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Gaza: 'The world must act NOW!'

Marcus Browning

The United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI) on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, to the 60th session of the UN Human Rights Council, has concluded that Israeli authorities and forces have committed and are continuing to commit genocide in the occupied Gaza Strip.

The Commission has been investigating the events on and since 7 October 2023 for the last two years. Its verdict is that Israeli authorities and security forces committed four of the five genocidal acts defined by the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, namely killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the destruction of the Palestinians in whole or in part, and imposing measures intended to prevent births.

Explicit statements by Israeli civilian and military authorities and the pattern of conduct of the Israeli security forces indicate that the genocidal acts were committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as a group.

RESPONSIBILITY

"The Commission finds that Israel is responsible for the commission of genocide in Gaza," said Navi Pillay, Chair of the Commission. "It is clear that there is an intent to destroy the Palestinians in Gaza through acts that meet the criteria set forth in the Genocide Convention."

"The responsibility for these atrocity crimes lies with Israeli authorities at the highest echelons who have orchestrated a genocidal campaign for almost two years now with the specific intent to destroy the Palestinian group in Gaza," Pillay said. "The Commission also finds that Israel has failed to prevent and punish the commission of genocide, through failure to investigate genocidal acts and to prosecute alleged perpetrators."

The report is based on all the Commission's prior investigations, as well as factual and legal findings in relation to attacks in Gaza carried out by Israeli forces, and the conduct and statements of Israeli authorities from 7 October 2023 until 31 July 2025. The Commission's findings are based on a comprehensive examination of the underlying acts of genocide (*actus reus*) and genocidal intent (*dolus specialis*).

In establishing the genocidal acts, the Commission examined Israeli military operations in Gaza, including:

- killing and seriously harming unprecedented numbers of Palestinians
- imposing a total siege, including blocking humanitarian aid leading to starvation
- systematically destroying the healthcare and education systems in Gaza
- systematic acts of sexual and gender based violence
- directly targeting children
- systematic and widespread attacks on religious and cultural sites
- disregarding the orders of the International Court of Justice.

The acts of Israeli political and military leaders are attributable to the State of Israel. The Commission therefore concluded that the State of Israel bears responsibility for the failure to prevent genocide, the commission of genocide and failure to punish the perpetrators of genocide against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

INCITEMENT

The Commission also concluded that Israeli President Isaac Herzog, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and then-Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, have incited the commission of genocide and that Israeli authorities have failed to take action against them to punish this incitement. The Commission has not fully assessed statements by other Israeli political and military leaders and considers that they too should be assessed to determine whether they constitute incitement to commit genocide.

The Commission has urged the government of Israel to comply immediately with its international legal obligations, including to end the genocide in the Gaza Strip and fully implement the provisional measures orders of the International Court of Justice.

Israel must end its policy of starvation, lift the siege and facilitate and ensure the unimpeded access of humanitarian aid at scale and unhindered access of all United Nations staff, including UNRWA and OHCHR international staff, and all recognised international humanitarian agencies delivering and coordinating aid. The Commission is calling on Israel to immediately end the activities of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

The Commission recommended that member states cease the transfer of arms and other equipment that may be used for the commission of genocidal acts to Israel; ensure individuals and corporations in their territories and within their jurisdiction are not involved in aiding and assisting the commission of genocide or incitement to commit genocide; and take action on accountability through investigations and legal proceedings against individuals or corporations that are involved in the genocide directly or indirectly.

Rally for Palestine in Boorloo/Perth March 2025.

GENOCIDAL INTENT

Amnesty International's Secretary General, Dr Agnès Callamard said: "As Israeli authorities and forces intensify their brutal campaign of annihilation, particularly in Gaza City, the UN Commission of Inquiry's damning report provides further confirmation of what Amnesty International and others have been concluding for months: that the Israeli authorities and Israeli forces have committed and are continuing to commit genocide against Palestinians in Gaza."

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What we can get, what we can learn

Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan has just returned from a five day official visit to China. While there, she tried to build relations with Chinese officials, pitched for more Chinese students and tourists and purchased four tunnel-boring machines for a railway project in Melbourne.

Victoria needs China, as does the rest of Australia. We need international students to keep our universities viable. We shouldn't need international students to do that, but since governments don't fund universities properly, we do. All of Australia needs China for trade. The People's Republic purchases 40 per cent of West Australia's mineral exports. The whole country needs products made in China (as does most of the world).

Allan's visit flew in the face of a campaign of demonisation of our major trading partner that has been relentless and unhinged. Countless opinion pieces and news items either argue or just assume that China is 'assertive,' and wants to run the world, that a military confrontation between China and the US is inevitable and that Australia would have no choice but to join in. It's a game anyone can play, from the predictably militarist Murdoch press to supposedly 'progressive' publications like the Nine papers and the *Saturday Paper*.

Only one of the assumptions is true. China is indeed assertive, standing up for the interests of the Chinese people. China doesn't want to run the world, as its actions and words show. Actions? China has only one military base outside its borders (the US has about 800). China supports development around the world through the Belt and Road Initiative. This helpful program has included massive debt forgiveness and extension, contrary to accusations of 'debt diplomacy.' The most recent, under-reported, action was extending aid to Afghanistan after that country experienced two massive earthquakes. Another action that doesn't get much attention is that China has hosted a peace conference between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Words? China has consistently talked about a "shared future" for humanity. Its leaders make it clear that the PRC does not want to be a global hegemon, a power that stands above all others. Compare and contrast with the US, whose President and senior politicians talk as though they are already the world's top superpower and will do anything to keep it that way.

It's the polar opposite of the USA, which talks and behaves as though it's entitled to run the planet, while mainstream commentators assume its on the side of freedom and democracy. Most recently a group of Republican congressmen have written an open letter warning Australia and other countries of "punitive consequences" for our planned recognition of Palestinian statehood. China talks and behaves as though it wants to be respectful to other nations, and commentators assume it wants to dominate the globe.

Back to the Victorian Premier. Allan's visit tells us about real needs in Australia's relationship with China. We need international students and trade. We also need big infrastructure projects. Victoria's population is growing at a massive rate, and needs more public transport and housing.

The other thing we can gain from China is the example of real respect for other nations. In this issue we write about PM Albanese's efforts to gain more influence with Pacific nations (of course to "counter China"). One thing Albanese could learn from the People's Republic is to help other nations without lecturing them. Countries respect China's Belt and Road Initiative, and other initiatives like the Asian Development Bank because aid is given without strings attached. Australia's belated attempts to look as though it takes Pacific countries seriously don't compare very well. We shouldn't copy China slavishly, because Australia is a very different country, but we can learn from a good example.

Gaza

Continued from page 1

Crucially, the report also concludes that the Israeli authorities and Israeli forces have had and continue to have the genocidal intent to destroy, in whole or in part, the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Statements made by Israeli authorities provide direct evidence for genocidal intent, and the pattern of conduct of Israeli forces provide circumstantial evidence that genocidal intent is the only reasonable inference that could be drawn from the evidence.

The Commission of Inquiry joins a growing number of international human rights bodies and experts in concluding that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.

Mohamed Duar, Amnesty International Australia's spokesperson for the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), said: "The UN Commission of Inquiry's determination reaffirms Amnesty and Francesca Albanese's finding Israel has been and is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. Israel has unleashed hell and destruction on Gaza brazenly, continuously and with total impunity." Francesca Albanese is the UN Special Rapporteur on the OPT.

Duar emphasised that Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese must use the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to convey the horror of the Australian public at Israel's genocide of Palestinians in Gaza and to call for a ceasefire, the unimpeded distribution of aid by UN agencies, including UNRWA and for an end to Israel's unlawful occupation of Palestinian territory and apartheid regime. "Australia should be taking a leadership role in the global community, to take decisive action to end this appalling situation.

"The Australian government must not risk being complicit in Israel's genocide of the Palestinian people. We call on Australia to halt all weapons and weapon component exports to Israel, and to consider further sanctions against Israeli officials, both civil and military, and other entities, that are contributing to this genocide.

"Israel has repeatedly violated the Genocide Convention deliberately killing, physically and mentally harming, and displacing Palestinians in Gaza, creating conditions of life calculated to destroy and dehumanise them including annihilation, displacement, deprivation of crucial aid and starvation as a weapon of war. Justice for Palestinians cannot wait. The world must act now."

Agnes Callamard said, "There is no more time for excuses: as the evidence of Israel's genocide continues to mount, the international community cannot claim they didn't know. This report must compel states to take immediate action and fulfil their legal and moral obligation to halt Israel's genocide.

"The international community, especially those states with influence on Israel, must exert all possible diplomatic, economic, and political pressure to ensure an immediate and lasting ceasefire and unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza.

"The findings of this report should compel all states to halt all arms and security transfers to Israel to re-evaluate their trade ties with Israel to ensure they are not contributing to Israel's genocide in Gaza, apartheid, other crimes against humanity or war crimes, or the unlawful occupation of the OPT."

Amnesty warns that with Israel intensifying its brutal campaign of destruction and displacement, especially in Gaza City, through the mass forced displacement of its residents and the erasure of its millennia-old heritage, the stakes have never been higher: The very existence of Palestinians in Gaza is under threat. "The scale of deaths and destruction has already been cataclysmic, but we are at a juncture where states have the tools to prevent further crimes. They must demonstrate that they also have the will to do so."

The report also warns the international community of its serious concerns that the specific intent to destroy the Palestinians as a whole has extended to the rest of the OPT, that is the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Amnesty International urges all states, beginning with those that have supported Israel for the last two years to shift course, to hear the findings of expert after expert, and to do all in their power to protect Palestinians and stop the ongoing genocide in Gaza and prevent its possible spread to the rest of the OPT.

The Commission urges Israel and all States to fulfil their legal obligations under international law to end the genocide and punish those responsible for it.

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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Send to 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010 or phone through on 02 9699 8844.

CPA General Secretary/President honoured in NSW Parliament

Community Recognition Statement

Thursday, 11th September 2025

Today I would like to honour the extraordinary life of Dr Hannah Middleton who passed away on 12 June this year. Hannah dedicated her life to campaigning for peace and justice, making profound contributions to Indigenous rights, nuclear disarmament and anti-war campaigns both in Australia and internationally. She campaigned against foreign military bases, the Gulf War, war in Iraq, and the arms industry, and built international networks to stand against violence and militarism. Hannah bravely faced arrest more than once for her commitment to justice. In our community she worked to protect public housing, was involved in Glebe Youth Service, the *Glebe Grapevine*, was a lecturer at UNSW, and was heavily involved with the Communist Party of Australia being for many years its president and later general secretary. She leaves behind a community strengthened by her tireless activism and commitment to justice. To Denis and your family, I offer my heartfelt condolences for your loss.

Kobe Shetty MP Greens member for Balmain in State Parliament

Carbon target deception

M Santos

Just days after its final approval to the extension of one of the largest fossil fuel export projects in the world, Woodside's North West Shelf, the government released its National Climate Risk Assessment Report (see page 6) and its emission reduction target for 2035.

The Albanese Labor government has set a new emission reduction target of 62%-70% by 2035 compared with 2005 – a year when emissions peaked. This follows on from the commitment to reduce emissions by 43% by 2030 – a target that Australia is not yet on track to meet.

The Climate Council says to "contribute to keeping heating well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, after which climate impacts become especially catastrophic and severe," we need to achieve a net zero target for 2035.

"At a 2035 climate target within the 62-70% range, Australia's climate pollution will still be amongst the highest in the world, and almost double the current emissions per person globally. Australia's emissions target would be higher than nations in Europe and Asia, and far exceeding many low-income nations."

The figure of 2°C is widely viewed by climate scientists as inadequate. We have already touched 1.5°C with catastrophic extreme weather events, irreversible melting of polar ice, oceans rising and warming, shortages of fresh water, loss of human lives and biodiversity.

A target within this 62%-70% range falls short of what's needed to protect Australians and our way of life, the Climate Council warns. The range is weaker than "What the science says is necessary to contribute to avoiding the worst climate impacts (net zero)."

"The Albanese government must also stop undermining our targets by approving new and expanded fossil fuel facilities. Since 2022, Labor has approved 31 new and expanded coal, oil and gas projects, impacting Australia's 2035 target," the Council pointed out.

"Approving new fossil fuel exports is destroying the future. It isn't just a betrayal of our Pacific neighbours, it is a betrayal of all Australians, putting the profits of foreign-owned fossil fuel corporations ahead of our wellbeing, security and prosperity," Richard Denniss, Executive Director of The Australia Institute, said.

BACK TO FRONT

Climate Change Minister Chris Bowen says that a target of over 70% is "not achievable. That advice is very clear." He claims Labor have "gone for the maximum level of ambition that's achievable."

PM Albanese called Labor's inadequate target "ambitious but achievable," praising it for "sending the right investment signal, *responding to the science* and delivered with a practical plan. It builds on what we know are the lowest cost actions we can deliver over the next decade while leaving room for *new technologies to take things up a gear*" (emphasis added).

"Vitally, this target range balances what the Commonwealth can achieve with existing policies and technologies, and what the country could achieve with a whole-of-economy and whole-of-society effort."

The target is not "responding to the science." The government's starting point is not the science. It is what it and its advisors claim is "achievable."

Such defeatist thinking is unscientific and inconsistent with what the science demands if humanity and life as we know it are to survive. It is a reflection of the government's subservience to the big resources companies.

The starting point should be what emission reductions are required and how quickly. From that target the government should go all out to achieve or over-achieve.

CARBON CAPTURE HOAX

So how does the government expect to achieve its totally inadequate target at the same time as promoting increased production of fossil fuels up to 2070?

There are a number of relatively inadequate albeit worthwhile measures such as funding for more renewable energy generation, new transmission and storage of energy including household batteries and token references to First Nations land managers "to use their knowledge of managing country to sequester more carbon …"

Labor is basing its totally inadequate targets on "*new technologies to take things up a gear*."

"But we need to invest in a range of options for future sequestration. New carbon removal technologies will be increasingly important as 2050 approaches, but most need further development before they will be ready to be deployed at scale," the government says in its so-called net-zero plan.

