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Class collaboration
A DANCE WITH THE DEVIL

M Santos

The Albanese government's much-heralded Economic Reform Roundtable last month revealed the government and employer agenda to use class collaboration as a shackle on organised labour for the enforcement of the government and big businesses' economic and political agenda.

The stated aim was to inform government on ways to improve "productivity" and implement "budget repair." In summing up the meeting, Treasurer Jim Chalmers said there were "heartening signs of consensus" on difficult issues.

This get-together across class lines involved a select group of business leaders, academics, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), the Productivity Commission, Treasury, the Reserve Bank of Australia, as well as Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Treasurer Jim Chalmers and shadow treasurer Ted O'Brien.

The discussions were held behind closed doors and nothing concrete had been disclosed at the time of writing. As usual, and in line with the tactic of evasion practiced by all the ministers in this government from the PM down, Chalmers talked in generalities about such measures as increasing productivity, removing "red tape" in the construction industry, the tax system, increasing corporate investment, and AI.

The employers rolled out their usual agenda of cutting company taxes, cutting government expenditure, further deregulation – policies successive governments have been implementing since the mid-1980s. The ACTU made what appears to be an ambit claim for a four-day working week and talked about support for media, arts and entertainment workers to strengthen copyright protections for material used by the AI sector.

ACTU president Sally McManus called for a raft of new tax measures that she said would boost government revenue, reduce inequality, and drive productivity growth. Climate change received barely a mention although the word "sustainable" was bandied around in terms of budget spending – read cuts to social spending. The burgeoning military budget to fund Australia's commitment to the US war machine, including around $400 billion for nuclear submarines, was not on the agenda.

National campaign to defeat the WorkChoices legislation, Sydney, 2006. Photo: Denis Doherty

There appears to have been "consensus" around addressing what the roundtable labelled "intergenerational unfairness" in the context that many younger Australians are struggling in casual jobs, on low incomes, unable to afford a mortgage or rent, or to study and gain skills for higher paid work. But there is no sign of any political will to really address this unfairness.

CLASS COLLABORATION

Under the Accord between the ACTU and the Hawke Labor government, the trade union movement agreed to co-operate with employers, restrain wages and make no extra claims on behalf of the workers they were there to represent. In return the government promised certain reforms, including Medicare, tax indexation, a (toothless) Price Surveillance Authority and the regular indexation of wages in line with price rises. Of course, full wage indexation was short lived.

The collaborationist theory proposed that wage restraint would reduce inflation and result in higher profits, leading to new investments followed by the creation of more jobs. In practice, real wages fell and profits rose, while much of the new investment went into job-replacing technology or offshore.

Unions began the process of trading off working conditions in return for wage rises – the aim being to fund wage rises out of productivity increases. In fact, employers often increased profits, following reductions in staffing levels, longer working hours, loss of paid breaks, and new enterprise "flexibility" measures.

The unions carried out their side of the bargain, but the employers never let up in their pursuit of maximising profits and drawing every extra drop of blood out of workers.

The trade union movement thus sacrificed its independence and its right to pursue its own demands in the interests of workers for very little. In fact, it quietly dropped its opposition to privatisation, pursuit of a 35-hour working week, and a number of other important policy positions.

While the trade unions were pursuing "class peace" – class collaboration – the Labor government was able to push through highly regressive (for workers) economic reforms. The process resulted in a blunting of class consciousness and the acceptance of the idea that gains could be won through simply sitting around a table with employers or in a court, without struggle.

As former ACTU president Ged Kearney later pointed out, "Wage restraint from 1983 to 1990 meant unions held back from doing their core work of bargaining with employers for better wages and conditions, and some forgot how to organise and are still paying the price."

The economic interests of labour and capital are diametrically opposed and so for workers, class collaboration is a dance with the devil.

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National Day of Action in Support of Palestine

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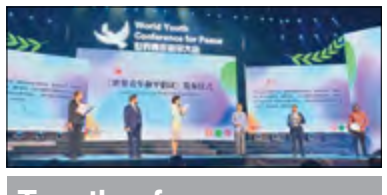

Together for peace

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Guardian

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CSL, let's own it!

Have you taken any medicine in the last week/month/year? How useful was it? How much did you need it? How about the people you care about – did they need any medicine? These sound like strange questions in Australia, because most of us are used to being able to get the medicine we need when we need it. For most people, it's affordable, although the PBS scheme which makes our medicines affordable could do with a lot of improvement (see *Guardian* #2139).

We take these things for granted in Australia, but we shouldn't. There's the menace of Trump and tariffs, as US pharmaceutical companies eye the PBS scheme. Australia's relatively inexpensive medicines annoy the USA's pharma giants because they're a standing argument for the US to have cheaper pharmaceuticals. Albanese has said he'll stand firm on the PBS. We'll see. He doesn't have a good record of standing firm.

The other reason we shouldn't bank on our medicines being cheap and accessible forever is that Australia is at the mercy of global supply chains. Australia imports 90 per cent of its medicines. According to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, there are 400 medicines in short supply in Australia. 30 are classed as critical. These are medicines with a life-threatening or serious impact on patients.

This country mainly makes vaccines and some generic medications. Another thing that makes our medical supplies fragile is that most of the raw ingredients are also imported. If there's a shortage of one ingredient, it can affect the supply of a range of finished products. So one way or another, our medications are at the mercy of international supply chains and large overseas manufacturers. If there's a global shortage, those manufacturers will prioritise larger markets and put Australia at the back of the queue.

There's an obvious solution. We should be making what we need here, or at least be ready to ramp up production when the international system lets us down. As a first step, we should renationalise CSL. The Commonwealth Serum Laboratories was founded in 1916 and was wholly owned by the Australian government for most of its successful career. It had an important role in the production of penicillin and antivenom. It developed pioneering treatments to protect blood products from HIV.

Faced with such a successful enterprise, a neoliberal Labor government flogged it in 1994. Now CSL is another large company whose legal duty is to make profits for shareholders. Benefit to Australian health comes second.

Australian governments like to talk about sovereignty. They should practice what they preach by renationalising CSL and putting it to work giving Australia independence when it comes to health. This is not a utopian or impractical demand. Most people reading this editorial grew up with CSL as a publicly owned company working for the benefit of Australians. This country could have a world-leading pharmaceutical industry that works to give people here security when it comes to health. As it stands, a lot of Australians are one international crisis away from severe health risks.

A neoliberal objection to nationalising CSL is that Australia is a "small market." It's true that 28 million people isn't a large population compared to the USA, India or China, but life isn't all markets. Cuba has a population of about 10 million people. The Cuban Institute of Molecular Biology, operating under a savage and long-lasting blockade, made five working vaccines against Covid during the pandemic and continues to do groundbreaking work with Alzheimer medication.

Australia is a prosperous, educated country. There's no reason why we couldn't have sovereignty and safety when it comes to medications.

Let's take back CSL!

Quotes of the Week

"Writers withdrew … because they most likely read the code of conduct on the same phone screen that brought them images of amputee children, emaciated adults and incinerated refugee tents in Gaza."

Dr Randa Abdel-Fattah on the code of conduct that led to 50 writers withdrawing from the Bendigo Writers' Festival

"Yesterday it was communists, then terrorists, then weapons of mass destruction – today it's drug traffickers. The lies change, but the script remains the same."

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yván Gil after Trump placed a bounty on President Maduro for drug trafficking

Class collaboration

Continued from page 1

So it was that under this arrangement profits soared, wages stagnated or fell in real terms, and hard-won working conditions were traded off under the Accord. Trade union membership declined as class struggle was suppressed.

The Accord was based on the false premise that workers and their employers have common economic interests. All the conclusions and assumptions arising from this false belief were also false; that boosting productivity – profits – somehow helps workers. In reality every extra dollar in profits is a dollar less in wages and vice versa.

If the Albanese government were serious about "budget repair" and "fairness" it would firstly cancel AUKUS and slash the warfare budget, and fund services such as the NDIS and Medicare which benefit the people, services that it is so clearly hellbent on wiping out.

It's still unclear what will come out of the roundtable, but this much is clear; class collaboration has only helped one class, the one that owns the means of producing wealth. For real progress, working people are going to have to get active in their unions and struggle. ✪

Congress Appeal

From 27 February to 1 March 2026, elected delegates representing Communist Party organisations from all over Australia will gather in Melbourne for the 15th National Congress of the Party. There will be an opening on the Friday night, 27 February, to which all *Guardian* readers, their families and friends are invited. (Details will be provided in a future issue of the *Guardian*.)

Over three days, delegates will discuss the work of the Party, make any amendments to and adopt a Political Resolution. In the lead-up to the Congress, Party members are discussing and submitting amendments to the draft Political Resolution. In January 2026 the Central Committee will consider these amendments and finalise the draft to be put to Congress.

Congress will elect a new Central Committee to lead the work of the Party until the next National Congress. As the highest body of the Party, it can also amend the Party's Program and Constitution and adopt other resolutions as its delegates may determine.

The CPA has launched a Special Appeal to help defray the costs associated with holding a National Congress. These are considerable with delegates coming from as far away as Perth, the printing of documents, etc.

We are appealing to Party members, organisations, and all friends and supporters of the Party, including *Guardian* readers, to help us reach our $10,000 target as soon as possible.

To contribute, please fill in the form below or write your details on a separate piece of paper to send with your contribution. Payment by credit card can also be phoned in on 02 9699 8844 or use the direct credit details.

All contributions will be acknowledged in the *Guardian*, with the names of contributors unless otherwise requested. We look forward to your support for this important occasion. ✪

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Albanese expels Iran ambassador

Peter Farmer

On 26 August, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese took steps to expel the Iranian ambassador, and withdrew Australian diplomats from Iran, following allegations from ASIO that Iran had directed an attack on Melbourne's Adass Israel Synagogue in December 2024.

ASIO Director-General Mike Burgess claimed that the Iranian government was behind the attempted arson of Adass Israel Synagogue and other unspecified attacks on "Jewish interests." He said ASIO was still investigating possible Iranian involvement in other attacks.

Burgess reportedly stressed he did not believe the Iranian regime was responsible for every antisemitic attack in Australia.

Dr Tim Anderson, Director of the Centre for Counter Hegemonic Studies described Burgess' claims as a "line," and suggested that the "painstaking" work ASIO claimed it had put in amounted to "reading many anti-Iranian cables from Mossad and the CIA."

The most high-profile antisemitic attack this year, the notorious caravan full of explosives in NSW turned out to be a hoax which the Australian Federal Police described as the work of criminals with no real anti-Jewish motivation. NSW Premier Chris Minns used the hoax as the basis for passing draconian anti-protest laws. There is currently a parliamentary inquiry into how much Minns knew about the hoax as he forced the laws through.

What's certain is that Israeli diplomats are still in place and parts for Israeli F-35s are still being made in Australia after the killing of at least 65,000 Palestinians by Israel.

As for the Australian reaction, journalist Greg Jericho put it well on social media: "Lot of media organisations and journalists glad they now can move on from having to talk about Israel bombing another hospital." He added "Iran are such an easy bad guy for our media and government. That the Israeli ambassador remains in Australia is a disgrace."

On 25 August Israel bombed a Gaza hospital twice, killing at least 20 people, including journalists, medics and aid workers in what Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu described as a "tragic mishap."

Childcare

Safer Staffing Action Plan

Early education reforms must solve widespread unsafe staffing issues, with early childhood educators demanding an end to a misused staffing loophole and more inclusion support for children who need additional support.

The demands are part of the United Workers Union's *Safer Staffing Action Plan*, a blueprint for a safer sector based on the views of thousands of educators. The plan has been put to the Minister for Early Education, Senator Jess Walsh, and State-based education ministers.

Developed in response to the current safety crisis following tragic incidents in Victoria and other states, the plan is built from input about challenges that face educators, children and families.

The *Safer Staffing Action Plan* calls for staffing to be put at the centre of reforms for a safer sector including an end to the so-called under-the-roof ratio.

The staffing loophole allows educator-to-child ratios to be counted across a whole centre ("under the roof"), even if ratios are not being met in individual rooms.

In a union survey of more than 2,000 educators released in July, 77 per cent of educators said they were operating below minimum staffing levels in their rooms at least weekly, and 42 per cent said it was occurring daily – indicating widespread misuse of the loophole.

In the same survey, 83% of educators strongly agreed the loophole compromises the safety and wellbeing of children.

The plan also includes calls for:

- Every child requiring additional support, whether diagnosed or not, to be fully supported through additional staffing and other required resources.
- Staffing waivers at centres allowing understaffing to be only used as a last resort and strictly time limited.

In the union's recent survey of more than 2,000 educators:

- 75% said understaffing meant children were left without emotional support.
- 72% said understaffing led to an increase in children hurting themselves or others.
- 79% said there were not enough inclusion support educators to meet the needs of children who need additional support.

