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Hiroshima Day
BAN ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Marcus Browning

We face the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, as the issues of war and peace are thrown into stark relief against Israel's horrific crimes against the Palestinians. The world is also witnessing nuclear-armed Israel's aggression against Iran and Syria in its role as military attack dog of US imperialism in the middle-east.

The US decline and fear of China's growth which is beginning to challenge US dominance throughout the region, including Australia, is driving the escalation of US military aggression.

The US has a growing military presence in Australia's north with the Australian military being further integrated under US command, especially though increased joint exercises.

This foreign military presence includes a build-up of US warships, submarines, B-52 bombers, fighter aircraft and weapons (including nuclear) based in Australia. Joint exercises with Australia and US will be increased. Australia has already undertaken a relocation of its own armed forces with two thirds of the Army's combat forces now in the NT and nearly half the fleet in WA, in line with US strategic plans to contain China and dominate the South China Sea.

The US controls many important trade shipping lanes and has numerous military bases and troops stationed throughout the region to protect its present and future economic investments, control of resources and markets and political power.

The new US imperialist military expansion and provocations in the Asia Pacific are a threat to peace and national sovereignty of countries and people in the region.

US imperialism is the main instigator of wars for control of resources, markets and for its monopoly capital investments across the globe. Australia's military integration into the US imperialist war machine assists the US to wage predatory wars against people and nations.

The Communist Party of Australia campaigns for peace, for Australia's sovereignty and independence and to build friendship and solidarity with the people of Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

The CPA advocates:

- The banning of all nuclear weapons.
- The removal of US military and intelligence bases from Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.
- Opposition to Australia's role as a US proxy in the Asia and Indo-Pacific region.
- The promotion of an independent Australian foreign policy that builds peace, and respects the independence and sovereignty of countries and people in the Asia-Pacific.
- Exposing and opposing foreign armaments corporations in Australia.
- Opposing the development of an armaments industry in Australia.
- Commemorations of the August 1945 nuclear bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are occasions when the demand is raised for the abolition of all nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are the only weapons capable of destroying civilisation and the human species.

The 80th anniversary is a time to remember the victims and raise awareness of the current dangers posed by the proliferation and build-up of far more powerful and sophisticated nuclear weapons. Trillions of dollars are spent on nuclear weapons and associated technology while huge numbers of people die of hunger.

Australia is directly involved through its alliance with the United States and the US bases here, especially the missile launch detection system at Pine Gap. Australia is also involved through the export of uranium.

Photo: Leigh Howlett

Brigadier General Bonner Fellers, one of US General MacArthur's aides, described the annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as "one of the most ruthless and barbaric killings of non-combatants in all history."

As time has passed, there has been growing recognition that the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a war crime. It was not to "save Allied lives" as the spin the US put on it would have us believe.

The use of the atomic weapons was a way of positioning the US as the dominant power in the post war period.

This is a time to renew our struggle for peace in this world and this region. We urge all CPA members and supporters, everyone who hates war, everyone opposed to nuclear weapons, everyone committed to a world of peace and social justice to get to your local commemoration.

How not to abolish nuclear weapons: Iran

Peter Farmer

Iran was negotiating a nuclear weapons deal with Western countries when something happened. That something was unprovoked missile attacks by Israel followed by worse attacks by Israel's arms supplier the USA.

The Israeli justification that Iran was on the brink of developing usable nuclear weapons was debunked by US experts who had every reason to support the imminent nuclear weapons narrative. US President Trump dismissed the testimony of his own national security adviser, saying "I don't care what she said."

Having been attacked by two nuclear powers, it would be understandable if Iran were now motivated to do its utmost to develop nuclear weapons. The US doesn't act so recklessly to countries that have their own supply.

Iran had a nuclear deal in 2015, but Trump abandoned that agreement in his first presidency, saying the deal wasn't tough enough.

Morning Star reports that the US has pressured France, Germany, and Britain who have agreed to restore sanctions that applied under a deal the USA walked away from if Iran doesn't agree to a new agreement.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has said in recent that Tehran would accept a resumption of nuclear talks with the US if there were assurances of no more attacks.

If the US and its 'allies' want a nuclear-free Middle East, they could start by keeping agreements and by asking Israel a few hard questions.

Nuclear weapons are the only weapons capable of destroying the human species

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Austerity and war vs development and peace

The *Guardian* has a podcast
Search for "Communist *Guardian* Podcast"

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Hope on the horizon

PM Anthony Albanese's trip to China seems to have been a success. As well as the usual diplomatic niceties and photo-ops, Albanese had substantial time for conversations with Chinese leaders. Australia has good trade relations with China which benefit both countries. Relations seem positive. This paper does not praise Albo very often, but we must say it's a good thing he didn't spend time chasing after US President Trump, as urged by some sycophantic parts of the Australian media.

That media has put a lot of effort into demonising China. The People's Republic is faulted for being "assertive," as though only the US and its allies are allowed to have interests. China's military is described as growing in a scary way, while the US trillion-dollar+ military budget is accepted as just the way things are.

Chinese actions that are obviously positive are routinely spun into threats. The world needs electric transport and renewable energy, but China's epic production of affordable EVs, batteries, and solar panels are described as 'dumping,' as though it's bad that a lot of people will soon be able to afford an electric car and solar power.

We need to stop the use of fossil fuels. This is a matter of survival for the human species. China's use of coal and gas has peaked, and it is bringing renewable power on board at unprecedented rates but this news is buried back in the business pages instead of being celebrated.

The USA has been less than constructive. In contrast to China's respectful approach to other countries, the US tried to pressure Australia (and Japan) to commit to joining in a US war with China in the event of military action around the Chinese province of Taiwan. Hamfisted Liberal Party Defence spokesman Angus Taylor promised Australia will join in. The USA also continues to nag Australia about the "need" for more spending on the military. Because of our dependent relationship to the USA, Australian politicians promise to lift military spending instead of telling Washington to mind its own business.

All too often, China is depicted as a threat, instead of as an inspiration and/or an opportunity. China *is* a threat. It's a threat to the idea of a world run by a single superpower that does what it wants, directed by large corporations looking for short-term profits. China threatens that model, not militarily, but by showing independence. The Brazil Russia India China South Africa partnership known as BRICS+ offers the possibility of countries developing and trading outside US control. China is also a threat because it's a socialist system that is working. Like other successful socialist countries, it's an alternative to the neoliberal system of capitalist exploitation and chaos.

This paper is very positive about China, and why shouldn't we be? We find it particularly inspiring the way China has paid careful attention to the needs and culture of its people in pursuing socialist progress.

China is a source of hope, but not a model to be slavishly followed. Fidel Castro once said that "revolution can't be exported because you can't export the objective conditions that make revolution possible." Australia has very different objective conditions to those of the People's Republic, but we also have a lot of the same needs.

This paper will continue to keep an eye on China's progress and provide an alternative to mindless demonisation. If you support what we're doing, consider donating to the Press fund.

Hiroshima Day Events roundup

Hiroshima Day is 6 August. The bombing was at 8.15

Naarm/Melbourne: Wed 6 August, State Library Victoria, 8 am
(there will also be a silent vigil from 8-9 am at St Paul's Cathedral)

Armidale NSW: 6 August, 5.30 pm at Boobooks

Sydney: Saturday 2 August, 12.00 Sydney Town Hall

Wollongong Crown St Mall, Wed 6 August, 7.30

Boorloo/Perth: Friday 8 August, 5 pm,
Wesley church Cnr of Williams and Hay Street Perth CBD

Online: ICAN is running a national webinar featuring
Peter Garrett, Scott Ludlum and others ican.org.au

Quotes of the Week

"In truth, growth has become a vehicle not for shared prosperity, but for upward redistribution."

Stewart Sweeney

"Growth for growth's sake is the ideology of the cancer cell."

Edward Abbey

"We shouldn't erase the word 'climate' from our lexicon. The physics of the problem remain completely unchanged."

Ketan Joshi

"The great unpunished war crime of our time is a product of the war on terror; Israelis who descend from survivors of one holocaust are now creating another."

Adam Shatz

Vale Jimmy Donovan 1940 - 2025

The MUA is mourning the loss of Jimmy Donavan, a former WWF and MUA Sydney Branch official, lifelong member of the Communist Party, and a resolute member of the working class until his last day.

As a child, Jimmy was brought to the Waterside Workers Federation's union rooms by his mum, Jessie, who enrolled her nine year old son in art classes there. It was as a child that Jimmy saw the Sydney wharfies' mural first take shape in its and his formative years of development.

However, while he began his working life as an apprentice boilermaker at the NSW Government Railways in 1957, he eventually came back to the waterfront in 1963, where he quickly became a workplace leader and political activist.

Jimmy was a fighter and an uncompromising trade union and labour union leader who dedicated his life to the working class and understood the importance of class struggle driven by unity, peace, social justice and universal respect and recognition for worker and human rights in the face of enormous challenges. He was an activist and leader of our community for over 62 years as a wharfie, an official and later an MUA veteran.

Jim was revered and cherished to the very end. His last contribution to the MUA Film Unit was just ten days before his passing, when he recorded a message of solidarity for our comrade Willie Adams of the ILWU. One legend of the waterfront commending the contribution of another.

The MUA, CFMEU, ITF, and the IDC on behalf of their affiliated unions worldwide offer our deepest condolences and sympathies to Jim's family, comrades, and friends and particularly to Stephen and the family in the hope we in some way ease their sorrow at the passing of our dear friend and comrade.

Jim's life was driven by courage and determination often during times of significant challenge and hardship for working Australians but also working people throughout the globe. He inspired us to follow his vision of a better, fairer and more just workplace. This in turn, he taught us, would improve our society, the nation and contribute to a better, fairer world.

In line with this commitment to working class internationalism, Jimmy was one of the instrumental players in the formation of the International Dockworkers Council. Likewise, at home, he was a leader of the MUA after its inception in 1993 from the amalgamation of the WWF and the SUA, and served as both a Sydney Branch Secretary and the MUA's National President.

During these periods, one of the MUA's most challenging chapters unfolded; the 1998 Patricks dispute. Jimmy was in the thick of it, day in and day out, alongside the tens of thousands of MUA members, supporters, fellow travellers and ordinary Australians who flocked to the picket lines to defend Australian wharfies' right to a dignified, safe and respectful workplace.

No greater contribution could be asked for or delivered. Jim's memory serves at this time of great attack and hardship on working people as a terrific inspiration to walk in his footsteps in everything we do as trade unionists.

Jimmy was a tremendous custodian of the great oral history of the MUA and its predecessor, the Waterside Workers Federation. Through his recollections, good humour and peerless record of activism on the Sydney waterfront, Jim served as an inspiration to young workers and new entrants to this oldest and most storied industry.

It was a source of immense pride for him when the Australian National Maritime Museum unveiled the Wharfies Mural in 2022, a permanent acquisition and display at the Museum made possible by Jim's foresight in working with Tassie Bull through the early 1990s to preserve the mural for future generations. It would take almost another 30 years for the mural to finally go on display at the National Maritime Museum, something which Jimmy worked tirelessly with the Sydney Branch and National Office to achieve on the eve of our Union's 150th anniversary.

Aside from his contribution to workers' lives in their employment, Jim was an energetic campaigner for the preservation of the communities and streetscapes in which the working-class people of Sydney had lived and built communities. He carried this torch on behalf of his mum, Jessie, who had fought in the 1950s to protect workers' housing in Woolloomooloo. In turn, history records that Jimmy was one of the last to leave Rowena Place in Woolloomooloo with his own young family in 1975 under threat of arson and murder after the "disappearance" of Juanita Nielsen.

Later in life, after retiring as a full time official, Jimmy devoted himself to the ongoing cultivation and mentorship of young maritime union activists as a leader of the MUA Veterans. He was a fixture at stoppies and inductions of new members, as well as an energetic campaigner for the causes that the Union tackled throughout the last twenty years.

Jim, following in his mum's footsteps, also continued to advocate for inner-Sydney's working-class history, including as a Guide of walking tours through Woolloomooloo where he was able to share the rich social and cultural life of the old Sydney with younger generations and visitors.

Vale Jimmy, friend and comrade, person of family, peace and equal opportunity and justice for all.

Now at peace after a long and important life's journey.

Paddy Crumlin
MUA National Secretary

Jimmy Donovan

Jimmy understood the importance of class struggle driven by unity, peace, social justice, universal respect and recognition for worker and human rights.

Palestine welcomes Joint Statement

Peter Milimi

In an official statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine has welcomed the Joint Statement issued by the foreign ministers of 28 countries, including Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, alongside the EU Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management, which called for the immediate cessation of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, and strongly condemned the continued actions of the Israeli occupation forces in deliberately preventing the entry of humanitarian aid and killing Palestinian civilians.

22 July 2025, marks the 655th day of Israel's genocidal war against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. Israel has forcibly displaced almost all of Gaza's population of 2.2 million people and turned the Strip into a death zone where Palestinian civilians are being targeted, killed, injured, starved to death and deprived of the most basic rights, including food, clean water, shelter, safety and education. An average of 28 children are killed every day in Gaza. Without immediate, large-scale humanitarian access, the Gaza Strip risks a catastrophic descent into man-made famine, chaos, and further mass loss of life.

