external relations of the United States under Trump is due to a hypernationalist approach to world power, based in key sections of the ruling class, particularly high-tech monopolists, as well as Trump's largely lower-middle class followers. According to this neofascist and revanchist [editor's note: seeking revenge for or reversal of perceived loss] perspective, the United States is in decline as a hegemonic power and threatened by powerful enemies: "Cultural Marxism" and immigrant "invaders" from within, China and the Global South from without, while hindered by weak and dependent allies.

Beginning with the first Trump administration following the 2016 election, the regime has stood for a hard shift to the right internationally, as well as domestically. Globally, all available resources are to be focused on a zero-sum increase in US power and on the defeat of China as the newly arising rival.

Thus, it was in the first Trump administration that the New Cold War on China was launched in earnest, with the concomitant shift toward détente with Russia. Although the Biden administration subsequently went forward with Washington's prior planned proxy war on Russia (which had commenced with the 2014 US-backed right-wing Maidan coup in Ukraine), it nevertheless followed the Trump Republicans in continuing the New Cold War on China, thus confronting the two great Eurasian powers at the same time.

Once back in power, Trump has sought to end the NATO proxy war in Ukraine, while turning more decisively to the struggle in Asia. Even the Middle East, where the Trump regime is currently supporting outright extermination – or the complete elimination and removal of the Palestinians in Gaza in the name of "peace" – while bombing Yemen and increasing pressures on Iran, is viewed as secondary to the New Cold War on China.

Excerpted from 'The Trump Doctrine and the New MAGA Imperialism', *Monthly Review*, monthlyreview.org

Football: Epic pastings

FRF

"220-point win mate.
Take it to the bank."

The speaker is a mate who's justly proud of playing local football in Victoria in his late 40s. Every week he jokingly tells me to bet my last dollar on a 220-point win. The Scientist as his mates call him, trains bloody hard, working each week on weak points revealed in the last "epic pasting" his team endured. He puts up with a lot of pain. It all says something about local footy.

The Scientist's team never actually wins by 220 points, but there are good weeks where they lose by less than triple digits. It's a mark of difference between local footy and higher levels of the game that these results are possible and that the team keeps coming back for more each week.

At least *most* of them keep coming back. The Scientist has harsh words for the last-minute heroes who are mysteriously sick in large numbers when they're about to face a far superior team, but who recover en masse when a beatable team is in the offing.

This is a worker's game. Almost everyone on the team has a job they have to do outside of football. Many have families and relationships to tend to. In the amos (the Victorian Amateur Football Association), they're in it for the love of the game, also for the company of mates. Many's the team that's had a boost because players who could easily be in higher leagues are sticking around so they can play with friends.

It's a long way from the slick, gambling-advertising plastered AFL games. There the margins are far tighter. The Scientist says that "even when the AFL teams stuff up – and they do stuff up – margins are never that high." There everyone is well trained and rested, with teams of sports medicine experts watching their every move. Even the top divisions of the amateurs has lower margins. There, teams can't pay players, but they can pay coaches and can "give out stuff." That sort of thing is how the state teams wound up becoming professional – good players being given cushy pretend jobs by rich supporters, generous 'in kind' payments.

The worst result our friend knows of in the amos is when Campbell's Creek won by over 600 points (so that's the best result from Campbell's Creeks's point of view). The scientist theorises that there must've been some sort of compulsory boozy function leading to the entire opposing team having hangovers. Not that there's not a lot of hard work involved in most games. The Scientist says there's a massive overuse of tape on injuries by players who just have to be there – players just tying everything up and hoping they survive the game.

Again, it's a worker's game. A lot of people do it as a way of surviving work. For some people, the weekly footy game is what gives the week meaning, getting them away from alienating work, stress, underpayment, or maybe just from nonsensical work jargon. Some workplace Human resources departments think they can waffle their way around anything, but when you're playing footy, the numbers don't lie.

Photo: Fitzroy Football Club Facebook

Many's the team that's had a boost because players who could be in higher leagues stick around so they can play with friends

Chile: Communist Party candidate wins primary

Voters in the presidential primary of the Unity for Chile coalition have selected the Communist Party's Jeannette Jara as their candidate to face off against the right-wing candidates José Antonio Kast and Evelyn Matthei in November's general election.

Jara scored 60% total in a four-candidate race. Her next closest challenger was Carolina Tohá of the Democratic Socialism party, who took 27.7% of the ballots. The Unity for Chile coalition pledged to support whichever candidate won the primary. Left and progressive forces in the country are now rallying behind Jara.

"Today begins a new path that we will walk together, with the conviction to build a fairer and more democratic Chile," Jara declared on social media after her win. "In the face of the threat from the far right, we respond with unity, dialogue, and hope."

She urged compatriots to "hold on to each other and not let go, so we can face Chile's far right with the broadest possible front."

She was immediately congratulated by President Gabriel Boric, who is barred from running for re-election due to constitutional limits on presidents serving consecutive terms.

"Jeannette Jara immediately steps up to lead the forces of progressivism toward the future," Boric said. "What lies ahead will not be easy, but Jeannette knows about tough battles. Now, let's all work together for unity to rally the majority of our compatriots to continue building a fairer, safer, and happier country."

Jara, 51, is one of the most prominent political leaders in the country. Before stepping down to run for president, she served as Minister of Labor in the Boric government and spearheaded successful efforts to reduce Chile's work week from 45 to 40 hours and raise the minimum wage.

OPPONENTS HAILS FROM FASCIST FAMILY

Kast, her main opponent in the general election, is making his third try for the presidency. His father was a member of Hitler's Nazi Party and a lieutenant in the military of the Third Reich.

As a politician, Kast has consistently pushed a reactionary platform premised on giving free rein to big business. He advocates major tax cuts for the wealthy, a rollback of labour and other progressive legislation, a halt to immigration, and bans on emergency birth control and same-sex marriage.