UWU Early Education Director Carolyn Smith said: "We have seen a range of quick fix responses to safety issues across centres that fail to address the underlying issue of understaffing.

"If we are to achieve the wellbeing and safety that children deserve, no amount of CCTV can replace the oversight of skilled, trained educators who are able to give children the necessary time and attention.

"It's important that reforms address loopholes like the under-the-roof ratio, that is being used by unscrupulous providers to short-change educators, children and families.

"There is also consistent feedback from educators that a failure to provide necessary levels of support for children who need additional support means that educators are stretched and children are missing out."

Quotes from early childhood educators:

"... when it comes down to making a decision that puts profits against quality care, profits always win. Management are also ignorant to the struggles within the room, especially in the increasing number of megacentres that keep popping up." – New South Wales educator

"We are constantly running on survival mode ... We want to do our best for these kids and we are overworked. It's disheartening to not be able to meet the needs of the children when you need to because you have multiple things to do at once ... Children are not able to get consistent attention and focus to support them." – Northern Territory educator

"Under-the-roof ratio has to be cancelled. It creates the biggest problem ... under-the-roof ratio is wrong and only benefits to the companies who want to make more money." – Northern Territory educator

"Staff are constantly walking in and out of our sector and we always have no staff so it becomes a mad rush to work out the day, and no amount of planning or caring can account for not having enough staff members." – Queensland educator

"There is such a high burnout educators are moving out of the industry." – South Australian educator

"Ratios need to be lowered to benefit the children and minimise educators stress." – South Australian educator

"There was never enough suitably experienced staff on the floor at ANY time." – Victorian educator

"Under-roof-ratios are the biggest obstacle for providing quality care and education for children below five years of age." – Victorian educator

"[I want to] advocate for educators to be recognised for the dedication and inspiration they provide our next generation in their most formative years. We deserve more so we can give the children the absolute best foundation for their future." – West Australian educator.

Photo: pickpik.com (public domain)

when it comes to making a decision that puts profits against quality care, profits always win

Unions join forces for free speech

The National Tertiary Education Union and Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) have warned of serious risks to freedom of expression stemming from a code of conduct adopted by the Bendigo Writers Festival.

The festival issued a code of conduct to participants in La Trobe University-sponsored events directing them to "avoid language or topics that could be considered inflammatory, divisive, or disrespectful."

It also mandated adherence to La Trobe's Anti-Racism Plan, which adopts the Universities Australia definition of antisemitism.

More than 50 writers, academics and hosts including NTEU and MEAA members withdrew from the festival over the code.

NTEU National President Dr Alison Barnes call it "especially galling that La Trobe University management has used its role as a sponsor of the festival to stifle academic freedom and freedom of expression – the very principles universities are built on.

"This is exactly why the NTEU strongly argued against Universities Australia's definition of antisemitism – it risks conflating uncomfortable criticism of government policies with discrimination.

"The NTEU will always unequivocally oppose all forms of racism and discrimination including antisemitism and Islamophobia."

MEAA Acting Chief Executive Adam Portelli said that the union "supports creative and media workers' right to freedom of expression, even when uncomfortable or inconvenient. In fact, it is in the very nature of artistic expression to be disruptive.

"These workers deserve the freedom to express opinions without fear of being silenced or censored.

"This can be done while ensuring an environment free from discrimination and vilification."

NTEU/MEAA

Qld government stops collecting royalties at Adani coal mine

Graham Holton

The Queensland LNP government has negotiated with Bravus (formerly Adani), to defer royalty payments on the Carmichael coal mine. The former Labor government had signed a royalty deferral deal with Bravus in 2020, subject to 'proceedings.' Treasurer David Janetzki said those proceedings will now end, with the LNP government having made a new arrangement with the company. The government insists the only difference between their deal and Labor's will be Bravus's $50 million future investment.

Janetzki said, "there will be no additional deferred royalties." He did not say how much interest would be charged or when the deferred royalties would be paid, due to commercial-in-confidence arrangements agreed to under Labor's deal. So Queenslanders don't know when the deferred royalties will be paid, or how much interest will be charged.

The Qld government has a specific royalty regime for coal, and under the Mineral Resources Act 1989 mine producers must pay royalties. Premier David Crisafulli has made significant changes to the royalty scheme based on present coal prices. Under the $50 million scheme the Carmichael mine will expand its production by 30 per cent, over the next four years, to 16 million tonnes per annum. Bravus chief operating officer, Mick Crowe, said this deal will allow the mine to "continue to grow and invest in the 1,200 people who work out here. This creates more certainty for them in the future."

Carmichael coal mine.
Photo: Adani Mining Australia – wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 4.0)

The premier said: "That money will be used to expand the workers' village, create a new dam, a rail network hub for maintenance, and additional engineering works." It will open "the door for half a billion dollars of investment and will enable an expansion to the tune of about a third" of the mine, thereby "increasing productivity."

Labor and the Greens have accused the government of giving the mining giant a 'free pass.' Shadow Treasurer, Shannon Fentiman, described the deferral as a "secret sweetheart deal to provide Adani with a royalty holiday." Greens MP, Michael Berkman, said, "What are Queenslanders getting out of this deal, and if it's so great, why can't we see the details?"

As Adani, Bravus has donated generously to the LNP.

ANU must pause all job cut plans after union win

The Australian National University (ANU) has committed to no future change proposals containing forced redundancies. However, there are currently eight restructures at various stages of proposal and implementation, with more than 100 staff still facing the loss of their job.

National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) ACT Division Secretary Dr Lachlan Clohesy said that the announcement of no new forced redundancies was "a clear vindication of the union's campaigning. This is a win for ANU staff, students, and the broader community who have been appalled by this process and the way it has been managed, and have actively opposed it.

"We still have eight processes in place, with more than 100 people currently facing the prospect of having their jobs cut. This announcement gives no comfort to those facing the axe. The Vice Chancellor needs to revisit those existing proposals, which include disestablishment of incredibly significant resources like the Australian National Dictionary Centre, the Humanities Research Centre, the Centre for European Studies and the ANU School of Music."

Clohesy called on the Vice Chancellor to confirm that there will be no forced redundancies in 2026, whether ANU leadership considers them part of 'Renew ANU' or not.

"ANU has lost more than 1,000 staff since April 2024, including those already gone and those proposed to go. It is misleading to only refer to forced redundancies when talking about jobs lost."

NTEU ANU Branch President Millan Pintos-Lopez was blunt:

"Let's be real, the pressure that union members have put on the University Executive is working. They haven't willingly had the hard conversations, our collective voices have forced them to. Measures like voluntary separations to avoid forced redundancies were implemented because of the actions of union members.

"This is a win for our campaign, but there is more to do to see off Renew ANU and save jobs.

"The Vice Chancellor must pause all proposed redundancies, at least until the outcome of the next voluntary separation round is known and the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency investigation is complete.

"There are still over 100 staff members who don't know if they'll have a pay cheque this Christmas."

Pintos-Lopez also called on the Vice Chancellor to rule out redundancies in 2026, calling it "ludicrous" to continue down the path of redundancies when so much about the university's future is not known.

National Tertiary Education Union

Dingo bytes

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) has welcomed the acknowledgment by technology companies of the rights of Australia's media and creative workforce and willingness to pay for the content they use to develop their highly profitable AI models.

MEAA chief executive Erin Madely said the union was looking forward to sitting down with the Tech Council of Australia and the ACTU to negotiate a deal for fair payment for journalists and creative workers.

"Today's agreement by the Tech Council of Australia is a welcome but long-overdue breakthrough in MEAA's campaign to 'Stop Creative Theft,'" Madeley said. "It is a recognition of the labour rights of our members and their valuable contributions to Australia's culture, our society, and our democracy.

"Media and creative workers have spoken out about the encroachment of artificial intelligence on their jobs and how their voices, music, and artwork have been scraped and faked without consent or compensation.

"Finally, the technology industry has agreed to stop the theft."

Madeley said with the technology industry now on board, the spotlight was now on government to progress legislative action to prevent AI from encroaching on workers' interests. A delegation of MEAA staff and members from across all sections will travel to Canberra on 1 September to advance the case for an economy-wide AI Act and AI-specific regulation. MEAA is calling for:

- Transparency – so workers know if their work has been used to train AI
- Labelling – so consumers know what is made by humans and what is made by AI
- A levy on big tech AI companies to pay for the use of Australian creative and media work
- Legislation that embeds Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protocols into law
- Laws to protect workers from having AI digital replicas of themselves generated without consent.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is dairy processor Fonterra. Dairy workers at a site owned by Fonterra, one of the world's largest dairy companies took strike action on 22 August after failed negotiations to improve job security and work health-and-safety allowances. United Workers Union (UWU) members walked off shift at 2:30 pm and 3:50 pm as part of protected industrial action. With the looming sale of Fonterra Australia to French dairy giant Lactalis for an estimated $4 billion, dairy workers at the Bayswater site are taking a stand for secure jobs in the dairy industry.

UWU members are pushing for a 4-year agreement to give workers stability across a period of change, an increase to the redundancy payout by 8 weeks to 60 weeks, as well as work health-and-safety improvements. Fonterra Australia – the sixth largest dairy company in the world by revenue – is famous for brands such as Mainland cheese, Perfect Italiano cheese, and Western Star butter.

To date it has refused to meet UWU members' demands ahead of the planned sale.

"We know that with the sale of a business and the introduction of new management comes the risk of layoffs. Our members and their families deserve financial security and job certainty. It's the least Fonterra owes them; without them they have no business to sell," UWU's Food and Beverage rep Tom Czech said.

"The suits at the negotiating table don't appreciate the physical toll that an honest day's work in a dairy takes on the body. Our members are expected to handle 20kg blocks of cheese everyday without a proper lifting device. Dairy work is hard work and it's physically taxing. This reality should be reflected in the agreement and financially compensated for. In addition, many of our members have been with Fonterra or its predecessors for over 30 years – to short-change them on redundancy pay after dedicating their working life to a company and helping build it into a $4 billion company, is insulting.

"Our members will be outside their workplace today, fighting for a future for our dairy industry."

$90m message for Qantas

The Transport Workers' Union (TWU) has welcomed the Federal Court ruling that Qantas will be penalised $90 million – the largest employer penalty in Australian corporate history – for illegally sacking and outsourcing over 1,800 workers. The decision was a moment of justice for loyal workers who'd loved their jobs at the airline.

The judgement, marking the end of a David and Goliath five-year battle is, according to the TWU, the final vindication for workers whose decision to fight the case was derided and mocked by Qantas management from day one.

The penalty on Qantas follows an earlier Federal Court decision on compensation to affected workers, which led to the establishment of a $120 million fund to compensate them for economic loss and hurt and suffering. Many suffered financial stress, family breakdowns and mental illness as a result of the outsourcing, and have endured a further five years of distress at being discredited by Qantas which argued throughout that they were wrong to challenge it.

TIMELINE

Qantas appealed the case all the way to the High Court which unanimously confirmed Qantas had acted illegally by outsourcing the workers, preventing them from accessing industrial rights to collectively bargain and take protected industrial action.

Qantas returned to the Federal Court and submitted that the workers should receive no compensation at all, then argued that the largest ever case of illegal sackings only deserved a "moderate" penalty.

Qantas failed in its bid for zero compensation and workers have now begun receiving payments from a $120 million pool for economic loss, and hurt and suffering.

Federal Court Judge Michael Lee was scathing of Qantas' call for a moderate penalty, saying "You can't come along and run false cases in court" with evidence fashioned "in a careful way in order to try to dissemble what went on," and that the decision not to bring a witness who'd been present for the decision "has the look of choosing a person who couldn't be the subject of true investigation."

Qantas was also criminally convicted and fined $250,000 for the targeting and standing down of a health and safety rep who raised concerns during the pandemic

In light of the ruling, the TWU is calling on Qantas to take concrete remediation steps by properly funding decent jobs for workers in its supply chain – such as at Swissport – who are suffering up to 400 safety reports a month in some ports.

TWU National Secretary Michael Kaine said: "In 2020 over 1,800 Qantas workers took on a huge and audacious battle against this airline, and [this] decision is a final win for both those workers and the tens of thousands of other TWU members who backed them every step of the way.

"These were committed Qantas workers who had done nothing wrong and had loyally served this company, in many cases for decades. They weren't just sacked, they were told by Qantas that they were delusional for questioning it. This ruthless, self-interested and illegal calculation to kick them to the curb has rightfully merited the largest ever penalty of its kind.

"These workers took on a fight against a company with almost limitless resources, knowing it was a long shot, and [the] decision is a $90 million message to corporate Australia that workers will stand up for what's right.

"Qantas was not sorry to workers when it illegally outsourced these workers, many finding out they'd lost their jobs over a loudspeaker in the lunch room. It was not sorry when it dragged them all the way to the High Court, or when it argued it should have to pay them no compensation at all. Qantas is only sorry now that it has to pay the largest penalty fine of any employer in Australian corporate history.