That is an understatement! Carbon capture and storage (sequestration) is hellishly expensive, unproven on a commercial scale, and points to a 2050 timeframe, when announcing a target for 2035. Only $52 million is allocated to Carbon Capture Technologies program "critical to reaching net zero by 2050."

The whole plan is a cover for fossil fuel business-as-usual and failure to take the urgent and decisive action required to phase out fossil fuel production and usage.

The plan announced alongside the release of the target allocates less than $9 billion in total while leaving untouched $12 billion or more in fossil fuel subsidies.

The plan also includes $73.8 million in a Support Plantation Establishment Program, "increasing future plantation forest resources available for processing." At the same time logging of native forests continues to enable the expansion of mining and farming.

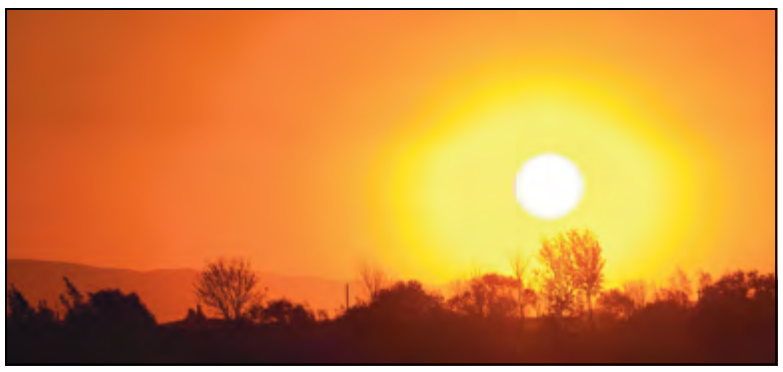


Photo: rawpixel.com

VULNERABLE MOST EXPOSED

"The weak target announced today by the Albanese government falls dangerously short of what the science requires and what is possible," ACOSS CEO Dr Cassandra Goldie said.

"Without greater action, we will face more heatwaves, more floods, a higher cost of living, and deeper inequality.

"The federal government is failing to do enough to protect all communities. The people who will bear the heaviest burden are those on low incomes, regional communities and First Nations peoples. People are suffering now."

"Instead of protecting people, the government's approach is protecting the profits of coal, oil and gas corporations while households are left to foot the bill," Goldie said.

POLICY

ACOSS is calling on the federal government to commit to a plan to:

- Reconsider its target at the international climate negotiations in November (COP30), where all countries will assess whether they are doing enough to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.
- Phase out fossil fuels.
- Urgently increase investment to support people and communities at greatest risk of climate change impacts.
- Accelerate home energy and resilience upgrades for renters, First Nations communities, and low-income homeowners.
- Strengthen the community sector's capacity in climate and disaster response, recovery and resilience.

a betrayal of all Australians, putting the profits of foreign-owned fossil fuel corporations ahead of our wellbeing, security and prosperity

Climate Facts

- Australia is the second largest fossil fuel exporter and fifth largest fossil fuel producer in the world.
- Emissions from Australia's fossil fuel exports are around 1.15 billion tonnes CO2 annually, greater than the emissions of all countries except China, the United States, India, and Russia.
- Australia is expanding fossil fuel exports with around 100 new fossil fuel projects under development.
- Nearly a fifth of Australia's domestic emissions now come from sending fossil fuels overseas.
- The 45-year extension of Woodside's North West Shelf gas export terminal, approved by the Australian government on 12 September 2025 will add around 90 million tonnes of emissions to the atmosphere, equivalent to opening 12 new coal power stations.
- The Australian government gives most of the gas exported from Australia to global oil and gas giants for free.
- 0.03% of Australians work in the oil and gas industry.

The Australia Institute

International Peace Day in Walyalup/ Fremantle WA

Vinnie Molina

Some 500 people gathered to commemorate the International Peace Day at Pioneer Park in Walyalup/Fremantle WA on Sunday 21 September 2025, focussing on Gaza and AUKUS and keeping Fremantle a nuclear free zone.

Anger was expressed at the Albanese government for its pursuit of the AUKUS agreement that makes Australia and especially local WA areas less safe and a target. Just a few kilometres south of the rally the government is building up a submarine base that will eventually house AUKUS subs. In the meantime, US subs will rotate and get maintenance at the Stirling base in Garden Island.

Speakers at the event condemned the continued 2-year genocide in Gaza and the lack of action by the Australian government against the terrorist state of Israel. The UN General Assembly will address the issue of Palestinian statehood this week, but it remains a symbolic gesture as Palestine is being *demolished by the day and its people ethnically cleansed*.

More than 150 countries have unilaterally recognised Palestine as an independent state and efforts continue for the implementation of a two-state solution. The problem is Israel will not let go of its policy of a Greater Israel unless the international community takes action to remove all complicity and support of any kind. The people of Palestine must be protected and an international peace keeping force sent in.

All countries must boycott the apartheid state of Israel; there is not much time left before the genocide is complete.

International Peace Day is a special date commemorated around the world with a single message; we must stop war and find diplomatic solutions to the conflicts that kill innocent people.

Unfortunately, under capitalism, peace doesn't make profit and war allows the warmongers to profiteer at the expense of innocent people.

The CPA calls on the Australian government to expel the Israeli ambassador and cut all military ties with the terrorist state of Israel.

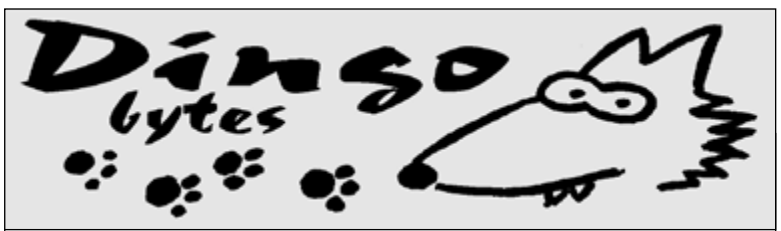
Australia recognises Palestinian statehood (finally)

The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has welcomed the decision taken by Australia, along with the United Kingdom and Canada, to recognise the State of Palestine. The Ministry has called the decision "bold and principled," saying that it reflects a firm commitment to international law, as well as demonstrating a genuine dedication to ending the occupation and achieving lasting peace; ensuring security, stability, and prosperity for the region and the world at large.

While some are saying that the decision comes much later than it needed to, the Palestinian Authority has pointed out that the recent wave of recognitions, as well as affirming the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people provides momentum to regional and international efforts to implement the New York Declaration. The Declaration was co-sponsored by France and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the United Nations General Assembly. It calls for collective action to end the war in Gaza, and a peaceful and lasting settlement based on effective implementation of the two-state solution.

The Ministry has called on countries that have not yet recognised the State of Palestine to take the initiative in doing so, saying that they would be "standing on the right side of history." The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs added that an immediate end to all Israeli war crimes is essential to building trust and restoring a viable political horizon for a just and lasting resolution.

Standing on the wrong side of history is the Liberal Party of Australia. Leader Sussan Ley has taken the unusual step of writing to US Republican Congress members to say that the federal opposition would reverse the decision should they form government.



Pope Leo XIV has sharply condemned EV car maker Tesla's plan to make Elon Musk the world's first trillionaire. Tesla's board has proposed a US $970 billion annual pay package for Musk, tired to ambitious growth milestones. The tech mogul has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into Trump's re-election campaign and for the first months of the new Trump administration, was in charge of the jobs and services cutting Department of Government Efficiency.

The Chicago-born pontiff, by contrast, grew up in modest circumstances on the city's South Side. He said that at a time when working-class people the world over are under economic and political attack, the Musk "proposal" reflects a "loss of the value of human life, of the family, of the value of society."

Leo, formerly known as Robert Prevost, discussed Musk's pay in an interview published in the Catholic newspaper *Crux*. "Yesterday, the news [arrived] that Elon Musk is going to be the first trillionaire in the world," Leo said. "What does this mean when money becomes the most important value in human life?" The size of Musk's paycheque was something that particularly irked the pontiff. "If a big paycheque is the only thing that has any value in the world anymore, we're in big trouble," the Pope said.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is the fossil fuel Albanese clique. Commenting on the Albanese government's target to reduce emissions by 62-70% by 2035, the Australian Conservation Foundation's climate and energy program manager Gavan McFadzean summed it up: "This timid target range suggests the Prime Minister is more committed to the future of the coal and gas industries than he is to the safety of Australian communities and nature.

"Until the government stops approving new and expanded coal and gas projects, it will continue to put more Australians in harm's way. A target range of 62-70% falls significantly short on all measures of what's needed, with the government's plans preparing Australia only to meet the bottom end of the range.

"The 70% figure is greenwashing while the plans are not there to reach it. It's awful to see the government shrug and accept the worst-case scenarios in the National Climate Risk Assessment as if they are Australia's inevitable future: regular coastal inundation, more heat-related deaths, worse bushfires and more environmental damage.

"This target range condemns Australian communities to ongoing climate harm and is embarrassing in the face of the climate leadership being shown by our Pacific neighbours and states like Victoria and New South Wales.

"This target is low because the government is in thrall to the coal and gas industry.

"The government's failure to address Australia's biggest contribution to global heating – coal and gas exports – is the thing that is holding back climate action.

"Even the domestic emissions that come from digging up coal and gas in Australia are significant and are proportionately increasing as other parts of the economy decarbonise.

"Wealthy countries such as Australia that have grown economically on the back of coal and gas pollution have the ability – and responsibility – to make much deeper cuts than this."

Norway has a target of 70-75% by 2035. The UK has a target of 81% by 2035. The EU is committed to 90% by 2040.

Palestinians attacked on Sydney train

Denis Doherty

There were three rallies on Sunday 31 August, one anti-immigration, one pro-immigrants and refugees and the usual pro-Palestine rally. Shamikh Badra and Mohammed Saleh attended the refugee and pro Palestine rally and caught the train from Town Hall station to go home.

Shamikh Badra and his brother/friend Mohammed Saleh were born in Gaza City and came to Australia around 7 years ago.

He recounted the story to the *Guardian*:

"I was facing my brother Mohammed Saleh on train, and we were just quietly talking when someone behind started shouting at us. They were saying 'If you want to fight for Palestine go there' and later 'go back to where you came from!' and Mohammed was reacting to the person yelling. I stood up so I could look around and see who was making these threatening noises, where I was confronted by a man who pushed me in the chest. He was accompanied by another man and two women, aged in their 40s or 50s. They all began shouting at us and making the most horrible accusations against Palestinians in general. We attempted to defuse the situation by retreating to other end of the carriage, but these people kept following us and shouting 'get out, get out!' The man kept pushing us.

The train then pulled into Macdonaldtown station, so these people redoubled their efforts to get us off the train and started pushing and punching till we got out of the train onto the station, but still these people followed. They continued to attack. Other people now came and intervened, but this made him worse, and he attacked other people who were defending us. We started chanting 'Free Free Palestine' and moved to leave the station and walk up to Newtown but still these people were following us and abusing us. At one point I tried to talk to one of the women in the hope that she would calm her companion down, but she screamed 'Get out! Get out of my country!' In the end they tired of their efforts and went back to the station. We moved onto Newtown Police Station and gave an account to them plus pictures and videos of the some of the incident.

Rail staff came up as the issue ended and said that they saw everything and had reported it. But we wonder why the rail staff did not intervene to look after us. When people attack you in this way it is scary, it has upset my normal rhythms as I am not sleeping well, I cannot concentrate and do my PhD project."

At the time of reporting to the *Guardian*, around 15 days from the attack there has been no response from the police or notification from them that they have identified the culprit.

Shamikh says "The crux of the event is that these people feel they can stop people supporting Palestine, stop free speech. We have been trying by peaceful means to have the country support Palestine which is our right.

We are Australian citizens with rights just the same as theirs, yet they somehow feel they have the right to attack and abuse us."

Shamikh has suffered the personal tragedy of losing his father, his brother and his brother's wife and their four children. They are still under the rubble of the building they were in when Israel attacked.

This attack comes amidst the twin events of a rise in anti-immigration marches signalling the rise of far-right extremism and the launch of the report on Islamophobia *A National Approach to Islamophobia* by Aftab Malik the national envoy on Islamophobia.

The party will follow up this issue with several NSW government ministers. ✪

Strengthening the ranks

James T

On 6 September, comrades from across Sydney gathered in the CPA's Peter Symon building to attend a workshop on Basic Skills for the Trade Union Activist. Hosted by experienced Party members from the CPA's NSW Trade Union Fraction, the workshop brought together comrades from a range of different backgrounds and work experiences to learn and relearn the basics of trade union activism.

Through a combination of lectures, discussion groups and practical activities, participants were able to share their experiences, ask difficult questions, and come together to formulate plans of action for specific workplaces.

Beginning with a lesson in the history of trade unionism in Australia, the workshop was grounded in the current situation and how this relates to the practice of communists in the workplace. Participants were inspired by tales of trade union strength in the past, from hard-fought industrial disputes to the intersection of trade unionism and community which formed the backbone of working-class culture in Australia. This was a theme that would permeate the entirety of the workshop.

Situated in the weakened position that Trade Unions now find themselves in, the workshop focused on cultivating basic activist skills among comrades that are beginning their journey in trade unionism. Young comrades learnt fundamental actions to take before organising a workplace, including a checklist of information to gather and the art of mapping.

Experienced participants shared important strategies in deep mapping and what to be on the lookout for in order to understand their workplace community including hobbies, sports team affiliations, and details about family and community; all this information is essential in creating a dynamic and an ever-expanding workplace map. Young comrades learnt how to constructively engage fellow workers, and build ties of trust and solidarity that extend throughout each role in the workplace.

Importantly, the task of building and strengthening a workplace culture was emphasised. Inspired by workplace cultures cultivated by militant Trade Unions, participants were instructed on how to bolster self-reliance, solidarity and comradeship within the workplace. From small acts like group dinners to rolling funds that can be used to compensate those who have been victimised by capital, workplace communities link the working class to each other in times of great alienation across society. Within these communities, an embryonic form of future organisations can be glimpsed.