People's World (edited for space)

Solutions to Crossword

Guardian 30 June 2025 #2151

Down

1. **Hiroshima** – Japanese city where the US brutally attacked innocent civilians
2. **Severny** – Island over which the most powerful nuclear weapon in history was detonated
5. **Mosaic** – Name of two British nuclear tests on an archipelago off the coast of West Australia, so large they contaminated the mainland
7. **Boron** – Chemical that stops/controls nuclear fission
8. **USA** – First country to develop nuclear weapons
9. **WMD** – Acronym for a useful excuse to invade a country

Across

3. **Polygon** – Nickname for the Semipalatinsk Test Site, a Soviet site that became the most researched in the world
4. **Vela** – Satellite that detected a double flash in the late 70s, revealing that Israel or South Africa had conducted nuclear tests
6. **SmilingBuddha** – Grinning deity, code for India's first successful nuclear tests
10. **Maralinga** – Australian territory where the UK tested nuclear weapons in the 1950s

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Hollywood on the picket line

Peter Dreier

E.P. Clapp Distinguished Professor of Politics, Occidental College

Since the mid-1900s, Hollywood studios have depicted the collective efforts of working people to improve their lives and gain a voice in their workplaces and the larger society with both sympathy and hostility. Independent producers, who gained a foothold starting in the 1970s, have generally been friendlier toward workers and their unions.

Some of the most well-known labour movies champion the struggle of the everyday worker: *Modern Times*, released in 1936, stars Charlie Chaplin going crazy due to his job on an assembly line. It features the famous image of Chaplin caught in the gears of factory machinery. *The Grapes of Wrath*, a 1940 adaptation of John Steinbeck's novel, tells the story of sharecropper Tom Joad's radicalisation after his family and other migrant workers experience destitute conditions in California's growing fields and overcrowded migrant camps.

1979's *Norma Rae* is based on the life of Crystal Lee Sutton, who worked in a J.P. Stevens mill in North Carolina. The textile worker and single mom inspires her fellow workers to overcome their racial animus and work together to vote in a union. *Bread and Roses*, a 2000 film about low-wage janitors in Los Angeles, is based on the Service Employees International Union's Justice for Janitors movement.

There's also an anti-labour strain of Hollywood history, particularly during the post-World War II Red Scare, when studios purged left-wing writers, directors and actors through an industry-wide blacklist. Red Scare-era releases such as 1952's *Big Jim McLain* and the 1954 film *On the Waterfront* often depicted unions as corrupt or infiltrated by communist subversives.

When I teach labour history, I've used films to supplement books and articles. I've found that students more easily grasp the human dimensions of workers' lives and struggles when they are depicted on the screen.

Here are five unsung labor movies, all based on real-life events, that, in my view, deserve more attention.

1. *Northern Lights* (1978)

This is a fictionalised account of a fascinating but little-known political movement: the Non-Partisan League, which organised farmers in the upper Midwest in the early 1900s.

During this period, Midwestern farmers worked long hours to harvest grain that they were then forced to sell for low prices to elevators, while paying high prices to the big railroad companies and banks. Economic insecurity was a part of life, and foreclosures were routine.

The film follows Ray Sorenson, a young farmer influenced by socialist ideas who leaves his North Dakota farm to become a Non-Partisan League organiser. In his beat-up Model T, he travels the back roads, talking to farmers in their fields or around the potbellied stoves of country stores. He eventually persuades sceptical farmers that electing NPL candidates could get the government to create cooperative grain elevators, state-chartered banks with farmers as stockholders, and limits on the prices that railroads can charge farmers to haul their wheat.

Northern Lights is based on an early-20th-century farmer-led political uprising in the Midwest.

In 1916, the Non-Partisan League did, in fact, elect farmer Lynn Frazier as governor of North Dakota with 79% of the vote. Two years later, the NPL won control of both houses of the state legislature and created the North Dakota Mill, still the only state-owned flour mill, and the Bank of North Dakota, which remains the nation's only government-owned general-service bank.

2. *The Devil and Miss Jones* (1941)

In this screwball comedy with a pro-union twist, Charles Coburn plays John P Merrick, a fictional New York City department store owner.

After his employees hang him in effigy, the tycoon goes undercover to ferret out the agitators of a union drive led by a store clerk in the shoe department and a union organiser.

As he learns more about their lives, Merrick grows sympathetic to his workers – and even falls in love with one of his employees – none of whom know his true identity. As the workers prepare to go on strike, and even picket his house, Merrick reveals that he owns the store and agrees to their demands over pay and hours – and even marries the employee he's fallen for.

The film was likely inspired by the 1937 sit-down strikes by employees of New York City's department stores.

3. *Salt of the Earth* (1954)

Decades ahead of its time, this story of New Mexico mine workers deals with issues of racism, sexism, and class.

After a mine accident, the Mexican-American workers decide to strike. They demand better safety standards and equal treatment, since white miners are allowed to work in pairs, while Mexican ones are forced to work alone. The strikers expect the women to stay at home, cook, and take care of the children. But when the company gets an injunction to end the men's protest, the women step up and maintain the picket lines, earning greater respect from the men.

Made at the height of the Red Scare, the film's writer, producer and director had been blacklisted for their leftist sympathies, so the film was sponsored by the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, not a Hollywood studio.

Will Geer, a blacklisted actor who later portrayed Grandpa Walton on the TV drama *The Waltons*, played the repressive sheriff. Mexican actress Rosaura Revueltas played the leader of the wives. The other characters were portrayed by real miners and their wives who participated in the strike against the Empire Zinc Company, which served as the inspiration for the film.

The film itself was blacklisted, and no major theatre chain would show it, but has since become a cult favourite among union activists and on college campuses.

4. *10,000 Black Men Named George* (2002)

Andre Braugher stars as A Philip Randolph, who organised the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first Black-run union.

Being a porter on a Pullman railroad car was one of the few jobs open to Black men. But wages were low, travel was constant and trains' white passengers patronised the porters by calling all of them "George," after George Pullman, the mogul who owned the company.

The company hired thugs to intimidate the porters, but Randolph and his top lieutenants persisted. They began their crusade in 1925 but didn't get the company to sign a contract with the union until 1937, thanks to a New Deal law that gave railroad workers the right to unionise. Randolph became American's leading civil rights organiser during the 1940s and 1950s and orchestrated the 1963 March on Washington.

5. *North Country* (2005)

Charlize Theron portrays Josey Aimes, a desperate single mom who flees her abusive husband, returns to her hometown in northern Minnesota, moves in with her parents and takes a job at an iron mine.

There, she is constantly groped, insulted and bullied by the male workers. She complains to the company managers, who don't take her seriously. The male-dominated union claims there's nothing they can do. Aimes sues the company, which, after a dramatic courtroom scene, is forced to settle with her and other women.