"If Qantas is serious about changing its behaviour it will now move to improve standards for workers in its supply chain at companies like Swissport still suffering appalling safety incidents, under-staffing and low pay.

"We need to return to an industry where workers are an investment and not a cost to be viciously driven down. We need a Safe and Secure Skies Commission so aviation works for our communities and not profit-obsessed executives."

Graphic: Transport Workers' Union Facebook

Raise GST? Tax gas exports

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a broad-based tax of 10% on most goods, services and other items sold or consumed in Australia. It's innately regressive – if two people with different incomes buy the same GST-eligible item, both pay the same GST, so the person with the lower income pays more tax relative to income. Here's what The Australia Institute thinks needs to be done.

Revenue from the GST was supposed to grow over time, so that state and territory governments would have a reliable income source to help them fund the important services they provide long into the future. But it has failed to live up to that goal. The reality is that GST revenue has failed to keep up with national income (Gross Domestic Product) and this has meant that the states have found it increasingly difficult to fund the important services they are responsible for.

If GST revenue had grown at the same rate as national income, then the states would have received an additional $231 billion in revenue over the 23 years from the introduction of the GST in 2000-01 to 2023-24. This includes $22 billion in lost revenue in 2023-24 alone.

The anaemic growth of GST revenue in the last two decades has been caused, in large part, by rising inequality in Australia. Slow wage growth for low-income earners, coupled with rapidly rising rents, has constrained consumer spending in Australia and, inevitably, constrained the growth of GST. Similarly, the more rapid increase in the incomes of high-income Australians means that expenditure on GST-free items – like private school fees, private health insurance and overseas holidays – has grown, and this has also cut into the amount of GST revenue that could be provided to the states.

Broadening the GST to include private school fees and private health insurance would generate $1.8 billion per year, overwhelmingly from high income households. In contrast, any attempt to simply increase the GST rate above 10 per cent would exacerbate the inequality already caused by the exclusion of so many goods and services preferred by the highest income households.

A simple solution to the impact of rising inequality on the decline in GST growth would be for the Commonwealth to collect new taxes to add to the pool of revenue the Commonwealth provides to the states. This could include new taxes on wealth, sugar, or a simple royalty on gas exports from commonwealth land or waters that are currently given away royalty-free. Alternatively, the Commonwealth could end tax concessions such as the Fuel Tax Credits Scheme, which currently costs about $11 billion per year. The additional revenue could be allocated to the states and used to better fund public schools, hospitals, and other essential services.

The Australia Institute

(The Australia Institute also approves of the ACTU plan to tax gas exports at 25%, saying that the plan would end gas shortages, cut gas prices, and deliver a $12.5 billion revenue windfall for Australian industry and households.)

Ngumpan Statement demands action on water, heritage, and fracking in WA

Aboriginal leaders in the Kimberley recently issued the Ngumpan Statement – a declaration marking 40 years of law, language and culture, calling on governments to protect Country, culture and water.

The statement urges leaders to reject short-term policies and adopt long-term thinking that places respect for future generations at the centre of decision-making.

"Water is life. It sustains our Country, our people, and our culture," the statement reads.

It argues West Australia's century-old water laws fail to recognise Aboriginal rights or knowledge, and must be reformed to avoid the mistakes seen in other regions where water has been overallocated and mismanaged.

The signatories noted the Kimberleys should lead with a precautionary and sustainable approach, remaining grounded in Aboriginal leadership and knowledge systems.

Cultural heritage was also a central concern.

The statement pointed to the destruction of Darrajayin, a sacred site featuring men's and women's areas connected to the Serpent Dreaming Story (Jawaren) and the Moon Dreaming Story (Garnkiny) on Malarngowen Country.

It said current laws in Western Australia and nationally are too weak to provide meaningful protection.

"We call for strong, best-practice cultural heritage laws that protect our sacred places and ensure our voices are at the centre of all decisions about our heritage," the statement read.

On fracking, the statement warned the risks to water, culture and community are too great, with existing protections described as inadequate.

Most of the state is already shielded from fracking and the statement said the Kimberley should be no different.

National Indigenous Times

(edited for space)

Cannon fodder from down under

Jo Dunleavy

> A mother speaks to her son as he prepares to go to war: "Now as you go forth to do your master's bloody business, ahead of you the enemy guns, at your back the officer's pistol, do not forget, their defeat is not yours, and neither is their victory."
>
> Berthold Brecht

The marking of the 80th anniversary of the end of WW2 was the occasion for another round of outpourings on the theme of Australia's military heritage and how we supposedly "became a nation" by sending troops to be slaughtered at Gallipoli in WW1.

British imperialism had much to gain from its attempts to capture the Dardanelles. If successful the operation would have severed Turkey from Europe, leaving its Middle Eastern empire available to be "freed" – and brought under British domination.

If all had gone as planned and the British had succeeded in capturing Constantinople (Istanbul), the Black Sea would have lain open to them – and so would the oil of Baku and the iron and steel of the Donbas. Imperialists in London, like Sir Henry Deterding of Royal Dutch Shell, were not deterred from coveting Russia's resources by the fact that the Russian Empire was their ally.

Henri Wilhelm August Deterding was one of the first executives of the Royal Dutch Petroleum Company and was its general manager from 1900 to 1936. He was also chairman of the combined Royal Dutch/Shell oil company. He succeeded the founder of Royal Dutch, Jean Baptiste August Kessler, when he died, and made Royal Dutch Shell a competitor to John D Rockefeller's Standard Oil and one of the world's largest petroleum companies.

In 1920, Deterding was made an honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire, for services to Anglo-Dutch relations and for his work in supplying the allies with petroleum during the First World War. Deterding was a bitter enemy of the Soviet Union and helped thousands of counter-revolutionary White Russian exiles.

There being no place in business for sentiment, the squandering of lives on Gallipoli was necessary for the boosting of business, the seizing of colonies and the domination of world trade.

It is a fact which bourgeois commentators studiously ignore, that with one exception, all the wars and military adventures that Australian governments have involved this country in were predatory wars, fought in most cases for the purpose of maintaining, restoring or extending colonial rule.

The exception of course was WW2, which began as a predatory war of conquest and trade domination – first and foremost arming Nazi Germany for the destruction of the Soviet Union – but became an anti-fascist war of liberation. The ideals espoused by the anti-fascist alliance of WW2 in turn inspired and invigorated the national liberation movements of the colonial countries.

The First World War was a great trade war in which Australian troops were largely cannon fodder for British imperialism's efforts to cripple its imperial rival Germany and to take over German and Turkish colonial possessions. After first dutifully seizing the German colony in New Guinea, Australian forces were dispatched to the Middle East.

After that, they were sent over to France, to slug it out in the trenches on behalf of British and French capitalism against the workers consigned to the opposing trenches by German capitalism.

When the rising of revolutionary and anti-war sentiments spread from Russia into Germany and Hungary and also caused mutinies among French and British troops, the warring imperialists took fright and called a halt, on 11 November 1918.

March through Adelaide, 1941. Photo: State Library of South Australia

Even as they met to re-divide the world's colonies and to restrict German capitalism's ability to compete, they were sending troops, including Australians, to invade Revolutionary Russia.

In WW2, Australians were initially sent to the Middle East and North Africa before being brought back to defend British colonial possessions in Malaya from would-be rival colonial power Japan.

After the defeat of Japan, Australians were sent back to Malaya to help Britain suppress the national liberation movement there. The troops were told they were fighting "Communist bandits."

Australian troops were also sent to fight similar "bandits" in Borneo. Then the US tried to "roll back Communism" in Asia by fomenting wars on China's eastern, southern and northern borders.

Only the one on the Korean peninsula developed into anything significant, and Australian troops were once again cannon fodder in a predatory war. The US, and allies like Australia, were fought to a standstill in Korea.

That did not deter the US from taking over from the French colonial occupiers in Vietnam and escalating another war to restore colonial possessions, acquire US domination over an area believed rich in offshore oil and other resources, and achieve strategic advantage for a planned full-scale war with China.

Even Australia's much-vaunted intervention in East Timor had an underlying strategic aim that had nothing to do with saving the lives of the Timorese. The Howard government's concern was to use the intervention to gain votes from the Australian people while actually establishing an imperialist base on the border of Indonesia. At the same time neatly and conveniently bracketing the gas fields of the Timor Gap with an Australian military presence.

And of course, we have been active participants in both bouts of US and British aggression against Iraq and Afghanistan. The predatory nature of these wars could not have been plainer.

For the last 80 or so years, Australian governments – with the notable exception of the Whitlam government – have had no hesitation in sending troops in support of the US to take part in any of imperialism's predatory wars. The most recent example is the AUKUS war-making alliance.

Is this what defines us as a nation? ✪

Something to say?

Write to the Editor!

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cpa.org.au

Workers force bank backdown

Commonwealth Bank workers have forced the bank to back down on AI-driven job cuts, in what the Finance Sector Union (FSU) calls a major win – but the fight to stop Australia's biggest bank replacing people in secure jobs with machines is far from over.

CBA announced in July that it would axe 45 customer service roles and replace them with its new AI-powered "voice bot," which it claimed was reducing call volumes.

FSU members told a very different story: call volumes were rising, with management scrambling to offer overtime and even pulling team leaders onto the phones.

The union says CBA is raking in billions in profit yet still tries to save a buck by sending jobs offshore for cheaper labour, rather than investing in its own staff and local jobs.

In addition, the FSU said employment numbers at CBA India had increased by 21% (from 5,630 to 6,788) since last year, marking a massive 138% increase since CBA first began reporting those numbers in 2022. In contrast, Australian employment numbers at CBA had decreased by 2.74% since 2022, reinforcing CBA's agenda of offshoring local jobs, which the union called "un-Australian."

After weeks of pressure from union members and a dispute before the Fair Work Commission, CBA has admitted it got it wrong and backtracked on the job cuts. Impacted staff will now be offered the option of staying in their roles or taking a voluntary exit payment.

The FSU says the damage is already done for the 45 workers who endured weeks of unnecessary stress, not knowing if they would be able to pay bills or support their families.

The union is continuing to collect accounts from members across the bank about how offshoring, automation and AI are impacting workloads and job security. Another hearing before the Fair Work Commission is scheduled for 25 August.

The union says this case is just the tip of the iceberg and has warned that more so-called 'efficiency measures' dressed up as AI or digital transformation are already in play across the sector.

FSU National Secretary Julia Angrisano said: "This is a massive win for workers, proving what can be achieved when members stand together – but let's be clear, this is no victory lap.

"CBA has been caught out trying to dress up job cuts as innovation. Using AI as a cover for slashing secure jobs is a cynical cost-cutting exercise, and workers know it.

"Our members want to be part of the conversation about how new technology is used in banking. They want secure jobs today and the training needed for the jobs of the future, not to be discarded under the guise of efficiency.

"CBA likes to talk about being a digital leader, but real leadership means investing in your people, not tossing them aside and blaming the technology." ✪

WA: Senator and environmental activist fined

Richard Titelius

Former Greens Senator and long-time environmental activist Jo Vallentine of Western Australia faced the Perth Magistrates Courts on 13 August 2025, charged with one count of trespass over an occupation of WA Labor Premier's office at Dumas House in 2024.

Vallentine and others had gone to the offices of Premier Roger Cook to protest over the Woodside Energy project in Western Australia's northwest which will contribute significant amounts of greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere and further escalate the climate change crisis.

A small crowd of people gathered outside the court to show their support for the former Greens Senator, including two current state Upper House members of parliament, Sophie O'Neill and Tim Clifford. To underscore the significance of Jo Vallentine's court appearance, The Australia Institute took out a full page advertisement in *The West Australian* to highlight that WA is "the only state without a 2030 climate target."

Vallentine advised that she intended to plead guilty. She also tried to make a plea in mitigation to tell the court of instances in other legal jurisdictions in Australia and around the world where courts were hearing cases concerning the obligations of governments to address greenhouse gas emissions which affected climate change and therefore people's livelihoods. Chief Magistrate Steven Heath shut down Vallentine's attempt to speak on the topic and fined her $500 with $300 Court Costs.

On the steps of the courthouse Jo Vallentine then addressed a crowd. She explained that the state in West Australia is completely captured by the gas and mining sectors of the WA economy, uncritically accepts whatever they need and implements policies designed to meet their requirements. Vallentine also said that companies like Woodside, Rio Tinto and BHP made donations to both major political parties and that there was a revolving door from industry into government and back out to industry. She accused energy and mining companies such as BHP, Woodside Energy, Chevron, and Rio Tinto of attempting to buy social licence by sponsoring various cultural and sporting events such as the Perth International Arts Festival and the Fremantle Dockers Football Club.

The former Senator argued that engaging in acts of peaceful non violence is an act of necessity to help bring transparency and accountability to government.

