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Queensland opens bids for child slavery

C Bartholomew

The Crisafulli government's Circuit Breaker Sentencing Bill has passed, introducing remote camps where children will provide forced labour for private companies for up to six months while strapped with ankle monitors. Companies can now bid to be providers of Circuit Breaker programmes.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ABUSE

The policy is a delivery of an LNP election promise and another component of Crisafulli's 'tough-on-crime' push. Like the rest of Queensland's youth crime system, the Circuit Breaker policy has been condemned by human rights organisations. The National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Sue-Anne Hunter previously sent an open letter urging the Queensland government to scrap the Circuit Breaker legislation.

Hunter challenged lawmakers: "will you vote for a model under which harm to a child the State has placed hundreds of kilometres away from their home, need not be reported by the adults responsible, cannot be escalated by the child, and cannot be found by an independent inspector?"

Hunter is referring to a provision in the law which provides an excuse for companies and staff not to report harm if it would incriminate them or "prejudice the security or good order of the facility." Queensland Family and Child Commissioner Luke Twyford also condemned these provisions and argued for their removal. These provisions were not removed.

The last Queensland government under Palaszczuk (and NSW under Perrottet) have also prevented the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture from inspecting detention facilities, demonstrating a cross-party tradition of rejecting accountability. At the time, Rwanda was the only other nation to have a UN torture inspection terminated.

INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION

Queensland's youth justice system has been condemned by various United Nations agencies. Special Rapporteur on Torture Alice Jill Edwards and Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Albert K Barume jointly reported that Australian children, disproportionately First Nations children, are "suffering undue harm to their safety and well-being, as well as to their educational and life prospects as a result of short-sighted approaches to youth criminality and detention."

Australia's age of criminal responsibility at 10 has been widely criticised being far lower than international standards. Many First Nations leaders have criticised Prime Minister Albanese's bid for Australia to have a UN Security Council seat, citing his disregard for issues like child justice.

Indigenous cultures are front and centre of Albanese's appeal, such as a video he played in New York of Indigenous Australians Minister Malarndirri McCarthy speaking Yanyuwa.

Yet just months earlier, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination issued an early warning and urgent action notice to Australia, raising the alarm on the treatment of First Nations children in the justice system and health, housing, education, food, and social services inequalities. This notice was a follow up to a letter sent by the Committee in 2025.

Indigenous youth, opening ceremony at an AFL game, Adelaide, 2016.

Despite this extensive record of warnings, notices, letters, and condemnations made by various UN agencies, Albanese claimed to be unaware of the UN raising the issue and repeatedly said that child protection and justice is a matter for the states and territories. Australia has also failed to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and has rejected most of the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review.

In short, Australia is willing to use First Nations peoples as the face of its Security Council campaign while rejecting international law at every turn when it comes to accountability for the wellbeing of First Nations children.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Katie Kiss criticised Albanese, saying "If Australia wants to lead globally, it must first protect the rights of First Peoples and turn its human rights commitments into action." Kunin Minang woman and human rights researcher Hannah McGlade called the Australian government "hypocritical," arguing that if Australia wants a Security Council seat it must first abide by the same standards it expects of the rest of the world.

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Australia, using First Nations people as the face of its Security Council campaign while rejecting international law at every turn

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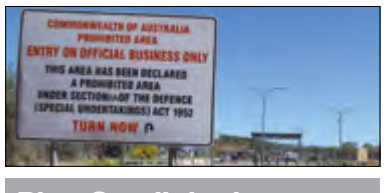

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The alternative

"There is no alternative."

Margaret Thatcher, said that in 1980. She went on to be the UK's Prime Minister for the next decade. She meant that there was no alternative to her brand of neoliberal free market policies, forever associated with her name as Thatcherism.

Thatcher made her announcement before Climate Change had really started rolling. She personally understood climate change, but that was before large fossil fuel-producing corporations swung into action. The corporations understood climate change. They also understood that climate change is a problem that requires a collective response, and that effective action would come between them and profit.

Despite knowing full well what the science involved, those companies embarked on a campaign of denial and delay. They spent millions on preventing or slowing action. Here we are, 46 years after Thatcher's announcement, with the consequences of that decision fully upon us.