A workplace community is a sphere of society controlled by the working class and acts in accordance with its interests. When connected to points of distribution and social reproduction, these communities can bring together an increasingly larger section of the working class and can unite it in the face of pressing political, economic and social issues. As a site of true proletarian power, the workplace community is no longer a site of individual suffering but of collective struggle. In this environment, the working class can recapture what it has lost after decades of capitalist onslaught and construct a scaffold for future working-class institutions.

Furthermore, attendees were given valuable instructions on how to combat hostile management and other appendages of capital in the workplace. By instilling confidence and by the careful examination of key documents, the workplace activist can resist the diverse traps laid out for them as a result of their agitation. By utilising trade union structures, and Health and Safety Reps, and by winning the confidence of the rank-and-file, the activist can become a formidable opponent of capital.

By the continual deployment and refinement of workshops like this, the Party can develop a new generation of talented trade union activists. United in opposition to capital, an increasingly organised and conscious working class can reclaim its fighting organisations from traitors and cowards. Only by the continual development of activists can the working class bolster its ranks in the struggle that accompanies a capitalist system in crisis.

The Party and its young rank and file membership has taken a step forward in our ability to construct working class power. With theoretical clarity and practical skills, comrades will be developed into activists and endowed with the fighting spirit that once burnt across our southern sky. ✪

Help us cancel the Indo Pacific Expo

To be held in Darling Harbour

November 4-6

The fact that Israel is committing genocide in relation to Gaza has been confirmed by many prestigious organisations and experts. The companies that are making huge profits on the bodies of the innocent men, women and children of Gaza have been named by Francesca Albanese the UN rapporteur for Palestine.

These companies are: Elbit Systems, Lockheed Martin (F35's), Leonardo S.p.A, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Boeing, BAE systems, Northrop Grumman (*the list is not complete*). These companies are invited to the Indo Pacific Expo – a display subsidised and sponsored by the NSW and Federal Governments!

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Medal of Friendship

Vinnie Molina

The CPA congratulates comrade Elizabeth, CC Assistant General Secretary on receiving the Friendship Medal awarded by the Cuban Council of State at the request of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples, ICAP.

Cuban ambassador to Australia Dr Tanieris Dieguez bestowed the Medal on Elizabeth at the Cuban embassy in Canberra on Thursday 18 September.

Comrade Elizabeth has been the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society, ACFS Perth branch secretary since 2007. She has been consistent in solidarity work with Cuba in Boorloo/Perth over the years.

Some of the critical campaigns by the local ACFS branch have been the pickets outside the US consulate demanding of the freedom of the Cuban Five. Rallies outside the US consulate have continued for years on the 17th of each month in demand of the removal of Cuba from the US list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism.

ACFS also participates in the international campaign 'Bridges of Love.' In Boorloo we walk across the bridge on the Swan River at Elizabeth Quay the last Sunday of each month. Elizabeth has consistently been the voice of solidarity work with Cuba in the state.

Recent activities include fundraising events to support the ACFS Agro Vivo project in Cuba for the production of organic food for local consumption.

Under her leadership several members of ACFS and the Communist Party of Australia in WA have participated in the Southern Cross solidarity brigades.

In her response speech Elizabeth committed to continuing her solidarity work until the criminal US blockade on Cuba is lifted. She also condemned the inclusion of Cuba in the US list of countries that allegedly sponsors terrorism and calls for the removal of Cuba from that spurious list. Finally, she demanded the return of Guantánamo Bay to the people of Cuba.

Long live Cuba!

Down with the US blockade!

Stop the US threats to Venezuela

Vinnie Molina

A CPA delegation led by the Party president paid a visit to the embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to meet with the Chief of Mission in Australia, Luis Laya on 18-19 September 2025.

Laya updated the CPA delegation on the dangerous and irresponsible threats to his country by the United States.

For a number of weeks now the US has moved its warships to the Caribbean in front of the sovereign waters of Venezuela. It has bombed three fishing boats, killing 24 fishermen under the pretext of preemptive action against drug trafficking.

The objectives of US imperialism haven't changed, the forcible removal of the Bolivarian government of President Nicolás Maduro and the imposition of a puppet government to rob Venezuelans of their oil.

Venezuela has the biggest certified reserves of oil and gas in the world. For decaying US imperialism, grabbing control of those natural resources seems an imperative.

The Bolivarian revolution led by Commander Hugo Chávez gave the Venezuelan people hope and a future by using the income generated by the oil industry in the benefit of all Venezuelan people. This fact was not in the dirty books of the United States, and a war of intervention by any means was launched against the Bolivarian government.

The US has pushed its regime change policies against Venezuela with coup d'état campaigns, assassination attempts against the leaders of the revolution, and the funding of a violent opposition.

Most recently the US offered a reward of $50 million for the head of President Nicolás Maduro. Meanwhile the US moved its warships to the Caribbean in an open threat of military intervention with the pretence of combatting narco-terrorism.

The Bolivarian revolution has the support of its people and has responded by mobilising its 4 million strong militias calling on the people to take up arms in defence of their sovereignty.

The situation is very dangerous as reported by Venezuela's Chargé d'affaires Luis Laya, calling on the international community to demand the US cease its threats and its attacks on the Venezuelan people.

The CPA delegation delivered a message of solidarity with the Bolivarian revolution, its government and people.

Hands off Venezuela!

Govt ignores climate risk assessment

M Santos

The National Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) released earlier this month by the Albanese government looks at what Australia might expect under three levels of global heating: 1.5 ºC, 2 ºC and 3 ºC above pre-industrial levels. It issues a stark warning that without strong action global heating is set to reach 2.7ºC by 2100. The report notes that human-induced warming has already reached 1.5 ºC and is having an impact on Australians and our environment.

It identified and estimated the level of risk of 63 nationally significant climate risks based on five levels – low, moderate, high, very high, and severe by 2050. These risks evaluated included to economy, finance and trade (very high); health and social support (severe); primary industries and food supply (severe); infrastructure and the built environment (very high); urban, regional and remote communities (severe); and defence and national security (severe).

"Australia's climate is changing and will continue to change into the future. The country is likely to experience more intense and extreme climate hazards, and in some cases in areas where people and places haven't experienced these hazards before," the report notes.

"Climate science indicates that our future extreme weather is likely to differ significantly from the past. Changes in the timing, duration, intensity and spatial patterns of hazards are likely, with many events occurring more frequently, in combination or affecting new locations."

"Australia currently experiences compounding and cascading hazards, and this is going to increase. Concurrent events, and reduced time between severe events will become more common.

"Extreme heat, floods, bushfires, poor air quality and communicable diseases will escalate health risks. Those with pre-existing health conditions, including mental ill-health, are most at risk. This includes the very young and our older populations. People who work outdoors will also be at increased risk."

"More frequent and more intense extreme events will affect the way of life in different ways across Australia – from impacts to sport and recreation, to unreliable infrastructure, like energy sources during heatwaves. There will be additional pressure on emergency responders and defence resources. Increased severe floods and bushfires will degrade water quality, placing pressure on already limited water sources."

Other risks identified include:

- 1.5 million Australians living along the coastline would be under threat of rising sea levels by 2050.
- Deaths caused by heatwaves will soar by more than 400% in places like Sydney and Darwin.
- Sea level rise and increased coastal hazards will significantly impact coastal communities and cities.
- The risk of vector-borne diseases (e.g. malaria and dengue fever) will rise as temperatures, rainfall, and floods increase, straining the healthcare system.
- Water availability and accessibility for towns, ecosystems and agriculture may become limited due to rising evapotranspiration in inland regions and changes in annual rainfall.
- Crop yields will decrease with more drought (e.g. southwest Western Australia) and increased susceptibility to fire (e.g. southern and eastern Australia).
- Disruptions to supply chains from more severe rainfall and flood events can result in many regional and remote communities not receiving goods. Distribution costs will also increase.
- Critical infrastructure, such as power lines and telecommunications, is likely to experience increased pressure and damage from increased climate hazards.
- Coral reefs (e.g. the Great Barrier Reef and Ningaloo reef) will face ever increasing risks of bleaching and biodiversity loss as oceans warm and acidity increases.
- Increases in extreme heat and heatwaves will increase health risks and heat-related mortality, making it harder to work outdoors and respond to disasters.
- Many ecosystems, such as Eucalypt woodlands, will have a lower capacity to support biodiversity under future climate change.

The big take-away from the report for anyone concerned about the future of humanity and the planet is ACT NOW to curb greenhouse gas emissions as hard and fast and possible.

What is the Albanese Labor government doing? Just three days prior to the release of this important, and possibly conservative, report the government gave its final approval to the extension of Woodside's North West Shelf project off the coast of Western Australia until 2070! Its licence was due to expire in 2030. It is one of the largest gas exporters in the world.

The government has announced a climate plan with token measures to address climate change, while doing nothing to enforce a phasing out of fossil fuels. (See page 3)

Labor pays lip service to climate change, but it is worse than missing in action. Public pressure where MPs fear the loss of their seats must be increased by all means possible.

Naarm anti-AUKUS event: rock, information, inspiration

FK

Victoria's Trades Hall Solidarity Hall was almost full for a No AUKUS information session on Saturday 20 September. After a rousing warm up from local rock group Breeze, participants heard from six speakers, ably introduced by social scientist and philosopher Dr Joe Camilleri, who began with a much longer than usual acknowledgement of country to stress that the militarisation that goes with AUKUS is happening on unceded Aboriginal land.

Richard Tanter of the Nautilus Institute explained the neo-imperialist nature of AUKUS, saying that Australia needs to be defensible both strategically and morally. The nuclear submarine pact falls down on both grounds. In Tanter's words, "we are real estate" rather than "partners." Margaret Beavis, the Vice President of the Medical Association for Prevention of War spoke about the provocation that AUKUS posed, as well as the missed opportunities.

Indeed opportunity cost was a common theme at the event, with several speakers pointing out what Australia could afford without the massive cost of AUKUS as well as the spending we are beginning to forgo in order to afford the pact – the largest ever expenditure by Australia.

Historian Emma Shortis, author of *After America* pointed out that AUKUS is not a done deal. While the Labor government is very committed, AUKUS has never been before cabinet or parliament. However polls show that a clear majority of Australians favour a more independent foreign policy. As Tanter explained, AUKUS makes Australia far less independent.

It's common for anti-AUKUS speakers to talk about what we could have instead, but Stephanie Theusen from HACCSU (Health and Community Services Union) for Peace really fleshed it out, explaining in detail shortfalls in funding that mean Australians with disabilities and psychological issues are disgracefully underserviced.

Hamish McPherson of Labor Against War detailed the struggle within the Labor Party to get pro-peace policies across the line. AUKUS is far from popular with grass roots ALP members.

Veteran Victorian Greens MP Dr Tim Read pointed out that Australia neglects aid in its region, aid which would have a far more meaningful impact on our security than joining AUKUS will.

The event finished with participants enrolling for various forms of activism against AUKUS. We all left with much more information and much more hope. AUKUS is by no means final, but will require hard work to topple.

All *Guardian* readers are encouraged to get actively involved in activism against this pact which will make Australia poorer and less secure.

Pine Gap protest activists face court

Paul Gregoire

Peace activists Carmen Escobar Robinson and Tommy Walker are set to appear in Alice Springs Local Court in relation to summary offences that they were slapped with in respect of their second direct action blocking the road into Pine Gap: the joint US-Australia signals intelligence surveillance base, which is located in the Red Centre of the continent.

The 27 November 2023 direct action that prevented about 100 Pine Gap employees from entering the second most important US surveillance base that morning, involved 50-odd activists, comprising of Arrernte Traditional Owners, local health workers, and community members, with social justice group Mparntwe for Falastin coordinating the demonstration.

Unsurprisingly, these actions were motivated by the genocide in Gaza, which is being perpetrated by Israel and commenced the month prior to the November 2023 Pine Gap road blockage action, which highlighted that the base located on Arrernte Country, 18 kilometres southwest of Mparntwe-Alice Springs, is definitely sharing intel on Gaza with the US, and this is then passed on to Israel.

For their troubles in raising the alarm in respect of this nation's complicity in the commission of genocide against the Palestinians of Gaza, Robinson and Walker are facing charges of loitering, causing a hazard on the road and blocking the use of a public road. The case was continuing to take place over four days, because the defendants had expert witnesses testifying on their behalf.

The antiwar activists conducted their initial action blocking the road into Pine Gap in October 2023. The second action was spurred by revelations in Declassified Australia that involved an ex-Pine Gap employee underscoring that intelligence from the secretive US base is definitely making its way across the planet to Israel. Indeed, three of Pine Gap's four satellites completely cover the Gaza Strip.

Sydney Criminal Lawyers
(edited for space)

GREEN NOTES

Plug it!

Graham Holton

Researchers from the University of Queensland (UQ) have detected significant methane emissions from potentially thousands of poorly sealed exploration holes drilled across Queensland. This is of significant environmental concern as methane, which is 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas, contributes significantly to global warming. It is therefore urgent for the Queensland government to audit and seal all coal field boreholes.

These researchers used advanced LiDAR technology to measure the methane emissions from a coal exploration borehole in the Surat Basin (west of Brisbane) taking readings down to a depth of 100 metres. Results suggest it has been emitting methane gas for over 20 years. There are an estimated 130,000 such boreholes across Queensland which have the potential of methane and water leaks. The findings show that the one borehole leaks 235 to 253 tonnes of methane per annum, which is equivalent of the annual greenhouse gas emissions of 10,000 cars each driving 12,000 kilometres every year.

Phil Hayes, Associate Professor at the University of Queensland Gas & Energy Transition Research Centre, co-author of the research published in the journal *Science of the Total Environment*, said: "This was the first long-term measurement of methane emissions from an abandoned coal exploration borehole." Prof. Hayes said another monitored hole erupted "with water every 10 minutes because of the gas pressure building up beneath it." Such gas leaks can contaminate air, soil, and water sources. The researchers will expand their study to include water bores, to understand the full scope of the issue in order to reduce emissions.

The Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) says it is a problem that the Crisafulli government needs to fix. The QCC is calling for the leaking boreholes to be properly plugged by the original coal corporations. Charlie Cox of the QCC said: "This research is the tip of the methane iceberg for Queensland. We already aren't doing enough to curb methane from current projects, of which there are over 50, with 28 new or expanding projects in the pipeline on top of that." The QCC is calling for a borehole audit program to be established within the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI), paid for by coal royalties, with unmet costs to be paid for by a levy on all current coal corporations.

Cox asks: "why would you add more methane to the problem with new coal and gas projects when you don't yet even have an accurate measure or handle on the burden left behind by coal boreholes like this one? If the government is serious about helping Queenslanders impacted by worsening climate change, they need to get serious about monitoring, reporting and enacting solutions for all sources of harmful methane pollution."

A spokesperson for the Queensland government's Natural Resources and Mines Department said that state's regulations "require petroleum and coal companies to plug, cap and fully remediate any boreholes and wells they abandon to prevent legacy boreholes and fugitive gas emissions." The spokesperson added: "In many cases, these old boreholes may not have been properly mapped and the resource company that drilled and abandoned them no longer exists."

Under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Qld)*, leaking boreholes are classified according to environmental harm. Coal boreholes are "assessed to determine whether remediation is required." At present the cost of remediation may fall to the landholder which may directly affect land value. Ensure Legal advises: "Identifying and managing the risk of abandoned exploration boreholes protects both asset value and legal compliance."

Rachel Williamson in *Renew Energy* writes that: "Infrared thermographer Théophile Humann-Guilleminot found 101 leaks and methane venting at 15 of 38 sites visited in New South Wales (NSW), and at 20 of 42 sites visited in Queensland." Some sites had multiple emissions points from a single piece of equipment. The true environmental cost to Qld has yet to be evaluated.

Queensland: 'Right out of the Joh Bjelke-Petersen playbook'

Graham Holton

The Crisafulli LNP government of Queensland has been heavily criticised for its stand on issues from Native Title Disputes, rejecting Human Rights Act recommendations, to the CFMEU.

In regards to Indigenous matters, the Qld government is development-first and reconciliation-last. The Quandamooka People's Native Title Claim covers 3,500 properties across southeast Queensland, including Brisbane and the Redlands. It is to be determined whether native title exists over land that has been developed, leased, or transferred into private ownership.

If upheld, this could affect infrastructure planning, private property certainty, and be a precedent for other urban native title claims. Success would strengthen First Nations bargaining power in land management and development approvals by councils and Queensland government opposition to aspects of the claim, especially any recognition over developed areas.

The Quandamooka People have fought long legal battles over Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) mining rights, cultural heritage protection, and coastal land use. This case is part of a long history of contested sovereignty. For many First Nations groups, the native title dispute is seen as the state privileging development over recognition and justice.

The Premier has said he supports "respect" for Indigenous Queenslanders, but he has repealed Path to Treaty Act and shut down the Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry. The latter was set up to examine colonisation's impacts on First Nations' people. This move is unprecedented, and is seen as counterproductive by Indigenous communities and the inquiry's chair. This has weakened trust between the government and Indigenous communities.

Repealing the Path to Treaty Act has been called "a major step backwards for First Nations rights" by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, who described it as a "kick up the guts. Repeal came after communities had spent months preparing for on-country hearings in places like Cherbourg and Stradbroke Island. Indigenous leaders say the repeal has eroded trust, and caused emotional harm.

The government has axed the Environment Defenders Office (EDO), a vital community legal service that provided free environmental justice, advice, and education. This rollback affects farmers, First Nations communities, and regional groups dealing with legal matters tied to the environment and planning.

The government offered to redirect "Path to Treaty" funds into what they call "measurable action" for Indigenous communities – focusing on outcomes like health and housing. Critics argue this dismisses the foundational need for Indigenous leadership, structural justice, and treaty-based approaches.

In regards to Civil Rights, the Human Rights Law Centre and Change the Record have strongly condemned government laws enabling "adult crime, adult time" sentencing. This effectively increases the imprisonment of children in overcrowded watchhouses and youth prisons, disproportionately harming Indigenous children and those with disabilities.

The Crisafulli government has rejected all 70 recommendations proposed in a review of the Queensland Human Rights Act, which included protections for housing, environment, gender-based violence, and expanded enforcement mechanisms. The government has prohibited parliamentary debate on abortion for the next four years, which is criticised as a suppression of open discussion and democratic scrutiny.

In regards to environmental issues, the government has reviewed Queensland's emissions reduction targets. Environmental groups warn this will benefit multinational corporations, burden consumers with higher energy bills, and degrade farmland, thereby undermining climate action. The government rejected certain federal environmental targets, citing cost-of-living pressures. They're launching a review of waste and recycling policies in 2025, framing it around "cost effectiveness."

The Quandamooka People have fought long legal battles over Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island).
Photo: Michael Dawes – flickr.com (CC BY-NC 2.0)

The Queensland Conservation Council criticised the government for rushing through planning legislation that allowed 2032 Olympic-related projects to override environmental and planning laws. The government has introduced hurdles for renewable energy developments and shortened community consultation periods from 60 to 30 days. These changes ignored hundreds of public submissions.

Crisafulli has poorly handled pay disputes with public service unions, sparking industrial unrest and reinforcing perceptions that the government is aggressive towards organised labour. The Queensland Police Union criticised the government's pay offer, as "grossly inadequate." Nurses and midwives rejected the government's pay offer as it failed to deliver promised "nation-leading wages." QBuild, QHealth, and other public-sector unions staged strikes demanding an 8 per cent pay rise over three years and a shift to a 36-hour workweek. The government fretted about potential productivity declines in construction.

The premier endorsed a proposal to exclude the CFMEU from tenders for major state road projects, such as the Bruce Highway. This is in breach of Fair Work Act protections due to potential secondary boycott implications and violation of workers' freedom of association. Crisafulli denounced CFMEU actions at the Centenary Bridge construction site, which had 70 days of work stoppages since February 2024, and escalating costs of $22 million to install fencing, CCTV, and security. Crisafulli declared CFMEU protests "unsanctioned" and stated participants "won't get paid," condemning the behaviour as damaging to the broader union movement. None of these accusations have been proven.

The Labor opposition has referred Premier Crisafulli and his Cabinet to the Crime and Corruption Commission over the controversial axing of Queensland's Chief Health Officer, Krispin Hajkowicz. Hajkowicz had been a sure thing for the job, but his appointment was scrapped. His wife had made a submission about planning legislation accusing the government of overriding the rights of Queenslanders "to make life easier for politicians and developers," calling the legislation "right out of the John Bjelke-Petersen playbook."

The government claimed they weren't aware of the submission when recruiting the Chief Health Officer.

In regards to Crisafulli's own behaviour, a parliamentary ethics committee found the Premier had failed to declare a $200,000 payout to liquidators, arising from an insolvent trading settlement on his register of interests. The breach was deemed "careless." Further investigation revealed that the Premier ran a training company (SET Solutions/Southern Edge Training) that received government funding for more teaching hours than delivered. The company suffered compliance breaches, with the regulator ASQA, which rejected its renewal.

Southern Downs Regional Council workers win fair pay rise

Council workers in the Southern Downs, south-east Queensland, have won a fair deal after large scale strike action across Warwick and Stanthorpe .

The breakthrough in negotiations came at a bargaining meeting between the Council and union representatives.

The new offer that has been put to workers will mean that they will receive a 4-6% pay rise over three years.

Australian Workers' Union (AWU) South Western District Secretary Joey Kaiser called it a good outcome for workers at the Council.

"This is a great result for our hardworking Council staff and it wouldn't have been possible if these workers had not have stood up and fought back last week through their strike action," Kaiser said.

"I would like to thank CEO Rachel Brophy and other members of the Council bargaining team for cutting through the malaise and delivering an outcome their workforce deserves."

"This new agreement will help the Council attract and retain the quality staff they need to keep this region one of the most beautiful places to live and visit in Queensland."

As part of the offer to staff, Council have also agreed to drop claims that would have changed working arrangements on Sundays and introduced insecure types of employment into the agreement.

These claims were widely condemned by the workforce and were part of the reason workers took strike action.

Kaiser said that the preservation of these entitlements has been celebrated by staff.

"Working in local government is about having a good work-life balance," Kaiser said.

"Our members could take their significant skills and experience to the gas or construction industries and earn a lot more money, but they would lose their quality of life."

"This was a fight about what working in local government is all about, and through the collective strength of our membership, we have won."

Now that in-principle agreement has been reached on the offer, the new agreement will now be drafted and go to a vote of all employees at the Council. If that vote is successful, it will be submitted to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission for certification.

Kaiser said that this win is a message to other employers throughout the region.

"This shows what can happen when workers stick together, know their worth and fight for a better deal," Kaiser said.

"Councils are big employers in regional and rural areas, and it's important for the economy and liveability of towns like Warwick and Stanthorpe to maintain a decent wage for these workers."

"This Australian Workers' Union in Queensland was born in this region – our members are built tough, and they won't settle for second best."

AWU

US left groups brace as Trump uses killing as pretext for crackdown

CJ Atkins

Having neither a subject in custody nor any confirmation of the motive of a shooter didn't stop President Donald Trump on 11 September from seizing on the killing of Christian nationalist youth leader Charlie Kirk as an excuse for declaring war on the political left.

Kirk, a far-right media personality and founder of the MAGA campus group Turning Point USA, was gunned down on 10 September at Utah Valley University while debating mass shootings at a student event.

Speaking from the White House, Trump declared Kirk "a martyr" and said that the "radical left" was responsible for his death. "For years," Trump claimed, "those on the radical left have compared wonderful Americans like Charlie to Nazis." He said that "violence and murder are the tragic consequence of demonising those with whom you disagree" and said the "left" was "directly responsible for the terrorism" seen in Utah.

Trump neglected to mention recent episodes of right-wing political violence, such as the assassination of Minnesota State Rep. Melissa Hortman and her husband in June by an alleged Trump supporter, a conspiracy theorist's attack on Rep. Nancy Pelosi's husband during an attempt to take the former speaker hostage in 2022, MAGA influencer Matt Walsh's call for the execution of Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson a few days ago, or Trump's own 2016 suggestion that "Second Amendment people" might have to deal with Hillary Clinton, to name only a few.

Nor did he speak up about the epidemic of gun violence that has long plagued the nation, demonstrated so blatantly by the fact that literally within minutes of Kirk's murder, yet another school shooting took the lives of two students in Colorado – the type of incident that Kirk himself said was "worth it" to preserve gun rights.

Instead, the president said it was not fascist violence and ideology but rather the criticism of the latter that led to the terror and division on display in the US.

He did not bring up any of the reprehensible and racist views that Kirk has promoted to the youth of America – ideas like:

Black women don't have the "brain processing power" to be political leaders. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed racial discrimination, was a "huge mistake." Islam is a "sword the left is using to slit the throat of America." Gay and transgender people are "groomers" who target youth for sexual abuse and should be "stoned to death." Women should follow a "biblical model" for relationships and submit to their husbands. Black Americans who achieve high positions, like airline pilots, can't possibly be qualified for their roles and only achieve them due to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policies. The people of Washington, D.C. – most of whom are people of colour – are "cockroaches." Israel's genocidal war in Gaza is justified because "Palestine does not exist" and Palestinians brought their suffering on themselves (even as he simultaneously made antisemitic assertions that "Jewish people" control colleges, non-profits and the media in the US).

The list could literally go on and on.

Rather than a propagandist of division, white supremacy and hate, Kirk was reimagined by the president as a "patriot" who "fought for liberty, democracy, justice … joyfully engaging with everyone interested in good-faith debate."

Immediately joining Trump in his rewriting of reality were all the names big and small of the MAGA movement. They cast a wide net, pinning blame for Kirk's murder on anyone who might oppose the Trump agenda, from the mainstream liberals of the Democratic Party to the progressive movement writ large.

Elon Musk, who spent the first months of the second Trump administration terrorising federal workers, wrote on his X platform that "The Left is the party of murder." Podcaster Joey Mannarino said the "Democrats murdered Charlie Kirk" and that there can be no more "moderate right" or compromise going forward. Republican Senator Nancy Mace told reporters that "Democrats own what happened today …. Some raging leftist lunatic put a bullet through his neck."

Disinformation diva Laura Loomer responded by calling former President Barack Obama a "sanctimonious piece of shit" after he said he was praying for Kirk's family. She labelled the left "a national security threat" and urged Trump to "shut down, defund and prosecute every single Leftist organisation."

Trump signaled he may do just that, confirming his intention of using the Kirk killing as justification to go on the offensive against anyone who challenges him. He pledged to set loose law enforcement to "find each and every one of those who contributed to this atrocity … including the organisations that fund it and support it."

The country thus enters a moment of escalated danger, with democracy and constitutional liberties in the firing line. The Communist Party USA warned that, with the Kirk killing, "the cycle of political violence that's plagued the US grew worse."

The Party condemned political violence as a tactic and said that "the working-class and democratic movements know full well from our own long experience that acts of violence and terror only serve the interests of the forces of hate, racism, intolerance and reaction."

The CPUSA, itself the victim of right-wing political repression at multiple points in the past, sounded the alarm that Trump and MAGA could launch "a crackdown and even war" on the organisations and activists affiliated with struggles for economic justice, racial equality, immigrant rights and other causes.

The Party newspaper, *People's World*, has also repeatedly found itself the target of government repression as part of a broader ruling class campaign to crush the working-class and left movement.

From the 1920s to the '80s, the FBI constantly spied on and harassed the journalists of the paper's predecessors, the *Daily Worker* and the *Daily World* – whether they were on the picket line in the office or at their homes. Lawsuits attempted to silence us, and tax officials sought to bankrupt us.

During the McCarthy era, we were branded a "foreign agent" because we dared speak out against the Cold War, and the Post Office tried crippling our ability to reach our readers via the mail. Our editors were among those indicted in the Smith Act trials and locked away in federal prison for years, falsely accused of conspiring to advocate the overthrow of the government by force and violence.