The Ministry has pointed out that as the occupying power, Israel bears a legal obligation under international law to ensure that Palestinians in Gaza have access to food, medicine, and other essentials necessary for their survival and human dignity. United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher has warned: "Hunger must never be met with bullets."

The State of Palestine has called on the signatories to translate their principled position into practical and concrete actions to stop the ongoing genocidal war and the policy of weaponised starvation it is carrying out.

cpa.org.au

IPAN urges Australia to 'take a leadership role'

Peter Farmer

On the 80th anniversary of the Trinity nuclear bomb test which began the age of nuclear weapons, the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) has called on the Australian government to take action to prevent nuclear war.

IPAN member and spokesperson, Colin Mitchell said that IPAN believes the Australian government should declare support for nuclear-armed nations to adopt No First Use policies as a means of reducing the risk of nuclear war. IPAN has urged Australia to support China's proposed five nation *No First Use* treaty.

Reminding the Albanese government that the Labor party has previously taken a leadership role in advancing measures towards nuclear war risk reduction, nuclear arms control and nuclear disarmament, IPAN describes the risk of nuclear conflict as at its highest level since the Cuban missile crisis. "We are seeing multiple existing or potential conflict zones that could spill over into nuclear war, including the Ukraine war, India-Pakistan, and the US-China confrontation in the South China sea. Nuclear war is the biggest threat to the survival of human civilisation on planet "earth," said Mitchell.

Tasmania: Broken promise endangers workers

The Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) has condemned the Liberal government's broken promise to deliver transit officers after it received a letter confirming the statewide rollout has been deferred to a "future budget process."

This is despite the Liberals' own budget brochure promising a "safer public transport system" and more than two years after officers were first announced by the state government.

Bus drivers face ongoing risks from assaults and antisocial behaviour resulting in two drivers being hospitalised in the past six months and the most recent attack reported in the media in June.

RTBU Tasmania Branch Secretary Byron Cubit said the delay is a betrayal of bus drivers who continue to face violence on the job.

"It is unacceptable that bus drivers will continue facing daily threats to their safety, because the government failed to deliver on a key commitment," Cubit said.

"Drivers deserve immediate protection not hollow promises. Transit Officers require adequate powers to deal with anti-social behaviour; this includes infringement notices and the power to detain offenders. This is another example of the Liberal government dragging its feet on keeping drivers safe."

The RTBU's concerns are heightened by the confirmation to the union of significant delays in a letter from the Department of State Growth, in response to the RTBU's correspondence to the Minister for Transport highlighting the concern over transit officers on public transport.

In its response, the department wrote: "the rollout of statewide transit officers will be subject to funding through a future budget process".

"This isn't just about delayed bureaucracy, this is about driver safety and the viability of our public transport system," Cubit said.

"Enough is enough. The safety of drivers and passengers can't be put on hold due to political delays. Tasmanians deserve better than these broken promises. Drivers need certainty – either the funding exists or it doesn't."

RTBU

Youth (in) justice: Experts speak out

At a time when the Senate has been asked to consider a report on the youth justice and incarceration system in Australia, experts from the University of New South Wales have spoken out after making submissions to the report.

Associate Professor Noam Peleg, an expert on children's rights law, says that Australia is "not meeting its commitment" on the rights, safety and well-being of children: "Sending primary school children to jail," "doesn't make anyone safe, and it harms children, families and the communities."

Peta MacGillivray, a Senior Research Fellow with the Yuwaya Ngarra-li Partnership, also at UNSW calls the Children's Court "a sausage factory for kids with disabilities, whether they're Indigenous or not." She says that "Indigenous kids as young as eight are coming into contact with the police, on a trajectory that is entirely predictable, and entirely preventable. The system is actually causing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children."

Research associate Dr Lisa Ewenson wants an end to youth detention centres, saying that they "are not safe places for young people. The criminal justice system does not address the known factors leading children into criminalisation, nor does the system prevent children from re-offending. Australia should learn from countries like Scotland, where youth justice detention centres have been completely abolished."

'Cultural vandalism on a breathtaking scale' – ANU dumps dictionary

Peter Farmer

The Australian National University's recent announcement that it will slash three full time positions at the Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB), and "disestablish" the *Australian National Dictionary*, another priceless project which has tracked the changes in Australian English from colonial times to the present, has been called "cultural vandalism on a breathtaking scale" by two senior history academics.

In an article in *Inside Story*, the two academics argue that cuts the two dictionary projects is "an astonishing act of self-harm by the ANU." They point out that the Australian National Dictionary is not solely an ANU affair, but rather a collaborative national institution, with an independent board. The Dictionary is supported by a large number of volunteers, but still needs funding.

Griffiths and McKenna say that the ANU's "assault" on the ADB and the Australian National Dictionary is not a standalone act of vandalism, but takes place "in the context of a sustained attack on the humanities in Australia."

3CR RADICAL RADIO

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Dingo bytes

The Mining and Energy Union says Victoria's energy workers and the wider population deserve a frank and realistic assessment of the future of state's energy generation. The cancellation of Gippsland Dawn, BlueFloat Energy's advanced offshore wind project, has raised fresh concerns about Victoria's energy security against the scheduled closures of coal-fired power stations Yallourn and Loy Yang A.

Additionally, revelations about secret agreements between the government and power station operators managed by EY Parthenon have cast doubt on the transparency of the state's contingency plans, if any are in place.

Mining and Energy Union Victorian District President Andy Smith said it was now time for the state government to come forward with a practical and realistic plan to manage Victoria's energy mix into the 2030s and beyond.

"On any given day, coal-fired power accounts for 60% of Victoria's energy mix" Smith said.

"Yallourn is scheduled to close in 2028, and there are now no realistic plans in place to plug the gap that's going to create in our energy market. If the lifespan of Yallourn needs to be extended, as is looking increasingly likely, it's time for the Allan government to come clean.

"The Victorian public, and in particular the workers at Yallourn, have a right to know – even if the facts are inconvenient for the government.

"Any agreement struck between the government and power station operators should include significant consultation with affected workers, whose lives are set to be upended in as little as two years."

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is Israel. In early October 2023, at a conference in Mexico, Israeli Communist and parliamentarian Ofer Cassif raised the alarm. He warned that the right-wing Israeli government, led by Benjamin Netanyahu and backed by the fascist Bezalel Smotrich, was preparing to consolidate a system of fascist governance over both Israel and Palestine.

According to Cassif, the regime was preparing to unleash what he called "the unholy trinity of genocide in Gaza, ethnic cleansing in the West Bank, and an assault on the democratic rights of Palestinian citizens of Israel and their elected officials."

At the time, this plan was encountering resistance due to mass protests against Netanyahu's so-called "judicial coup." But only days later, on 7 October, Hamas launched an attack on Israeli towns surrounding Gaza. The protests against fascism went silent, and Israel unleashed its genocidal war on Gaza.

Nearly two years later, the accuracy of Cassif's warning has, tragically, become undeniable.

For almost two years, Israel has been slaughtering the people of Gaza. Officially, the death toll stands at nearly 60,000 – mostly women and children – but many experts estimate the true number is closer to 100,000, or even more.

Gaza's cities, hospitals, and universities lie in ruins. The Israeli government is now openly working to concentrate the remaining two million residents into a concentration camp that it calls a "humanitarian city." This is widely seen as a stepping stone toward implementing the so-called "Trump Plan" to empty Gaza entirely of its Palestinian population.

While international attention remains focused on Gaza, the Netanyahu regime is simultaneously carrying out ethnic cleansing in the West Bank. Palestinians there are living under increasingly intense military rule and enduring unrelenting violence from fanatic Kahanist settlers. Entire villages have been forced to flee, replaced by expanding Jewish-only settlements.

Tax: Make the corporates pay

M Santos

"No sensible progress can be made on productivity, resilience or budget sustainability without proper consideration of more tax reform. I don't just accept that, I welcome that," Treasurer Jim Chalmers said.

What sort of tax reform does he have in mind and in whose interests?

Those of the capitalist class or the working class?

"Budget sustainability" and "budget repair" – tackling a mounting budget deficit – is one of the big issues to be discussed at the government's productivity roundtable with big business, the ACTU, and other organisations in August.

This deficit is set to rise with a massive hike in military spending on nuclear submarines and other items in war preparations.

The Labor government has already made billions of dollars in "savings," a euphemism for cuts to services – including to the NDIS and Medicare.

At the same time as increasing the tax take, Chalmers has already indicated that lower income taxes are on the agenda. These are expected to include cuts to personal income tax and concessions and or cuts for the corporate sector.

He has also indicated that the GST – too hot to touch – is unlikely to change.

He is determined to go ahead with the tax from superannuation income on superannuation balances above $3 million but this will only raise a few billion dollars in coming years.

The federal government raises $26.6 billion annually from excise and customs duties on petrol, diesel and other fuel products. As motorists turn to low or no-emission vehicles this amount is set to decline.

Simple arithmetic says it does not add up. So how does Chalmers plan to increase the total tax take while cutting taxes?

CARBON TAX?

Ken Henry, former secretary to Treasury under both the Coalition and Labor (2001-2011), carried out a review commissioned by the Rudd Labor government in 2008 on Australia's future tax system.

His report, handed down in 2010, includes a recommendation for a 40% carbon tax on the resources sector, including coal and gas.

This was one of few recommendations taken up by the Rudd government. It led to ructions in the ALP, Rudd's replacement by Julia Gillard, and the reversal of the tax. The 'coup' was a result of massive pressure by generous political donors from the fossil fuel sector along with the pro-business mass media.

Henry, who will be at the roundtable, is again calling for a carbon tax on Australia's resource exports, including coal and gas. He says the federal government could boost revenue by $50 billion a year from a carbon tax.

Don't forget, carbon taxes are *not* a substitute for phasing out fossil fuels. The government should be removing all tax concessions on fossil fuels and cease approving new and expanded fossil fuel projects.

However, Chalmers has said that raising taxes on the resources sector was not on his agenda. So where will the additional taxation revenue come from?

Chalmers has hinted at winding back franking credits for shareholders to fund a reduction in the 30 per cent corporate tax rate.

A franking credit is a tax credit paid by corporations to their shareholders along with their dividend payments. The income from shareholdings is deemed to have already been taxed at 30%. It would only raise a few billion dollars in the short-term.

Labor tried this before along with the phasing out of negative gearing in 2019 and lost the 'unlosable election.' But that alone wouldn't compensate for the corporate and personal income tax cuts, let alone increase the tax take.

Henry is also pushing for an increase in the present 10% GST to pay for company and personal income tax cuts, but Chalmers has already indicated that is unlikely.

The corporate sector is calling for an increase in the GST and its expansion to cover presently exempted items. Treasury analysis estimates that exemptions will cost the budget about $30 billion in "foregone revenue" this financial year, including for fresh food ($9.5 billion), health ($5.4 billion) and education ($4.6 billion).

CUTS

When Chalmers talks about tax changes that would improve investment (encourage corporate sector to invest more capital) he means cutting corporate taxes and new or increased tax concessions. These cuts, along with cuts to personal incomes and massive hikes in military spending, mean one thing – cuts are needed elsewhere.

How else is "budget sustainability" possible?

Cuts to the public service? Will it be cuts to social spending such as to education, health care, aged care, the NDIS, the age pension? Continuing the cruel refusal to make real increases to the punitive rates of JobSeeker, the youth allowance and below poverty line payments?

The government in its first term reduced personal income tax rates in a regressive manner, with the wealthy receiving the highest cuts.

Chalmers in true neoliberal fashion wants to cut social spending, personal income taxes and corporate taxes at the same time as hiking military spending on war preparations – AUKUS submarines being the largest, but not only component, of that increase.

Designed by Wannapik

The GST is regressive and unfair; it is a flat rate with those on lower incomes paying a higher percentage of their income on it.

Today, the GST raises more than $90 billion, behind only personal income tax ($335 billion) and company tax ($133 billion). The GST goes to the states, not the federal government.

TAXATION: CLASS QUESTION

How governments raise incomes and what they spend money on is a class question. The wealth created in a capitalist society such as Australia is by workers. Through their labour, workers add value to inputs. That added value is carved up into profits, dividends for shareholders, taxation and wages.

A progressive tax system that is in the interests of workers is one that charges the wealthy far higher rates in the dollar. Likewise, it would see super profits, such as in mining, taxed at a far higher rate.

Over recent years marginal rates on personal income have been slashed, with the wealthy receiving much higher tax cuts. Those on very low incomes have received next to nothing or nothing at all.

Hundreds of other large corporations paid peanuts in taxation.

It is time for progressive tax reform that serves the interests of working people and the planet instead of the rich and the big end of town.