Shame on ANU leadership!

Canberra CPA

On the 20 August, the Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University (ANU), Geniveve Bell, showed a blatant disregard for the well-being of the workers in her employ. The VC announced in an all-staff email that there would be no future forced redundancies under the current ANU restructure. About one hundred staff, who had been told that their positions were identified as "surplus," were jubilant. They believed the decision to sack them had been reversed, and that they still had jobs after all.

It wasn't true. Several hours later, different work areas received emails from their local administrators, telling them that no, actually the VC's email was misleading, and that they were being made redundant after all. It's just that there will be no "new" redundancies. This wasn't just bad communication. This was a planned publicity stunt. The email coincided with the VC publishing an op-ed written in advance in the *Canberra Times*, and speaking to the ABC, and not correcting any reporters who mistakenly assumed that "no new forced redundancies" meant the cuts to the College of the Arts and Social Sciences, the abolishing of the Humanities Research Centre and the School of Music weren't going ahead. Make no mistake, these cuts are still going ahead, and this deliberate obfuscation was an attempt to get a couple of nice headlines at the expense of the emotional well-being of workers being sacked.

The cause of this ostensible pivot is clear, ANU leadership is on the defensive as the result of ongoing action by unionised staff and organised students. ANU

Dr Liz Allen Appreciation BBQ

senior management wants us to forget the devastating Senate testimony by former elected members of ANU Council. They especially want us to forget what was said by Dr Liz Allen: that Chancellor Julie Bishop bullied her, and that the stress made her suicidal and caused a miscarriage.

ANU workers made their feelings known in an NTEU-supported BBQ held in honour of Dr Allen. The university is yet to allow a full investigation into Dr Allen's allegations, and her attempts to seek justice have been met with multiple institutional obstructions. Justice for Liz Allen! Shame on ANU senior leadership and the corporate, managerial class of corporatised Australian universities that steal a good education from university students and treat their workers with the worst disrespect imaginable.

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

communist.party.australia

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

GREEN NOTES

AI and extinction

The UN Environment Program (UNEP) warns of a growing and serious impact on climate. That is the rapid, unregulated expansion of AI data centres including those operated by cloud service providers. Companies such as Amazon, Apple, Google, Meta, Microsoft, Nvidia, and Salesforce are blindly pursuing massive profits from AI with no thought for their impact on climate change and the future of humanity.

Adam Zewe of MIT has warned:

"Rapid development and deployment of powerful generative AI models comes with environmental consequences, including increased electricity demand and water consumption."

These centres use massive amounts of electricity, fuelling the emission of planet-heating greenhouse gases. Climate researcher Ketan Joshi has pointed out that "for Microsoft to make a million bucks in 2020, it burned through 75 megawatt hours of energy. To make a million bucks in 2024, it had to burn through 122 megawatt hours: a 60% increase." The staggering amounts of electricity being used lead to increased carbon emissions and pressure on domestic electricity grids. The International Energy Agency estimates that in the tech hub of Ireland, the rise of AI could see data centres account for nearly 35% of the country's energy use by 2026. Increasingly AI corporations are setting up data centres in third world countries, exploiting their resources.

"The demand for new data centers cannot be met in a sustainable way. The pace at which companies are building new data centers means the bulk of the electricity to power them must come from fossil fuel-based power plants," says Noman Bashir, a fellow with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Climate and Sustainability Consortium. He says the industry is on an unsustainable path, but there are ways to encourage responsible development of generative AI that supports environmental objectives.

"By 2026, the electricity consumption of data centres is expected to approach 1,050 terawatt-hours (which would bump data centers up to fifth place on the global list, between Japan and Russia)," the *MIT News* says.

Data centres use water during construction and, once operational, to cool electrical components. Globally, AI-related infrastructure may soon consume six times more water than Denmark, a country of six million, UNEP reports. That is a problem when there is a chronic shortage of fresh water with a quarter of the world's population already lacking access to clean water and sanitation. "We need to make sure the net effect of AI on the planet is positive before we deploy the technology at scale," Golestan Radwan, the Chief Digital Officer of UNEP, says.

Capitalism with its ongoing expansion of fossil fuels and AI data centres is driving humanity to extinction and destroying the habitat on which humans are dependent for survival. The system with its corrupt, compliant politicians is unwilling and unable to take the necessary measures to save humanity and life as we know it on the planet. They put profits before the survival of their own children, grandchildren and future generations.

This is not a doomsday message. It is a call for action *NOW*. Join the struggle to pressure governments to act on climate change, to phase out fossil fuel usage and control the development and usage of AI. AI could be used to benefit society, but left to its own devices without government controls and direction can be a highly destructive force. Capitalism is past its use-by-date and must be replaced by a system that is capable of planning and taking the necessary action to save humanity – socialism.

National Day of Action in Support of Palestine

Boorloo/Perth

Vinnie Molina

Tens of thousands rallied and marched for Palestine as part of the National Day of Action on Sunday 24 August 2025.

In Boorloo/Perth more than 20 thousand people gathered at Forrest Place to listen to a number of speakers who demanded the end of the genocide and to sanction Israel. The situation is dire on the ground as reported by speakers who had witnessed the horror in Gaza. The situation demands action now, tomorrow could be too late.

The rally was kept updated on the other protests across Western Australia, Bridgetown, Albany, Margaret River, Broome, Karratha in the North West, and Geraldton in the Mid-west. These reports demonstrated that the anger against Israeli terrorism was being felt in both urban and regional centres.

People defied wet and windy weather conditions to show their anger at the inaction of the Albanese government. Recognition was welcome as a step but it must be backed up by real action to stop the genocide. It is not enough to say Australia is a "middle power" and an "F-35 country." Every country should be doing all within its power to send a message to Israel and put maximum pressure on it to stop the genocide. And there is much Australia can do. All military and diplomatic ties with Israel must be cut immediately, the Israeli ambassador must be expelled and the Australian ambassador to Israel recalled.

The rage on the ground was loud and clear joining in the chants, speaker after speaker. The full list of speakers was:

Chris Cain, retired CFMEU National Secretary, former State Secretary, Maritime Union of Australia - WA Branch

Sophie McNeill, Greens MLC

Chantelle Ní Chróinín, Perth-based doctor who has served with Doctors Without Borders in Yemen and Palestine

Hiba Farra, Executive Board member of APAN - Australia Palestine Advocacy Network, Chair of Friends of Palestine WA and Co-chair of Perth Mums for Palestine

Ella Marchionda, National Union of Students Vocational Education Officer and organiser, Students for Palestine WA

Janet Parker, founding member of Jews for Palestine WA

An important factor at this National Day of Action was union endorsement. Union officials and secretaries were present, as were rank and file members.

UnionsWA secretary Rikki Hendon, as well as members of the AMWU, CFMEU, NTEU, TWU, MUA, CPSU/CSA, CPSU/PSU and CSIRO Staff Association, United Voice among others including a number of the state secretaries all showed up.

Historically the union movement has been a key player in the struggles for peace and justice. Since the ACTU issued a statement in solidarity with Palestine back in May 2025, APHEDA and its activists had been prominent in getting union members involved.

Chris Cain said loud and clear that the time is now for the trade unions to strike for Palestine.

The rally then went on an unprecedented 2 km march across the horseshoe bridge through Northbridge ending at Hyde Park halting intersections for around half an hour. People in cars showed their support by waving and tooting their horns in solidarity.

People commented on the monumental numbers not seen in Perth since demonstrations against the war on Iraq and the campaign against the third wave of industrial relations that saw workers taking to the streets in 1996, the struggle that established Solidarity Park across from the State Parliament.

The Communist Party of Australia condemns the genocide against the people in Palestine, and demands an independent Palestinian state and the end of the occupation.

It calls on the Albanese government to back up its resolutions and statements with actions on the ground. The starvation of the people of Gaza must be stopped and Australia and the international community can put an end to Israel's moves for a greater Israel and its genocidal policies.

Stop the genocide now, tomorrow could be too late

Gadigal/Sydney

Denis Doherty

Another big crowd turned up to express their dismay that the Australian government has not been more adventurous in applying sanctions to Israel and that not enough is being done to stop the carnage in Gaza. Unions for the first time were there in some numbers: the Teachers Federation, MUA, and the NTEU. The CFMEU had quite a big crowd for the first time, as did the HSU, NUW, and the Nurses.

The bulk of the crowd were many ordinary Australians, of all backgrounds, including anglo-Australians, Jews and a big contingent of Koreans. The Communist Party was there distributing *Guardians*, collecting signatures against the presence of Israeli companies at the upcoming Indo-Pacific Expo to send to Premier Chris Minns. Every Party branch from Sydney had representatives at the march.

Naarm/Melbourne

W Varga

Naarm Party members attended the Palestine Solidarity Rally in Melbourne's CBD. Comrades met in the party office at Trades Hall before heading down to the front of Trades Hall to join hundreds of union members who were marching in solidarity with Palestine. At around 11:30 am we marched down to the State Library together with the assembled crowd of union members to join the main rally where speeches were given. Speakers included Lydia Thorpe and Gary Foley.

After around an hour and a half we marched down Swanston Street to Flinders Street and then marched up to Spring Street and finished outside Parliament House where more speeches were given. The march was overwhelmingly peaceful although at one point, two Zionists wearing Australian flags tried to disrupt it and were met with loud opposition. Overall, however, the march met no resistance. Organisers estimate that around 100,000 people attended the demonstration.

So far, the IDF has killed at least 60,000 Palestinians as part of Israel's illegal war in Gaza. Additionally, it has been confirmed that over half a million Gazans are now experiencing famine thanks to the conflict and the blocking of aid by Israel. Community organisers and unions have called for the imposition of targeted sanctions on Israel by the Australian government, the deployment of a humanitarian aid convoy to Gaza, the cessation of all trade in military supplies with Israel, the support, by the Australian government, of efforts to prosecute those guilty of violating international law, and the establishment of emergency humanitarian visa pathways.

The Communist Party of Australia condemns the ongoing genocide, war crimes committed by the Israeli government and the IDF, and its repeated human rights abuses in the strongest terms, and stands in solidarity with the people of Palestine.

Netanyahu spells out vision for 'Greater Israel'

J E Rosenberg

Boorloo/Perth rally for Palestine on Sunday 24th August as part of the national day of action in support of Palestine. Photo: Vinnie Molina

In a recent interview with Israel's *i24 News*, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu openly declared his support for the vision of "Greater Israel." Asked by interviewer Sharon Gal if he subscribes to this controversial idea, Netanyahu responded without hesitation: "Absolutely."

While the US mainstream media has largely ignored the comment, the Israeli leader's statement immediately drew condemnation from a coalition of Arab and Muslim states. For those unfamiliar with the term, it may seem like political jargon.

In reality, Netanyahu's words represent a dangerous watershed moment. To understand why, it is necessary to trace the history and meaning of "Greater Israel."

The phrase gained political currency after Israel's territorial conquests in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. But its ideological roots lie in the Revisionist Zionism of the early 20th century.

Founded by Ze'ev Jabotinsky, Revisionism rejected the cautious, diplomatic approach of Labor Zionism in favour of a more militant vision. Jabotinsky himself wrote that Jewish sovereignty could only be secured through what he called an "iron wall" of force.

This hardline philosophy shaped the Irgun (Etzel), a paramilitary organisation founded in 1931, which fought British rule in Palestine and carried out violent attacks against Palestinian communities.

The Irgun's emblem was a map of the entire British Mandate, including both banks of the Jordan River, with a rifle imposed over it. This was no accident. A decade earlier, Britain had carved the Emirate of Transjordan (today's Jordan) out of the Mandate.

Revisionists insisted that this land, too, was part of Eretz Yisrael HaShlema – the "Whole Land of Israel." Rooted in biblical claims, they argued that both sides of the Jordan River were divinely promised to the Jewish people.

After Israel declared independence in 1948, Revisionist veterans of the Irgun formed the Herut Party, the forerunner of today's Likud. From its inception, Likud inherited Revisionism's refusal to accept partition and its attachment to a "whole" Land of Israel.

This ideological continuity is crucial: Netanyahu's party did not invent the vision of Greater Israel, but rather carries a legacy that stretches back nearly a century.

For decades, right-wing Zionists have used this framework to dismiss Palestinian statehood outright. Rehavam Ze'evi, the late far-right minister, infamously declared that Jordan was already the Palestinian state.

More recently, senior government figures such as Gideon Sa'ar have echoed this sentiment. The implication is clear: Palestinians do not need a state in the West Bank or Gaza because, in this logic, they already have one across the river.

Israel's conquest of the West Bank, Gaza, Sinai, and Golan Heights in 1967 propelled the idea of "Greater Israel" into mainstream political discourse. Citing biblical passages promising Abraham's descendants land "from the brook of Egypt to the Euphrates," Revisionists and messianic Zionists alike saw the war as divine confirmation of their project.