Far-right and fascist governments throughout history have regularly latched onto episodes of political violence and terrorism – real or contrived – as a pretext for repression, to silence dissent and to destroy constitutional rights.

With the Kirk murder, the Trump administration and the MAGA movement are signalling they may be trying to follow that same playbook. The time is now to both condemn individual acts of terror and violence and also rally to defend democratic freedoms.

Mass collective struggle and broad unity are the time-tested tools for combatting fascism and winning change.

People's World

Colombian President blasts US

Colombian President Gustavo Petro questioned the US "decertification" of his country and accused the United Nations of being an "accomplice" to a failed global anti-drug policy.

"I am a president decertified by a foreign government. By what right, under international law, can the president of a foreign government decertify another president who was elected by his own people? Is that democracy or the beginning of barbarism?" he said during a high-level dialogue in New York held as part of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

US President Trump's administration has decided to "decertify" Colombia, meaning it removed the South American nation from the list of countries deemed to be complying with the fight against drug trafficking in 2024.

Petro criticised the UN for defining whether a drug is "poisonous" depending on the country that produces it. To illustrate, he noted that alcohol is not considered by the United Nations to be as dangerous a substance as cannabis because alcohol is largely produced in the North, not in the South.

The Colombian president also referred to recent US military attacks in international waters near Venezuela against ships allegedly carrying drugs.

He said the South is the victim of a drug control approach that leads to "the murder of young people, who are not to blame, with missiles ordered by a president of the United States."

Petro stressed that the "War on Drugs" is a "misguided policy" and an "outright failure" because "it was never a war against drug traffickers, but "a dominant global power policy of the North over the South."

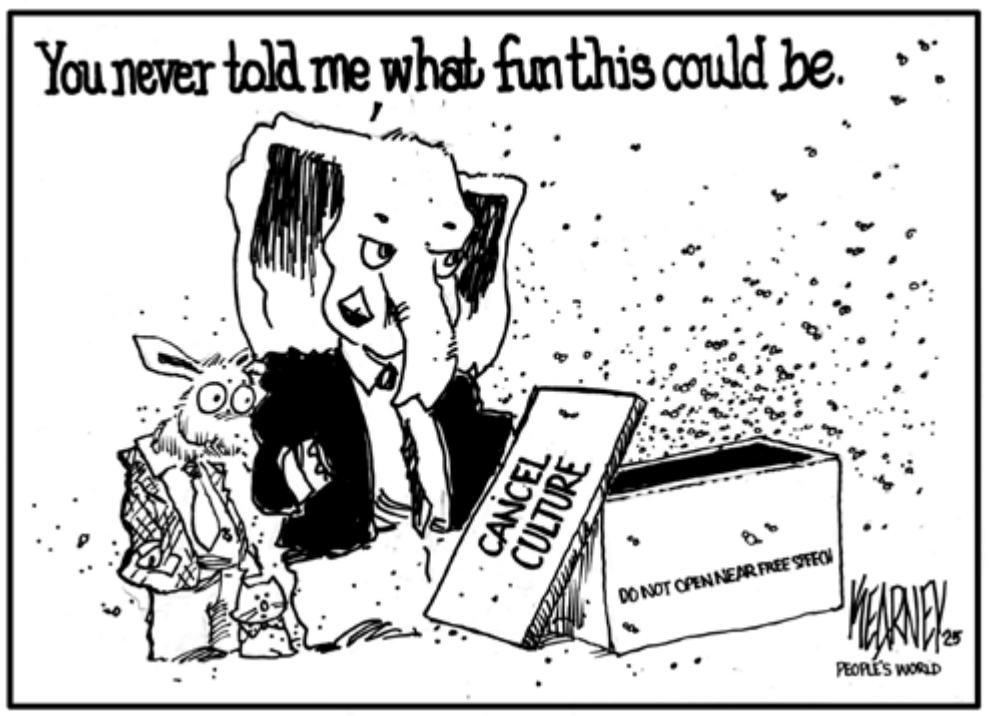
He argued that this failed policy blames substances or objects instead of targeting those who profit from the drug business and live in "New York, Miami, or Dubai."

"The missiles don't go there. The missiles go to the poor. This is the same global power that prevents solving the climate crisis and therefore makes it impossible for humanity to survive. It is the same global power that drops bombs on Gaza … and does so to continue dominating the world," Petro declared.

For the Colombian leader, the so-called fight against drug trafficking and anti-immigrant policies fall within a "war between greed and life," in which the United States and Europe believe "a superior race exists, and that is why Colombians are treated in the streets as if they were slaves."

"What they are doing in Gaza is an experiment just like Hitler's, when he began testing gas chambers and concentration camps," Petro said. He reiterated the need to end the genocide in Gaza and called for the creation of a UN protection force.

Telesur



Something to say?
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Letters to the Editor
The Guardian
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Surry Hills NSW 2010
email: editor@cpa.org.au

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Please find enclosed the *Guardian* subscription form completed and money order for $100, being for 6 months subscription. I enjoy reading these publications very much and with every issue I learn a great deal.
Wishing you a very happy Spring.
Yours sincerely,
Margie Whittle
Victoria

We're really glad you're enjoying and learning, Margie, that's the plan.

Sydney Vigil

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USA Consulate, 50 Miller Street North Sydney
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Book Review

Fascism or Genocide:
How a Decade of Political Disorder Broke American Politics
by Ross Barkan

Reviewer: Ron Jacobs

Like other commentators searching for a working-class politics that can bring the elusive white working class – the white whale of the US political system – back to the Democrats, Ross Barkan, while critical of the Democrats, writes about the future as if the left must continue to travel the road maintained by the Democrats.

In his mind, the left liberal wing of the Democratic party is the only left worth considering. He writes about a resistance to Trump, correctly characterising the Chuck Shurmer/Hakeem Jeffries, "I wrote a strongly worded letter" version of that resistance as meaningless in that it focuses on Trump the man, not the politics he represents.

Yet, in dismissing any opposition not involved with the Democrats, Barkan joins the liberals in the media, granting the right wing a victory before there's even a fight. To be fair, this book was written before Trump and his henchmen began sending US troops into US cities and immigrants to Uganda and Sudan.

I wrote a pamphlet in the weeks after election day about how Trumpism 2.0 must be opposed. Let me tell you: there's nothing in that pamphlet that looks to the Democrats for leadership or advice. In fact, my take is if the Democrats want to join a truly radical and grassroots opposition from the left, they can but they need to leave their donkeys and billionaires behind, especially their billionaires. I wrote:

"What is needed is a popular rejection of the Trump White House and its fascism; not just one led by Democrats in the courts and the legislature. This struggle needs to be waged in the streets, the schools, the workplace and throughout the United States. It's a struggle against fascism, not a battle between the political parties of the elites."

The reader knows what the "fascism" in the title of Barkan's book is referring to. One hopes they also know what the "genocide" is in reference to.

Barkan considers Israel, its illegal and brutal occupation of Palestinian lands, mass murder of Gazans, and the cynical complicity of the US government in both. In a discussion of a speech by Chuck Schumer in 2024 in which Schumer called for new elections in Israel and decried Netanyahu as an obstacle to peace, Barkan calls the speech a "victory" for the anti-Zionist protesters in the US.

It's not like Schumer called for an arms embargo or an immediate and permanent ceasefire, yet in the politics of mainstream US, the speech was seen as not supporting the Palestinian resistance, but certainly not within parameters proscribed by the genocidal Israeli state. Like Bernie Sanders and Democrat Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC), Barkan doesn't stick his neck out too far against the Zionist lobby, but he does acknowledge that the Democrats can no longer pretend that their support for Israel and its occupation can continue unchallenged.

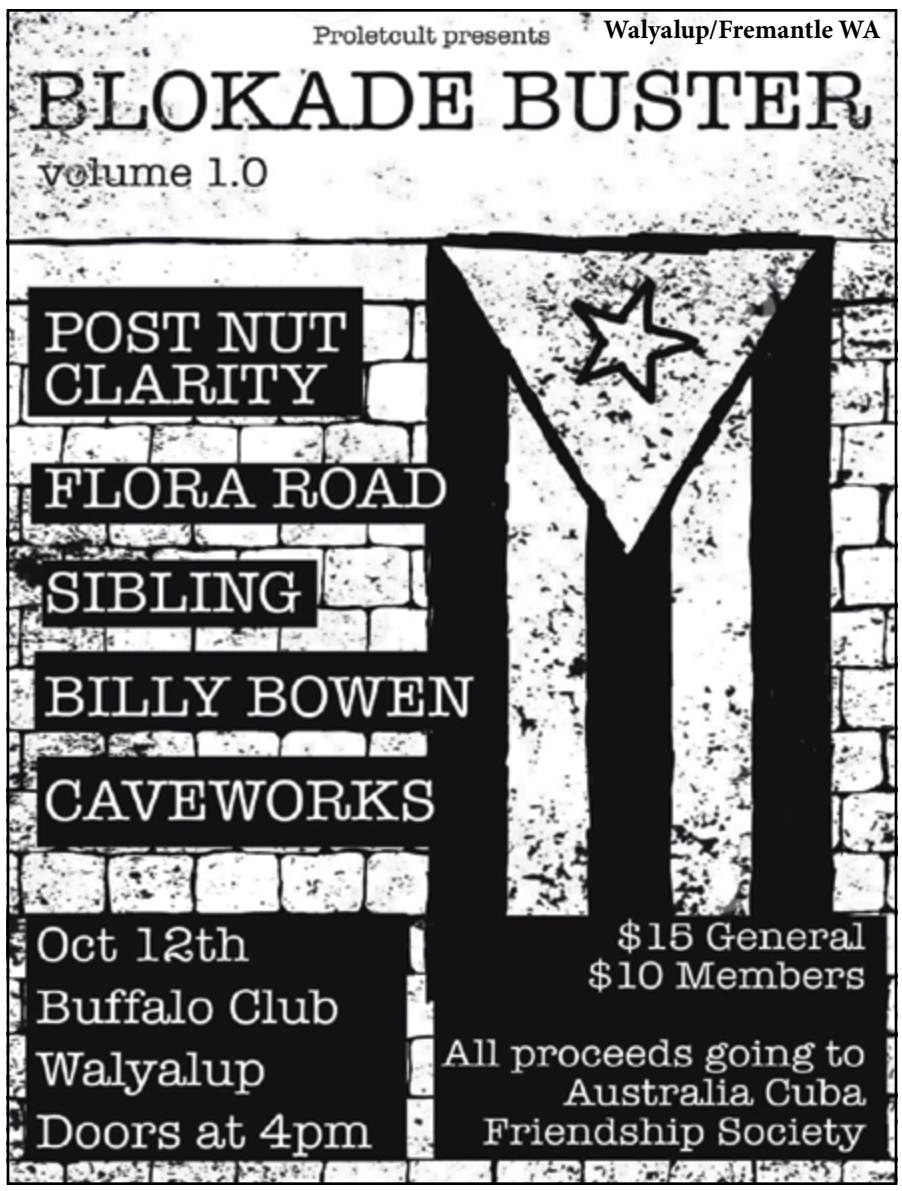
Also, although Barkan doesn't have much to say about protest movements of the past 10 years, he admits that the protests against Israel's genocide have moved the conversation in a direction that considers Palestinian lives equal with Israeli ones. A recent refusal by the Democratic leadership to call for a ceasefire or arms embargo makes it clear that the Democrats' leadership doesn't agree.

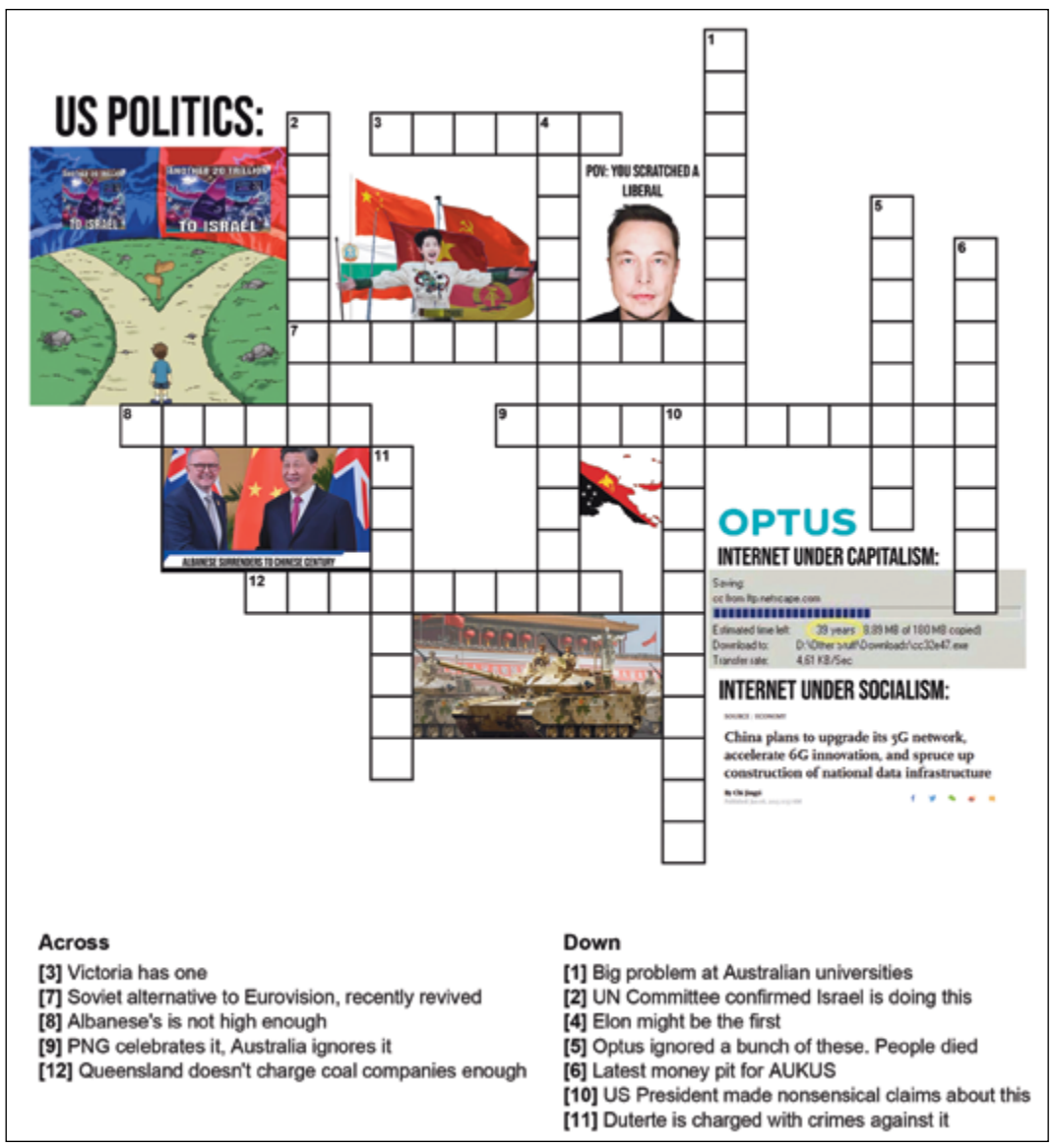
Barkan more or less ends his book by throwing up his hands, not exactly in surrender, but certainly not in raising the banner of radical and popular protest. I suggest it's his refusal to take the power of those on the left who have little use for the Democratic party seriously that limits his abilities to see the value of street protest and other manifestations of grassroots political power that aren't promoting candidates.