Such reforms include:

- Making marginal tax rates progressive with far higher rates on high incomes
- Making corporations pay tax with higher rates on super profits
- Abolishing negative gearing by property investors
- Abolishing franking credits on dividends
- Wiping out fossil fuel subsidies
- Cancelling AUKUS and the US alliance and making other cuts to military spending
- Nationalising health care services and the NDIS to end rorting by the private for-profit sector
- Increasing the age pension, JobSeeker, youth allowances and other payments
- Expanding the public service to meet people's needs.

The roundtable must not be a mechanism to lock in the ACTU and trade union movement to more anti-working class, pro-big business reforms. ✪

UNTAXED

For the last ten years mega port operator DP World, coal mining giant Peabody, packaging behemoth Amcor, metals and mining wholesaler Citic Resources, and News Corp Australia have paid NO income tax. These five companies had a combined income of $8.997 billion in 2023.

Corporates demand cheap labour

"Free doctor visits. Free TAFE. Free lenders mortgage insurance for first home buyers. More subsidies for childcare. Taxpayer-funded wages for aged care and childcare businesses and workers. A taxpayer bailout for the Whyalla steelworks, to name just a few." Thus whines the voice of big business, *The Australian Financial Review*.

A coalition of 28 business lobby groups plans to present a united front at the roundtable in August calling for an expanded business investment, lower corporate taxes, cuts to personal income taxes, and a higher GST.

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia is calling for a "genuine tax debate" including slashing of income taxes and overhauling the GST – meaning raising the rate and expanding its coverage to items such as fresh food and health care.

Pru Goward, Liberal member of the NSW Legislative Assembly is not shy about venting her anti-worker venom. After claiming industry groups as some sort of giant democratic force because they "represent hundreds of businesses, thousands of employees and millions of shareholders," Goward calls for "industrial reform" (she means lower wages and worse conditions) and frets that business won't invest if shareholders "are denied a return on their investment because it is eaten up by benefits to employees or additional taxation."

Goward says "locking business into the government's second term is critically important." What she means is giving business what it wants.

It is not business that is being locked in. The aim is to lock trade unions in to a neoliberal, pro-big business agenda as was done by the Hawke/Keating governments' Accord with the ACTU from 1983-1996. Under the Accord, trade unions committed to cooperating with employers – class collaboration – and accepted reductions in real wages. Chalmers hopes to repeat history. ✪

Check out the official Instagram account of the Communist Party of Australia

communist.party.australia

www.instagram.com/communist.party.australia/

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www.cpa.org.au/press-fund/

Federal Court says no to Torres Strait Islanders on climate change

Graham Holton

On 14 July a Torres Strait Islander delegation of elders, Paul Kabai and Pabai Pabai, travelled to the Federal Court in Cairns to receive the judgement of the Federal Court on whether the federal government had a duty of care in relation to the impact of climate change. They were astonished to hear that the court found the Commonwealth of Australia does not owe a duty of care to Torres Strait Islanders to protect them from the impacts of climate change, or to fund adaptation measures.

Judge Michael Wigney said he had "considerable sympathy" for the argument put by Uncles Kabai and Pabai that their cultural loss was compensable, but he did not consider it open to a single judge to recognise it in law for the first time. The judge also rejected the Torres Strait Islanders' claims that their cultural loss should be compensated under negligence law. Judge Wigney ruled Australia's greenhouse gas emissions targets are matters of "core government policy" which should be decided by the parliament, not the courts.

Guda Maluyligal traditional owner, Uncle Pabai, told the *ABC News*: "My heart is broken for my families and my community. We don't want to be climate refugees." Uncle Paul added: "This pain isn't just for me, it's for all people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who have been affected by climate change. What do any of us say to our families now?"

The class action was brought by Uncle Pabai and Uncle Kabai in 2021, because the Islands in northern Queensland have been severely impacted by global climate change. Sea levels are rising up to 8 mm per year, twice the global average rate, causing major coastal erosion and increasing inundation impacts the cultural heritage and livelihoods of these Indigenous peoples. Climate change has increased oceanic acidification, and altered rainfall patterns, which has then affected local fisheries and infrastructure on low-lying islands. Increasing sea levels are washing out ancestral graves and diminished areas available for traditional camping grounds. This is a major threat to their cultural identity and connection to Country. It is calculated that by 2100 sea levels will rise by 2 metres unless greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.

The landmark litigation was financed through the NGO, the Grata Fund, and modelled on a successful case from the Netherlands. James Clarke, a partner at law firm Ashurst, said the outcome did not spell the end of climate litigation. "This decision, along with the Full Federal Court's earlier judgment in the Sharma case, presents a significant obstacle for future novel climate change duty of care cases in Australia against both governments and companies," Clarke said. "Despite this outcome, we are likely to see further significant climate change litigation in Australia, including cases based on alleged duties of care, greenwashing, contract claims, human rights, and other legal grounds."

In a joint statement, Climate Change and Energy Minister, Chris Bowen, and Indigenous Australians Minister, Malarndirri McCarthy, said the government was 'carefully considering the detailed judgment' and argued the Labor Party is doing more than the former coalition government to combat climate change. That's true as far as it goes, but the Albanese government is also doing more to make climate change worse, by extending the life of gas projects like the North West Shelf.

Paul Kabai was quoted after the case as saying "the government is not listening to us, they know [climate change] is happening and they keep approving mining, keep pushing mining."

The Torres Strait Islander elders will review the decision and consider their options for appeal.

Saibai Island in the Torres Strait Islands.
Photo: Brad Marsellos – flickr.com (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

We don't want to be climate refugees

'Snuff videos as a sales pitch'

Rafael boasts of human testing in Gaza death camps

Stephanie Tran

The video, posted to the company's official account on social media, shows a Spike Firefly loitering munition drone as it hovers above a man walking alone through the rubble of a heavily bombed area. The drone silently tracks the man before detonating directly above him, killing him instantly.

Meanwhile, a young Palestinian girl, Hala, was executed recently with a bullet to the head fired by a quadcopter drone. It is even more grotesque that Israeli weapons manufacturers are crowing about their human testing labs – which are the killing fields of Gaza.

The Spike Firefly drone, first unveiled by Rafael in 2018, is a lightweight, soldier-deployed loitering munition designed for urban combat. Weighing just three kilograms, the drone is launched from a canister and can fly silently above a target for up to 15 minutes before striking with high precision.

The drone can be operated remotely with a tablet, and its camera feed allows operators to stalk targets in real time.

According to Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, Israel has increasingly relied on drones like the Firefly to kill civilians in Gaza since 7 October 2023, with quadcopters being deployed in densely populated residential areas and refugee camps. Their report documents multiple instances of drones being used to assassinate individuals in violation of international humanitarian law.

AUSTRALIA'S FINANCIAL AND MILITARY TIES TO RAFAEL

Despite mounting evidence that Rafael is complicit in war crimes, the Australian government continues to deepen its commercial and military ties with the company.

Data from Austender reveals that since 2007, the Department of Defence has awarded Rafael-linked entities over $168 million in contracts.

Of this, $42 million went directly to Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, and $126 million to Varley Rafael, a joint venture launched in 2018 by then-Defence Minister Christopher Pyne between Rafael and the Australian engineering firm Varley Group.

The most significant of these is a 15-year missile procurement contract awarded in 2023, worth $108 million. The contract was originally priced at $50 million but was amended and expanded in October 2024, raising further concerns about the government's ongoing commitment to the company amid the genocide in Gaza.

Beyond procurement, Rafael is also embedded in Australia's military research ecosystem. The company is a partner in the Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance (GWEO) enterprise, a cornerstone of the AUKUS defence initiative.

Through this program, Rafael is working with US firm General Atomics to develop a deep-strike missile. The missile system "will be built in the US for delivery to US military customers to support a variety of critical Department of Defence and coalition partners' precision fires missions."

Michael West Media put questions to the Department of Defence about its ongoing collaboration with Rafael and whether the government would consider suspending contracts in light of the company's apparent complicity in war crimes.

The Department did not respond to the request for comment.

'OBSCENE'

Greens Senator David Shoebridge, who has long called for an end to Australian arms trade with Israel, condemned the video and the government's silence.

"It's obscene that we're seeing weapons companies that are profiting from a genocide sharing snuff videos as part of their sales pitch," he told *Michael West Media*. "It's even more obscene that the Australian government is buying weapons from these companies."

Shoebridge has previously raised concerns about Rafael's marketing practices. At the 2024 Indian Ocean Defence & Security Conference in Perth, he witnessed the company using drone footage showing images of Israeli attacks in Gaza, Yemen and Lebanon being used to promote Israeli weapons systems.

BREACHES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

Under international human rights law, extrajudicial execution of civilians constitutes a grave violation of the right to life. These acts are strictly prohibited under the Geneva Conventions and are prosecutable as war crimes and crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In her March 2024 report "Anatomy of a Genocide," UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Francesca Albanese, concluded that Israel's military campaign in Gaza since 7 October 2023 bears the hallmarks of genocide.

The report, presented to the UN Human Rights Council, documents a deliberate pattern of attacks on civilians, the systematic destruction of infrastructure essential to life, and the obstruction of humanitarian aid, actions that violate humanitarian law.

Albanese explicitly condemned the Israeli military's use of advanced weaponry, including drones, to indiscriminately "target the Palestinian population as a whole." These attacks, she says, "cannot be proportionate and are always unlawful."

As Albanese notes in her most recent report, "From economy of occupation to economy of genocide," the commodification of Palestinian death for weapons sales is part of a broader militarised economy in which violence against civilians is used to "battle test" weapons.

She highlighted the role of weapons manufacturers in enabling and profiting from these attacks, calling for international accountability not only for states but also for the companies complicit in atrocities. This convergence of state violence and corporate profit, she warns, reflects "an economy of occupation turned genocidal."

Michaelwest.com.au
edited for length

‘For the Freedom of Nations!’

Solidarity with Cuba, WA Branch Boorloo/Perth, 2015.

A Carruthers

The Lao Peoples’ Revolutionary Party, the Communist Party of China, the Communist Party of Cuba, FRELIMO (Mozambique), the Nicaraguan Sandanistas, the ANC of South Africa, the People’s Democratic Party of Tajikistan, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela, ZANU-PF of Zimbabwe, Belaya Rus of Belarus, the Algerian National Liberation Front, the now-illegal Syrian Ba’athists, and other ruling parties around the world, have joined a new movement “For the Freedom of Nations!”

The full title of the movement is: “Forum of Supporters of the Struggle Against Modern Practices of Neocolonialism.”

The Chair of this new movement Dimitry Medvedev wrote an essay in 2024 titled “The Time of the Metropolises is Over.” In it he proposes that the World Majority should once-and-for-all bury the “neocolonial” legacy by increasing the “interaction of all progressive forces,” and by advocating for a “polycentric” and “fair world order” and the “democratisation” of global governance.

Medvedev notes that the initiative is “based on the longstanding traditions of the USSR in the area of combating colonialism and its consequences.”

Medvedev describes neocolonialism using statistics:

I will cite just a few figures that eloquently characterise the political component of neocolonialism. According to experts (I note, US ones, despite all their bias), from 1946 to 2000, the United States interfered in the electoral processes in other countries more than 80 times. Since 1945, they have carried out over 50 attempts at coups d’état and military interventions ... One of the most important tools for implementing such a course of the neo-metropolis has become unilateral sanctions, which contradict international law. Of the 174 cases of restrictive measures in the 20th century, 109 were initiated by the United States, and they achieved a change in political course in undesirable states in 80 cases.

Here are some examples of the consequences of illegal restrictive measures of this kind. The total damage to the Cuban economy from the embargo imposed in 1960 as of October 2023 amounted to USD 159.8 billion. During the period of unilateral restrictions against Iran in 1984-2000, the average annual cost of sanctions amounted to USD 80 million. In the 7 years since the sanctions imposed on Venezuela in 2015 began, the Latin American country’s GDP losses, according to President Maduro, have reached 642 billion.

These are devastating statistics, and they point to the fact that the USA has become “a global sanctions neo-metropolis.” This is the basis of the “unilateral coercive measures” which are flagrant violations of international law on multiple counts.

But we are not talking about economic warfare, in many cases we are talking about attempts “to destroy entire countries and even quasi-genocide.” Hand-in-hand with neocolonialism’s enforced dependency on poorer countries is what Medvedev calls “ideological colonisation,” an attempt by the West to spread its own ideas and values throughout the world through social media and “colour revolutions.” They are also trying to further pull the old Soviet sphere apart: “US, EU, and NATO are becoming more and more frequent guests in Armenia, handing out generous promises left and right ... A similar situation is developing in Moldova, in which EU citizen and Harvard graduate Maia Sandu is heading straight into neocolonial slavery, using the same fairytales about a ‘bright future.’”

The Western colonial legacy is a criminal one. Many nations and peoples around the world have not yet been afforded justice for the wrongdoing done to them. Medvedev calls for an “anti-colonialist Nuremberg” – a database of crimes committed under Western colonial and neocolonial regimes, from the transatlantic slave trade to modern financial companies in banking and insurance who trace their history back to these crimes of the 18th and 19th centuries, especially in Africa and the Middle East. Medvedev argues that reparations should be given to the victims of Western colonialism based on substantiated, legally-verified evidence.