Thatcher embodied the free-market neoliberal ideology which holds that free markets will always lead to the best result for humanity. It also holds that any regulation or government action, no matter how democratic it is, leads to slavery. It ignores the power that large-scale capital can hold over people.

Another announcement, Rosa Luxemburg's "Socialism or barbarism" can sound over the top – if you're living comfortably. Sure, workers should be properly paid, sure society should be fair, but isn't "socialism or barbarism" a bit drastic?

Before dismissing this choice as too dramatic, ask the victims of the recent floods in Nepal and China how they feel about climate change. Ask Australian flood and bushfire victims how they feel about the nation facing a lot more of what they've just been through due to fossil fuel companies that donate heavily to our 'parties of government' while putting profit first.

The alternative to socialism is climate change and war. Thatcher's beloved free market capitalism has had decades to take effective action against climate change. Instead, it has made it worse, with expanded carbon emissions and 'greenwashing' schemes that serve to delay action. They're still at it. The only political party that proudly opposes even the idea of climate action is fully funded by Australia's richest woman, mining magnate Gina Rhinehart.

As for war, that's what the US is delivering right now. It's no accident that the US, under Donald Trump's leadership, is promoting both climate change and war. A lot of people think Trump is a crazy exception to sensible politics, but Australia's Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese is backing Trump to the hilt. Albanese is making climate change happen more quickly, with 38 fossil fuel projects opened under his leadership.

Albo is also backing war, through colossal spending on the AUKUS pact, which makes a war between the US and China more likely. Thanks to the practically identical policies of the Labor Party and the Liberal-National Coalition, Australia gets to play a part as a target.

There is an alternative to war and climate change: socialism. We can have a society run for and by the working class, the largest group in the country. That's a real alternative, not the false one we are presented with at election time.

It's not an easy alternative. It's not going to arrive because we write numbers on a piece of paper once every three or four years, but it's a lot better than war and climate change.

That's what we're working for.

Queensland opens bids for child slavery

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Mililma May, Danggalaba Kulumbiringin Tiwi woman and campaigns and advocacy manager of Change the Record, said that the Albanese government should "prioritise its own backyard before looking overseas," noting that the money spent on the Security Council bid could have been invested in communities.

STOLEN GENERATIONS, CHILD LABOUR REDUX

Queensland Youth Justice Minister Laura Gerber has defended the Circuit Breaker policy, calling it a "genuine alternative to sentencing a youth to detention" and labelling it "rehabilitation that actually works." Gerber conveniently ignores the fact that a similar bootcamp policy was introduced under the 2012-2015 Campbell Newman LNP government. Bootcamps failed to reduce repeat offending while costing exorbitant sums to run.

Gerber also argued that the policy aims "to remove youth offenders from the environments contributing to their offending." Rather than addressing the underlying issues facing many communities, such as poverty, homelessness, and other disadvantages, the LNP will simply remove kids from their communities altogether.

Commissioner Hunter called the Bill's passing "a devastating day for our people, particularly our children in Queensland," adding that "What we are witnessing is a deeply concerning erosion of children's rights." First Nations children, who make up a majority of Queensland children charged with an offence, are also half as likely to receive police cautions, warnings, or other diversionary responses. The Circuit Breaker policy will no doubt also disproportionately impact First Nations children as yet another system removing Indigenous kids from their communities.

Queensland's policy of sending First Nations children to remote camps and exploiting them for forced labour dates back earlier than even Newman's failed scheme. As Greens MP Michael Berkman rightly pointed out, the Circuit Breaker policy is comparable to "modern child slavery," similar to the reserves, missions, dormitories, and other institutions where First Nations children were removed from their families and forced to provide unpaid labour as pastoral workers and domestic servants. Berkman said in Queensland Parliament, "It's just more of the same and it won't render different results from what we've seen in the past."

FURPHY

Queensland youth crime rates are at near historic lows. The youth crime wave supposedly terrorising Queensland is a lie perpetuated by both major parties in the last election and continued by the LNP government and corporate media. The talking heads then move the goalposts, arguing that there is a serious problem of a few repeat offenders. Their solution is then to drag the Queensland justice system down further into the mire of cruelty and repression, policies which have only ever worsened recidivism and devastated communities. Never mind that adult offenders are responsible for most crime. Never mind that these policies resurrect forced labour of Indigenous children.