With stellar performances by Theron, Sissy Spacek, Frances McDormand and Woody Harrelson, *North Country* is based on a groundbreaking lawsuit brought by female miners at Minnesota's Eveleth Mines in 1975 that helped make sexual harassment a violation of workers' rights.

The Conversation

Northern Lights

The Devil and Miss Jones

10,000 Black Men Named George

North Country

Worth Watching

***Newsfront*: Australian newsreel cameramen chase the news around Australia from just after WW2 until 1956 when television is introduced to Australia, and everyone goes off newsreels. The immensely likeable Bill Hunter heads a cast that includes Judy Davis, Chris Haywood, and Bryan Brown. The film takes in anti-communist hysteria in the mid-fifties, the attempt to ban the Communist Party by referendum, postwar immigration, and the 1956 Olympics, all in a very naturalistic way. Watch for when the voiceover guy spits the dummy on something political, still in his voiceover guy voice, and what Bill Hunter says to a priest who won't stop badgering him about voting Yes in the referendum.**

Do you have a favourite Australian film? Write in and tell us if the *Guardian* should profile it.

UK: Nuclear bomber fleet brings Britain 'closer to the brink'

Morning Star editorial

Keir Starmer's decision to buy 12 nuclear-capable F35A warplanes from the United States leaves us all less safe.

The decision stinks on every level.

Those who argue British rearmament will revive our gutted manufacturing sector instead see the Prime Minister splurging enormous sums – each plane comes with a price tag of $80-100 million (around $120 million AUD) – on US-built weaponry.

Hardly surprising, since a key motivation for Starmer is to appease a belligerent White House, whose demand that we ramp up "defence" spending serves the war profiteers of its bloated military-industrial complex. F35 manufacturer Lockheed Martin is one of the death-merchants that has done very nicely out of a world at war, with sales up 5 per cent last year to $71 billion.

Much worse still is the shift in nuclear policy this indicates. It lowers the threshold for use of a nuclear weapon in conflict, which has been taboo ever since the only country ever to do so – the United States – killed a quarter of a million people by dropping the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki 80 years ago this August.

Nuclear-capable aircraft will be a "second pillar" of our nuclear arsenal, ministers say, additional to Britain's existing "continuous at-sea deterrent" of Vanguard submarines bristling with Trident missiles.

Britain's existing nuclear weapons do not keep us safe, nor are they a truly independent deterrent, the missiles being leased from the United States and the guidance system being US-designed.

But at least the at-sea deterrent is conceived as a last resort. It is popularly justified as a means of striking back at an adversary with such force that we would not be attacked in the first place – though the NATO military alliance to which we belong has always refused to rule out first use of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear-armed aircraft are different. They would carry smaller, so-called tactical nuclear bombs, which military planners say would enable "limited" battlefield use that wouldn't necessarily escalate to nuclear Armageddon. Submarines can launch these smaller, though still devastating and poisonously radioactive, weapons too but the armchair generals fear a country under attack might not be able to distinguish whether it was under full-scale nuclear assault or the more "limited" variety, so might respond as if to the former.

The spin is that these weapons reduce the risk of all-out nuclear war. Nonsense. Convincing the reckless warmongers who rule us that they can use nuclear weapons without provoking all-out retaliation will normalise their use. Their very possession will accelerate nuclear proliferation, convincing every country fearing attack that it needs such weaponry itself. Dropping a nuclear bomb on someone is always going to be a huge escalation: the idea of a contained nuclear war is dangerous fantasy.

This catastrophic development, which also breaches our obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, is not being debated in Parliament, though few issues could have graver consequences. It is decreed by the Prime Minister on the grounds that we can "no longer take peace for granted."

But why is that? It is because our own government, and the US administration it shackles itself to, are leading a march to war. After a week in which Starmer has sternly warned the victim of unprovoked military attack, Iran, to "de-escalate" while bleating about the right of the aggressor to "defend itself," nobody should fall for the lie that our military posture is defensive. If or when the long taboo on nuclear war is violated, will it be in "self-defence" or to further the crazed ambitions of a far-right US president or the genocidal schemes of a murderous Israeli regime?

It is because we can no longer take peace for granted that nuclear disarmament is so urgent. Britain's rulers must feel pressure to stop stoking the nuclear arms race and bringing our country and the planet closer to the brink.

Morning Star

Warrior of Peace, a visit to Leonard Peltier

Sentenced to life in prison for the murder of two US federal agents in a shoot-out in 1975, Indigenous activist Leonard Peltier was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences. His sentence was commuted by President Biden in January 2025. Peltier always maintained his innocence. This account of visiting him is by Party member Dr Bev Hall.

Leonard Peltier is under house arrest and is restricted in travel, communications, personal visits and as well as other restrictions. He cannot leave Turtle Mountain beyond a 161 km radius. Travel beyond that is restricted and requires permission. It's very difficult for people to visit Leonard with Trump in power, due to the ICE reign of terror which has scooped up First Nations people as well as other migrants.

Leonard is barred from meeting any person who is a convicted felon which includes a large percentage of First Nations peoples. This would be very difficult for former AIM members or even present-day First Nations activists.

As with many First Nations people who have been institutionalised and incarcerated after release it can be difficult to adjust, and for families to understand and find the best ways to support and cope with this situation. In Leonard's case, he has been getting to know his family after being heavily institutionalised for 50 years in total. It takes time to adjust and there is a lot of trauma and healing expected with all involved.

Peltier is the longest serving political prisoner in the world – in a country that claims to value human rights. There is a high risk he can be set up and returned to prison on any fake pretext to serve out the sentence even though he is innocent and has never had a real trial. The original prosecutor James Reynolds in 1977 signed petitions calling for clemency, as he believed Leonard was innocent. Leonard was convicted by an all-white jury and under dubious circumstances for the so-called murder of two FBI agents on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in 1975.

Leonard did NOT receive the clemency of pardon as is typically understood. The clemency former US President Biden granted was one of house arrest and continued monitoring. Leonard has to serve out his life sentence in this manner. The FBI and disinformation forces, continue to stand in a menacing position.

In 1998 we were able to visit Turtle Mountain and Pine Ridge with several Australian Aboriginal friends and Canadian First Nations members. We found this a very moving experience, very spiritual, and we certainly learnt a great deal. The church had been removed but the grave site of the original massacre of the Lakota peoples is still maintained as a dark part of the US history. Black Elk is also buried there on the side of the mass grave. The plaque at the base of the hill leading up to the site claimed a shot was 'accidentally' fired from a soldier which led to the massacre of the Lakota people there.