Western governments have a disgusting contempt for different political systems, for civilisational sovereignty, and indeed other ideological formations than their own. They play geopolitical games of “beggar thy neighbour” and “zero-sum game,” rather than engage in “win-win” and “shared future” approaches trade and international relations. When are we ever going to hear the West advocate for a positive, just future, for unity in diversity, multipolarity or non-alignment? Western governments and their lackeys in corporate media are now open about taking a bloodthirsty neocolonial approach to international relations. They see the world as a threat rather than a possibility. They hate Communist countries the most – don’t forget the No. 1 geostrategic goal of the United States is still to destroy Communism – but they also hate any system that doesn’t resemble theirs, including national liberation governments, or Indigenous sovereignty and militant union movements within their own countries – things Western ruling classes are always afraid of.

This has to change. Inevitably there are a diversity of political systems, civilisations, and types of governance in the world. Enforcing one kind of global governance only – the failing Western model – will cause further mass strife, conflict and war. But the global majority is not buying the Western model any longer. Other cooperative models are becoming more and more attractive by the day, like BRICS, CARICOM (Caribbean Community), the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation), the Eurasian Economic Union, SADC (Southern African Development Community), the Alliance of Sahel States, ALBA-TCP, ASEAN, NAM (Non-Aligned Movement), and, now, ‘For the Freedom of Nations!’

Liberals and liberal intellectuals in the West might talk about ending racial discrimination and use the language of “decolonisation lite” within the narrow framework of Western multiculturalism and within the context of the failing economic and social systems of the capitalist core – but what Medvedev outlines here goes right to the heart of the problem. It strikes back against the falsification of history, xenophobia, racism and neo-Nazism peddled by the Western capitalist order. It gives grounds for hope. This is a new model for international relations that we cannot ignore.

PEACE NOTES

An expanding threat

Peter Farmer

What’s the biggest threat to world peace? Is it those nuclear weapons Iran is supposed to be working on? Is it the much-demonised country of China? Is it nuclear weapons in general?

There’s a case to be made that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is the most dangerous organisation on the planet. In fact, someone has made that case. In a ‘dossier’ for the Tricontinental Institute, the case is made that NATO isn’t in crisis, but is in fact proceeding according to a very dangerous plan.

If Australians think about NATO at all, it will probably be because they’ve seen some news item about US President Donald Trump wanting the alliance to spend more money on arms. Like a very expensive mobster in charge of a protection racket, Trump is supposed to have told the NATO nations that if they don’t put their hands in their pockets more deeply, he won’t guarantee that the US will protect them. It’s a serious threat because mutual defence is the point of NATO, its excuse for existing.

Needless to say, mutual defence isn’t the real reason for NATO. As Tricontinental says, NATO “serves a wide range of purposes for the United States and has done so since it was founded in 1949.” The so-called alliance is a way for the US to keep its position of global power. As the dossier argues, NATO is going to keep helping the US to project power, regardless of gripes about arms spending.

Political Scientist Peter Gowan wrote that NATO states are “hell-bent on exacerbating the inequalities of power and wealth in the world” and that the member-states have fooled their electorates into thinking that they’re leading the world towards a just and humane future.

As well as giving a history of NATO and of its role in helping US imperialism, the dossier looks at how NATO has reinvented itself as a kind of global policeman, intervening in the Global South. NATO has “used its dominion to punish states that refuse to adopt the policies of globalisation, neoliberalism and US primacy.”

All right, Australian readers might think, that’s bad, but we’re a long way from Europe here. This is not our problem.

That’s a tempting thought, but it’s wrong. NATO has drawn Australia in to conflicts such as Afghanistan and Australia engages with NATO as an ‘observer nation’. The expansion of the alliance is ongoing and there’s no reason why it might not include Australia in some way in the future.

The other danger NATO poses to Australia is by making the world a less safe place. A key example of this is Libya. NATO had a key role in the destruction of Libya which has had knock-on effects around the world in terms of arms movements and migration flows. Under pressure from the US, NATO is steadily beginning to join in demonisation of and aggression towards China. In 2019, NATO said that China provided both “opportunities and challenges.” In 2021, NATO dropped the ‘opportunities’ and worried about China’s “assertiveness” and threats to the “rules based international order.”

Really what NATO is after, says Tricontinental, is to “maintain the US rules-based system and prevent other countries from developing.”

Now *that’s* dangerous.

Hannah Middleton: a celebration

Hannah Middleton (1942 – 2025) was the Communist Party of Australia's first woman General Secretary and President. She was also editor of this paper, *Guardian, the Workers' Weekly*, as well as being a lifelong peace activist, and an activist for Indigenous rights and public housing.

On 19 July, a large crowd gathered in Sydney, on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, to commemorate Hannah's life. This was a rewarding celebration of a life well-lived. Speakers included CPA President, Vinnie Molina, General Secretary Andrew Irving, Professor Stuart Rees, and of course Hannah's partner, fellow Party member Denis Doherty.

Hannah's books were on sale in the foyer. After music, speeches, and video contributions from Hannah herself the event finished with a stirring rendition of the Internationale.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME TRIBUTES TO HANNAH

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point, however, is to change it."

Hannah was a very beautiful woman both inside and out. She was a very clever woman and she knew exactly how to deploy her charm alongside her intellect to get exactly what she wanted. In a recent conversation with my sister in law Pamela, we agreed that Hannah was simply a woman you didn't mess with. Truly intelligent; with the power to feel as well as think and to carefully consider how she could contribute and bring clarity to a given situation. At the heart of all of Hannah's work has been a deep love for humanity and a desire to make the world a much better place for all.

Hannah's sister-in-law, wife of her brother Max

I first met Hannah Middleton Nangari sometime during 2012 after I started my PhD working closely with my Gurindji family and community based at Kalkaringi and Daguragu communities in the Victoria River region of the Northern Territory, which is about 830km southwest of Darwin.

While Hannah arrived to do doctoral research work on the strike action, being Hannah, her research turned into deep support for the Gurindji community in their fight for recognition – initially of their human rights, which swiftly segued into sovereign self-determination of their traditional homelands.

I hope Denis will share the story of his and Hannah's non-violent protest action in breaking into Pine Gap, when they cut through the wire fence and skipped – not ran so as to stay peaceful! – in opposite directions away from the security and police officers chasing them, which had me in stitches laughing when Hannah told me.

When Hannah committed herself to something, it was lifelong, be it as a member of the Communist Party, supporting Land Rights and First Nations Social Justice, or as a Peace Movement Advocate.

Hannah never gave up the fight to make change for the good wherever she could. Hannah's passing is a significant loss to the world but she has planted so many seeds of hope and courage that will continue to live on in others and the work they do.

Brenda L Croft (she/her; me/we)
Gurindji | Malngin | Mudburra Peoples, Australian First Nations; Anglo-Australian | Chinese | German | Irish | Scottish heritage
Professor, Indigenous Art History and Curatorship
Australian National University

I have truly valued your friendship and collaboration in many causes. I have watched in awe as you have persevered over these latter years as your mind continued to drive you to contribute to the common weal regardless of your personal circumstances.

Professor Stuart Rees, founder of the Sydney Peace Foundation

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An intellect such as yours certainly was a gift to the working class. A communist is necessarily an optimist. The future is still with the class that you spent your life struggling for.

Denis Doherty

Hannah, you've been an extraordinary inspiration ... a trailblazer for the Australian left, a guiding ideological force. For who you are, and everything you represent, the very best of humanity

Andrew Irving, CPA General Secretary

Vinnie Molina, CPA President finished the event by reminding everyone that it was a celebration, not a funeral. He reminded the audience that Hiroshima Day events are upon us, and that the slogan "Hiroshima never again" has never been more relevant. Vinnie urged everyone to attend Hiroshima Day events in their city. He also urged those present to write to governments which are complicit in the genocide being committed by Israel to act.

Vinnie finished by returning to the Marx quotation Hannah loved – the point is not to just interpret the world, but to change it.

That's what the CPA is trying to do. Give us a hand!

Andrew Irving, CPA General Secretary addressing the crowd.

Vinnie Molina, CPA President addressing the crowd.

Japanese PM clings to power

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba has said he will remain in office to address challenges despite his coalition's recent election defeat.

The loss left the coalition as the minority in both chambers of parliament and triggered calls for his resignation.

Ishiba's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its junior coalition partner Komeito fell three seats short of a majority in the 248-seat upper house.

Though the LDP remains the largest party, the coalition's minority status complicates the passage of legislation.

With the opposition fragmented, Ishiba faces pressure to resign from ultraconservative factions within his own party.

He said his priority is to avoid a political vacuum and focus on pressing issues, including the looming 1 August deadline for a tariff deal with the United States.

"Challenges such as the global situation and natural disasters won't wait for a better political situation," he said.

Sunday's result follows the coalition's loss of its lower house majority in the October election, amid public frustration over corruption scandals and a failure to address the cost-of-living crisis. Rising prices for essentials like rice and stagnant wages have eroded support for the government.

Ishiba said the LDP and Komeito will maintain their coalition while seeking co-operation from the opposition.

Younger voters have shifted support to emerging conservative and right-wing populist parties.

The Democratic Party for the People quadrupled its seats with a campaign focused on raising take-home pay.

The far-right Sanseito party surged to third place, running on a Japanese First platform that includes stricter immigration controls and opposition to gender and sexual diversity.

Sanseito leader Sohei Kamiya said he is open to working with the ruling bloc on conservative policies and that he plans to build momentum in the next lower house election.

Experts have warned that Sanseito's rhetoric during the campaign and on social media fuelled xenophobia, attracting discontented voters while alarming rights activists.

Morning Star

(Peter Farmer adds: The LDP has dabbled in some racism themselves by setting up a body to monitor crimes and over-tourism involving foreigners. At the ceremony to establish the new body, PM Ishiba, in what Australians would call a dog-whistle said "Crimes and disorderly conduct by some foreigners, as well as the inappropriate use of various administrative systems, have created a situation in which the public feels uneasy and cheated.")

Cuba and China: learn from each other in poems

Dong Feng

Diversity is the basic feature of the world and the very charm of human civilisation. Civilisations thrive and prosper through exchanges and mutual learning.

As part of the activities commemorating the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and China, the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba in China hosted the Cuba-China Poetry Appreciation event in Beijing, on 11 July.

Minister of Culture of the Republic of Cuba Alpidio Alonso Grau, who was invited to the Global Civilizations Dialogue Ministerial Meeting in Beijing, told the *Global Times* on 11 July that his visit to China would be brief but fruitful.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba in China held "Encuentro Poetico Cuba-China," a Cuban-Chinese poetry appreciation event, where Chinese and Cuban poets shared their poems and insights on their creative work, while analysing the rich literary heritage of both countries.

The minister told the *Global Times* that the dialogue of civilisation is associated with cultural exchanges and the possibility of defending cultural values and recognising diversity.

From his point of view, the culture of dialogue is against exclusion, and against a culture of violence, discrimination, and xenophobia. "In the face of emerging unilateralism, we, as Cuba, call for a culture of dialogue and inclusion," he said.

To elaborate on the culture of equality, he said that "Cuba depends on a culture of justice and peace."

2025 marks the 65th anniversary of the bilateral ties between Cuba and China. The minister said that "We [Cuba and China] have very close relations in the cultural sphere, but we think we still have much more potential to exploit."

The minister shared his outlook on bilateral collaboration in the cultural sector that could focus on music, cinema, and literature. He also urged increased efforts in translating literary works to break the language barrier in cultural exchanges. "We should make an effort to make contemporary Chinese art much more known in Cuba. There aren't many poetry translators, and there aren't many Spanish translators in China," the minister said.

"We are very interested in expanding our knowledge of Chinese poetry and Chinese literature in general, but the knowledge we Cuban readers have about Chinese poetry is still very limited and we intend to encourage a much broader exchange, to also make Cuban poetry be known here [in China]," Minister Alonso told the *Global Times*.

During the event, as both a poet and an editor, Minister Alonso shared his poems titled "Venegas, 1993," "Cisne Salvaje" (Wild Swan), and "Heredad" (Inheritance). The poet introduced the works by explaining that he was born in Venegas, in the central city of Villa Clara, Cuba. "Venegas, 1993" is part of a poetry collection, in which readers can read about Cuban culture and Cubans' lives. The collection was written when Alonso was travelling in provinces of Cuba. Although he majored in automatic control engineering, Alonso has published several poetry collections.

After sharing three poems, Minister Alonso said, "It is a very magical and wonderful experience to be able to translate my works into Chinese and hear them read aloud in Chinese by experts and scholars." Meanwhile, he remarked that the event is of great symbolic and commemorative significance.

"Cuba was also the first country in the Western Hemisphere to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China," he said.

Usually, when bilateral ties are discussed, the focus is on economic and trade exchanges. However, the exchanges of poetry and literature, which are rather spiritual, are also very important, as it allows us to achieve spiritual resonance between our two peoples, the minister stressed.