SETTLERS

The settler movement, born in the late 1960s, was fueled by this ideology. Its leaders believed that planting Jewish settlements in conquered territory – despite their illegality under international law – would make "Greater Israel" irreversible.

Settlements appeared across the new territories, though those in Sinai and Gaza were later dismantled. When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, settlers even tried to establish outposts in the occupied "security zone," though this effort failed due to lack of government backing. The impulse was clear: wherever Israeli soldiers advanced, settlers sought to follow.

Today, as Israel reoccupies Gaza and seizes more land in Syria, settlers once again see opportunity. Conferences are being held to discuss new settlements in Gaza.

Some extremists have even called for settlement in southern Syria. Israeli soldiers have been photographed wearing patches with maps of "Greater Israel," stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates.

These are not fringe images. They reflect a wider cultural acceptance within parts of Israeli society that settlement expansion is both natural and divinely ordained.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has become one of the most outspoken advocates of resettling Gaza. He has promised supporters that new settlements will be established there, drawing international condemnation at a time when much of the world still insists on a two-state solution. His growing influence within Netanyahu's government shows how far the Greater Israel idea has penetrated official policy circles.

Until recently, Netanyahu publicly distanced himself from such rhetoric, even while enabling settlement expansion throughout the West Bank. By declaring his "absolute" support for Greater Israel, he has dropped the pretence. His statement signals open endorsement of a project of expansion and permanent occupation.

The vision of "Greater Israel" is not a peaceful one. It is a vision of permanent war, conquest, and settlement – an ideology that denies Palestinian nationhood, threatens Israel's neighbours and forecloses any hope of peace. That an Israeli Prime Minister, backed with billions in US aid and diplomatic support, now openly embraces it should alarm people everywhere.

This is not a marginal statement. It is a declaration that the leader of Israel subscribes to a worldview of endless expansion. The fact that US media has chosen to ignore it does not make it less dangerous; it only makes it more urgent to shine light on what Netanyahu has just said.

Washington's silence speaks volumes. The United States remains Israel's chief patron, supplying it with weapons, military aid, and diplomatic cover at the United Nations.

By continuing to bankroll Israel unconditionally, the USA is not a bystander – it is an active enabler of the Greater Israel project. Every settlement built, every family displaced, and every village demolished is carried out with US arms and US money.

Netanyahu's "absolutely" is therefore not just a statement of Israeli intent, it is a manifestation of US foreign policy. Unless this support is withdrawn, Greater Israel will continue to expand at the expense of Palestinian survival and the prospects of peace for the entire region.

People's World

Children at gravest risk as full-fledged famine unfolds in Gaza

As famine grips Gaza, putting over a million children at risk, Plan International is demanding a ceasefire and unrestricted humanitarian access.

Famine has taken hold in Gaza Governorate and will expand to Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis without urgent action, according to a new report from the UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) published Friday 22 August.

PREVENTABLE CATASTROPHE

Responding to the IPC's latest report, Dr Unni Krishnan, Global Humanitarian Director at Plan International said:

"The fatal consequences of Israel's weaponisation of hunger and blocking of humanitarian aid are devastatingly clear for all to see. No conflict should ever reach this point. What we are seeing in Gaza today is an entirely man-made and preventable catastrophe that is leaving more than a million Palestinian children – and 2.2 million people in total – struggling to stay alive.

"Famine in Gaza is not a failure of logistics or aid – it is the outcome of brutal war and deliberate starvation."

Dr Unni Krishnan, Global Humanitarian Director at Plan International:

"Plan International has recently managed to deliver urgently needed aid into Gaza, but far more is needed. The continued illegal blockade of life-saving supplies means children and families are being condemned to die, painfully and needlessly.

PROFOUND IMPACT ON GENERATION OF CHILDREN

"Children in Gaza are not only being starved, they are also being maimed and permanently disabled in staggering numbers due to the Israeli army's excessive use of force and newly intensified military campaign. Since the escalation of conflict in Gaza, disabilities have risen by 60% and Gaza now has the highest number of child amputees in the world. Hunger, injury and forced displacement into militarised zones are all highly traumatic events and will have a profound impact on an entire generation of children.

"The world cannot look away. Every hour lost costs more lives. Famine in Gaza is not a failure of logistics or aid – it is the outcome of brutal war and deliberate starvation. We demand – without delay – an immediate and sustained ceasefire, a complete halt to arms transfers to Israel, and the full lifting of Israel's illegal blockade on humanitarian aid. This must include safe and unrestricted humanitarian access, so that we can reach more children and families with food and the basics needed for survival."

Plan International Australia

Book Review

The Last Tour: Paul and Eslanda Robeson's Visit to Australia and New Zealand

by Ann Curthoys

Reviewer: Graham Holton

Paul Robeson was a famous African-American singer, actor, civil rights and anti-colonialism activist. His wife, Eslanda, was a civil rights activist, United Nations journalist and an anthropologist. In the 1960s, at the height of the Cold War, they toured Australia and New Zealand, to perform concerts and talk to fans, unionists, peace activists and communists. Robeson's music and activism were inseparable from his beliefs.

His appearance on the international stage was in itself a powerful act of defiance against the US establishment. The Robesons openly championed Aboriginal and Maori protests. On leaving Australia, Paul Robeson said it was: "one of the great tours of my whole life."

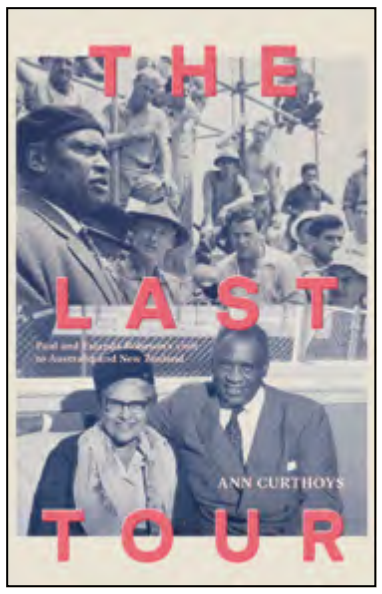
Curthoys has done extensive research utilising oral history, community memories, media articles, and the archives of ASIO files on the Communist Party, to gain an understanding of how the tour had such a profound influence. By doing so, Curthoys has redefined the Robesons' importance in Australasia's struggles for social and political justice.

In the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc Robeson was revered as a hero of socialism and anti-fascism. In the United States, he was effectively silenced, from 1950 to 1958, due to McCarthyism and the Red Scare. His passport was revoked, preventing him from performing internationally. On his last tour Robeson faced damage to his voice, and depression from the toll of state surveillance and repression in the US, and the mixed reactions he received on tour. Curthoys reflects on how Robeson's reputation had shifted since his 1930s stardom, complicated by Cold War anti-communism and shifting US political allegiances. The tours proved Paul was an artist who sacrificed immense commercial success for his socialist beliefs.

The tour was a series of international engagements over several years, representing his first chance in a long time to perform outside the US. Curthoys reconstructs the tour vividly, with an emphasis on Robeson's solidarity with Aboriginal and Maori activists. Robeson's socialist politics, opposition to racism and colonialism, and support for Indigenous rights resonated with audiences, governments, and activists.

Robeson was already in his 60s, and the tour took an immense physical and psychological toll on him. While his voice retained its incredible resonance and power, close observers noted the sheer stamina required for him to perform. He ended the tour exhausted. Curthoys concludes that their most important legacy was "an enhanced determination by left-wing activists to support the struggle for Indigenous rights." There are a number of references to the Communist Party of Australia.

Robeson died in 1976. He lived to see the Freedom Ride in 1965 led by Charles Perkins, the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission's equal pay decision in 1966, and the amendment to the Australian constitution in 1967. Curthoys covers Hannah Middleton of the CPA organising the Paul Robeson 100th Anniversary birthday committee in 1997. Middleton had been the Robesons' babysitter earlier in London.



The writing is a tad academic, but *The Last Tour* shines a light on a potent moment in transnational solidarity, a time of struggle against political oppression to reignite the question of the role of artists in promoting and understanding political movements for justice.

Well worth the read. Fascinating. ✪

Book Review

Shifting Sands

by Judith Scheele

Reviewer: Sylvia Hikins

I have travelled to the edge of the Sahara and, like most other tourists, ridden a camel over sand dunes. But this book challenges many of today's assumptions about what the biggest desert on Earth, in fact, is.

Author Judith Scheele, after 20 years of research and travel, has produced a captivating history that challenges the common misconception that the Sahara is nothing but empty barren sand dunes. In reality, only 15 per cent of the surface consists of these. The rest is rocks, geological yellow cake mountains that create water sources, resulting in lakes of sweet water formed several thousand years ago but most of which are still locked underground.

However, this book isn't just about the world's hottest desert, a region that crosses 11 borders, but a story of conflict, fighting for survival, and adaptability, listening to nature. Unsurprisingly, those who were able to manage best, indigenous and nomadic people, suffered most at the hands of the rich and powerful. The words "nomad" and "barbarian" have been consistently used in derogatory ways by those who consider themselves superior. Our Euro-centric interpretation of history so often ignores previous African cultures.

This book provides an account of Saharan social and political life past and present, and where possible, from the bottom up. It's basically divided into three parts. Part 1: What Makes a Desert, dispels the notion that the Sahara is full of sand. It is a varied and difficult landscape where, in order to survive, diversity, variability, interdependence, collectivity, symbiosis with other creatures became the way of life.

Part 2: Endless Movement, focuses on migration, seeing this as a necessity, not a threat. All aspects of a pastoral, nomadic life are presented in depth, including modern-day slavery, which may be in a different form from the past but still exists.

And Part 3: Margins of Empire, examines happenings from the past, such as the legacy of colonial times that still exists today, such as financial support from other countries, slaughter in the name of religion, migration, conflict and struggles over who controls natural resources.

Chapter 7 starts with this quote: "Government is an institution which prevents injustice other than such which it commits itself," written by the historian, Ibn Khaldun in his book, *Muqaddima* in 1377! What follows focuses on colonial conquest dealing with the last years of the 19th century when rivalry between the French and British empires was at its peak. Imperial armies could only rule by relying on local intermediaries. Tribal notables became tribal leaders backed no longer by popular consensus but by a foreign army with superior weapons.

Today there are different forms of crisis threatening to become permanent, the most obvious being the effects of climate change – poor rainfall, food shortages, future malnutrition or even famine. Saharans, both in the past and present day, display a constant ability to improvise, and an ability to adapt to new challenges arising from a harsh environment – something we might all have to face in the near future.

Shifting Sands, based on the harsh realities of life on the edge, takes us on a journey from Roman occupation to present-day struggles in all their forms. If you want something to stop you constantly tapping your smartphone, this compelling, unputdownable book is the perfect answer.

Morning Star ✪

Across

[3] Buzzword, can also mean 'talking shop'
[4] Good in theory, weaselly when used by Labor
[5] Buzzword, for bosses it means 'lower wages'
[7] Site of troubled festival
[8] Israel has cancelled a few
[9] Good place for Curry with a Comrade

Down

[1] Aussie body horror flick
[2] How Qantas treated baggage handlers
[3] Bare minimum step for Palestine
[6] USA just took a big step backwards on these

Statement on the International Action Day of Trade Unions for Peace

We refuse to work for the war

Image: pixabay.com (CC0)

We denounce with all our might the unspeakable crime against the Palestinian people and we demand an end to genocide, ethnic cleansing and the use of famine as a war tactic

The World Federation of Trade Unions calls upon all militant, class-oriented trade unions, its affiliates, and friends to organise activities, honouring the established International Action Day of Trade Unions for Peace 1 September 2025. The International Action Day for Peace constitutes an annual call for struggle, on the occasion of the dark anniversary of the beginning of the Second World War with Nazi Germany's attack on Poland, for the remembrance of millions of victims of Nazi and fascist atrocities and all those affected and suffering by imperialist conflicts and the endless thirst of big capital for profit.

Nowadays, with the intensification of new and old military conflicts, such as in Palestine and Ukraine, and in an era where the war economy is the imperialists' agenda and the military expenses are skyrocketing, and while fascism, racism, and xenophobia rear their heads, the struggle for peace is a necessity.

The international class-oriented trade union movement stands its ground against war plans and interventions. The WFTU strongly condemns the 2025 NATO summit's decision to increase the military spending of its members to unprecedented levels, with NATO members being obliged to spend 5% of their GDP on "defence," which is more than double the previous target of 2%. In addition, military spending is rising across every region, even with double-digit percentage jumps in some regions, namely Europe and the Middle East, while 15 countries spend roughly 75% of global military spending, which is more than US$2 trillion, exacerbating confrontation and heightening the risk of a widespread, generalised imperialist war with dire consequences.