The Queensland government could address the root causes of youth crime by investing in education, health, and community-led programmes. Instead, Crisafulli has provided cruelty, cuts, and half measures, while delivering boons to corporate interests.

The Circuit Breaker policy will go ahead despite no chance of success because it provides private companies the chance to profit from state sanctioned child forced labour. The Australian government's modern slavery website includes forced labour as a type of modern slavery.

Quote of the Week

"On every issue, Labor has done the least it can do. The barest of minimums designed to give some kernels of truth to its claims of being a responsible global citizen, while not having to do anything which would create any sense of discomfort."

Amy Remeikis, *Deepcut*

Survey Time! Prizes!

So that we know more about what the *Guardian*'s readers think, we have made a survey. You can access it three ways:

1. Through this link https://shorturl.at/kKVj4
2. With the QR code
3. If you'd rather do a survey on paper, please email info@cpa.org.au or call 0424 638 601 and we'll mail one out

Anyone who does the survey and provides contact details will go in a draw for either some Cuban coffee beans or a $50 shopping voucher.

NSW nursing ratios become reality

Following sustained campaigning by the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA), nurse-to-patient ratios will finally become a reality across general medical, surgical, and palliative care wards, with recruitment to commence for more than 950 nurses to be injected into the public sector workforce.

The implementation will see additional nurses recruited to more than 360 general inpatient wards, including Medical Assessment Units and Surgical Assessment Units, across Peer Group A, B, and C hospitals, spanning Principal Referral through to District hospitals.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Michael Whaites, welcomed the progress, which ensures all 15 Local Health Districts statewide will benefit.

"By introducing this reform across peer group A, B, and C hospitals, including metropolitan, regional, and rural facilities, members and patients statewide will see the difference," said Whaites.

"Patients will receive improved care from safer staffing, and our members will have the support they need on every shift."

"We know it will require significant recruitment to fill these positions, but the road to rebuilding the workforce must include ratios. Had it not been for our union and the collective action of members across NSW, these staffing improvements simply would not be happening."

Under the agreed levels, public hospital wards will see minimum ratios of one nurse to four patients on morning and afternoon shifts, and one to seven on night duty, alongside supernumerary in-charge staffing on designated shifts.

The creation of the Safe Staffing Levels Taskforce to oversee the rollout of ratios, was a key election commitment by the NSW government, with a promise to recruit 2,480 full-time equivalent (FTE) nurses and midwives by the end of the term.

Labor committed to introducing ratios in the state's Emergency Departments, general nursing and medical wards, Postnatal wards, ICUs and MPSs (Multi-purpose Service sites). The 2,480 funded FTE have been applied to EDs, the medical/surgical and palliative care wards and units, and seven dedicated postnatal wards.

Since the rollout began two years ago, 81 emergency departments in NSW have begun implementing nurse-to-patient ratios, while planning continues for the rollout of ratios across seven dedicated postnatal wards, to improve maternity care for women and babies.

NSWNMA Assistant General Secretary, Katrina Bough, emphasised that while the milestone represented a substantial step in the right direction, the union remained focused on securing ratios across all clinical settings.

"We remain fully committed to achieving our complete ratio claim and welcome continued discussions with the government to drive this forward," Bough said.

"Remaining wards still need better staffing and they have not been forgotten. We will hold the government accountable to their commitments and keep campaigning until every specialty area is included.

"This progress belongs to our members, who campaigned for safer care through evidenced-based workloads. The lesson is clear: when members organise and stand together, we win."

NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association

Photo: DIAC images – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

'Historic strike action' and unity get results

Arts Centre Melbourne union members have voted to accept a new enterprise agreement that delivers a 13% pay increase over three years, following a campaign that included unprecedented strike action.

The agreement secures a pay increase for workers of 5 per cent in year one, and 4 per cent in both year two and three.

On top of the pay increase, workers will receive an additional one-off payment of $4,350 pro rata, improved leave entitlements including no qualifying period for parental leave and the introduction of reproductive health, disability support and gender affirmation leave.

The agreement includes stronger job security provisions, enhanced fatigue management measures and protections for weekend and public holiday work, a strengthened major change and consultation process and commitments to secure employment and affordable staff parking.