The Minister of Culture of the Republic of Cuba Alpidio Alonso Grau (5th from left), shares his poems with about 100 delegates at the "Encuentro Poetico Cuba-China," a Cuban-Chinese poetry appreciation event at the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba in China, on July 11, 2025. Photo: Chen Tao/GT

we, as Cuba, call for a culture of dialogue and inclusion

"The event also allows us to express our emotions, and understand and learn from each other. This is an extremely important part of our cultural exchange, and the most basic part of our bilateral relationship," he added.

The event also hosted Jidi Majia, an indigenous poet of the Nuosu (in the Yi ethnic group) people of mountainous southwestern China; Zhao Zhenjiang, a veteran Spanish language professor at Peking University; Xiao Xiao, a Chinese poet and painter; Sun Xintang, a professor at the Beijing Language and Culture University; and Cuban poet and intellectual Yasef Ananda, who lives in China.

Jidi Majia said the event aims to further deepen cultural ties and poetry exchanges between the two countries. "Even though today's world is getting more complicated with more uncertainty, I think poetry will play a huge role in deepening the dialogue among different countries and civilisations," said Jidi Majia before sharing his poems.

When he was a 17-year-old high-school student, Jidi Majia fell in love with poems by Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén. "His works enlightened me on the musicality of poetry, and how poems can be more than the words. Thus, his poems influenced me a lot," Jidi Majia said, sharing his poems titled 'The Responsibilities of a Poet,' 'Century,' and 'Flames.'

For her part, Xiao Xiao, a Chinese poet and painter, started her sharing from the experience of attending the 31st Havana International Poetry Festival in late May in Cuba. When she was a little girl, she sang a song titled "meili de hawana" (or Beautiful Havana). "The song has influenced generations of Chinese people, and I visited Havana this year," Xiao Xiao shared.

At the end of the event, Minister Alonso awarded Zhao, a pioneer in the translation of Latin American poetry into Chinese, the medal of "Distincion por la Cultura Nacional" (or Distinction for National Culture) for his remarkable contribution to introducing Cuban literature to China. The 85-year-old scholar said that "For me, this award is a great honour, but it's also a great encouragement to continue working to promote cultural exchanges between China and Cuba, and between China and the Hispanic world."

Global Times

UK Palestine Action Ban: 100 already arrested

Harriet Williamson

Protests against the government's proscription of Palestine Action are expected to continue across the UK following the arrest of over 100 people under counter-terror powers in a two-week period.

Home secretary Yvette Cooper ordered that Palestine Action be proscribed as a terrorist organisation after members of the group allegedly entered RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire and sprayed red paint on two military planes.

The proscription, which came into force on 5 July, is the first time a non-violent direct action group has been designated a terrorist organisation in the UK. Membership of or support for the group is now a criminal offence punishable by up to 14 years in prison.

Since then, more than 100 people have been arrested across Britain under terror legislation, including an 83-year-old priest and a human rights lawyer.

On the day the proscription came into force, 29 people were arrested at a peaceful protest organised by campaign group Defend Our Juries in Parliament Square, London. Defend Our Juries had informed the Metropolitan police commissioner Sir Mark Rowley of its plans in an open letter before the demonstration took place.

Reverend Sue Parfitt, 83, who was holding a cardboard sign that read "I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action," told *Novara Media* moments before her arrest: "I know that we are in the right place doing the right thing. As my friend Ruth always says, 'we cannot be bystanders.'"

A week later over 70 arrests were made at various demonstrations against the proscription of Palestine Action. The Met arrested 41 people in London, South Wales police arrested 13 people protesting outside the BBC offices in Cardiff, and Greater Manchester police arrested 16 people in response to a protest in St Peter's Square.

In Glasgow, a man was charged outside a music festival for wearing a T-shirt that read "Genocide in Palestine, Time to Take Action," with the words "Palestine" and "Action" in a larger typeface than the rest of the text.

Policing responses varied widely across the UK, however, with police in Derry and Kendal not arresting protesters, but treating the protest in Cardiff as if "it were a serious terrorism incident."

South Wales police held those arrested in custody for an extended period, with Middle East Eye reporting that their doors were broken down, homes raided and belongings seized. Defend Our Juries said two of the 13 arrestees were Quakers, aged 78 and 80, and their food cupboards were tested for radioactive material.

Police have also applied the proscription to protesters who have not mentioned Palestine Action or showed support for the organisation.

On 14 July, armed police in Kent threatened to arrest a woman, Laura Murton, on terrorism charges for holding signs saying "Free Gaza" and "Israel is committing genocide." One officer told Murton: "Mentioning freedom of Gaza, Israel, genocide, all of that all come under proscribed groups, which are terror groups that have been dictated by the government."

A spokesperson for Defend Our Juries said: "These protests will see many more ordinary people across the country take a stand, who don't want to be handcuffed and detained in a police cell but refuse to stand by while our country collapses into an Orwellian nightmare where opponents of genocide are criminalised and silenced.

Novara Media (edited for space)

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

email: editor@cpa.org.au

Silver Lining to Insurance Rorts

Dear editor,
A recent headline in Murdoch's *South Australian Advertiser* begins with good news: 'Home Premium Hike Looms.' The news item continues: Maximum insurance payouts when builders go bust will increase as part of sweeping changes to the state's building indemnity insurance scheme... (What follows dashes hopes to the ground) but consumers are set to foot the bill!

Well that we have to get used to expect. Average premiums are set to rise by 25 per cent, that is consumers can add an increase of $2251 to $2814m to their financial worries and cloud their dreams. But it may also get consumers thinking about the increasing instability of our capitalist economy and looking for a better alternative. I admit I am one of the fortunate ones who managed to purchase and pay off his home in happier times.

Bob Saltis

Something to say?
Write to the Editor!

Solutions to Crossword

***Guardian* 21 July 2025 #2154**

Across

2. **Esmerelda** – Woman's name, title of Mexican, Venezuelan and Brazilian TV series
5. **Ocelot** – Scary South American cat
6. **Random** – Could say this about clues in this crossword
7. **Proletarian** – Class that can start a revolution
11. **Lemon** – Character in *30 Rock*

Down

1. **Treaty** – Something nuclear Israel ignores
2. **Marxists** – Not quite Engels-ists
4. **Worse** – Stalin said "they are both….."
5. **Eclipse** – Total and of the heart in 80s song
8. **Privacy** – Violated by data breaches
9. **Envoy** – Barnaby and Jillian's jobs

Film: *Superman*

Sebastian Peady

The latest *Superman* is the first film in the second attempt at a DC cinematic universe. As the eighth *Superman* film released into a world that's a bit over the inundation of superhero films, this iteration has quite the task of winning over an audience becoming weary of the genre. What will win audiences back to this film is stupidly simple; Superman is a good person, something previous versions have been afraid to embrace.

In an irony-poisoned age where sincerity is too often seen as embarrassing, this Superman is a much appreciated breath of fresh air. Indeed, many of the best moments of the film are moments of shameless, unabashed sincerity which would be undercut with an eye-roll or a snarky quip in other blockbusters.

David Corenswet effortlessly portrays a traditional boy scout Superman. He is likable and kind; unwaveringly doing the right thing, but not naïve. The base on which Superman's goodness is built upon is Ma and Pa Kent, Superman's adopted parents, portrayed in this film by Neva Howell and Pruitt Taylor Vince respectively. The decision to cast lesser known character actors instead of big names adds to the grounded nature of Superman's parents, and, by extension, Superman himself. I doubt Superman would have been half as good a character if it weren't for Ma and Pa Kent.

In this *Superman*, audiences are dropped into a world in which superheros are thoroughly established. This is refreshing and leaves time for the story. After what feels like an eternity of super-flicks, it's nice to see one that knows we know about all the super-people and don't need exposition. Director James Gunn also joyously embraces the silliness of superhero comics. That's good. The dark-and-gritty stuff was getting old.

Superman takes a welcome, if surprising, political stance. Central to the plot is the conflict between the fictional nations of Boravia and Jarhanpur. At the start of the film, Boravia has attempted an invasion of the neighbouring and militarily inferior Jarhanpur, which was prevented by Superman. Throughout the film, as Boravia continues to threaten invasion, we learn that Boravia is a close ally of the United States, which supplies it's weapons, thanks to evil billionaire Lex Luthor's corporation. The two countries may well be standing in for Israel and Palestine. Even if they aren't meant that way, Boravia and Jarhanpur have provoked a lot of self-victimising Zionist tirades online. Honestly, any film which makes Zionists this angry is worth the price of admission.

In an industry so thoroughly incorporated into the machine of US imperialism, few filmmakers have the inclination, let alone the courage, to include such themes into a major blockbuster.

Where *Superman* falters, however, is its pacing. Scene transitions are often jarring, leaving the film feeling somewhat disjointed. Some scenes are left feeling somewhat unfinished, or not allowed enough time to sit with the audience. The film can feel as though it is rushing to reach its finale.

That aside, if you're up for some formulaic super-fun, *Superman* has enough charm and character that sets it apart in an all too stale genre. Three red stars out of five.

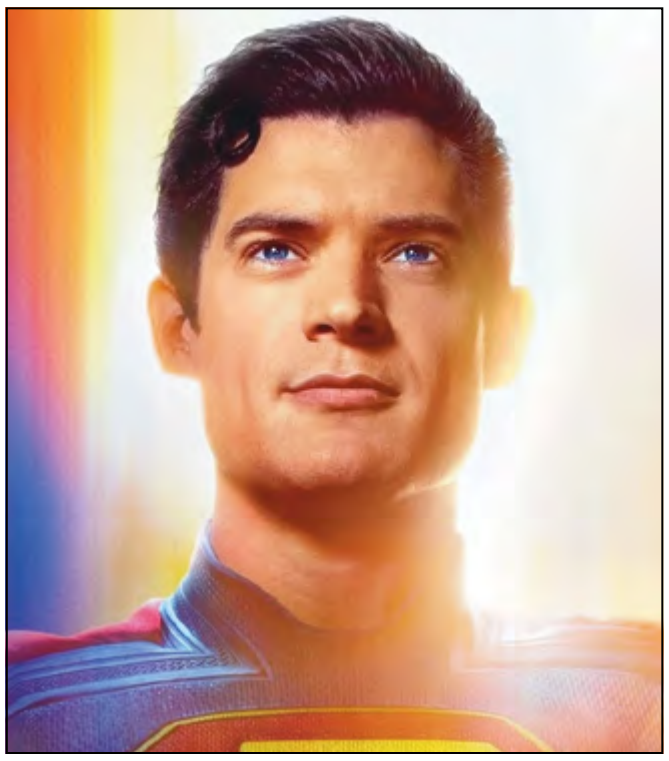


Photo: Warner Bros

Book Review

Waste Land
by Robert D Kaplan

Graham Holton

I read *Waste Land* because it has had positive reviews from at least one history academic and a senior military figure, David Petraeus. I was very disappointed. Kaplan's logic twists and meanders, his winding arguments and assumptions often lack historical and political support. At times his conclusions are incorrect. A book for those wanting to ward off their insomnia, otherwise to be avoided.

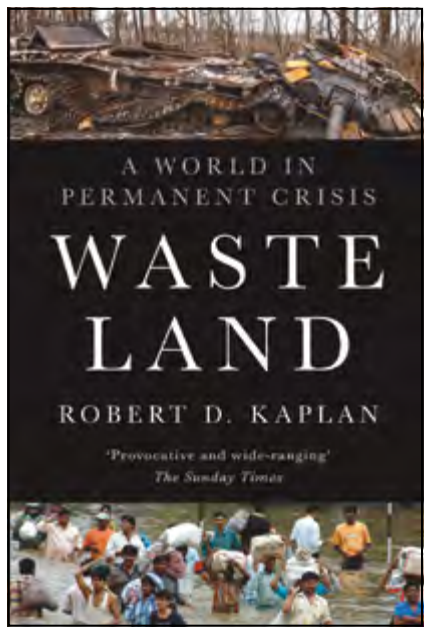
The title "The Waste Land" comes from TS Eliot's poem, with Kaplan using imagery of desolation and spiritual crisis to frame the modern fractured and overheated politics of the present. He travels through the American Southwest exploring its military installations, prisons, and abandoned towns as metaphors for what he sees in the USA: isolation, militarisation, ecological exhaustion, and the collapse of civic society.

Kaplan's views the present great-power rivalry as "an interconnected system of states in which no one really rules." That's true as far as it goes, also so vague as to be useless. He argues that the world's precarious state is similar to Germany's Weimar Republic of the 1920s; a state in permanent crisis. Kaplan highlights how the economic fragility and political polarisation of the Weimar era is mirrored in today's rise of populism and the erosion of trust in state institutions. It is an argument supported only by Kaplan's precarious leap in logic.

Kaplan critically explores how modern technology and digital media amplifies global fragility. Modern communications, he claims, have created a "closeness" that people formerly did not experience, ensuring local conflicts quickly become global. "Complexity leads to fragility" making our world more unstable, and making conflict riskier and pervasive, than in the past.