At the same time, it cannot go unmentioned the unacceptable and dirty stance of yellow unions and surrendered union leaders, such as the leadership of the International Trade Union Confederation and its regional structures who, either through the positions they express or through the conscious absence of any reaction or protest against these policies, in practice support imperialist militaristic plans, providing them with political backing.

The workers demand all these resources to be channelled for their needs, for a better life, for adequate health care and quality education, for dignified salaries and pensions, for welfare benefits, and not to be "invested" in the wars and bloodshed for the imperialists' interests and monopolies profitability. We demand an immediate and unconditional end to all imperialist wars and interventions all over the world. We assert the demand for the dissolution of NATO and all military coalitions, and the complete abolition of nuclear weapons. We demand an immediate ceasefire and the end of the war in Ukraine, Yemen, Sudan, and all the war zones, in the wider Middle East and elsewhere. We condemn and denounce with all our might the continuation of the unspeakable crime against the Palestinian people, and we demand the end of the genocide, the ethnic cleansing practices, and the use of famine as a war tactic. We intensify our struggle against the Israeli armed campaigns and aggression against Lebanon, Syria, and Iran, for the end of occupation and settlements in the occupied Arab territories, guarantee the right of return for the refugees, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We demand full respect for the sovereignty, independence, and right of every people to choose their own path, and freely decide for their present and future. We condemn the exclusions, discriminations, embargoes, and sanctions orchestrated by the USA, EU, and their allies against a range of countries, resulting in a direct and detrimental impact on the everyday lives of ordinary people. We oppose with all our strength the war economy strategy, all the bourgeois governments that choose and pave this path.

It is clear that both the spending of the war economy and the implications of the economic war negatively impact the standard of living of the popular strata who are already burdened by the consequences of economic hardship, including soaring prices, rampant inflation, and the enduring effects of long-standing austerity measures, while the ordinary people pay with their lives for the wars conducted for the increase of multinationals' profitability.

The WFTU's firm position is stated clearly and loudly: The workers, the people all over the globe, have nothing to expect and nothing to gain from the inter-capitalist rivalries for geopolitical, economic control, and monopolies' profitability that resulted in death, poverty, and misery. We relentlessly stand against the war economy and we refuse to work for it. Struggles and initiatives must grow in all countries, with unions and WFTU friends at the forefront. The workers must follow the militant examples of the class-oriented unions and stand against any imperialist war activity, oppose any involvement of their country in wars, to refuse to work for the production, loading and transfer of weapons and military equipment, and to boycott any collaboration or facilitation linked with the Israeli occupation or other active battlefronts.

The WFTU calls upon workers and militant trade unions worldwide to take active part in the International Action Day under the slogan "We refuse to work for the war", amplifying the voice of internationalism and class struggle in pursuit of lasting peace against imperialist aggression and capitalist barbarity.

The Secretariat

Korea: expats crave 'a land free of imperialism'

Sebastian Peady

Six men, all former soldiers and spies of the DPRK, all of whom had been arrested and imprisoned in South Korea decades ago, have collectively submitted a formal request to the unification ministry of the South Korean government to repatriate them to the DPRK. All six men have been unable to return home since their releases from prison.

Yang Won-jin, 96, Ahn Hak-sop, 95, and four others were arrested before and after the Korean war by the fascist puppet state installed by the American military occupation. Each of these men served decades in prison as all bravely refused to renounce communism in the face of the South's assault on freedom and democracy. Many before them have made similar demands, but died before their wishes to return home could be fulfilled.

The last and so far only time South Korea has allowed such a repatriation to happen was back in 2000, when 63 former prisoners were returned to the DPRK through Panmunjom, the truce village on the border between the two countries. Ahn Hak-sop had the chance to return to the DPRK during this repatriation, but he chose to stay as an act of defiance against the US military presence in South Korea. Recent health scares made him decide to return to the DPRK, saying in interview with CNN "I want to go back to the home of my ideology. It would be too much of a resentment to be buried in the colony even after death."

Ahn Hak-sop participated in a rally, marching along the southern border to the Unification Bridge, at which he gave the speech, "I miss the North, where my comrades are. It's unbearable. I want to be buried in the free land. Independent nation. A land free from imperialism."

A civic group advocating for the repatriation of these six men argued that the South Korean government should allow them to be returned to the North. This group argued that the men should be treated as prisoners of war, noting that the Geneva Conventions mandates humanitarian treatment in war.

An official from the Unification Ministry said that the government is "well aware of the demands" and was "looking at various ways to address this." The official also added that it expects more former prisoners from the DPRK to make similar demands, but could not give a precise figure as to how many are still alive.

This request comes after South Korea's newly elected president, Lee Jae-myung, vowed to resume dialogue and improve ties with the DPRK. Lee started improving relations with the DPRK by removing loudspeakers along the border which had been broadcasting anti-DPRK, pro-South messages, with the intent of encouraging migration. This is already a massive improvement from South Korea's previous president, Yoon Suk Yeol, who attempted to enact martial law and provoke war with the DPRK.

What is going on in Sudan?

Yassmin Abdel-Magied

Sudanese revolution, 2019. Photo: Osama Elfaki – wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Sudan is mired in a senseless conflict between two military generals who represent different factions in Sudanese politics. Efforts by the international community to bring a resolution to the conflict have failed; there have been at least 16 failed cease-fires, and unsuccessful peace plans from the African Union and other blocs.

It is not simply a war between two generals, one leading the traditional army (the Sudanese Armed Forces, or the SAF) and the other heading a paramilitary group (the Rapid Support Forces, or the RSF). This is a war by the military and militarised groups against the Sudanese people. It is a war about the soul of Sudan.

The question at the core of the conflict is this: will Sudan be a nation that is run by civilians, with freedom, justice and peace as its foundational values, as the millions called for during the revolution? Or will it slip back into its old dictatorial ways, a nation crippled by leaders who respect only military rule?

The jury is still out, but the position of the Sudanese people is clear. They want to live in a country free of military rule, where civilians lead the nation and freedom, peace and justice reign. That was the aim during the 2018/2019 revolution, when a popular, non-violent movement brought a sea change to the country and inspired the world, and that's what remains the aim today.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

Sudan's 2019 revolution was the culmination of many months – years, really – of resistance against Omar El-Bashir, the President who ruled the nation with an iron fist for almost 30 years. It was one of the largest social movements in recent history.

Protests began in regional towns in December 2018. Bear in mind, this was not the first time Sudanese people had tried to bring down Bashir. There was an early attempt a few months after the Egyptian Arab Spring moment in 2011, resuming later in 2012 and 2013. However, this time was different. By starting in the regions, popular support built, and within weeks, regular protests were taking place across the country.

By April, a sit-in was established at the front of the military headquarters, and it became a symbol – a manifestation – of what a new Sudan could be. Full of art, education, healthcare and joy, the sit-in was visited by dignitaries the world over.

Omar El-Bashir stepped down, only to be replaced by another military head. The people continued to protest, resist and demonstrate their displeasure, forcing another resignation and the creation of a body called the Transitional Military Council – the TMC. However the state decided the sit-in was a threat to national security, and opened fire.

It was a massacre in the heart of the city. Over 100 people were gunned down. Internet was cut off, and the world turned 'blue for Sudan.' Resistance committees were catapulted into action, and soon, the 'Millions Marches' began, continuing the call for civilian rule.

By late August, the Sovereign Council – part military, part civilian – formed, and was tasked with overseeing the path to civilian rule. Abdallah Hamdok was named Prime Minister, and the first phase of the revolution was over.

HOW HAS DEMOCRACY BEEN CO-OPTED BY THE MILITARY?

The agreement was always that the military in the Sovereign Council would hand over power after approximately two years. However, when the time came, they instead seized power in a coup and claimed to be doing it in the name of the people!

The two men at the top – General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan of the SAF and General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo of the RSF – worked together to thwart the civilian movement. However, once the coup was successfully undertaken, it became a power struggle between the two, and who would ultimately prevail, control Sudan and ultimately, profit from all of its land and resources.

If you pay attention to the language used by both the RSF and the SAF, and the way they have learnt to position themselves, to the Sudanese as well as – if not more so – to the international community, you will see they use the language of the 'will of the people', of 'protecting the revolution' and so on – claiming to be of the people when in fact, their actions show otherwise.

HOW IS THIS LINKED TO THE PREVIOUS GENOCIDE IN DARFUR?

Unfortunately, much of the focus over the past year has been on Khartoum, partly because it is the capital and had not seen conflict like this since the late 19th century, partly because of race and class. The elites in Sudan are Arab tribes, and the conflict in Darfur has an ugly, racialised reality, as many of those being targeted, harassed and killed are those from non-Arab tribal groups.

It is important to know that the RSF is in fact the formalised version of another group – the Janjaweed, which translates to 'devils on horseback.' The Janjaweed were responsible for the genocide in Darfur in the early 2000s, tasked by Bashir to 'deal with the rebels.' The janjaweed targeted the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit villages in 2003, and the RSF is doing the same today.

Thousands have been killed, and the situation does not look like it is improving any time soon.

WHAT IS THE SITUATION FOR PEOPLE IN CHAD WHO HAVE FLED?

Hundreds of thousands have travelled to Chad, seeking shelter and aid.

Despite the stress on the neighbouring nation's resources, already stretched by its own challenges, Chad has left its borders open, unlike others to the north and east. But the situation is not easy, by any stretch, and people are suffering from a dire humanitarian crisis – and there's a stark shortage of funding to alleviate it.

HOW BIG IS THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS?

The situation is dire.

About 10.7 million people are now displaced by conflicts in Sudan, with 9 million inside the country, making Sudan the largest internal displacement crisis globally.

About 3.5 million people have been displaced from the state capital Khartoum since mid-April 2023.

16 million people in Sudan have insufficient food consumption, with Darfur having the highest ratios.

Suspected cholera cases continue to rise and at least 10,500 cases, including 292 associated deaths, were reported from 60 localities of 11 states.

About 7 million people were reached with life-saving assistance and 5.7 million people received agricultural and livelihood support between 15 April and 15 December 2023.

From the UN OCHA situation report:

Of the 10.7 million people displaced, 1.7 million have fled to neighbouring countries. Chad hosts the majority of arrivals at 37% with South Sudan at 30% Egypt at 24% while Ethiopia, Libya and the Central African Republic host the remainder. This creates additional humanitarian needs in a region that is already in crisis. Their needs are overwhelming: shortages of food, shelter, healthcare, and sanitation, all combine to place them at heightened risk of disease, malnutrition, and violence, according to the IOM.

Humanitarian needs across Sudan are at record highs with 24.8 million people, or every second person, needing humanitarian assistance in 2024. This is 9 million more than in 2023. Millions lack access to essential goods and services such as food, water, shelter, electricity, education, health care and nutrition.

WHAT ROLE DO INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS HAVE IN THIS?

There's always an international angle. The RSF would not have had the capacity to continue the fight for as long as it has without international support, and much of it is reported to come from a key US ally: the UAE.

Hemedti, the leader of the RSF, has strong personal and commercial ties with the Emirates, and supplies tons of gold from his family-controlled mines in Darfur to the small nation. Saudi and Egypt are also involved. Some have said Sudan is a 'proxy war,' but that is too simplistic and ignores the complexity of domestic politics.

There are foreign *interests*, and regional powers vying for the rich resources available, all looking to control a piece of the pie. Where the international community failed, and continues to, was in accepting the 2021 coup, legitimising the military generals and excluding the civilians – those who resisted and overthrew the military dictatorship in the first place. That is where international political pressure should be – on ensuring civilians are involved in the peace process, on ensuring the regional powers aren't low-key fueling the conflict for their own aims, and on sending aid to the tens of millions of innocent Sudanese caught in the middle.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- You will often hear us Sudanese say #KeepEyesOnSudan. So much of the war has been waged in international silence, I often speak to folks who are fairly politically aware, who have no idea about the conflict, the scale of the disaster, the urgency of the need. So please, keep eyes on Sudan.
- Write to your representatives and ask why aid is not being sent, why visas are not being issued, why countries continue to support those nations fuelling the conflict.
- Donate, if you can – **eyesonsudan.net/donate**.

Shado-mag.com (edited for space)

Bolivia's election – a turn to the right

Graham Holton

Bolivia's 17 August general election saw a loss for the left-wing Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) party. MAS has dominated Bolivian politics for nearly twenty years. Its defeat spells an end to the political career of the founder of MAS, Evo Morales. Morales was first elected president in 2006, as part of the 2000s 'pink tide' of left-wing leaders who were swept into power across Latin America. He stood along Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez as the symbol of Latin America's new left.

During his presidency Morales expanded the rights of the country's Indigenous majority, the Aymara, Quechua as well as the Chiquitano, Guaraní and Moxeño peoples. He defended coca growers against US-backed eradication programmes and diverted natural gas profits into much needed social programs.