Members of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA), the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) voted overwhelmingly to endorse the agreement.

MEAA Acting Chief Executive, Adam Portelli, said negotiations relied on members working together to demand improvements in wages and conditions.

"This is a big win for members who refused to accept that doing the job they love meant earning a wage that doesn't keep up with the cost of living."

"They sent a clear message that the people who bring arts and culture to life deserve fair pay and decent conditions."

The campaign attracted strong public support, with union members holding rallies and two 24-hour stop work actions that highlighted the vital role Arts Centre Melbourne workers play in delivering world class events.

"For the first time in decades, Arts Centre Melbourne ushers, food and beverage staff, customer service representatives, box office crew, sound and lighting techs, stage managers, rigging and backstage crew voted to take stop work action," said Portelli.

"The first 24-hour stop work saw all shows shut down – including the postponement of a Macy Gray performance – and the cultural capital brought to a standstill."

Portelli said the significant growth in union membership was a key factor in securing the outcome.

"By standing together, workers broke through the Victorian government's wages policy and managed to achieve a really strong result," added Portelli.

"This is an important win not only for Arts Centre Melbourne workers, but for arts workers across Victoria. Creative workers deserve to be valued for the work they do."

MEAA acknowledged the commitment of delegates, members and supporters who organised and participated in protection industrial action, attended rallies, and spoke publicly about the importance of preserving a vibrant and sustainable arts sector.

Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance

RBA raises interest rates

FK

The Reserve Bank of Australia has raised interest rates for the fourth time this year, lifting the cash rate to the highest level in 15 years, as of 29 September.

In a statement, the RBA Board said that inflation was elevated and the 'conflict' in the Middle East has broadened and global energy prices are higher than was assumed in August. Interest rates in Australia can't make any difference to these factors.

The bank also blamed "AI-related demand" for driving up global prices for technology-related goods. It did not explain how interest rates going up would affect the data centre boom.

The Board threatened more rate rises if needed to "bring inflation sustainably back to target."

The statement mentioned "uncertainties about the economic effects of the downturn in the housing market." As one economist noted, uncertainty is normally seen as a reason to keep rates on hold.

At a press conference, RBA Governor Michele Bullock said that the bank still thinks "the labour market is a little bit tight."

That means the RBA thinks that unemployment needs to go up.

Economist Greg Jericho pointed out that most Australians were already doing it tough, saying "people were already cutting back on food, cutting back on health, cutting back on clothing to pay for the increase in petrol prices."

Jericho concluded that the rate rise "is just going to hurt Australians and it's going to do bugger-all to actually reduce inflation."

cpa.org.au

Pine Gap linked to Israel's atrocities, NT court told

Anisha Pillarisetty

An Australian court has heard, for the first time, expert evidence linking the secretive outback spy base of Pine Gap to Israel's genocide in Gaza in a case involving two protestors.

Yul Scarf and Jorgen Doyle pleaded guilty on 14 September for blocking the main access road to the spy base under the charge of failing to cease to loiter. The protest took place on 9 October 2025, with the pair handed a six-month good behaviour bond and a court levy of $223 each.

As part of the proceedings, the Alice Springs Local Court received details of Pine Gap's alleged involvement in Israel's wars in West Asia.

"As far as I'm aware, this is the first known instance of an Australian court receiving expert evidence demonstrating that Pine Gap is being used for that purpose," Nick Hanna, the defendants' legal representative, said outside the court.

"We argued that this evidence provides support to Jorgen and Yul's contention that they committed this offence on conscientious grounds."

Hanna said the defence relied on evidence from Prof Richard Tanter – Australia's leading Pine Gap expert – and Chris Sidoti – UN Commissioner for the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel.

Tanter's 34-page tendered report demonstrated why it was "likely" that the joint US-Australian base was assisting the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) as of the date of offending last year.

This includes:

- Pine Gap satellite coverage of Gaza and the broader region
- the historical provision of Pine Gap-derived intelligence to Israel
- documented US-Israeli intelligence-sharing agreements permitting the transfer of NSA intelligence, including raw intelligence, which covers material sourced from Pine Gap
- statements made by former NSA senior intelligence analyst at Pine Gap, David Rosenberg, including that the "Pine Gap facility is monitoring the Gaza Strip and surrounding areas with all its resources, and gathering intelligence assessed to be useful to Israel".