Kaplan' goes on to argue that the US faces "decay in the culture of public life" and that as "the media has become less serious, so have our leaders." He compares President Dwight Eisenhower to President Donald Trump, whom Kaplan calls "the epitome of self-centered, emotional impulses." Russia's decline is "in a far more advanced state of rot" than the US, whose decline is "subtle and qualitative," while Russia's slide is "fundamental and quantitative."

Kaplan's politics takes an anti-left turn. He contrasts China's Deng Xiaoping with Xi Jinping, who he calls "a Leninist ideologue" who has returned China to a "die-hard authoritarianism." Kaplan shows little understanding of Marxism, equating Communism with fascism. Kaplan's arguments at times are illogical. He says that both the USA in 2020 and Russia in 1917 "demonstrated the phenomenon of genuinely liberal people socially intimidated into supporting movements to their far left." If one is far right enough, Joe Biden *could* be to their "far left," but I fail to see how votes for Biden were like the Russian Revolution.



Leg Glance

Cricket is a South Asian sport

Vijay Prashad

'Cricket is an Indian sport,' Ashish Nandy wrote in his *The Tao of Cricket* (1989), 'that the English discovered by accident.' In fact, Nandy could very well have substituted 'South Asian' for 'Indian' given the grip of the sport in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

These five South Asian countries are part of the twelve elite members of the International Cricket Council, and three of the countries – India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka – have won four of the thirteen Cricket World Cups. But most importantly, 90% of cricket's one billion worldwide fans live in South Asia.

That last point is the key one: despite the *actual* invention of the game of cricket in England, the game is most fanatically played and enjoyed in South Asia. It is, in that sense, a South Asian sport.

It is difficult to explain the game to people who did not play it as kids. So much about sports is about nostalgia for things done better in one's youth than later in one's life. If you played a sport as a young person, you developed a body memory of that sport and that memory bathes you with the eternity of youth through your life. This applies to those who watch a sport through their life, the act of watching the sport creating its own kind of physical fanaticism.

I love cricket and have always loved it. When people tell me that they either don't understand cricket or find it absurd as a sport, I try my best not to react with anything but sympathy. Everyone else's sport is hard to understand or appears stupid: I have no appetite for Gridiron or for tennis, but only because I neither played them nor watched them as a young person. They are alien to me, as I suspect cricket is alien to people from non-cricket parts of the world.

India and Pakistan played their first cricket match against each other in 1952, and since then, the two sides have found that the game was drawn fully into the geopolitical rivalry between the two states. Not a match went by that was not charged with electricity.

Things got so bad that the two sides would rarely play each other in their two countries, but would have to play on such neutral pitches as in Sharjah (United Arab Emirates). When relations between the two countries improved, then one side would tour the other's main cities; when tensions inflamed, such as when the two countries went to war (1965, 1971, 1999), the two sides simply would not play each other. Cricket between India and Pakistan was, from the first, interrupted by politics.

All of this is a great pity. Many schoolchildren in South Asia have fantasised about the incredible team that would have been produced out of a united South Asia, or else about the tremendous All-South Asian cricket tournaments. When India had the world's best spin bowlers, Pakistan had some of the finest fast bowlers: what a team they would have made, with Imran and Sarfraz sharing the ball with Bedi, Prasanna, and Chandrasekhar. Imagine the immense scores made by Zaheer Abbas and Sunil Gavaskar if the two titans of the bat had opened the innings for a South Asian team?

After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, and after Bangladeshi cricket began to come into its own, many people in the Bengali speaking regions of South Asia have wondered about a United Bengal team that would be a treat to watch

Photo: Anil Sharma – pexels.com

against the otherwise overpowering Maharashtra. Some of this came to pass with the emergence of the Indian Premier League (IPL) in 2008, although the money power in IPL has taken some of the artistry out of the game.

As children, we would make fantasy teams and play book cricket with these teams (randomly opening the pages of any book, the 0 would be out, the 2, 4, 6 would be runs). My schoolbooks could have been mistaken for the Wisden cricket almanac. I would always have a South Asian team play the Rest of the World. The captain of the South Asian team was always Gavaskar, who appealed to me as an organic intellectual of the cricket pitch. The bowling for the South Asian side was always opened by Sarfraz Nawaz. I would often bring on Bishen Singh Bedi to bowl early because I wanted him to take five wickets every time. My Rest of the World – characteristically – was captained by Gary Sobers, and the team was populated largely by Australians and West Indians. From early on, I did not like the English team. It had something to do with the *anyone but England* mentality that afflicted all of us in the 1970s, but it was mostly to do with the behaviour of Tony Greig when he was in India (*we are not monkeys*, Tony).

I know that it is conventional wisdom to believe that there is animosity between the fans in India and Pakistan over their two teams. All sports are wrapped up in other social obligations, such as national pride. Chauvinism plays a role, no doubt. But let's remember one simple fact: genuine fans love sport. They appreciate artistry. Remember the roar that greeted Mohammed Rizwan, one of the most daring of contemporary batsmen, when he scored a century in Hyderabad a few years ago. When India plays Pakistan, I always cheer for India, but if Pakistan is playing anyone else my allegiances are obviously with Pakistan. It saddens me equally to see both Babar Azam and Virat Kohli slip into bad form; these twins in pads had the most elegant way to send off any errant ball beyond the boundary.

No amount of national pride can take away the excitement of the day when either Jasprit Bumrah or Mohammed Abbas starts their run up with a shining red ball in their hand, ready to bang into the pitch and test the mettle of the eyesight of the batsmen and their reflexes.

Cricket is a South Asian sport. Anything that is shared is also able to divide. But it is one of our great shared cultures and we should cherish that.

Adelaide

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Cuba unveils Youth and Childhood code

On 19 July 2025, Cuba's National Assembly of People's Power approved the new Youth and Childhood Code, a landmark legal reform. The updated code expands the legal framework for the protection and participation of minors in Cuban society.

President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez and Arelys Santana Bello, head of the Permanent Commission on Youth, Childhood, and Women's Equality, led the approval ceremony. The law marks a shift from a focus on ideological and professional formation to a rights-based, inclusive, and holistic approach.

"Nothing we do would make sense without our greatest treasure: the new generations. Our children and grandchildren are the reason we fight for a better world," Díaz-Canel said.

The new code introduces a comprehensive protection system that integrates institutions, policies, and procedures to ensure the well-being, development, and active participation of children, adolescents, and youth in Cuban society.

The law places special emphasis on early childhood, gender equality, and access to education, health, and work opportunities. It also addresses issues such as delinquent behaviour, age-based power dynamics, and the inclusion of young people in political and social decision-making.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The Youth and Childhood Code establishes a shared responsibility model, where families, schools, and state institutions collaborate to ensure the full development of minors. It introduces legal mechanisms for early intervention, inclusive education, and protection against violence, while also promoting the right to work for adolescents under strict regulations.

The code also includes legal safeguards for digital safety, reflecting the evolving nature of childhood and youth experiences in the 21st century. "This is a legal instrument that responds to today's realities," said Minister of Education Naima Ariatne Trujillo Barreto, noting the importance of a multisectoral and community-driven approach.

The formulation of the new code involved broad consultation with civil society, including academics, educators, social organisations, and youth groups. This participatory process ensured that the law would reflect the real-life experiences and needs of Cuban children and young people.

Telesur (edited for space)

Taiwan: history says One China

Jo Dunleavy

Temple of Confucius, Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Photo: CEphoto, Uwe Aranas – wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 3.0)

To understand why the Chinese remain so firm in their determination to oppose what they describe as a "small gang of splittists" it is only necessary to look at the past century or so of history of the island.

In April 1895, through an aggressive war against a weak imperial China, Japan forced the Chinese to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki and occupied Taiwan. In July 1937, Japan launched its all-out war of conquest against China.

In December 1941, the Chinese nationalist government issued the Proclamation of China's Declaration of War Against Japan, announcing that all treaties, agreements and contracts concerning Sino-Japanese relations, including the Treaty of Shimonoseki, had been abrogated, and that China would recover Taiwan.

In December 1943, the Cairo Declaration was issued by the Chinese Nationalist, US and British governments, stipulating that Japan should return to China all the territories it had stolen from the Chinese, including Northeast China, Taiwan, and the Penghu Archipelago.

The 1945 Potsdam Proclamation agreed by China, the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union stipulated that: "The terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out."

In August 1945, Japan surrendered and promised in its instrument of surrender that it would fulfil the obligations laid down in the Potsdam Proclamation. On 25 October 1945, China recovered Taiwan and the Penghu Archipelago, resuming sovereignty over Taiwan.

However, between 1945 and 1949 the Chinese Nationalists of the Kuomintang (KMT) led by Chiang Kai-Shek resumed their campaign, which had only been temporarily and very partially put on hold during the anti-Japanese war, against the Chinese Communists led by Mao Zedong.

On 28 February 1947, popular discontent against the KMT on the island boiled over into a mass uprising which was only put down by KMT forces after an estimated 20,000 people were killed.

On 1 October 1949, the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) was proclaimed, replacing the Republic of China.

Chiang and the KMT remnants were forced to withdraw to Taiwan and its surrounding islands. The Kuomintang, remained in power in Taiwan, first under the dictator Chiang, then under his son, Chiang Ching-kuo, and Lee Teng-hu.

In 1991, Lee ended emergency rule, which had permitted the domination of Taiwan's national assembly by mainland delegates appointed in 1947 by the KMT.

During the 1990s the anti-KMT opposition gained a number of seats in the assembly. In 1999 a split developed in the KMT when James Soong challenged the official candidate for the 2000 presidency, Vice President Lien Chan, and was expelled. The opposition candidate, Chen Shui-bian, won the election, with Lien placed third behind Soong.

During the election, Chen had pledged that his Democratic Progressive Party would not push for separation from the mainland. Chen's essential problem was that in pushing for international support for separation he was swimming against the tide.

For the two decades after the 1949 revolution, the socialist camp and many non-aligned nations strongly supported the PRC and many capitalist countries likewise began to recognise it, however reluctantly, the new reality in China, while the US maintained a solid position of support for its anti-communist ally in Taipei.

However, during the 1970s, as People's China and the US established better relations, the Taiwanese regime became increasingly isolated.

In October 1971, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 2758, which kicked out the Taiwan authorities and gave China's UN seat to the government of the PRC.

This was followed in September 1972, by a Sino-Japanese Joint Statement, establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries, with Japan recognising the government of the PRC as the only legitimate government of China, and promising to abide by Article 8 of the Potsdam Proclamation.

In December 1978, China and the US issued a Joint Communiqué in which the US side recognised "the government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China" and acknowledged "the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is a part of China".

Today, despite the efforts to link diplomatic recognition with handsome trade and aid deals, Taiwan's only full diplomatic status in Europe is with Vatican City. Its main embassies are in a dozen or so Central American and Caribbean states, a handful of African states and a sprinkling of tiny island states in the Pacific, such as Paulu and Tuvalu.

The former Yugoslav republic reverted to recognition of the PRC after a two-year spell in which it had established diplomatic relations with Taiwan after Taipei pledged up to US$300 million in cash and more than US$1 billion over a longer period.

Then, the South Pacific island state of Nauru broke relations with Taipei.

The Taipei administration continues to designate itself as the "Republic of China," it maintains support for Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, as of course does the PRC, which causes considerable problems with many of its anti-PRC allies.

However, the Taiwanese also lay claim to sovereignty over the entirely independent Republic of Mongolia. Just as bizarrely, the Taiwanese claim that the Chinese mainland capital is still Nanjing and not Beijing.

Despite this, relations have indeed improved and have come a long way since the 1950s when both sides shelled each other's territories and Chian occasionally launched commando raids on the mainland.

In 1979, Beijing launched a series of proposals, beginning with the National People's Congress's "Letter to Taiwan Compatriots," which proposed the two sides should establish "Three Links" (trade, postal, and transportation) and "Four Exchanges" (economic, cultural, technological, and sports).

In response, the Taiwanese administration outlined the "Three Nos" policy (no contacts, no negotiations, and no compromise).

The People's Republic's position has been constant for the best part of two decades; a process of peaceful unification in which the PRC retains its goal of "socialism with Chinese characteristics" with the capitalist character of the Taiwanese economy remaining for "a long time to come."

The "one country two systems" policy has already proven effective in Macau and Hong Kong, two former colonies that returned to Chinese sovereignty in the late 1990s. Despite the dire predictions of some in the West, neither territory shows signs of losing its unique character anytime soon.

The Taiwanese regimes have always been caught in a dilemma. Their claim to be the legal government of all of China and Mongolia has long been a fiction, their attempts at international recognition have run aground.

Even the very idea of "independence" illustrates the Alice-in-Wonderland fantasy of the Taiwanese separatists. After all, if the rightful sovereign government of all China is in Taiwan, the island would, in effect, be declaring independence from its own territory.