According to the electoral court's preliminary tally, centre-right Rodrigo Paz Pereira has won 32.2 per cent of the vote, and right-wing Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga won 26.9 per cent. The official MAS candidate, Eduardo del Castillo, finished sixth with 3.2 per cent of the vote. Morales had called for a boycott of the vote, resulting in 19.1 per cent of the ballots being null and void. A power struggle between Morales and Luis Arce fractured the MAS bloc and handed the opposition its first real shot at victory in decades. There will be a second round in October.

The election was dominated by the poor state of the economy. On his win Paz Pereira said Bolivia is "calling for a change to the political system" and that "This economic model must change." Bolivia is enduring its worst economic crisis in four decades, with a desperate shortage of US dollars to buy wheat imports. Fuel shortages have paralysed the country. Inflation has jumped to 23 per cent. Bolivia is also marked by racial and ideological division.

Under MAS Bolivia oriented towards China, Russia, and Iran, and away from the US. A new Bolivian administration could mark a shift in diplomatic, economic, and geopolitical alignment back towards the United States, especially around trade and natural resource investments such as lithium. Paz plans to decentralise the government by introducing a '50-50 economic model' in which the central government would manage only half of public funds. The remainder would be designated to regional governments. Quiroga supports deep public spending cuts and a political shift away from Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua.

While there has been no evidence of covert US involvement in this election, the win of Paz Pereira means improving US–Bolivia ties, which have been strained since 2008, when Morales expelled the US ambassador, the DEA, and USAID. Influence in the region is always important to the United States.

CPUSA sends pacemakers to Cuba

The US economic blockade of Cuba intentionally hurts Cuba's people in almost every way possible. Although the policy was initiated 63 years ago, the Trump administration has turned the screws far more and is targeting Cuba's remarkably successful healthcare system.

The blockade, a crucial part of the US assault on Cuba, is consistent with US-engineered shortages in all aspects of life and living in Cuba. Now, Cuban doctors and their patients are facing increasing shortages of materials, including drugs, reagents for making drugs, hospital equipment, and surgical supplies.

International solidarity with peoples in trouble is among the highest of human aspirations. Providing them with material aid traditionally has been a way to express solidarity. As regards Cuba, the time is now for doing exactly that, says Henry Lowendorf, chair of the Communist Party USA's Peace and Solidarity Commission. He told this reporter, "For the Party, saving lives is a first priority. Reaching out to provide material aid contributes to heightened awareness of the cruelty and illegality of the US blockade."

Lowendorf pointed out that "The CPUSA has also prioritised increased solidarity with Cuba. One way to show this is to urge all activists who can spare a few dollars right now to send aid to Cuba."

The Party has turned to Global Health Partners (GHP) to provide the means for doing so. GHP has long delivered medical supplies to Latin American countries, particularly to Cuba.

Presently, GHP is sending cardiac pacemakers to Cuba. GHP points out that "Cuba has a dire shortage of pacemakers, leaving patients with a three-year wait for these devices. The embargo prevents the country from purchasing pacemakers in the global market, and Cuba urgently needs 2,000 pacemakers to treat its heart patients."

According to GHP, "MediCuba Europa and the Saving Lives Campaign have already delivered 440 pacemakers to Cuban hospitals, with 110 more units on the way. These lifesaving devices are already being implanted in Cubans with heart disease."

The organisation's website highlights the campaign's purpose of putting "your donation to work immediately to combat the inhumane embargo that is increasingly inflicting hunger and hardship on the Cuban people." GHP "will speed a humanitarian shipment of pacemakers that will save lives and pierce the cruel medical embargo."

People's World (edited for space)

The Communist Party of Australia supports the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society. This year, it is fundraising for Cuban organoponic farming. Visit the ACSF site in your state for more.

Sydney Vigil

STOP USA BLOCKADE ON CUBA

4:15pm till 5:00pm Wednesday 17 September

USA Consulate, 50 Miller Street North Sydney

Call 0418 270 885

Global Briefs

New Zealand: The New Zealand Security Intelligence Service has released a report claiming that the nation is facing threats of interference and espionage, particularly from China. The Chinese embassy has rejected the accusations as "entirely unsubstantiated" and based on a "Cold War mentality." New Zealand media and intelligence has run stories about foreign espionage before, usually targeted against China but also including countries such as Russia and Iran. New Zealand itself, as a member of the Five Eyes alliance, has regularly engaged in spying and hacking of other countries in collaboration with the US. Targets revealed in leaks such as the Snowden files have included China, India, Pacific Island nations, and even allies such as France. New Zealand has also long welcomed foreign intervention by the US. The FBI has recently been awarded a new office in Wellington with a permanent Legal Attaché. The FBI's work in New Zealand is openly stated to target China, as well as New Zealand's Pacific neighbours.

Venezuela: The Trump administration, upholding a long and bloody tradition of US intervention, has doubled the bounty on President Maduro to US $50 million (AU$77 million) and deployed three warships and 4,000 troops to Venezuela's coast under the false pretence of combatting drug cartels. In response, Venezuela has mobilised 4 million soldiers of the Bolivarian National Militia and set up thousands of registration points across the country. Even leaders amongst the opposition have spoken out against US imperialism, while thousands of eastern fishermen have mobilised a grassroots defence campaign to protect Venezuelan sovereignty. Large numbers of women, including those from fishing communities in Zulia State, have also enlisted in the Bolivarian National Militia. Leaders such as Colombia's Gustavo Petro and Cuba's Díaz-Canel have condemned US aggression (see p16 for more).

Argentina: Javier Milei's government has continued to push forward with mass privatisation plans, now having formalised a bidding process for the sale of its major hydroelectric dam networks. These dams are responsible for about 10% of the country's energy generation. The Milei government has continued its baseless claims that privatisation will optimise management and attract private investment. The privatisation process has also begun for parts of Argentina's running water services.

Colombia: The 5th Meeting of the Presidents and Heads of State of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) has taken place in the Colombian capital with the goal of reaching a unified position on the preservation of the Amazon biome. Colombia's Gustavo Petro, Brazil's Lula da Silva, Bolivia's Luis Arce, and representatives of Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela attended the event. Contributions were also made by Indigenous leaders, academics, and members of civil society, all with the aim of advancing regional strategies to prevent the Amazon from passing the point of no return. This means avoiding a level of deforestation which would permanently destroy the Amazon's capacity for self-regeneration. The attending nations approved the Bogotá Declaration, reaffirming commitment to multilateral cooperation, the integration of scientific and Indigenous knowledges, and climate change action.

Nicaragua: Nicaragua's Urban and Rural Housing Initiative has announced that home construction nation wide is on schedule to deliver more than 7,500 homes this year. This marks the final stretch of the national programme, launched in 2007, to build 150,000 homes by the end of 2025, of which more than 148,000 have already been built. As well as combatting poverty and improving quality of life, the plan has also created more than 20,000 jobs and benefited more than 20,000 families.

Together for peace

A Carruthers

The world is at a crossroads. We are seeing new fractures open up along old conflict zones. The world is crying out for stability, for voices of reason. China is emerging as a major force for peace, a force for dialogue, exchange, and justice, rather than confrontation. The "Community of a Shared Future for Humankind" approach from China is a clarion call for scientific development, win-win-cooperation and civilisational dialogue rather than destruction, neo-fascism and genocide, as we are seeing now with Israel's actions in Palestine and the US trade and tariff wars enveloping the globe.

On 30 July 2025 a World Youth Conference for Peace was held at Peking University in Beijing. Over 3000 young people from 130 countries and regions attended. President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter to the conference. We know that peace is dear to Xi's heart. The youth put forward a "World Youth Peace Initiative" manifesto which is published in this issue of the ***Guardian The Worker's Weekly***.

World Youth Conference for Peace in Beijing, July 29, 2025. Photo:CGTN

Among the points put forward in the manifesto are the defence of world peace against the distortions of history after the victory over both European and Japanese fascism in World War II, the importance of mutual learning among and between civilisations, sustainable development against climate destruction, and scientific and technological development for the common good.

Young people of the world give hope. Young people bring energy. They bring energy to movements like our own, to the worker's movement. They bring new ideas and new possibilities and they can shoulder the responsibility to build a better and more peaceful planet.

The young people of the world also have a unique ability to forge peace through international initiatives. Wherever we come from, no matter what country or political system we come from, we must learn to engage in dialogue and build bridges of understanding between countries, cultures and civilisations. If we cut ourselves off from each other, and stop translating our ideas into other languages and stop engaging, differences will grow and suspicions will turn into hatreds and distrust. Proletarian internationalism is the same. Without learning from other likeminded fraternal movements our principles, however well-meaning, can wither into dogmas.

The issue of "technologies for social good" has never been more pressing. We have seen how Silicon Valley can innovate in the areas of AI and cryptocurrency and electric vehicles, but they cannot translate these things into social goods. China has been able to harness cryptocurrency against fraud, and AI for Aged Care, and transform their transportation system through EVs – new productive forces for new social relations and new forms of community. We cannot forget also that science and technology can and must be harnessed for environmental progress and defeating climate change. The next generation shoulders an immense burden to ensure that the destruction of the planet is reversed in favour of the greening of the globe, to bring back the flourishing biodiversity that makes our planet unique and the only thing we have.

Technological advances should be made for the benefit of the whole of humanity and for the planet, not the few. Socialist China has proven this is possible.

Initiatives like the World Youth Conference for Peace must be celebrated. They are essential for our times and the challenges we face.

Let's march together for a peaceful world.

World Youth Peace Initiative

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in the World Anti-Fascist War and the founding of the United Nations.

Eighty years ago, in face of the dark and evil forces of fascism, people from different countries, nations, social systems, and ideologies united together and, through tremendous sacrifice, secured the triumph of justice and peace, marking the beginning of a new chapter in rebuilding post-war world order and the pursuit of lasting peace for humanity.

Over the past 80 years, under the themes of peace and development and propelled by waves of scientific and technological innovation, human civilisation has enjoyed unprecedented prosperity, the world has become more interconnected than ever before, and humanity has increasingly become a community with a shared future.

Today, 80 years on, transformations of the world unseen in a century are unfolding at a faster pace. Changes of the world, of our times, and of the historical trajectory are taking place in ways like never before. Once again, humanity has come to a crossroads of unity or division, dialogue or confrontation, win-win cooperation or zero-sum games.

As representatives of the youth from around the world, we deeply cherish peace and understand the responsibilities borne by our generation. Only by treasuring peace and upholding unity can humanity embrace a brighter future. To this end, we solemnly issue this World Youth Peace Initiative, calling on young people across the globe to unite in safeguarding peace, promoting development, and shaping our shared future.

We call on youth to defend world peace. History must not be distorted; justice must be upheld and peace be safeguarded. Young people of all nations should draw wisdom from history and take concrete actions to defend peace, oppose all forms of war and violence, and reject unilateralism, hegemonism, and protectionism. Together, we should defend the hard-won outcomes of the victory in World War II, safeguard the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order based on international law, and put true multilateralism into practice, to contribute youthful strength to the cause of global peace.

We call on youth to pioneer mutual learning among civilisations. To safeguard world peace, we should first construct defences of peace in our minds. Young people of all nations should uphold the principles of equality, mutual learning, dialogue and inclusiveness among civilizations, and let cultural exchanges transcend estrangement, mutual learning transcend clashes, and coexistence transcend feelings of superiority, to contribute youthful wisdom to fostering harmony among civilisations and deepening friendship among peoples.

We call on youth to advocate win-win cooperation. Development is the cornerstone of peace. Young people of all nations

should adhere to the philosophy of win-win cooperation and common development. By making full use of multilateral and regional mechanisms and platforms, we should deepen and expand youth cooperation, actively participate in the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the outcomes of the Summit of the Future, to inject fresh momentum into bridging global development divides and promoting inclusive, equitable global growth.

We call on youth to tackle climate change. Climate change poses a threat to our shared home on Earth. Young people of all nations should act in the spirit of "promoting global solidarity" and actively engage in global climate actions, to demonstrate commitment of the youth in delivering innovative solutions to the climate crisis, improving global ecological governance, and addressing international challenges hand in hand.

We call on youth to promote "technologies for social good." While technological advances bring opportunities for peace, they also pose new challenges. Young people of all nations should stand at the forefront of emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, shoulder responsibilities, and work for the goal that technological advances benefit the entire humanity, and that digital development remain inclusive, to contribute youthful solutions to improving global tech governance and building an inclusive, fair, and sustainable global future.

Eighty years ago, our predecessors illuminated darkness with unity. Eighty years later, it is up to us – the youth – to define the future through action. Let us take the 80th anniversary of the victory in the World Anti-Fascist War and the founding of the United Nations as a new starting point, unite for peace and work hand in hand for the shared future of mankind!

From Cuba to Palestine

Working people, internationalism and solidarity

Rozhin Emadi

Speech delivered on behalf of Labour for Palestine at Vancouver's Moncada Day event hosted by the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association.