Although most politicians won't admit it, the elephant in the room is capitalism. Its modern excesses are destroying the present and the hope of a decent future for most of humanity. In the US, one political party doesn't care while the other says it does but is bought via the millions the rich want to throw at them. The result is ever greater inequality and a growing police state.

History makes it quite clear to those willing to consider it that two capitalist parties will not create the change required to create a socially just world. If anything, history tells us that what actually happens is that those two parties will compete in a race to the right, a race towards fascism. The present proves that statement's veracity.

Morning Star





What's Streaming

Buffalo Legends (SBS On Demand)

FK

> "Australian Rules Football is more than a game to Aboriginal people. It's always a way of achieving recognition, respect and equality."

These are the words that open up this inspiring documentary, now streaming on SBS On Demand, about an Aboriginal football team in Darwin in the 1930s. The documentary goes back to 1916 when Australian Rules Football came to Darwin. At that time Black people faced massive discrimination and racism. As one narrator says, with considerable understatement "Darwin wasn't the place to be. If you were Aboriginal, you were never given a fair go." But 'football fever' arrived and Aboriginal people took to 'kicking the leather.'

Racism in Australian Rules Football is often in the news, and most people know about Nicky Winmar's defiant and immortal moment hitching up his jersey and pointing at his stomach in defiance of racist taunts, as well as the disgraceful booing campaign against Adam Goodes. Many don't know how far back Aboriginal involvement with footy goes, or how important the game has been to a lot of Aboriginal people.

Buffalo Legends tells the story of a group of men who in the words of the documentary "knocked down the barriers of racism on the sporting field."

The story begins in Darwin at a time when children classified as 'half-caste' were kept in Darwin's notorious Kahlin Compound after being removed from their mothers. Some of the most grueling moments in the documentary involve reminiscences from people who were torn from their families and taken there.

In law, Aboriginals were not treated as full human beings. In addition to the Stolen Generation policies, a figure called "the Protector of Aborigines" had extraordinary power of what Aboriginal people were allowed to do.

The white authority figures didn't like it when they were beaten at footy by Aboriginals. They liked it even less when the Aboriginal players formed a club. The Buffalo men started to become political and chafe against the restrictions imposed by the laws. Australian author Xavier Herbert was a supervisor at Kahlin and a lot of his stories about Aboriginal people came from there.

The documentary details a lot of camaraderie and solidarity that kept people going in a tough situation. "Making fun of hardship is how we survived" says one former Buffalo. The inmates at Kahlin even formed a kind of language, recorded in songs, an amalgamation of the different language groups they were taken from. That language is still alive now.

Like the best documentaries, *Buffalo Legends* only uses the voices of participants, with no all-knowing narrator. A mixture of footage, sounds, and interviews are lightly worked in with the occasional recreation of events to make an uplifting, interesting, and for many people, educational experience.

French workers demand wealth tax and pension reform repeal

Thousands of citizens have joined protests organised by France's main labour unions to reject the 2026 budget pushed by Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu.

"The world of work cannot be the only one to contribute to the effort," said Marilyse Leon, secretary of the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), in an interview with BFMTV. She described the 2026 fiscal plan as "a museum of horrors" and "an unacceptable catalogue."

Former Prime Minister François Bayrou, who resigned after losing a no-confidence vote on 8 September over the 2026 budget, had sought to reduce the fiscal deficit of 44 billion euros by freezing social benefits and civil servant salaries, cutting some public services, and eliminating two public holidays.

Leon demanded that the new government to be formed by Lecornu abandon that project and draft "a budget that is fair" from social, fiscal, and environmental perspectives.

The latest protests "are a way of saying that the world of work must matter" in government decisions, the CFDT leader said. She reiterated several demands, including the "Zucman tax," which would impose a 2% levy on individuals with assets of more than 100 million euros, or about 1,800 taxpayers.

"It is not fair that billionaires pay less in taxes proportionally than a nurse," Leon said, citing economic studies showing that France's ultra wealthy pay a lower share of taxes than the average wage earner.

The CFDT secretary also called for suspending the 2023 pension reform, which is gradually raising the minimum retirement age from 62 to 64. In addition, she called for tighter controls on the more than 200 billion euros in corporate subsidies.

"Companies must be held accountable," Leon said, arguing that the ball is now in the government's court to abandon dogmas that have been in place for years, especially "tax cuts" that "have led to this situation" in public finances.

At the end of 2024, France's public debt stood at 114% of gross domestic product, with a fiscal deficit of 5.8%, nearly double the 3% ceiling set by European Union rules.

Taking a tougher stance, Sophie Binet, secretary of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), called for the repeal of President Emmanuel Macron's pension reform "to emerge from the democratic crisis and avoid a governance crisis."

Along with backing the Zucman tax, Binet demanded reinstating the wealth tax that was abolished after Macron took office in 2018. She further called for a levy on share buybacks by companies, which allow them to avoid withholding taxes and skip dividend payments.

The Interior Ministry estimated that nearly 1 million people took to the streets across the country. In Paris, about 100,000 demonstrators marched, with police arresting 94 people, 32 of whom were placed in custody, according to *Le Monde*.

The security operation involved more than 80,000 officers nationwide, supported by mobile units and riot-control forces. Authorities reported 476 actions in total: 341 demonstrations and 135 infrastructure blockades.

Several sectors experienced partial disruptions, especially in education and transportation. The Education Ministry reported full blockades at 23 high schools and partial blockades at another 52.

While the government said 90% of high-speed trains were operating, unions reported stoppages on regional routes, particularly in the south. Several distribution centres and public services were also intermittently disrupted.

Telesur

ABC barred from London press conference

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) was excluded from a press conference US President Donald Trump is set to hold near London, following a recent clash between him and the broadcaster's US correspondent, John Lyons.

"ABC's London bureau is still accredited to attend Chequers (the venue of the appearance); however, Downing Street has stated that the broadcaster no longer has space at the joint press conference (with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer) for logistical reasons," an ABC spokesperson stated.

Trump is scheduled to have lunch today with Starmer at Chequers, the prime minister's official country residence near London. The two leaders are then expected to appear together before the press.

The Australian broadcaster said it has received no indication that Downing Street's decision is linked to the episode earlier this week involving Trump and Lyons.

The US president told Lyons to "shut up" after the correspondent asked whether he believed a president could be involved in so many business dealings while in office.

Trump insisted that he does not manage his businesses, saying his children are in charge. He then questioned the journalist about his country of origin and added: "You're damaging Australia right now ... your country wants to get along with me, your leader will come see me very soon, and I'll tell him you're asking questions in a very bad tone."

Lyons, a 65-year-old editor who works for the ABC, tried to continue his questioning, but Trump silenced him by putting his index finger to his lips and repeating, "Shut up."

Later, during a live broadcast on ABC News Lyons said he did not understand what Trump expected Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to do about his supposedly "bad tone" in asking questions.

Lyons added that Trump's reaction was not "appropriate," as he was asking a legitimate question. The Australian government defended the independence of its public broadcaster. Treasurer Jim Chalmers said, "Journalists have a job to do," and from what he saw, "that journalist was simply doing his job."

Telesur

Chinese modernisation

Shiran Illanperuma

China's modernisation has been one of the most remarkable processes of the 21st century and one that has sparked endless academic debate. **Meng Jie**, a distinguished professor from the School of Marxism at Fudan University in Shanghai, has spent the better part of his career unpacking this process to better understand what has taken place.

As a Chinese Marxist economist, Meng Jie has built his theories based on his own primary research in China's modern factories, tracing how national supply chains have been built, how markets are constructed, and how the Communist Party and the state set goals and frameworks to achieve specific economic outcomes.

In the following interview, Meng Jie shares his perspectives on some basic elements of China's process of socialist modernisation.

The rehabilitation of the Suzhou Creek has improved the environment of large areas of Shanghai by improving sanitation services and also by providing greater access to parks and green spaces along the riverbanks. Photo: Asian Development Bank – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

SI: State-led development models are commonly associated with excessive bureaucratisation. How does China avoid this problem?

MJ: I think this is because, firstly, China's economic activities are premised on the market playing a decisive role in resource allocation. This means that for the government to better play its role, it must first acknowledge the market economy's priority status.

China's industrial policy is systemically and structurally quite complex. This is because China has both centralised leadership and an inclusive system of local government decentralisation. Therefore, both China's central ministries and local governments have their own industrial policies. These policies may, in fact, differ from each other.

Local governments are more familiar with local contexts and possess what is referred to as 'local knowledge.' These local governments might therefore adapt central government policies to local conditions. In turn, these adaptations might later be recognised by the central government, which is compelled to amend its policies based realities on the ground.

Another aspect is that even for industrial policies implemented by the central government, there is a certain kind of competition among different departments – we call this inter-departmental competition. For example, during the development of China's high-speed railway, both the Ministry of Railways and the Ministry of Science and Technology were involved. The competition between the two had a positive effect on the implementation of industrial policy.

SI: You have argued that China has a 'constructive market.' How is this different from neoliberal free markets?

MJ: While the market plays a decisive role in resource allocation in China, the government also plays a role as a facilitator. In a constructive market, the government basically plays the following roles:

First, it must coordinate the division of labour. We can see examples of this in many industries. In a purely market economy, the market price mechanism is the sole means of coordinating the division of labour. However, in China's socialist market economy, the government also undertakes the responsibility of directly coordinating the division of labour.

Second, the government usually needs to establish an incentive mechanism in the market. This is because it needs to align the national development strategy with the micro-level objectives pursued by enterprises. Therefore, providing such appropriate incentives is actually crucial for promoting the development and growth of the market.

SI: What's so 'socialist' about China's modernisation?

MJ: China's modernisation is led by the Communist Party of China and premised on the basic socialist economic system. Chinese-style modernisation has these several key features:

First, it is the modernisation of a huge population. Second, it is the modernisation of common prosperity for all. Third, it is the modernisation of both material and cultural-ethical advancement. Fourth, it is the modernisation of harmony between humanity and nature. Fifth, it is the modernisation of peaceful development.

only within a socialist framework and under the leadership of the Communist Party of China can modernisation be achieved

The combination of these features means that Chinese-style modernisation has to be inherently socialist in nature.

First, consider the challenge of modernising China's huge population. Former US President Barack Obama once said that the planet would not be able to sustain China's modernisation because its population is so large. In his view, China achieving modernisation would trigger and intensify various conflicts. The implication is that there aren't enough resources to sustain China's modernisation. It implies that China's modernisation would crowd out other countries' resources and undermine the prospects of peaceful development.

Second, consider the challenge of modernising while maintaining harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. This means that China must achieve green development, develop new quality productive forces, and develop green productive forces to realise its modernisation. Only such a development model can solve the challenges of peacefully and sustainably modernising a huge population.

I believe that only within a socialist framework and under the leadership of the Communist Party of China can China's modernisation be achieved. In the last decade, the Chinese government has made great achievements in promoting green development. In comparison, the US government is constrained by the vested interests of capital in the energy sector. As a result, when it comes to tackling issues like climate change and global warming, the US government has shown significant regression. This is not accidental. In fact, it is caused by the capitalist system.

China's systemic advantages enable it to pursue a path of green development. This drives Chinese-style modernisation forward through the development of new quality productive forces and the achievement of high-quality growth.

Meng Jie's essay 'Industrial Policy with Chinese Characteristics: The Political Economy of China's Intermediary Institutions' (co-written with Zhang Zibin) was published in the latest issue of *Wenhua Zongheng: A Journal of Contemporary Chinese Thought*.

Globetrotter

Ecuador: Indigenous people denounce army repression

Ecuadorian social organisations have launched an indefinite national strike to oppose adjustment policies implemented by President Daniel Noboa, who eliminated the diesel subsidy and seeks to call a new constituent assembly.

In this context, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) denounced violent repression by the Army against residents of the San Francisco de Cajas community, located in Cayambe canton, Pichincha province.

Indigenous organisations rejected what they called an "act of repression against the people's just demands" and held the Noboa administration responsible for the escalation of violence and tensions.

Kichwa leader Apawki Castro shared a video showing clashes in the El Cajas sector. The footage depicts police deployments and the use of tear gas in populated areas.

Leonidas Iza, former presidential candidate and CONAIE member, released four recordings showing confrontations with security forces and the firing of tear gas inside communities in the Ecuadorian highlands.

On 18 September, CONAIE called for a national strike after an extraordinary assembly in Riobamba, Chimborazo province, where it decided to mobilise against Noboa's Decree 126, which eliminates the diesel subsidy.