A less fantastic option and one that has been canvassed openly in the Taipei press over the past couple of years is that the Taiwan administration renounce its claims on Mongolia and the mainland and seek recognition as a new state. However, this is unlikely to be any more successful.

The obvious alternative is to make a serious response to Beijing's proposals which would allow the Taiwanese to negotiate a large measure of real autonomy.

The PRC has stated clearly that it would not station troops or impose a PRC administration on the island. Economic realities are pushing the two sides together in any case. Total Taiwanese investment in the mainland over the past decade has been estimated at over US$40 billion.

Cultural and language ties make mainland China the obvious centre of attention for Taiwan's hard-pressed corporations. The mainland has quite deliberately encouraged this both on pragmatic economic grounds and with the longer term aim of encouraging what used to be termed the "overseas patriotic bourgeoisie," that is to say ethnic Chinese businesses outside the mainland willing to invest in China.

Taiwan had long developed profitable links with Hong Kong and Macau during their colonial periods. Now the colonial powers have gone and the trade ties remain but the territories' status has changed to 'Special.'

Without any major ethnic, language or cultural differences with their mainland compatriots and with growing trade and investment ties that will inevitably bring Taiwan under the wing of the mainland's rapidly developing economy, the rational case for separatism can only grow weaker.

The last hope of the separatists is to count on backing from both the US, which has always seen Taiwan as a dagger pointed at the PRC, and Japan which is increasingly interested in developing itself as a regional power and wants to curb Chinese influence in East Asia. The Chinese government encourages peaceful and realistic dialogue in the direction of reunification of the Chinese people and their territory.

the USA has always seen Taiwan as a dagger pointed at the People's Republic of China

‘It’s Better in a Union’ campaign unites US workers

Graham Holton

Union leaders and workers have rallied at the AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington D.C. to launch their nationwide bus tour, “It’s Better in a Union: Fighting for Freedom, Fairness and Security.” Under President Donald Trump all levels of government have attacked workers’ basic rights, union jobs, and much-needed social programmes. The best defence against these attacks is for workers to unite behind their unions.

The bus tour will visit twenty-six states to join picket lines and support organising campaigns. They will speak to workers whose jobs and working conditions have been cut by the Trump administration. Workers face rising costs and cuts to essential lifesaving services, with no increase in pay. The tour will provide a voice to build workers’ power leading up to Labor Day on 1 September.

In Ohio the tour joined a protest outside the Central Ohio Tesla dealership. Next the tour stops at the IBEW Local 613 Union Hall in Atlanta, Georgia, to join a rally to hold the billionaires and major corporations accountable.

Local union leaders and workers demand lawmakers to put the needs of working families above billionaires, the freedom to organise a union, to protect essential social programmes, and to ensure dignity for all workers.

The Nurses Rally for Fair Contract at Palmetto General Hospital is for increased pay and to improve working conditions and patient safety. Hoosier Unions and People of Faith demanded that the federal government invest more in communities and not in the arrest of migrants and deportation centres.

South Carolina AFL-CIO President, Boris Gibson, a member of United Steel Workers (USW) and a former worker at the mill, has held a press conference to speak on South Carolina workers exercising their rights, organising unions, and fighting for good jobs and respect in the workplace.

Speakers included Democrat Senator Nina Turner. Gibson introduced the A.W.A.R.E. Campaign, “Advancing Workers Advocacy Rights & Equity”, which is in response to ‘DOGE’ (the formerly Elon Musk-led ‘Department of Government Efficiency’) and the “Big Beautiful Bill,” having devasting impacts on workers and progressive organisations.

A.W.A.R.E. is designed to unify workers’ efforts, their families, pro-worker organisations, and elected officials under one common banner. The tour has also visited Veterans Affairs and Medicaid-funded facilities and hospitals gutted by DOGE.

Cuban girls softball team benched by travel ban

Cuba’s girls’ softball team missed the recent Caribbean qualifier to the Little League World Series after the coaches and staff were denied US visas.

The girls, ages 9 to 10, who came from La Palma, Pinar del Río, were supposed to play in Puerto Rico. They never made their flight. While they received visas, no adult in the delegation did.

Cuba’s Baseball and Softball Federation called the decision unfair and discriminatory, adding that it is “cruel to play with the expectations of kids who have worked very hard.”

This is just the latest indication that Secretary of State Marco Rubio has imposed a de facto travel ban on Cuban sports.

According to Gisleidy Sosa, director of international relations at Cuba’s National Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation, no Cuban athlete this year has been granted a visa at the US Embassy in Havana.

Cuba’s national women’s volleyball and men’s basketball teams also recently missed competitions in Puerto Rico due to visa denials, while a dozen athletes were barred from attending the World Masters Athletics Indoor Championship in Florida.

The denials are not technically a result of Trump’s partial travel ban on Cuban nationals, which exempts athletes traveling to the USA for competitions “in major sporting events.” However the final decision for visa approvals ultimately depends on Marco Rubio’s State Department.

Some of the biggest international competitions require Cuban teams to obtain US visas since world and Olympic qualifiers often take place in the United States or Puerto Rico.

The 2028 Olympic Games will be held in Los Angeles, where any Cuban athlete who manages to qualify could be subject to Rubio’s whims – assuming he is still in the job.

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Global Briefs

USA: The largest teachers’ unions in the US, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), have, alongside the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), raised opposition to the US Supreme Court’s ruling which gave the go ahead to the Trump administration’s dismantling of the remaining half of the Department of Education. AFSCME’s president has labelled the decision, which effectively gives the executive the power to dismantle any agency created by a statute of Congress, “a direct violation of the Constitution.” The AFT has warned that students and educators will suffer without the work done by the Department of Education, including supporting students with disabilities or from poor communities, assisting with access to higher education, and protecting students’ civil rights. The NEA has committed to fighting for all students to have access to properly resourced public education.

Lesotho: Trump has threatened to impose a 50% tariff on all of Lesotho’s exports to the United States, despite claiming he has never heard of the country before. Lesotho, which is surrounded by South Africa, depends on trade with larger nations, such as the sale of water used for South African crop irrigation. Lesotho has also played a role in the US textile industry through the provision of cheap labour for manufacturing, helping to produce Levi’s jeans and Trump’s golf shirts. This arrangement is largely influenced by the US African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which Trump is likely to dismantle as it comes up for renewal in September. The proposed tariffs have yet to be implemented, but the threat of the tariffs has already caused factories to shut and thousands of workers to lose their jobs. Lesotho has declared a two-year state of disaster as the government seeks to drastically improve job creation.

NATO: Secretary-General Mark Rutte has threatened Brazil, India, and China with secondary sanctions if they do not pressure Russia in peace negotiations regarding the Ukraine conflict. These threats followed Trump’s declaration that additional 100% tariffs will be placed on countries with trade relationships with Russia if a peace agreement is not reached. Rutte also reaffirmed that military aid to Ukraine will continue. Some commentators have pointed out that solidarity and cooperation between BRICS countries has been motivated by a common desire to defend against this exact kind of economic intimidation.

Spain: A supposed leader of the far-right group Deport Them Now Europe, has been arrested in Barcelona and accused of inciting racial violence against Maghrebi immigrants in Torre Pacheco. The arrest followed the assault of a man in his sixties, with a handful of Moroccan youths alleged to be his attackers. Extremist groups have used the opportunity to organise mob violence against all migrants. Deport Them Now Europe, which has previously collaborated with far-right parties and movements from across Europe including Vox, Chega, Lega, and Alternative für Deutschland, used its social media accounts to call for a “hunt.” The primary targets have been the marginalised community of young people born locally whose parents are North African immigrants. Over 100 police officers were needed to quell the riots, during which weapons were seized, 14 people were arrested, and more than 120 identified, most of whom were found to be from other regions. Deport Them Now Europe has also promoted the creation of armed mobs under the guise of “neighbourhood patrol” to threaten North African residents. Spain’s Civil Guard and local police have formed a regular security presence, with some locals fearing a further escalation of far-right violence.

Austerity and war vs development and peace

Vijay Prashad

Photo: Thomas Hawk – flickr.com (CC BY-NC 2.0)

Reason seems to have been gradually abolished by the language of bombs. As weapons systems get 'smarter' and 'smarter,' the range of diplomatic instruments used by the Global North states becomes blunter and blunter. US and European diplomats have returned to the old colonial habit of speaking loudly and brusquely, lecturing the natives about what they should or should not do while they themselves do whatever they want. If the natives do not agree, then the old colonial rulers simply threaten to cut off their hands or bomb their homes.

When the International Criminal Court tried to open a file to investigate US atrocities in Afghanistan, Washington reacted by revoking the prosecutors' visas and threatening to sanction their families. More recently, the United States government sanctioned UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese for her report on corporate complicity in the Israeli genocide against the Palestinian people. This gangster-like behaviour reflects the longstanding attitude of colonial rulers, indicating a return to a period when the West sent its gunboats to threaten our countries to trade as they wanted us to trade rather than to trade as equals. During the colonial period, that form of behaviour was called gunboat diplomacy. What we have now is an updated version: nuclear missile diplomacy.

The 2025 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) summit at The Hague offers yet another example of this nuclear missile diplomacy. The final communiqué was the shortest produced at any NATO meeting, with only five points, two of which were about money.

This time there was no granular detail about this or that threat, nor was there a long and detailed assessment of the war in Ukraine or how NATO supports that war without limit. While the 2024 declaration asserted that "Ukraine's future is in NATO," this position was nowhere to be found in the 2025 statement. It was clear that the United States simply would not allow a laundry list of NATO's obsessions. Instead, it was the US obsession that prevailed: that Europe increase its military spending to pay for the US protective shield around the continent.

Under US pressure, NATO states formally agreed to increase their military spending to 5% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2035. Since many NATO members have not even met the previous 2% target, this move will likely spark serious domestic debates across the alliance. By our calculations, NATO states currently spend US$2.7 trillion on war making. As they move to increase military spending to 5% of their GDP, that number will rise to $3.8 trillion – a good $1 trillion more than in previous years.

What else could be done with $1 trillion? For one, global hunger could be eradicated in twenty to twenty-five years, hunger among children could be eradicated immediately, or the entire $11.4 trillion external debt of developing countries could be paid off in just over a decade. As it stands, the United Nations (UN) has warned that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will not be met by their target year of 2030 and might in fact be delayed by decades, if not a century. One of the most alarming areas of backsliding is SDG 2: Zero Hunger. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that, absent major inflation shocks or geopolitical and geological disruptions, it would take an extra $40 to $50 billion per year to end global hunger. Instead, that money is being spent to blow up food systems rather than build them.

In 2024, global military expenditure reached $3.7 trillion. That same year, the United Nations approved an annual budget of just $3.72 billion (which includes peacekeeping). The UN budget, therefore, is only 0.1% of the global arms budget. It is difficult to look at these figures and not feel the futility of advancing an agenda for peace between peoples and diplomacy between states. There is so much that needs to be solved and yet so little that is being done in this dispensation – however limited – to solve these problems.

NATO states agreed to US President Donald Trump's mandate to increase military spending to 5% of their GDP without any dispute. Because of their various neoliberal debt brakes, they will have to cut social spending in order to pay for their increased arms production and purchases. Germany, which has the largest GDP in Europe, is nonetheless mired in deep social problems; for instance, 21.1% of the German population faces the risk of poverty or social exclusion. The German government, led by Chancellor Friedrich Merz, has pledged €650 billion (almost 1 trillion AUD) over the next five years toward military spending in order to reach the 5% target by 2035 – an amount even the *Financial Times* finds to be "staggering." To meet this pledge, Germany will need to raise about €144 billion per year, primarily through budget reallocations – i.e., austerity – and increased borrowing – i.e., debt (raising taxes is unlikely, even in the form of regressive value-added taxes on consumption).

In other words, what Europe and the United States have adopted is the path of austerity and war. That is their promise to the world for the period ahead. Meanwhile, at the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), the BRICS+ countries – which now include Indonesia – opted for a different worldview. The BRICS+ statement called for programmes "for the benefit of our people through the promotion of peace, a more representative, fairer international order, a reinvigorated and reformed multilateral system, sustainable development, and inclusive growth." The key words here are peace and development.

That is the choice that has been laid out before us: austerity and war on the one hand, or development and peace on the other.