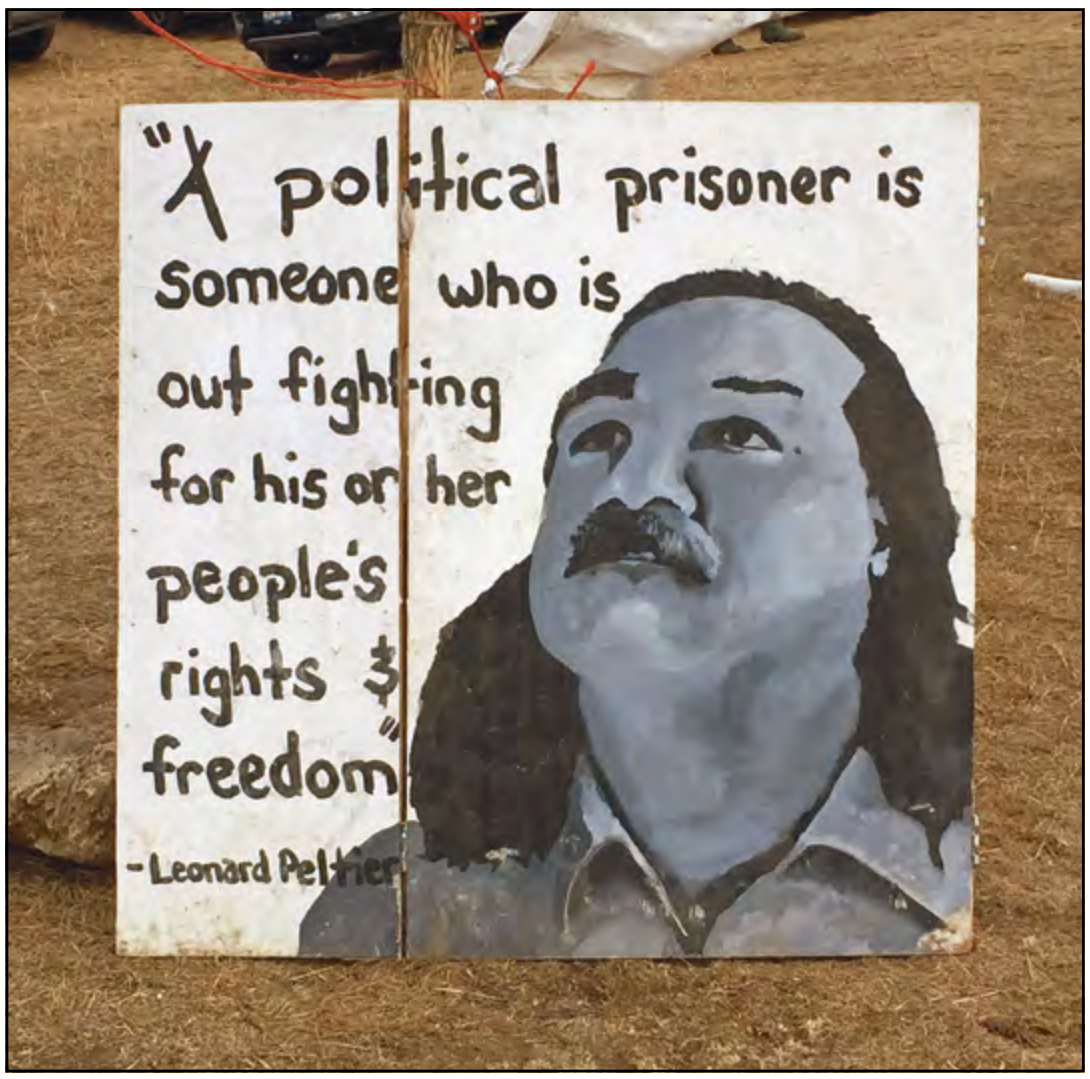

Photo: Becker1999 – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

Neutrality would suit Slovakia in times of armament: PM

Bob Saltis

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico has spoken out for the first time about the neutrality of the country, which has been a member of NATO since 2004.

"In these senseless times of armaments, when arms companies are rubbing their hands, as (pharmaceutical) companies were rubbing their hands during COVID, neutrality would be very beneficial for Slovakia. Unfortunately, this decision is not in my hands," Fico said in response to a journalist's question about increasing defence spending.

This is what the countries of the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union are planning. In this context, Fico questioned the increase in military spending, for example, asking a rhetorical question about who wants to fight whom. He also claimed that everyone is talking about war.

Slovak President Peter Pellegrini reacted by saying that Fico's statement was a provocative idea. Pellegrini told reporters that Slovakia would have to spend much more money on its defence than it does today in the event of neutrality. He described the topic of Slovak neutrality as unnecessary.

"For me, it is crucial that the government's program statement states that the government continues to support Slovakia's membership in NATO and intends to fulfill the obligations of this membership," the Slovak President said.

According to Slovak opposition leader Michal Šimečka, Fico's words would in practice mean Slovakia's withdrawal from NATO. "Robert Fico is raving about Slovakia's neutrality. This is an absolutely scandalous statement. He is questioning the anchoring of our entire foreign policy."

Other Slovak opposition politicians also criticised Fico for his statement about neutrality, saying it was another attempt by the prime minister to divert attention from the country's real problems. They also pointed out that Ukraine, where Russia is fighting now, was also neutral.

Libya revisited

Muammar Gaddafi. Photo: Πρωθυπουργός της Ελλάδας – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Marcus Browning

No one should be under any illusions about the intentions of Western governments and their offensive against Iran via their two nuclear-armed attack dogs, Israel and NATO given their activities throughout the 42 years of Muammar Gaddafi's rule in Libya. During that time there were 39 coup attempts inspired by US, British, and French agencies, most of which were centred on Benghazi and the province of Cyrenaica.

Many involved an attempt at assassination, as did the US fighter-bomber attack on Tripoli in 1986 in which eight of the 18 aircraft flying from Britain specifically targeted Colonel Gaddafi's private residence.

Gaddafi's overthrow began as an uprising in Benghazi which followed a Facebook call, from London on 17 February 2011, to commemorate the 2005 massacre at Abu Salim prison. In response to the ensuing fighting the UN Security Council unanimously approved resolution 1970 on 26 February.