This is not the first time Ecuador's Indigenous organisations have risen against austerity measures imposed by conservative governments.

In October 2019, CONAIE led a nationwide protest against the removal of fuel subsidies decreed by then-President Lenin Moreno, which left 11 dead and more than 1,000 injured.

Three years later, in June 2022, massive protests against price hikes and economic measures by the government of Guillermo Lasso paralysed the country for 18 days, leaving at least six dead and hundreds injured and detained.

NEW MASSACRE IN ECUADOR'S PRISONS

On the eve of the strike, Ecuador faced another outbreak of prison violence in El Oro province, where at least 14 people were killed and the same number injured in a clash between inmates.

The violent incident occurred around 2 am local time. Videos shared on social media showed that two strong explosions were followed by multiple gunshots.

According to a police account, prison guards responded after hearing gunfire during a confrontation between inmates from two cell blocks. One guard was shot and killed by prisoners, while another was wounded. Inmates seized weapons from the guards, tied them up hand and foot, and held them captive.

When police arrived, they found 14 dead in one of the cell blocks, including inmates linked to the drug-trafficking gangs Los Choneros and Los Lobos. Preliminary reports also indicate an undetermined number of inmates escaped during the incident.

Currently, prisons remain one of the epicentres of Ecuador's unprecedented wave of criminal violence. Since 2021, about 600 inmates have been killed behind bars, most in a series of massacres caused by clashes between rival gangs.

Telesur

Why the world still condemns Japan's distortion of history

Shao Xia

Japan's aggression across Asia during WW2 is an undeniable fact. Yet, for eight decades, there have been repeated attempts within Japan to soften, distort or even deny that part of history. Setting the record straight is essential not only to upholding truth, but to preserving humanity's collective memory for realising enduring peace.

When Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender on 15 August 1945, he delivered an "Imperial Rescript of the Termination of the War" that carefully avoided the word "surrender" and framed Japan's defeat as a voluntary decision to end hostilities. Since then, 15 August has been officially marked in Japan as the "Memorial Day for the End of the War." This narrative, reinforced by conservative media, has profoundly distorted public memory to the point that Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba was fiercely criticised for merely using the term "defeat" when referencing the war.

This play on words unveils Japan's obstinate reluctance to face historical facts and repent for the atrocities it committed.

The truth is that Japan was defeated. In his Imperial Rescript, Emperor Hirohito declared Japan's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration which demanded Japan's unconditional surrender. The formal surrender followed on 2 September 1945, when Japan signed the Instrument of Surrender aboard the *USS Missouri*.

Notwithstanding this, some in Japan still refuse to acknowledge the defeat. This not only risks blurring history but also raises alarm bells among Japan's neighbours about its unreconciled ambitions.

In recent years, whenever the world commemorates the victory over fascism, certain voices in Japan emerge to emphasise the "damage" Japan suffered – particularly its status as "the only country to have suffered atomic bombings." Some have gone even further to reframe Japan's aggression as self-defence, downplaying its aggression against China as minor skirmishes, and even falsely accusing China of provoking the conflict.

Overwhelming historical evidence tells the truth and Japan's role in WW2 as an aggressor is undeniable.

Japan's war crimes cannot be downplayed. On-site investigation and witness accounts document that over 300,000 Chinese were killed in the Nanjing Massacre alone. At least 200,000 women were subjected to sexual slavery at the "comfort stations" operated by the Japanese military and Japan's Unit 731 conducted biological warfare experiments on human beings in Northeast China – one of the most heinous crimes against humanity.

Article 9 of Japan's postwar constitution explicitly renounced war and prohibited maintaining offensive capabilities. This "Peace Constitution" has served as an anchor of Japan's pacifist course in postwar decades.

Since the 1990s, however, right-wing forces have pushed for constitutional revision, promoting "proactive pacifism" on the pretext of "contributing to peace." Japan has since eased restrictions on weapons exports, greenlighted limited collective self-defence, and announced plans to develop counterstrike capabilities and raise its defence spending to 2 per cent of GDP by fiscal year 2027.

It is evident that the "proactive pacifism" is less about peace and more about expanding Japan's military capabilities while circumventing the postwar international limits on Japan's armed forces. More alarmingly, claims that "Taiwan is Japan's business" echo past imperial pretexts for invading China. If unchecked, this risks reviving Japan's militarism under a new guise.

In 2015, then prime minister Shinzo Abe said that future generations should not be "predestined to apologise," fuelling a surge in the rhetoric of "moving beyond" history. Yet, historical responsibility and obligation cannot be written off by a simple statement. International law holds Japan accountable for war crimes indefinitely across governments and generations.

Many Japanese have voiced their opposition to historical amnesia. Former prime minister Tomiichi Murayama urged teaching "the horrors of war" to avoid repeating past mistakes. Another former prime minister, Yukio Hatoyama, stated, "Japan should feel apologetic to wartime victims until they no longer need apologies."

Facing history with honesty is a sign of strength, not weakness. Germany's example shows that confronting the past builds trust and enables genuine reconciliation. True peace begins with acknowledging wrongdoing and preventing its repetition.

Global Times (edited for reasons of space)

Cuba denounces US military threat against Venezuela, calls for peace

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla has warned of the serious threat posed by the United States military deployment in the Caribbean, directed against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and President Nicolás Maduro.

During the presentation of the annual report on the damage caused to the Caribbean nation by the US government's economic, commercial, and financial blockade, the Foreign Minister linked this escalation to Washington's policy of aggression, which he described as a direct violation of regional stability.

Rodríguez recalled that the military manoeuvres coincide with statements by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who, during recent visits to Israel and other international venues, has insisted on the need to intensify pressure against Caracas.

According to the Cuban Foreign Minister, these types of statements not only aim to justify coercive measures and sanctions, but are part of a strategy of economic and military warfare to control Venezuela's energy resources, including the world's largest proven oil reserves.

The Cuban Foreign Minister also said that these actions seek to revive the Monroe Doctrine and implement "gunboat policies" in the 21st century.

In this regard, he emphasised that the interception of fishing vessels, naval blockades, and operations in the waters of the eastern Caribbean are part of an offensive that threatens not only Venezuela, but also Cuba and the entire region.

In his speech, Rodríguez recalled that Latin America and the Caribbean were proclaimed a Zone of Peace by CELAC (The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, a bloc of 33 Latin American and Caribbean states) in 2014, a commitment that obliges all states to resolve their differences through dialogue, respect for national sovereignty, and rejection of any attempt at foreign intervention. "A military aggression against Venezuela would be an aggression against the entire region," he warned.

The Venezuelan Foreign Minister called on the international community, parliaments, social movements, and governments to mobilise in defense of peace and international law. "The United States seeks to start a war in our region under the false pretext of national security. It is urgent to stop this escalation before its consequences become irreversible," he concluded.

Telesur

Global Briefs

IRAN: Iran announced immediate suspension of all cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Israeli Foreign minister Gideon Saar urged European signatories of the 2015 nuclear deal signed by Iran to reinstate all UN sanctions on Iran. However, Russia, China, Pakistan, and Algeria supported maintaining the suspension of previous sanctions and restrictions.

PORTUGAL: Portugal has officially recognised the state of Palestine. The Portuguese Foreign Minister pointed out that "The Portuguese government symbolically chose to make the declaration at the permanent representation of Portugal to the UN – precisely to indicate that only under the aegis of the United Nations and the spirit of the founding chapter it is possible to reach a solution to the conflict." The recognition by the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and Portugal came on the eve of an international conference for a two-state solution.

HUNGARY: Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban has announced that he will initiate the designation of the Antifa movement as a terrorist organisation in Hungary, following the example of the United States. "Antifa is indeed a terrorist organisation. Therefore, I think it is very correct that in Hungary the time has come to classify organisations such as Antifa as terrorist, according to the American model," Orban said. Antifa is not an organisation in either country.

AFGHANISTAN: The Taliban government rejected US President Trump's bid to retake Bagram air base, four years after the USA's chaotic withdrawal from the country after 11 years of war. The chief Taliban spokesperson urged the US to adopt a policy of "realism and rationality." Trump threatened Afghanistan with unspecified "bad things" in case of a refusal to transfer Bagram base under US control. "We won't talk about that, but we are talking now to Afghanistan and we want it back, and we want it back soon, right away, and if they don't do it, you are going to find out what I'm going to do," the president told reporters.

IRAQ: Iraqi Prime Minister Sudani called for the establishment of an Islamic military alliance, saying recent Israeli attacks in Gaza and Qatar demand a collective response. Sudani said that the airstrike on Doha, which killed five Hamas members and a Qatari security officer, was "a shocking breach of international law" and a reminder that Israel's actions threaten the security of the entire region. "There is no reason Muslim nations cannot form a joint security force to defend themselves," he said. Sudani urged Arab and Islamic countries to build a comprehensive political, security and economic partnership. The Iraqi PM stressed that the Islamic world holds "numerous levers" that could be used to deter Israel, warning that the Israeli "aggression will not stop at Qatar."

PHILIPPINES: Thousands of people took part in two large anti-corruption demonstrations in Manila last week. Public outrage was caused by the images of wealthy developers who had profiteered on flood-mitigation projects. "I feel bad that we wallow in poverty, and lose our houses, our lives and our future while they rake in a big fortune from our taxes that pay for their luxury cars, foreign trips and big corporate transactions," a student activist told reporters.

Sri Lanka's severe austerity

Shiran Illanperuma

Sri Lanka has undergone one of the sharpest and fastest episodes of austerity in history, driven by a massive retrenchment in public investment and the suppression of real wages, according to a World Bank report.

On 9 September 2025, the World Bank published a report called 'Sri Lanka Public Finance Review: Towards a Balanced Fiscal Adjustment.' The 109-page report is anchored in the theoretical certainty that austerity was a painful but necessary adjustment following Sri Lanka's default on its external debts in 2022. The report provides a treasure trove of data that serves as a damning indictment of how austerity has suppressed investment, undermined growth, and deepened social distress.

According to the World Bank, across 330 episodes of austerity in 123 countries between 1980 and 2024, Sri Lanka's 'fiscal adjustment' from 2021 to 2024 stands out as being "sharper and faster." For Sri Lanka, this record fiscal consolidation is second only to the period from 1980 to 1983 – a turbulent period of neoliberalisation bookended by state-sponsored union-busting and ethnic pogroms.

GROWTH AND INVESTMENT

Since Sri Lanka entered into its 17th IMF programme in 2021, its primary balance (the difference between government revenue and expenditure, not counting debt repayment) has increased by eight per cent. This achievement came at an extraordinary cost.

The most severe blow has been dealt to public investment: a retrenchment in this area drove seventy-two per cent of the spending adjustment between 2019 and 2023. The contribution of public investment to growth turned negative between 2021 and 2023, dragging overall GDP downward. Instead of acting countercyclically, public investment was shackled precisely when it was most needed to absorb labour, stimulate demand, and lay the foundations for industrial recovery.

The cuts to public investment are particularly egregious given Sri Lanka's already poor infrastructure. The World Bank itself acknowledges that Sri Lanka's public capital stock ranked close to rock bottom – 143 out of 166 countries in 2019 – with glaring deficiencies in overall infrastructure. A significant portion of Sri Lanka's rural road network remains unpaved and in poor condition. In public transport: a third of the public bus fleet is non-operational and over two thirds of train engines are over forty years old.

This suppression of investment is directly linked to an economic stagnation that has crippled the country. The World Bank admits that "real GDP is not expected to return to its 2018 level until 2026." In other words, the country has lost almost a decade of development. The industrial sector, a key engine for employment and development, has been hit hardest, suffering a cumulative contraction of twenty-five percent over 2022 and 2023.

WAGES AND POVERTY

The human toll of this austerity policy is hard to digest. More than a quarter of the population has fallen below the poverty line, with another third of the population categorised as vulnerable and living on the brink of poverty. The report acknowledges that a four per cent increase in poverty was directly attributable to the fiscal adjustment between mid-2022 and mid-2023. The poor have been disproportionately impacted; the removal of electricity subsidies alone led to a five per cent decrease in disposable income for the poorest households.

Meanwhile, the promise of stability and recovery has failed to materialise for the average worker. Real wages remain fourteen and twenty-four per cent lower than pre-crisis levels for the private and public sectors, respectively. The public sector, under a hiring freeze, has borne the brunt of this. The average public sector wage, which was already low, fell from eighty-eight per cent of per capita GDP in 2020 to just sixty-two per cent in 2023, making government wages the least competitive for highly-skilled workers.

These figures contextualise the exodus of skilled workers, or "brain drain," that the country has been grappling with. A recent study found that an estimated 1,489 doctors, including specialists, emigrated between 2022 and 2024, causing a financial burden of nearly $41.5 million to the Sri Lankan government and taxpayers. This outflow has placed significant pressure on the healthcare system, resulting in shortages of key specialists, disruption in medical training, and widening disparities in access to healthcare.

Slum street after rain. Colombo, Sri Lanka. Photo: Aidan Jones– flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

public investment was shackled precisely when it was most needed

CONSPICUOUS ABSENCES

The report carries a plethora of technocratic recommendations to make the austerity more palatable. Many of these recommendations – such as improving tax administration, shifting towards direct rather than indirect taxation, and better targeting public spending – are inoffensive in themselves. You could call them no-brainers. Where the report has no answer is on two critical structural issues:

The debt bomb: the fact is that overall public spending in Sri Lanka is low. The single biggest component of public expenditure is interest payments, which accounted for nine per cent of GDP in 2023. To quote the report, "Sri Lanka's interest payment expenditures are relatively large, whereas the public sector wage bill, capital expenditures, and spending on health, social protection and education are relatively low." No amount of internal fiscal adjustment can provide long-term stability without defusing the debt bomb that crowds out social investment. A thoroughgoing restructuring or cancellation is needed.

The structural non-transformation: The words "manufacturing" or "industrialisation" hardly appear in the report. Naturally, the World Bank, with its long history of prescribing a development model based on agricultural exports and services, shows little concern for structural transformation. The problem of government spending is viewed in near-total isolation from the task of building a modern economy that can generate jobs and growth while sustaining infrastructure and public services. Balancing the budget will not transform the economy in a way that preempts the next crisis; long-term planning and industrial policy are needed.