Faced with this choice, we rage, we weep, we take to the streets and refuse to allow for any direction other than peace. This was how the Iraqi poet Badr Shakir al-Sayyab (1926–1964) felt in 1953 after he was expelled from Iraq for his participation in the failed 1952 Iraqi Intifada against the monarchy. Later that year, in Tehran, he witnessed the CIA-backed coup that removed Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq from power and restored the Shah of Iran. In 1954, he wrote the long poem 'Weapons and Children' (لافـطألاو ةحلسألا). A passage from it is presented below:

'Iron'
Who is all this iron for?
For a chain twisting around a wrist
A blade held to breast or vein
A key to the prison door for those that are not slaves
A noria that scoops blood.
'Bullets'
Who are all these bullets for?
For miserable Korean children
Hungry workers in Marseille
The people of Baghdad and the rest
Whoever wants to be saved
Iron
Bullets
Bullets
Bullets
Iron...
I hear the merchant
And the laughing children,
And like the blade before the victim notices,
Like lightning scattered in my mind
Like a screen, like a wound gushing blood –
I see craters rumbling –
Filling the horizon – flames, and blood
Pouring down like rain showers, filling the expanse
Bullets and fire. The face of the sky
Scowls whenever iron shakes it
Iron and fire, fire and iron...
Then the impact, then the bomb!
Thunder everywhere,
Lifeless body parts, and the rubble of a home.
Old iron for a new battle
Iron... to level this waterless desert,
Where children drew in the sand
And where older folks thought it was safe.
'Peace'
As if the spark in the letters
Is covered over by the darkness of caves,
With the hopes of the first man.
What picture did he inscribe on the stones,
Spurred on by death: is it a victory,
A longing for the best of worlds?

That is the choice: iron or peace, bullets or development. There is no peace through guns, no development through bullets. This is a choice. You must participate in making this choice. Your silence leads to guns and bullets and war; your voice, if it is loud enough alongside the voices of others, might take us to peace and development, the laughter of children as they play without fear in the dusk.

Tricontinental Institute

US and European diplomats have returned to the old colonial habit of speaking loudly, lecturing the natives about what they should or should not do.

46th anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution

Graham Holton

2025 marks the 46th anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua. On 19 July 1979 the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) overthrew the brutal US-backed, dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza, whose family had ruled the country since 1936. The Sandinistas are named after Augusto César Sandino, a nationalist rebel leader and founder of the EDSN group, who fought US occupation from 1927 to 1933.

In 1961 opposition groups formed the FSLN and launched a campaign of armed resistance against the Somoza regime. The FSLN was a broad-based coalition of peasants, workers, students, and leftists. After victory, from 1979 to 1990 the Sandinistas were members of the Junta of National Reconstruction. Furious at the loss of Somoza's hold on the country, the Reagan government funded the Contras to fight the Sandinistas. With the end of the Contra War in 1990, the right-wing government of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro won the election, though the FSLN still held a plurality of seats in the assembly. In 2006 Daniel Ortega won the presidential election, and his party has won elections ever since.

Some of the achievements of the FSLN include economic growth with a focus on the root causes of poverty. Illiteracy was cut from 50 per cent to 12 per cent, land reform gave land to the peasants, and free universal health care dramatically decreased maternal and child mortality. The country has free universal education from preschool to universities. Public transport is subsidised for the poor. Over 70 per cent of its energy is from renewable sources. Every year thousands of quality low-cost homes are provided for the poor.

Politically, Nicaragua defends the rights of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples. It is a world

leader in gender equality, ranking third for women in parliament, women's educational achievements, and women in cabinet positions. Importantly, Nicaragua has strong international solidarity relations with Palestine.

Liberation Day, or FSLN Revolution Day, commemorates the victory of the popular left-wing revolutionary government giving birth to an independent nation no longer under US control. The national holiday is celebrated in Plaza de la Fe in Managua, with President Daniel Ortega addressing supporters with shouts of "*¡Viva el 19 de Julio!*" and "*¡Viva la Revolución Sandinista!*." Across the country proud Nicaraguans hold parades, with music and dancing.

The success of the FSLN has served as a model of revolutionary movements in Latin America and inspired global solidarity among anti-imperialist movements. The legacy of the Sandinista Revolution continues in modern Latin America.

Portuguese union fights for pensioners

The Portuguese Telecommunications and Audiovisual Communication Workers' Union (STT) has spoken out about a threat to the income of around 900 pensioners from the former Marconi company, who are at risk of losing 15% of their pensions starting in August.

The CPRM Staff Pension Fund was set up with the aim of compensating Marconi workers for the less favourable conditions of the contribution scheme applied to them for decades. It is guaranteed by the Marconi Special Social Security Improvement Fund (FEM).

For many retirees, this supplement represents a fundamental part of their monthly income.

At present, the FEM is practically exhausted, with no financial resources to meet its short-term responsibilities, jeopardising the continuity of these payments.

In practice, this means a 15% cut in the pensions of these retirees – citizens who, after a lifetime of work, now see their rights and financial stability seriously threatened.

The STT considers this situation unacceptable and deeply unfair. It argues that the responsibility for ensuring that the commitments made to these workers are fulfilled lies primarily with the state, namely the Ministry of Labor, Solidarity, and Social Security, which must take urgent measures to restore normality and guarantee the continued payment of these pensions in full.

The management of the scheme cannot and must not "wash its hands like Pilate," as it intends to do with a letter it recently sent to the retirees.

STT says the payment cut not only represents a violation of the commitment made to these retirees, but is also a worrying sign of the State's lack of responsibility towards its most vulnerable citizens.

Labor Today International

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Half the Sky

Respect and protest

Clare Marino

Q: What has the Liberal Party learned about respecting women?

A: Absolutely nothing.

It was back to school for our Federal politicians with parliament resuming after a long break and the elected members meeting for the first time since Labor's resounding win in the election.

It was all very civil, with apparent bipartisan support for Welcome to Country, the Prime Minister praising the peaceful election process and even paying tribute to the election night concession speech by the outgoing Opposition leader. But scratch the surface and Australia politics is far from respectful.

Recent protests in Melbourne featuring vile, sexist slogans aimed at the premier Jacinta Allan exposed the blatant misogyny and hate-speech that still thrive in many channels of political life.

The unacceptable, sexist and violent slogans, implicitly supported by those attending the rally, including Victoria's Opposition leader, Brad Battin, ought be a call to action to address the ingrained misogyny in our political system.

Disturbingly, the misogynistic slogans bore a striking similarity in tone and appearance to the infamous 2011 Canberra rally in which Tony Abbott stood grinning in front of slogans including the now infamous "Ditch the Witch" line, aimed at then Prime Minister Julia Gillard. Another slogan that day labelled Gillard "JuLIAR – Bob Brown's bitch".

Across her political career Gillard was the target of relentless sexist attacks belittling her appearance, her voice, her decision not to have children, even her 'too clean' kitchen. The conservative media led the chorus, ably egged on and condoned by Gillard's political opponents. Precious little was done to shut it down by her supposed allies.

Gillard didn't treat other women well, notably single mothers in her opportunistic decision cut welfare to single mothers. She left thousands of single mothers up to $100 a week worse off.

That doesn't make the gendered abuse she copped as PM right. Gillard's appalling treatment was insightfully detailed in the award-winning play, *Julia*, which culminates in her powerful 2012 misogyny speech. The play should be compulsory viewing for all politicians, a reminder of how sexist the political culture was, and an uncomfortable mirror to how much of this vile disrespect continues.

It's 14 years on from that Canberra rally but political actors see no problem in echoing the hate-filled slogans. In Melbourne recently, watched by Brad Battin leader of the Victorian Liberal Party slogans draped on fire trucks included "Ditch the Bitch," "Truck Jacinta," and most grotesquely, "Raping the regions for the ring of steel." This last reference to Victoria's lock down provisions is disturbingly violent.

Nothing excuses this hateful, gendered abuse. While some of those in attendance claim they didn't see the slogans, that excuse is hard to stomach. No one called it out until at least after critical media reporting. If the standard you walk past is the one you accept then the slogans you stand in front and do nothing about are those you condone.

For sheer black and white evidence of the level of disrespect and hatred of women in power that continues, the recent Melbourne protests was a powerful example.

Comprehensive research evidence and the important work of groups such as Our Watch has shown that organisations which are heavily male dominated are likely to condone and continue these unacceptable, sexist attitudes. We know too, that disrespect towards women leads to violence against women.

Words matter and disrespect matters. It's not good enough for our political leaders to give themselves a pat on the back for playing nicely during an election. Action needs to be taken across all areas of government to get more women into positions of genuine power and to call out and combat sexism and misogyny.

Netanyahu uses war to try saving his government, again

JE Rosenberg

Once again, the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is on the brink of collapse. Once again, he is choosing to spread war, death, and destruction to preserve his hold on power.

The two Israeli Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) political parties – United Torah Judaism (UTJ) and Shas – announced plans to leave Netanyahu's coalition. They were demanding the passage of a law that would continue to exempt their ultra-Orthodox constituents from military conscription.

The proposal faces fierce opposition from within Netanyahu's own Likud party and other coalition members. Should UTJ and Shas exit the ruling coalition, Netanyahu would lose his parliamentary majority in the Knesset.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu's long-running corruption trial has moved into a more dangerous phase for the embattled prime minister. He is now forced to testify under oath. The charges against him – bribery, fraud, and breach of trust – are backed by damning evidence, including recordings and testimony from his former aides.

In an astonishing and unprecedented move, US President Donald Trump publicly urged the Israeli courts to drop the case. Even more brazenly, the USA's ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee appeared in court, a gesture widely interpreted as an unsubtle attempt to intimidate the judiciary. An editorial in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* described it as "mafia-esque" intimidation by the US diplomat.

WALLS CLOSING IN

With the walls closing in, Netanyahu has once again returned to his most reliable political strategy: bombing Arabs and launching wars.

In fact, his testimony in court was cut short because he ordered the Israeli Air Force to bomb the Syrian Ministry of Defense, in the centre of Damascus. His Minister for Diaspora Affairs, Amichai Chikli, went further, calling for the "elimination" of Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa.

This is hardly the first time Netanyahu has turned to war to save his political skin. In September 2023, Israel was rocked by unprecedented civil unrest. Protesters flooded the streets demanding Netanyahu's resignation. Military pilots and reservists refused to serve so long as he remained in power. Many feared the country teetered on the edge of civil conflict.

Then came 7 October. Hamas launched a surprise attack, and Netanyahu responded with a genocidal war on the people of Gaza that continues to this day. Israeli dissent evaporated almost overnight.

The pilots returned to their squadrons; the protests ended. More than 58 thousand Palestinians have been killed. Entire neighbourhoods in Gaza have been reduced to rubble.

Netanyahu's fiercest critics joined his war cabinet in the name of "national unity." Even opposition figure Gideon Sa'ar, whose whole political identity was built on staunch opposition to Netanyahu, fell into line, joining his sworn enemy's government.

Seeing how effective this cynical strategy could be, Netanyahu used it again in June of this year. On 4 June 2025, the Council of Torah Sages – the rabbinical body that guides UTJ – formally instructed its parliamentarians to introduce a bill dissolving the Knesset. Opposition parties, including Yisrael Beiteinu and the centrist Democrats, signalled support. Netanyahu's government was on the verge of collapse.

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

Israelis are beginning to recognise Netanyahu's self-serving manipulation

The massive war that followed lasted twelve days. Hundreds of Iranians were killed. Dozens of Israeli civilians died. Missile strikes damaged civilian centres in both countries. Thousands were displaced. The scale of devastation in Israel was unlike anything it had experienced before; airports closed, electricity grids and ports were hit, and civilians were sheltering in underground stations for days.

Politically, the war served its purpose. Once again, the country rallied together in a time of war, and Netanyahu's coalition held. The threat of a dissolved government disappeared.

Now, once more, we watch as Netanyahu drops bombs on cities to serve his own political survival. Whether the strategy works again remains to be seen. But increasingly, Israelis are beginning to see through the pattern and recognise Netanyahu's self-serving manipulation of war and military power.

The question is: How many wars will be launched, and how many more people will die before Netanyahu is finally removed from power?

People's World

Widespread Hunger and Disease: UNWRA urges action

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has issued a dire warning about the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of civilians face severe hunger, disease, and displacement due to Israel's ongoing military offensive and blockade.

UNRWA advisor Adnan Abu Hasna reported a sharp rise in malnutrition-related illnesses and waterborne diseases, exacerbated by the collapse of sanitation infrastructure and the lack of clean water. Since 2 March, Israel has blocked the entry of fuel, medicine, and hygiene supplies, leaving over 6,000 aid trucks stranded outside Gaza.

Only 11,000 tons of aid have entered Gaza since 17 May, a volume UNRWA says should be delivered daily to meet basic needs. "We hope this commitment translates into action on the ground," Abu Hasna stated, calling for the daily entry of hundreds of trucks, medical equipment, and repair teams for water desalination plants.

The European Union recently brokered a deal with Israel to reopen border crossings, increase aid deliveries, and restore vital infrastructure, but UNRWA insists that concrete implementation is urgently needed.

UNRWA also condemned the Israel–US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), calling its aid distribution model a "complete failure." According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 875 Palestinians have been killed while trying to access food near GHF sites, including 674 deaths in the immediate vicinity of its facilities.

Abu Hasna accused the Israeli government of using the GHF to politically manipulate aid, alleging that its true aim is to push civilians southward in preparation for mass deportation. "We refuse to cooperate," he said.

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) also raised alarms about the collapse of social and health services, reporting spikes in domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and mental health crises.

UNRWA's Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini described Gaza as a "graveyard of children and starving people," warning that without immediate intervention, thousands more lives will be lost.

Telesur

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