Calling for an end to all violence, it required all member states to apply an arms embargo which also prohibited the provision of technical assistance, training, finance and all other assistance related to military activities. It soon became clear that British forces were in breach of the resolution when six members of the SAS were taken prisoner by opposition forces in Benghazi. What the troops were trying to achieve, and what went wrong with the operation has never been revealed.

ARMING THE OPPOSITION

Following reports of civilian massacres by Libyan aircraft the Security Council responded by approving resolution 1973 on 17 March 2011, although this time one-third of the 15 members abstained. (The claims concerning civilian massacres were later refuted by Amnesty International, along with allegations that the Libyan regime had been employing foreign mercenaries.) This called for an immediate ceasefire and for all sides to seek a solution to the crisis while requiring them to protect civilians. Responding to a call from the Arab League it authorised the enforcement of a no-fly zone.

A US-drafted amendment allowed for "all necessary measures [to protect Libyan civilians] under threat of attack". The US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, promptly claimed that this allowed for the arming the pro-western opposition under the terms of the resolution. Jose Cabral, the chair of the Sanctions Committee, disagreed and declared that "the resolution [1973] imposes a full embargo on arms."

The US and NATO had no interest in legal formalities and large quantities of arms were subsequently supplied to the opposition from Qatar via the Egyptian border. France also shipped in some supplies directly, while NATO Special Forces supplied training and expertise.

In response to resolution 1973, the Libyan Foreign Minister announced an immediate ceasefire and a stoppage of all military operations against opposition forces. The next day French aircraft carried out an airstrike which was followed by the launch of 110 Tomahawk missiles by US and British warships against air defences in Tripoli and Misrata.

Thus, only two days after its approval, the Security Council resolution was rendered a sham by NATO when they ignored the offer of an immediate ceasefire and refused to seek a solution to the crisis.

All subsequent calls for a ceasefire by the Libyan government were summarily dismissed by either the opposition or NATO. By 29 March the Russian Foreign Minister was moved to comment "We consider that intervention by the coalition in what is essentially an internal civil war is not sanctioned by the UN Security Council resolution."

Apart from coverage of the murder of Muammar Gaddafi and his contemptuous secret burial there was little mainstream reportage of the results arising from this international banditry. Even casualty figures are vague. (NATO does not do casualty figures.)

During the 20th century both Syria and Libya experienced the brutal repression and racism of European colonialism, while Iran was invaded by British Empire forces a few years before Anglo-American meddling imposed a brutal puppet regime. The dark shadow of colonial occupation is attempting a come-back.

The US and NATO had no interest in legal formalities

Global Briefs

USA: The Indigenous People's Coalition (IPC) met in Nashville to discuss opposition to anti-immigrant raids conducted by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Trump administration. The IPC emphasised that attacks on Latino immigrants are also attacks on Indigenous peoples, noting that a majority of immigrants across the southern border are ethnically Indigenous or of Indigenous descent. Furthermore, many immigrants are only able to speak Indigenous languages. Drawing upon the history of opposition to racial segregation and the pursuit of fugitive slaves, the IPC meeting declared opposition to both ICE raids and the proposed bill from Tennessee governor Bill Lee set to criminalise harbouring or assisting migrants.

China: Defence ministers from member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) have met in Qingdao. Attendees included Iran's defence minister, who urged greater cooperation to support Iran's stance and ease tensions in the face of Israeli and US aggression. The meeting also marks a potentially important step towards managing tensions in other regions, namely between the member states India, China, and Pakistan. All 10 member states agreed to strengthen communication and practical cooperation. Chinese commentators have noted that, unlike confrontational, Western-led conferences such as the Shangri-La Dialogue, the SCO meeting was underscored by principles of mutual respect and peaceful, cooperative development.

Colombia: Gustavo Petro has signed landmark labour reforms into law following congressional approval. Petro said that the reform does not represent radical new rights, but a recovery of rights lost to neoliberalism. While more progressive reforms such as menstrual and paternity leave were cut during congressional negotiations, the reforms which survived include fairer standards for worker contracts across many industries, increased pay for weekends and holidays, and wider availability of social security. Petro has urged for unionisation as a means of organising and protecting the full implementation of these reforms.

Cuba: Preparations are underway for the arrival of a massive sargassum bloom on the coast of Guantanamo. A species of brown algae, sargassum is a vital resource for marine environments in the Atlantic. However climate change has led to an increased frequency and severity of excessively large blooms which threaten ecosystems, disrupt fishing communities, and pose a threat to human health. The decomposition of sargassum produces gasses such as hydrogen sulphide and ammonia, linked to a range of health issues. Sargassum blooms may also host bacteria linked to skin and gastrointestinal infections. Sargassum is an issue across the Caribbean, with Florida's coasts facing a similar threat. While countries such as Mexico have been able to adopt comprehensive strategies to address the issue, Cuba is particularly vulnerable due to the US embargo heavily limiting management options.

Korea: Commemorative ceremonies have taken place around the world for the 75th anniversary of the start of the Korean War (generally considered the 25th of June). Western events such as those in Australia and New Zealand lamented the 'forgotten war' and the mistreatment of veterans sent to aid in the US-led operation to "defend freedom and peace." Rallies held across the DPRK, from Pyongyang to Sinchon, instead marked the Day of Struggle against US imperialism. They remember that US intervention as a desperate attempt to assert control over Asia following the successes of the Soviet Union's nuclear program and the founding of the People's Republic of China. Working people, government officials, unions, and women's and students' organisations attended rallies across the nation to remember the US-led overthrow of democracy on the Korean peninsula, the killing of 12-20% of the North's population, and the continued need for self-defence in the face of ongoing embargoes and military threats from the US and its allies.

Argentina's most powerful woman silenced by 'lawfare'

In the latest example of what is sometimes called "lawfare," the leader of Argentina's largest political party and former president of the Republic, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner has been sentenced to six years in prison for alleged "fraudulent administration of public funds" and banned from ever holding public office.

Cristina, as she is often called, was first convicted in 2022. It was not until November 2024 that her appeal was heard and dismissed by the Court of Cassation. Following a further appeal to the Supreme Court, her sentence was confirmed on 10 June after a right-wing media campaign demanding that her case be heard before the July cut-off date for registration to stand in the forthcoming Buenos Aires provincial elections.