Sri Lanka is not alone. around fifty-four underdeveloped countries, home to 3.4 billion people, spend most of their tax revenues to pay creditors rather than invest in the wellbeing of their people. In these nations, the claims of the creditor often supersede the dignity of human beings.

This is the situation the National People's Power (NPP) alliance inherited in 2024. They won both the Presidential election and the parliamentary elections, and have set about changing Sri Lankan politics and government. The NPP, with the Marxist-Leninist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) in a leading position, are tackling corruption and the results of years of excessive privatisation (see *Guardian* #2126, 25 November 2024, and #2127, 2 December 2024 for more on the NPP's victory).

Globetrotter
edited for reasons of space

Statement from the Brazilian Communist Party

Full solidarity with the comrades of the Communist Party of Poland!

The Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) vehemently condemns the attempts to outlaw the Communist Party of Poland and communist ideas, perpetrated by bourgeois governments and their lackeys in the Polish judiciary.

As reported by our Polish comrades, on 1 October, the Polish Constitutional Court will review a motion to ban the Polish Communist Party. Furthermore, communist ideas have been under persecution in Poland for some time: following the same modus operandi also adopted by the anti-communist right in the Czech Republic, new amendments to the Polish Penal Code were introduced in October 2023. These changes included: the prohibition of communist ideology and symbols, their unacceptable equation with fascism, and prison sentences of up to 3 years for communist activity. The Polish Communist Party adds that people are already being repressed, among other things, for displaying communist symbols during the 1 May protest this year in Warsaw.

The Brazilian Communist Party is all too familiar with the frenzy of anti-communist legislation. In our over 100 years of existence, we have spent more than half of them outlawed and, especially during the corporate-military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985, in the strictest secrecy. Recently, even here in Brazil, spokespeople for the neo-fascist far-right have attempted to propose the criminalisation of communism.

The PCB condemns in the strongest terms the approval of this anti-communist amendment to the Polish Penal Code and the announced attempt at outlawing, and expresses its full and unrestricted solidarity with the comrades of the Communist Party of Poland.

AGAINST THE CRIMINALISATION OF COMMUNISM IN POLAND!

FULL SOLIDARITY WITH THE CPP!

IN POLAND, IN BRAZIL, AND ALL OVER THE WORLD: NEO-FASCISM SHALL NOT PASS!

Brazilian Communist Party
Central Committee
International Relations Secretariat

Trump accelerates attacks on the 'left' and its supposed funders

Mark Gruenberg, with CJ Atkins, John Wojcik, and Chauncey K Robinson

US President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance plan to accelerate their revenge campaign against "the left" and its supposed funders both say. Other figures in the MAGA movement are joining in and piling on.

Their pretext: The assassination of prominent right-wing influencer Charlie Kirk, a top Trump ally, while he spoke at a university in Utah.

After Kirk's murder on 11 September, Trump ordered flags lowered to half-staff and spent a four-minute speech on 17 September, accusing "the left" of fomenting the violence that led to the assassination.

Trump's targets have long included so-called "leftist" groups, even when their left-wing credentials are not at all clear. One such target is the so-called "antifa" trend, which is a shortened word for "anti-fascist." The problem is that antifa does not really exist as an organisation. It has no elected leaders, no headquarters, no bank accounts, and cannot be contacted in any way.

In recent years, the media took to narrowly labeling street protesters who often dress in black, wear masks, or engage in vandalism as "antifa." The actual politics of those whom the corporate press have lumped together in the antifa category are varied. They've included anarchists, anti-globalisation groupings, anti-racist demonstrators, climate protesters, and more.

The original "antifa" groups arose in the 1920s and '30s in Italy and Germany. The word antifa first appeared in German in 1930 as a shortened form of the name of the group Antifaschistische Aktion. Anti-fascist movements have existed ever since in countries around the world and have resisted figures like Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler, Francisco Franco, Augusto Pinochet, Trump, and other far-right leaders.

To be known as an anti-fascist was long an honorific title. The World War II alliance against Nazi Germany between the United States, the Soviet Union, and Britain, for instance, was often designated an "anti-fascist coalition."

Now, however, Trump wants to use "antifa" as a smear to justify targeting all those who stand against him. Singling out that label and applying it broadly provides a convenient tool to designate almost anyone opposed to the Trump agenda as part of the alleged organisation, and thus as a terrorist, according to administration officials.

CPUSA DENOUNCES VIOLENCE

The Communist Party USA is one of the few strong voices so far denouncing Trump's anti-left crusade and his use of Kirk's murder as a pretext.

The party opposes violence, including murder, and says such acts solve nothing and give Trump the pretext to attack the left. Co-chair Joe Sims said in a statement posted on YouTube that mass peaceful struggle and resistance against Trumpite fascism is what is absolutely necessary to solve the systemic problems of racism, exploitation, the wealth gap, and skyrocketing prices that are hurting the overwhelming majority of the population.

"We do not agree with assassinations. We do not agree with acts of terrorism. That only brings about greater repression," said Sims.

"The problem" of repression "is not solved by eliminating individuals. The problem is systemic, and our goal is to fundamentally change the system ... by mass public pressure from the working class and the broader public. Such peaceful resistance would include strikes, occupations, demonstrations, running for office, and collective action," said Sims.

It's not only avowedly left organisations that are being pointed to by MAGA. Unions could be in the Trump-Vance crosshairs, too. Vance explained Trump targets will include non-profit non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Months ago, News Guild President Jon Schleuss pointed out that unions – who have been in the vanguard of opposition to Trump's dictates – are non-profit NGOs.

The administration is also pledging to go after sources of funding, particularly when it comes to tax-exempt organisations they don't like.

Trump recently used his megaphone, the "Fox & Friends" program, to announce that he wants a federal racketeering investigation into liberal donor and multimillionaire George Soros and his foundation. Trump later told NBC News that Soros "should be put in jail."

The 95-year-old Soros, who has long been a target for right-wing antisemites, is a Hungarian Jewish refugee who survived the Nazi occupation of his country as a young man. He's been a target, for both his politics and his religion.

People's World (edited for space)

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Costs

This is one of those true but misleading weasel words. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute is a government and defence industry-funded 'think tank' that consistently lobbies for – you guessed it – more spending on the military and possible war with China. One of their writers is positively drooling at the prospect of Darwin port being "certified" to take care of nuclear-powered submarines. To head off criticism, he wrote that "Critics will point to costs."

Well yes they will. This must be the understatement of the millennium.

Disappointment

In the classic movie *Godfather II*, Al Pacino uses "I'm disappointed" to hint that he's about to have a rival gangster bumped off. It's scary because it's understated. When Communications Minister Anika Wells says that she's expressed "unbelievable disappointment" that an Optus stuff-up with triple-zero numbers lead to two deaths, it's kind of the reverse, alerting us to the gap between what Labor should do to Optus and what Labor will do (express disappointment, in case you were wondering).

Dissenting views

Describing right-wing nonsense as 'views' helps to legitimise some pretty horrible and/or obviously wrong opinions. Calling those opinions – sorry, I mean 'views' 'dissenting' makes them sound classy as well as legitimate. In this case, it's a Centre For Independent Studies person talking about a right wing opinion-monger's lazy racism, and someone else's climate change denial.

Declaration of independence

Has Anthony Albanese finally listened to the Communist Party of Australia on the topic of an independent foreign policy? Is Australia finally going to stand on its own two feet, close down the US bases here and send the US marines home? Not any time soon, but if you read Nine writer Matthew Knott's breathless writing about 'Albo's recognition of Palestinian statehood, you could be forgiven for thinking Australia has finally told the US where to stick its hegemony. What *has* happened is that Albanese has finally recognised Palestinian statehood, in a very Labor way. Recognition came long after saying it wasn't a good idea, also driving Fatima Payman out of the party for daring to vote in accordance to ALP policy. The bare minimum, delivered way too late – that's the Labor way! Unless you're Matthew Knott in which case it's also "an assertion of Australian sovereignty".

Humbled

Every other award winner has to say that they feel humbled. No you don't, you feel fantastic about your achievement, and justly proud. Claiming to feel humble as well is just greedy.

Information (not having)

If you don't have the information you need, waiting until you do before you decide to take action can be a good idea. So far, so non-weaselly. Where 'information' becomes a weasel word is when it's used as a stalling tactic in a situation where everybody has the information. Everybody who's being honest, that is. Step up Liberal Party leader Sussan Ley who is caught between a rock and a hard place. The rock is the heads of Coalition members who don't want Australia to even pretend to do something about climate change, while the hard place is voters who know that we have to do something and that a target isn't a bad idea, even if Labor's is woefully inadequate. Faced with this dilemma, Ley just pretends she doesn't know enough, saying that the Liberals recognise the importance of targets "when we have the full information in front of us." We've had the information for most of Ley's life, it's up to her to get in front of it.

Albanese's neocolonial travelogue

Peter Farmer

Australian PM Anthony Albanese has been doing the rounds of the Pacific, with visits to Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.

There's been a lot of press about 'defence agreements.' Albanese was expected to sign two of these, but didn't get to sign either. Not to worry, both countries will sign the agreements later, we are assured. What's it about?

In both cases it's about Australia being neocolonial towards Pacific nations, fearful and hostile towards China, and subservient to the USA.

The PNG agreement, known as the Pukpuk Treaty, still not signed at time of writing, has several elements. One is that Papua New Guinean soldiers will be allowed to serve in the Australian Defence Force. That's great news for Australia's armed forces, who always have trouble getting recruits, but not such good news for PNG, which would probably experience a brain drain as soldiers left PNG for higher pay.

Another troubling element of the agreement is 'mutual defence.' The idea is simple, if one country is attacked, the other one has to come to its aid. This could be a problem on both sides. Papua New Guinean politicians don't want their armed forces to be dragged into any war with China Australia might sign up to. On the Australian side, the risk of being at war with Indonesia doesn't sound very promising.

Then there is Bougainville. More than 15,000 people died in a war for independence, before a compromise led to autonomy for the island in 2001. In 2019, the people of Bougainville voted by a 98% margin to become independent from PNG. Papua New Guinea's government obviously isn't keen. Because the people of Bougainville are ethnically connected to the Solomon Islands and because the issue of Bougainville's secession has not been settled yet, there's the possibility of conflict with the Solomon Islands. A 'mutual defence' clause in the treaty would probably mean agreeing to join in on defence against 'external forces,' so Australia would be committed.

On the PNG side, there is an aversion to being committed to joining in on any conflict Australia has with China. The leaders of PNG have noticed that Australia joins in on any conflict the USA engages in – sometimes without being asked, as in Vietnam! PNG has a policy of being a friend to all and an enemy to none. There has been kickback from Papua New Guinean politicians, with one telling the ABC that "China is not our enemy." Non-alignment has been a traditional PNG policy, summed up in the slogan 'friends to all and enemies to none.'

Underpinning this is Australian neocolonialism towards Pacific nations, viewing them as a means to an end, rather than as equals to be respected. Pacific people can see the Albanese government's contemptuous attitude to action on Climate Change. That's far more important to them than 'containing China' is to Canberra.

The timing wasn't great. Albanese and Marles were expecting to sign this agreement as they visited PNG to celebrate the 50th anniversary of that country's independence.

The neocolonialism reached peak silliness and – so far – peak cost with Albanese's attempt to bribe and control Papua New Guinea's leaders by establishing a PNG team in the Australian Rugby League competition. The Australian government is planning to spend $600 million on it, in hopes of getting a veto clause. Just to make sure PNG got the message, there is a separate deal with the National Rugby League that the league has to terminate the franchise if Canberra stops backing it. Canberra will cancel if PNG makes any security agreements with China.

Vanuatu had been expected to sign a security pact giving Australia a veto over foreign investment in infrastructure. There are no prizes for guessing which foreign investment the deal was aimed at. The country's PM, Jotham Napat said politely that the treaty needed more discussion on "some of the specific wordings." Government sources told Nine media that there were fears the treaty could unduly limit overseas investment. In plain English, they didn't want Australia to have a vaguely-worded veto over Vanuatu's decisions.

PM Anthony Albanese with PM Hon James Marape in Port Moresby, 17 September. Photo: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Facebook

International trade unions show solidarity with Gaza flotilla

Statement from the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)

The World Federation of Trade Unions, representing over 110 million workers in 134 countries, expresses its solidarity with all workers who courageously support the heroic Palestinian people and their unrelenting struggle, and pays tribute to the participants in the Global Sumud Flotilla, a maritime mission that has mobilised over 300 people and 50 ships from 44 nations, which departed on 31 August from Spanish ports with the aim of breaking the siege imposed on Gaza and bringing humanitarian aid and concrete solidarity to the Palestinian people.

The evening before departure, a demonstration of 50,000 people marched in support of the Palestinian people and the Global Sumud Flotilla.

This initiative takes place at a time when Israel is using hunger as a weapon and famine as a tactic of war, and in light of the ongoing military operation, with the stated aim of completely occupying Gaza and completing systematic ethnic cleansing. The WFTU pays tribute to the active role played by USB dockworkers in the collection and participation of their representatives, who left with the flotilla, while USB dockworkers in Genoa have committed themselves to ensuring that all the material collected reaches the people of Gaza. The international class-based trade union movement demands that the Flotilla be left untouched.

The WFTU also pays tribute to the dockworkers in Italy, Greece, France, and other major ports who, under the leadership of their affiliates, have refused to load weapons and military equipment destined for Israel. These acts of resistance by workers are a powerful expression of class solidarity and internationalism.

The international class-based trade union movement is intensifying its struggle against Israel's armed campaigns and aggression against Lebanon, Syria, and Iran, to end the occupation and settlements in the occupied Arab territories, to secure the right of return for refugees, and to create an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Palestinian people and workers, under siege and under enemy fire, continue to resist with dignity. The WFTU stands firmly and on principle by their side.

Their struggle is our struggle.

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