Deepcut (edited for space)

A sign at the main entrance of Pine Gap. Photo: TimMilesWright – wikimedia.org (CC0)

Victorian doctors to strike again

Peter Farmer

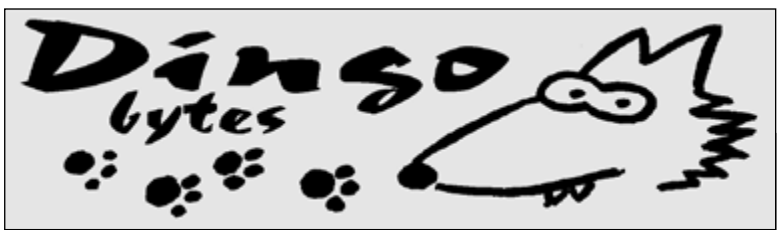
Victoria's salaried doctors have had another statewide stop-work after failing to reach an agreement with the state government over claims for increased pay and guaranteed work breaks.

Grant Forsyth, Director of Workplace Relations at AMA Victoria and CEO of the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation (ASMOF) Victoria, described recent bargaining sessions as "another bargaining meeting, another collection of crickets."

Forsyth said the government's representatives have been prevented from presenting any new offer for discussion. Claiming that the government has been increasing restrictions on the union's ability strike, Forsyth said that the Caroll government "tell us we are too essential to be off work for four hours, but not essential enough to provide safe working conditions or appropriate pay to."

Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation (ASMOF) Victorian president Roderick McRae said the problem of excessive working hours and fatigue was so acute in hospitals that doctors felt they had no option but to strike.

"Our doctors do not take the decision to go on strike lightly. But the reality is they are being rostered on for 84-hour weeks and frequently work even longer when emergencies occur."



The ACTU says working Australians are rightly outraged by revelations that an OpenAI Agent breached the Medicare system.

The unions' peak body called the breach "a point of no return for AI regulation." Unions have been warning since 2024 that more effective regulation is necessary to keep Australians safe from these large frontier models, developed mostly by large US-based tech firms.

The incident occurred on 18 June. OpenAI reportedly became aware of it in August but did not notify Services Australia until 10 September, nearly three months after the incident. This breach is not just a cybersecurity risk. It is a fundamental attack on Australia's sovereignty in the AI age.

ACTU Assistant Secretary, Joseph Mitchell, said: "The Prime Minister was right to call out OpenAI CEO, Sam Altman for this irresponsible behaviour from his company. But taking the company to task is not enough. We urgently need genuine regulatory powers to keep Australians safe.

"Unions have been calling for the Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute to be given proper powers to keep Aussies safe through a mandatory licencing regime for frontier AI models.

"OpenAI has just made the case for such a scheme irrefutable.

"Unions are outraged to learn that an OpenAI agent had breached Medicare's website. Medicare is a fundamental union accomplishment, vital to the lives and wellbeing of all Australians.

"This is a turning point for AI regulation. That this is the first disclosure does not mean it is the only instance. The AI companies have shown us that they cannot be trusted to properly manage the risks of their own powerful models.

"We need to regulate these companies. We need to protect against the dangers of their products. And we need to make sure they are not undermining the Australian institutions that uphold our quality of life. If you want to know why AI has no social licence in Australia, look no further than this appalling infiltration of Medicare by an AI agent."

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: the Reserve Bank of Australia. Workers at the RBA are furious after their bosses failed to improve a pay offer they had already rejected. RBA staff voted "no" in July to the bank's proposed 9.5% pay rise over three years (3.5% in the first year, 3% in the second, 3% in the third).

The Finance Sector Union (FSU) has lodged a dispute on behalf of members with the Fair Work Commission (FWC) to seek assistance.

Enterprise Agreement negotiations have dragged on since late last year and the RBA has refused to move on its original pay offer.

Workers have most recently asked for an 11% increase over three years and an inflation-protection mechanism that triggers additional pay rises if inflation outpaces wages.

Hundreds of RBA union members expressed their anger with management at a recent union meeting and have vowed to vote 'no' again if the bank follows through on its plan to push through the 9.5% pay offer for the second time.