The Supreme Court's decision provoked a furious reaction both inside and outside Argentina. Brazilian President Lula da Silva, himself a previous victim of lawfare and baseless charges expressed his outrage. In a statement, his Workers Party said that she was the "worst victim of political violence and legal warfare" since the return of constitutional government in 1983.

Former Honduran President Manuel Zelaya said that there is a continental strategy to undermine popular leaders and that Cristina's persecution is an affront to democracy and the Argentine people. Luisa Gonzalez, who recently lost the Ecuadorian presidential election in highly dubious circumstances, put it bluntly: "Today, Argentinian democracy ceased to exist." Other messages of support came from Ecuador's Rafael Correa Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, Colombian President Gustavo Petro, and Bolivian President Luis Arce.

In Buenos Aires, the Supreme Court's ruling prompted thousands of people to take to the streets, many of whom gathered outside Cristina's apartment in the centre of the city to lend their support. The hearing to decide where she should serve her sentence was scheduled for 18 June in the Federal Tribunal, though that was quickly changed to a session behind closed doors, in anticipation of public support.

If the intention was to avoid pictures of pro-Cristina demonstrations going public, it failed miserably. Instead of accompanying her to the court, unions, human rights organisations, and other civil society actors called for a demonstration in the capital's Plaza de Mayo. Regardless of sustained harassment from the authorities who tried to prevent buses from reaching the rally, nearly one million people flooded the streets in an incredible display of solidarity.

Comparisons were made with the huge protests of October 1945, that secured the release of Domingo Peron from jail, a date still celebrated by Peronists every year. Unlike her predecessor, Cristina will not have to serve her time in jail. In spite of calls for her to be put in a common prison, the judges ruled that she would be put under house arrest, forced to wear an electronic ankle tag and forbidden to go out onto her balcony, so as to "not disturb the neighbours."

Her defence had argued against the fitting of a tag, as there is no danger of her absconding owing to the presence of her own police guard, to which every ex-president is entitled, on duty 24 hours per day. According to the leader of the Socialist Workers Party/Left Front and lawyer, Myriam Bergman, the order to wear a tag was motivated by political spite.

The reality is that the restrictions of the type imposed on Cristina are not the norm. There are numerous examples of murderers and torturers from the dictatorship serving life sentences under house arrest, still being able to lead almost normal lives. Of the 498 members of the ex-military dictatorship under house arrest, only 16 per cent are forced to wear a tag.

The lifelong ban on being able to stand for political office has been called a threat to democracy and in violation of rights contained in international treaties Argentina is a signatory to. Cristina is only the third major political figure to be banned in under a century.

The massive turnout of 18 June demonstrates that Cristina is undoubtedly the most significant female figure in Argentinian politics since Peron's wife Eva. That does not mean she is universally popular; far from it. In Argentina's divided society, she arouses strong feelings from both her Peronist supporters and her detractors.

A poll taken after her sentencing, asking whether she was guilty as charged, resulted in a roughly 50-50 split. All too predictably, most of her supporters said that she was not guilty while detractors said that she was.

Guilty or not, some political analysts believe that the establishment's success in sidelining Cristina may turn out to be something of an own goal. Her sentencing and imprisonment have brought together all the warring factions of Peronism, who had hitherto spent more time fighting among themselves rather than concentrating on opposition to the extremist government of Javier Milei.

United, the Peronist movement, is the most powerful political force in Argentina, and with the right candidates, may well consolidate its parliamentary position at the mid-term elections in spring.

As for Milei himself, he was in Tel Aviv, offering unconditional support for Israeli genocide, when the verdict was announced and merely commented that justice had been done.

Morning Star (edited for space)

Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner. Photo: EneasMx – flickrcom (CC BY 4.0)

Cristina is undoubtedly the most significant female figure in Argentinian politics since Peron's wife Eva

Mali takes control

Pedro Stropasolas

The Loulo-Gounkoto complex, one of the largest gold mines in the world currently owned by the Canadian company Barrick Mining, has been placed under the provisional administration of the State of Mali. The measure was formalised on 16 June by the Commercial Court of Bamako and takes place amid a dispute between the Malian government, led by Colonel Assimi Goïta, and the multi-national company.

Mali, Africa's second-largest gold producer and the world's fourth-largest, says Barrick owes taxes and operates under unfavorable contracts signed with previous governments. In response, the company said it would appeal the court ruling.

The court appointed former Malian Health Minister Zoumana Makadji as the mine's interim administrator. Officials from Mali's government said the decision "protects national economic interests" and prevents "a sudden closure of the mine in the absence of a revised agreement." The mine accounts for about 14% of Barrick's revenues, and Mali holds a 20% stake.

The government had officially requested that the court change the management of the mine, citing an interest in reopening it at a time of historic highs in gold prices. The dispute with Barrick led to the closure of the company's offices in Bamako, the capital of Mali. The government also issued an arrest warrant for the company's CEO, Mark Bristow, in December 2024. The company has offered US$370 million (AU$56 million) to the Malian state amid the dispute.

In a statement, Barrick said that "while its subsidiaries remain the legal owners of the mine, operational control has been transferred to an external administrator."

The tension between Mali and Barrick is not an isolated case. As part of a new policy to strengthen the national economy, the Malian government – a member of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) alongside Burkina Faso and Niger – has been putting pressure on several foreign companies in the mining sector.

STATE OWNED

On the same day it took over management of the mine, the government began construction on West Africa's first state-owned gold refinery, in partnership with the Russian conglomerate Yadran.

Located in Senou, 19 km from Bamako, the refinery will have the capacity to process up to 200 tons of gold per year. Mali will be a majority shareholder in the project, which aims to ensure that the nation can benefit directly from its mineral resources, without relying on foreign refineries.

During the groundbreaking ceremony, President Assimi Goïta declared: "This is a long-awaited dream of the Malian people and today it has become a reality." The speech was made during the inauguration ceremony of the work, when the president laid the first brick in the construction.

Yadran Group Chairman Irek Salikhov welcomed the initiative and said the refinery is set to become a regional processing hub, also serving neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso. According to him, the goal is to enable Mali to "refine all the gold mined on its territory, putting an end to decades of exporting raw ore."

There is still no official deadline for the completion of the refinery, which represents another step by the Malian government towards sovereign control over the gold production chain.