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to visit Cuba on behalf of my union. What I witnessed was nothing short of remarkable. Despite the brutal and criminal US sanctions and embargo, Cuba has managed to build some of the strongest public infrastructures in the world, especially in education and healthcare.

Even more inspiring is how workers and unions are integrated into Cuba's political system. Every union has representation in the National Assembly, giving workers direct influence over legislation and governance. That is a reality our labour movement must learn from.

When we met with the union representing education, sports and science workers, we learned that 80 per cent of its leadership are women. This reflects broader gender equity across Cuban society, where over 60 per cent of government members are women.

Cuba's achievements are not accidental. They are the result of a socialist system, one that prioritises the liberation and wellbeing of working people over the pursuit of profit. A system that upholds education, housing, healthcare and food as rights, not privileges. A system that values environmental protection over destruction for private gain. A system that strives to unite people across race, cultures, gender and sexuality, rather than divide them for the benefit of the powerful.

As such, these values are reflected in Cuba's foreign policy. Unlike imperialist countries that export war and violence, Cuba exports doctors, solidarity and hope. Rooted in internationalism and a love for humanity, Cuba has always stood with Palestine – calling for an end to the genocide of the Palestinian people long before most people in our world even knew what was going on. Castro himself demanded an end to that violence decades ago.

In contrast, during the ongoing genocide in Palestine today, imperial powers – led by the US – have doubled down on their military and political backing of Israel, working to crush Palestinian self-determination.

The current genocide is part of a much broader imperialist project. From Iraq and Afghanistan to Libya, Syria, Iran, China, Korea, Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, we see the same pattern – nations and peoples who resist imperial domination are targeted, destabilised and punished.

It is no coincidence that the only two countries that consistently vote to maintain the US embargo on Cuba are the US and Israel. So, the same forces actively supporting the genocide of the Palestinian people are the same forces that have been attempting to destroy the Cuban revolution and socialism for decades.

Canada is not innocent either. It remains one of Israel's closest allies. This alliance is unsurprising, given Canada's own colonial foundations and its ongoing displacement of Indigenous peoples. In fact, Canada's reserve system directly influenced both South African apartheid and Israel's regime of occupation and segregation.

We must hold our government accountable. We must call for an immediate end to arms sales to Israel and fight for a foreign policy rooted in justice.

Since launching Labour for Palestine in Vancouver, we've built a growing network of union members committed to this struggle. We've passed resolutions in our unions, led educational workshops, launched the national Hot Cargo Campaign, and worked to keep Palestine front and centre in our labour work. Palestinian liberation *is* a labour issue.

We must take inspiration from Cuba's example of internationalist solidarity. We must push our unions to rise to the moment: to support boycotts, raise awareness and answer the call from Palestinian workers for global solidarity – just as workers did in the fight against South African apartheid, which Cuba very much opposed as well.

Some Canadian factories developing weapons or sending weapons directly to Israel are unionised. That is why we have launched our Hot Cargo Campaign – so unions refuse to handle any goods directly enabling the genocide.

As the saying goes, "an injury to one is an injury to all." The Cuban people have lived by that principle since the start of their revolution – despite decades of imperialist aggression, Cuba has never backed down. It continues to fight for sovereignty and for a world where people and the planet come before profit. Palestinians do the same. In the face of military occupation and genocidal violence, they resist with courage and dignity. Working people have much to learn from both.

Think of these words from Fidel Castro:

"Why should some people walk barefoot so that others can travel in luxurious cars?

Why should some live only thirty-five years so that others can live to seventy?

Why should some be miserably poor so that others can be immensely rich?

I speak on behalf of the children in the world who have no bread.

I speak on behalf of the sick who have no medicine, of those whose right to life and human dignity has been denied."

Working people must carry this vision forward. Fidel's words and the ongoing resilience of the Cuban and Palestinian people should inspire us to act, to organise and to believe in the possibility of a better world. We must continue to educate, mobilise and fight – for justice, for the planet, and for a future where no one is disposable.

When we fight, we win. We have to fight harder than ever because we have a whole world to win.

Peoples Voice (edited for space)

Leaders/bosses

There's a family of weasell-ish words that are transitive. That means they're different depending on who you're talking about. Countries the media respects have 'governments,' countries the media is demonising have 'regimes.'

Likewise, corporations and unions. At the Australian government's Productivity Roundtable, the *Australian Financial Review*, businesses and their lobbyists had 'leaders' (mature, responsible), while unions had 'bosses' (thuggish, nasty). Unions are infinitely more democratic than businesses, but you're not going to hear that from the *AFR*.

Has seen

When a media outlet doesn't want to talk about who was responsible, they use the passive mood, for example in Palestine, where there's been a lot of "were killed in an explosion" and not much "Israeli troops murdered" reporting.

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), a pro-war 'thinktank' funded by Defence and arms companies reports that Australia "has seen a major influx of US forces rotating through Australian bases," as though the US forces are clouds or weather pattens. It's weaselly use of the passive mood, but since ASPI assumes Australia's non-independence is a given, it sort of makes sense.

Nevertheless

This word can be just a fancy way of saying 'but.' It can also show that you didn't understand or didn't mean whatever you said before using it. For example "I'm sorry I was late, but the trains were late and it wasn't my fault" really means "I'm not sorry, it wasn't my fault, don't be angry."

Safetrac is an Australian company that runs compliance training, helping companies make sure they're doing the legal thing. It's been caught doing the not-so-legal thing by using staff laptops to spy on staff. Police are investigating and we wish the police well.

Safetrac has said that it is sure that what it did was "lawful, appropriate and justified", but added that "Nevertheless, it remains open to engaging with relevant authorities and strengthening its already robust compliance framework."

In everyday English, this means "We're innocent, but since we've been caught red-handed we'll cooperate and try to look like we won't do it again."

Already

See above for Safetrac's "already robust compliance framework." 'Already' is often used as a way of telling the world that nothing is wrong while admitting things need to be fixed. Governments love talking about improving already fabulous stuff, usually after a scandal involving the stuff in question. Safetrac have allegedly been sprung bad illegally spying on their staff, but can't resist popping in an 'already robust' to try to save their reputation.

Rebalancing

Rebalancing sounds like a good thing to do. We like things to be balanced, in general. It's weaselly here because Richard Holden, a pro-business economist who gets to opinionate in the *Australian Financial Review*, says that what's needed is "a rebalancing of personal taxes between income and consumption." Income taxes can be progressive, although they increasingly aren't, thanks to the major pro-capitalist parties. Taxes on consumption pretty much have to be regressive – if you buy a toaster and Gina Rhinehart buys a toaster, you pay the same GST, but it's a *much* lower percentage of Gina's income. We need balance between the two sorts of tax like we need a balance between being healthy and having cancer.

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Maduro defends Venezuela's sovereignty against US military pressure

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro Moros delivered a defiant speech during the "Act in Defense of Sovereignty and Peace of Venezuela, Latin America and the Caribbean," held in the Elliptical Hall of the Federal Legislative Palace in Caracas. Addressing lawmakers, military leaders, and civil society representatives, Maduro declared Venezuela "untouchable," asserting that "nothing and no one will touch the homeland."

The event, framed as a national reaffirmation of Venezuela's independence and democratic values, comes amid escalating tensions with the United States, which recently deployed naval forces near Venezuelan waters. Maduro thanked the National Assembly for convening what he called "a special act of unity and reunion for the defence of sacred rights: self-determination, full sovereignty, and the enjoyment of peace."

Referencing the legacy of Bolívar and other independence leaders, Maduro emphasised that Venezuela's true wealth lies not in its oil, gold, or gas, but in its "moral, spiritual, and ethical heritage." He called on all Venezuelans to set aside political differences, declaring, "This is not a time for colours or divisions. One flag shelters us all: yellow, blue, and red."

The president also expressed gratitude for international support, particularly from Russia, China, Iran, and ALBA-TCP member states (an alliance of Latin American and Caribbean countries, including Cuba and Venezuela), which have condemned US threats and reaffirmed the 2014 declaration of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace. "Whoever threatens one country in Latin America threatens them all," Maduro warned, urging regional unity against foreign aggression.

Maduro reiterated that international law prohibits both the use and threat of force against sovereign states, and accused Washington of attempting to fabricate a military conflict in South America. The recent deployment of US warships and renewed accusations linking Venezuelan officials to drug trafficking are seen by Caracas as part of a broader psychological warfare campaign led by US President Donald Trump.

Maduro's remarks were delivered before members of the National Assembly, the Executive Cabinet, the High Command of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces (FANB), and leaders of the ruling coalition, the Great Patriotic Pole. He called on all Venezuelans to choose peace, life, and sovereignty, declaring that the country must speak "with one voice" in defence of its independence.

The speech follows Venezuela's mobilisation of over four million militia members in response to US military movements in the Caribbean Sea. Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino López said that the militia is prepared to defend "every inch" of national territory.

Maduro's message aligns with statements made earlier this week at the ALBA-TCP summit, where he called on Latin American nations and social movements to unite in defence of Venezuela's right to peace and self-determination. The summit concluded with a joint condemnation of US "imperialist and destabilising policies."

As diplomatic tensions rise, Venezuela continues to position itself as a defender of regional sovereignty and multilateralism, invoking the principles of the UN Charter and the CELAC (Community of Latin American States) 'Zone of Peace' declaration. Whether this rhetoric will translate into broader regional action remains to be seen, but Caracas is making clear that it will not back down.

'PEACE QUADRANTS'

As the deployment of US military ships in the Caribbean increased, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro announced the activation of thousands of "Peace Quadrants" across the country's 5,336 communal circuits. "The goal is for each communal circuit to become a Peace Quadrant equipped with resources, technology and response capacity to guarantee the defence of every corner of Venezuelan territory," he said.

This deployment is based on what the government calls "popular-military-police unity," under which communities, the police and the Bolivarian National Armed Forces work in coordination.

The reports on the movement of the US fleet coincide with Venezuelan authorities' seizure of weapons in connection with recent attempted terrorist attacks in the cities of Caracas and Maturin.

During a session at the National Assembly, Citizen Security Minister Diosdado Cabello said those attempted attacks are part of a "hybrid war" involving foreign actors, far-right local activists and criminal groups.

The "Peace Quadrant" is a geographically defined area where public institutions and social organisations interact to carry out functions aimed at ensuring social, cultural, educational, economic, environmental and political development.

They focus on protecting property and people's physical, psychological and moral integrity, while safeguarding respect for rights, social peace, coexistence and compliance with the law.

Once the National Assembly approves the corresponding regulations, the Peace Quadrants will be organised under a General Staff made up of four action units that work internally and with one another.

These are: the citizen security unit, the comprehensive prevention unit, the solidarity coexistence unit and the comprehensive risk management unit for social, natural and technological threats. Social organisations will be allowed to participate in these units according to their mission and field of action.

In each Peace Quadrant, the government will implement a "Communal Interactive Patrol System" tasked with promoting peace through preventive measures.

"This is not just any plan, nor an academic exercise. It will not take up space in dusty offices. This is a popular struggle's instrument that will rise in our neighbourhoods, fields, and factories," Maduro said.

(The ALBA-TCP countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Venezuela.)

Telesur

the nation is prepared to defend 'every inch' of national territory

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro Moros.
Photo: Fabio Rodrigues Pozzecom/ABr – wikimedia.org (CC BY 3.0)

What is the United States looking for in the Caribbean?

The dominant power feels challenged by those who propose a new, multipolar, and united world order.

The deployment of US military forces, mainly marines, accompanied by warships, aircraft, and a nuclear submarine, has generated concern in Latin America and the world.

The forces are located very close to the Venezuelan territorial sea border. This move, presented as a measure to "combat drug trafficking", allows the US to establish control of maritime and air traffic over the south-eastern arc of the Caribbean Sea.

The Venezuelan government denounced the operation as a direct threat to its sovereignty, strongly rejecting it and preparing to confront it.

"We defend our seas, our skies and our lands, we liberate them, we watch over them and we patrol them, no empire is going to come to touch Venezuela's sacred soil," asserted President Nicolás Maduro, in a working meeting with governors and mayors of the Great Simón Bolívar Patriotic Pole.

Remember in 2020, the Trump administration accused the Venezuelan head of state of drug trafficking, and in a burst of creativity invented a 'Cartel of the Suns', in the style of the worst Narco soap operas.

Those interventionist plans, in which the current US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, played a prominent role, ended in a resounding failure. It seems the US, under Trump again, wants to repeat the fiasco.

This is not to be taken lightly, although the current threat is partly psychological warfare: the superpower feels challenged by powers that propose a new world order, one of 'multipolarity' (many powers) and solidarity. This way of seeing the world is alien to the US and is seen as a threat.

Given the strength of the BRICS in the economic order, especially the alliance of China, Russia and India, with guaranteed energy resources, the USA perceives the possession of Venezuela as vital for its survival as an empire.

Granma

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