Peoples Dispatch

Unwilling accomplice: Western imperialism uses Cyprus as launchpad for war

Amiad Horowitz

When Western media talk about imperialism in the Middle East, the conversation rarely extends beyond Israel. Armed, funded, and politically shielded by the United States, Israel operates as Washington's top regional enforcer – a de facto extension of the US military. But just 200 miles north-west of Haifa, in the eastern Mediterranean, another 'unsinkable aircraft carrier' has long served the same purpose for NATO: the island of Cyprus.

While Cyprus formally gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, the end of colonial rule came with a catch. Under the terms of the London-Zurich agreements, Britain retained control of two so-called 'Sovereign Base Areas' at Akrotiri and Dhekelia – effectively carving out chunks of Cypriot territory for permanent use by the British military. These bases remain operational today, hosting thousands of troops and dozens of aircraft and acting as logistical hubs, surveillance centres, and launchpads for air and intelligence operations across the Middle East.

In recent years, Cyprus has once again found itself implicated in imperialist wars – not by choice, but by geography and the persistent presence of foreign bases on its soil. The British Royal Air Force has used Akrotiri to conduct bombing runs on Syria. Intelligence gathered from Cyprus has supported operations in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine. NATO infrastructure on the island is tightly interwoven with US and Israeli military interests.

This militarisation is not an accident – it's by design.

The Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL), a consistent voice for peace and anti-imperialism in the region, has long opposed the foreign military presence on the island. For decades, AKEL has demanded the full demilitarisation of Cyprus and the removal of the British bases, arguing that these facilities serve imperialist interests, not the Cypriot people.

In a powerful and timely statement issued following the recent US and Israeli attacks on Iran, AKEL warned that this escalation "entails nightmarish dangers to the peace and security not only of the region but also of the entire world."

The party condemned the attacks as "a new gross violation of international law" and part of a broader imperialist project "to redraw the borders of the Middle East to suit [Western] geopolitical and energy interests." That plan, the statement emphasised, includes "the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people, which is continuing with unabated intensity."

AKEL connected the dots clearly: Cyprus, though often absent from headlines, is implicated in this unfolding imperialist strategy. The British bases – vestiges of colonialism – enable these interventions, often without the consent or even the knowledge of the Cypriot people. The party reiterated its call for a return to diplomacy and a rejection of the false justifications used by aggressors.

"The pretexts used by Trump and Netanyahu," the statement declared, "are blatantly hypocritical and a repeat of Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, and so on." The true motivations, AKEL noted, lie in the economic and strategic desires of Western imperialist powers – not in the pursuit of peace or democracy.

In this context, the island's division – between the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus in the south and the Turkish-occupied north – only deepens the injustice. While half the island remains under illegal Turkish military occupation, the other half is partially occupied by British forces. This double occupation by two NATO powers has long been condemned by AKEL and by Cypriot civil society, which demands reunification under a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality and no foreign interference, troops, or bases.

The wider implications of Cyprus's militarisation are becoming more apparent. Energy discoveries in the eastern Mediterranean have brought new attention – and new threats – to the region. NATO's posture toward Russia has intensified its interest in the region, while Israeli expansionism and Western interventionism continue to destabilise the broader Middle East. Cyprus, caught in the middle, is being used without consent.

Imperialism is not only about warplanes and invasions – it is also about control of land, manipulation of treaties, and the use of small nations as pawns on a global chessboard. The demand for a Middle East free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction – another long-standing call by AKEL – remains more urgent than ever. So too does the demand for the full sovereignty of Cyprus and the removal of foreign military bases.

The presence of US and British forces in the region does not make the world safer, rather, it places us all on the brink. Peace means standing with the Cypriot people, not with the war machines that occupy their land. It means recognising that colonialism didn't die in 1960; it just put on a new uniform and called itself a "strategic partnership."

The struggle for peace is global and the frontlines include not only Gaza, Tehran, and Damascus, but also the quiet military enclaves in Akrotiri and Dhekelia.

Cyprus is not just a beautiful island in the Eastern Mediterranean; it's also a battlefield in the struggle for sovereignty, peace, and freedom from imperial domination.

People's World

Sensible

On the face of it, this is a good thing – who wants to be not sensible? The weaselly use comes from using it – like close relative 'common sense' to smuggle in your own ideas without criticism. Angus Taylor, Liberal Party shadow treasurer Angus Taylor is against quotas for women in the very man-heavy Liberal-National party, but wants a sensible debate about recruiting women to parliament. No, Angus doesn't spell out how a sensible debate would work, but he's pretty sure it doesn't include quotas, or too many women.

Not uncritical

"We haven't been uncritical of Israel" says Anthony Albanese, as usual doing his balancing act of not criticising Israel while trying to not incur the completely justified anger of people who think that after more than 55,000 killed, being critical of Israel isn't the worst idea in the world. In effect, he's asking us to lay off because he's been plenty hard on Israel. Really.

What's Albo's evidence for this feisty 'not uncritical' approach? He's called for support for aid to go into Gaza. If you can see criticism of Israel in that statement, we have a bridge to sell you. It's been in the family for years, but it's cluttering up the backyard, not to mention Sydney Harbour.

Robust (times)

When it's not being used as part of a pretentious description of wine and or coffee flavours, 'robust' usually means two public figures hate each other's guts ("we've had robust discussions" is what the public is told).

According to a foot-massage profile in *The Saturday Paper*, Opposition Leader Sussan Ley expects "robust times ahead." We think it just means that the Coalition doesn't expect to be back in power any time soon, but no doubt there are some robust discussions ahead for Sussan.

Honourable

Not a word used much these days. The last time we remember it being used in public was when Andrew Windsor did a car-crash interview in order to tell the world that he stayed mates with convicted sex-trafficker and pedophile Jeffrey Epstein out of "honour."

Now 'honourable' has had another run from the British Foreign Office, which has told staff who signed an open letter that it would be honourable of them to resign.

The open letter had protested about the UK's role in arming a country that is carrying out a genocide. Apparently a nation can do that with honour intact.

Perplexing

One from the family of passive-aggressive weasel words, whereby the speaker pretends to not understand something they understand all too well. The Liberal Party has a problem. Labor is doing everything they'd do if they were in power, but they still want to oppose, like a good opposition would. So it is that Dave Sharma, Liberal senator and former Australian ambassador to Israel, said the government's response to the US attack on Iran was "perplexing," because Labor pretended to think about it, before adopting Australia's traditional approach of mindless support for whatever the USA wants to do.

Appropriate

A weasel classic because it's so vague – appropriate means different things in different situations. In this case, it's British PM Keir Starmer rushing to jump on a bandwagon. Starmer took time out of his Prime Ministerial schedule to condemn Irish-language hip-hop group, Kneecap's appearance at a festival he could easily ignore and which isn't his responsibility anyway. Kneecap's crime seems to be being pro-Palestine. Aging rocker Rod Stewart, also at the festival, has supported high-profile racist Nigel Farage, but Starmer didn't comment on that.

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Gaza hospitals shut down, Israel continues to block medical supplies

Ana Vračar

Less than half of all health facilities in the Gaza Strip remain partially operational and capable of providing basic primary care and surgery, the Al Mezan Center for Human Rights has warned. Israeli attacks have rendered nearly all hospitals in northern Gaza non-functional, destroying dialysis units, oncology departments, and rehabilitation centres. The threat of total shutdown is now advancing into the southern governorates: the European Hospital has already been forced to close due to the attacks, and the Nasser Medical Center could be next in line.

This major institution has been operating far beyond capacity for weeks and is under imminent threat of closure, according to both international and non-governmental organisations. "Its closure would deprive thousands of access to critical healthcare and effectively amounts to a death sentence for the wounded and sick in the southern district," Al Mezan reported.

According to the Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) Health Advisory Council, most patients at the centre are victims of direct sniper shots to the head or chest, illustrating the deliberate targeting of Palestinians by Israeli forces.

MEDICS FORCED TO REUSE

The crisis at Nasser, as with other medical facilities, is worsened by widespread shortages of essential supplies. Over 50% of medications for chronic conditions are unavailable, 64% of cancer and hematology drugs are missing, and the shortage of orthopedic equipment has reached nearly 90%, according to health organisations. Both the JVP Health Advisory Council and United Nations agencies have highlighted that the lack of basic items such as gauze, medicines, and surgical equipment is forcing medical staff into extreme triage decisions. "Medical teams have been forced to reuse equipment – sterilising and repurposing implants from recovered patients – due to the acute shortage of these items," Al Mezan said.

Fuel shortages are of particular concern, as they endanger the functioning of critical medical devices such as ventilators in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs). "Newborns in NICUs are often too small to breathe on their own – they need ventilators and oxygen to survive," staff from Doctors Without Borders (MSF) pointed out. "The charade of only allowing medical and fuel supplies at the very last minute before a looming disaster is nothing but a band-aid on a gushing wound."

HUNGER RATES GROW

At the same time, hunger is sweeping through Gaza. Following Israel's months-long blockade of aid and the weaponisation of humanitarian deliveries, most of the population is experiencing rising degrees of malnutrition. This is impacting public health in multiple ways, including reducing the pool of eligible blood donors, even as blood banks face dire shortages.

"We are missing everything: medical consumables like gauze, medications, and food for our patients," said MSF nursing manager Katja Storck. "This also includes therapeutic food for people with malnutrition, especially children."

By 15 June, nearly 19,000 children under five had received treatment for malnutrition, though this likely underrepresents the full extent of the crisis. As the JVP Health Advisory Council noted, these cases emerged "within a population where wasting was non-existent 20 months ago." Malnutrition is not only increasing susceptibility to infectious disease, but is also causing serious long-term effects such as stunted growth and mental health problems. Prenatal health is also affected: one in five newborns is now being born preterm or underweight.

While many adults are trying to shield children from hunger by reducing their own intake, most coping strategies are ineffective under the conditions imposed by the occupation. "Most families reported surviving on one meagre meal a day – thin broths, lentils or rice with salt, macaroni, cans of beans or peas, and boiled legumes," UN sources reported. "One third said they go entire days without eating or rely on a single piece of bread and duqqa. (a kind of dip)"

Beyond hunger caused by Israel's blockade, Palestinians in Gaza are also facing an escalating water crisis. With much of the water infrastructure destroyed and fuel to power desalination plants missing, access to safe drinking water has plummeted. In Deir al-Balah, 97% of residents reported being unable to obtain adequate water. "This is Gaza's most critical moment since this war on children began – a woeful bar to sink below," UNICEF spokesperson James Elder stated on 20 June. "A virtual blockade is in place; humanitarian aid is being sidelined; the daily killing of girls and boys in Gaza does not register; and now a deliberate fuel crisis is severing Palestinians' most essential element for survival: water."

People's Dispatch

Israeli attacks have rendered nearly all hospitals in northern Gaza non-functional

Photo: UNRWA

Australia: escalating police violence against protest

According to a statement from the NSW Greens, a peaceful picket at SEC Plating in Belmore descended into violence when the NSW Police violently attacked and assaulted protestors, leaving one woman with serious facial injuries and arresting multiple demonstrators (see report page 5).

SEC Plating reportedly is involved in providing plating services for various parts used in F-35 jets. The State of Israel's fleet of around 40 F-35 rely on the global supply chain and supplement supply from countries like Australia to continue the genocide against the Palestinian people. This puts the lie to Labor's repeated assertions that the Albanese government is not arming genocide.

Greens MP and NSW Justice Spokesperson Sue Higginson said:

"The actions of the NSW Police can only be described as brutal and excessive, there is a significant question about the lawfulness of what they have done to members of the community exercising their rights of assembly."

"I have spoken with the people in police custody ... and they can not believe what they saw happen to the individual who has sustained serious injury as a result of the excessive police force,"

"Premier Chris Minns must answer for his empowerment of the NSW Police State against protest, with his Labor government continuing the vilification and targeting of community members who are taking a stand against the ongoing genocide being committed against the Palestinian people,"

"If the NSW Police feel empowered to violently and brutally assault members of the community engaging in lawful and legitimate protest, then it is the responsibility of our democratic government to call this out, and to act to protect protest."

Greens Senator and Justice Spokesperson David Shoebridge said:

"When police are deployed to protect weapons companies instead of protecting the right to peaceful protest, we must ask whose interests they are really serving.

"Police are being used here to support a corporate-run global weapons chain against a people-powered global peace movement.

"The arrest of multiple peaceful protesters who are calling for Australia to stop arming a genocide shows how far we've moved from protecting peaceful dissent."

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