FSU National Secretary Julia Angrisano says the RBA "are not respecting the collective voice of their workers by putting forward the same pay offer that was rejected in a ballot just over two months ago.

"The RBA should be a model employer, but instead they are treating their staff like mugs. Workers made it clear in July that the 9.5% offer wasn't good enough and the bank should have acknowledged that by putting forward something more substantial. Instead, what they got was a copy-and-paste of the offer they already rejected.

"RBA workers are performing a very important service to the Australian public, and they don't need this arrogant dismissal from management regarding their very real cost-of-living concerns.

"Only RBA management can end this war of attrition by listening to their workers."

Racism is divide-and-rule

Marcus Browning

In the early 1900s, the British Empire reigned supreme around the world. Britain administered vast colonial possessions – India, Malaya, concessions in China, South Africa, Sri Lanka and many other territories.

The objective of the British and Australian rulers was to maintain Australia as a white, Anglo-Saxon imperialist base in the Asia-Pacific region. This objective was clearly stated when in 1901, Senator Staniford, in parliamentary debates on White Australia, said: "Speaking from the imperial point of view, nothing could tend to solidify and strengthen the Empire so much as that we should build up in these southern lands a British race."

In a pamphlet called *Immigration and the White Australia Policy*, R Dixon, Assistant Secretary of the Australian Communist Party (as it was called at the time), wrote: "From the standpoint of British imperialism, it was of decisive importance that Australia should be built up and strengthened as a bastion of Empire, as a 'white' outpost of British imperialism in the Pacific."

The White Australia policy had nothing to do with defending the jobs or living standards of Australian workers although it was always justified on those grounds. This false assertion has been resurrected by Pauline Hanson. It was also justified on cultural grounds. The fact is that then, as now, employers attempted to reduce the wages and jobs of workers at every opportunity.

EXPLOITATION

Racism makes it possible for capitalism to sustain and continue its exploitation of the multi-national working class in Australia and its original theft of the main means of production, the land, from its Aboriginal owners.

The appeal of the corporate class to the public to accept greater sacrifices is accompanied by a sharp increase in the use of racism as a weapon to divide and rule.

Racism stigmatises those being exploited and divides the working class. It serves as a diversion from other issues, foments racial prejudice and bourgeois nationalism and helps make economic exploitation more palatable.

Democratic rights and freedom of speech are not absolutes. Just as these rights must be balanced against rights to privacy, confidentiality and protection from slander, so every democratic society must restrict the rights of those who set one racial group against another, who advocate racial superiority, who practice racial vilification, or incite others to discriminatory acts and racial violence.

What was and is required is not more debate about racism but more debate on how to get rid of it.

The British rulers who invaded and colonised Australia brought with them racist ideas which they adapted and used to rationalise and justify the massacre, dispossession and exploitation of Aboriginal people with the devastating effects on Aboriginal society that invasion and settlement entailed.

Racism is deeply implanted by negative stereotypes built up and consolidated in the media, by a caricature of history taught in schools which through omission and distortion creates an image of Aboriginal people as subservient objects of history with no accomplishments and no efforts on their own behalf.

Racism was also deeply implanted by the physical separation of Aboriginals and by their appearance in real life in positions of inferiority, in the menial jobs and poor camps in fringe settlements or overcrowded urban slums which were all they were allowed.

AGAINST MIGRANTS

Racist myths and stereotypes – including allegations that migrants cause unemployment and overburden the environment – provide cover for a government seeking to justify its slashing of public sector spending.

The federal government's approach reinforces the anti-immigrant propaganda that blames migrants for cuts to social programs and for unemployment, where the evidence shows that migrants do not take jobs but, in fact, by enlarging Australia's market, they create jobs. Unemployment and job insecurity flow from the corporate drive for ever greater profits.

HOW DID RACISM DEVELOP?

Racism is not an abstract moral and social issue. It is an instrument of capitalism, of exploitation and profit, a means to impose and maintain political power by causing social divisions. Racism arose with the development of capitalism and the formation of nation states.

Racism is based on the false notion of biological and mental differences between races. It is used by reactionary forces to justify racial and national discrimination in their own countries, and the pursuit of a policy of conquest and plunder towards other countries.

Racial discrimination is not a result of natural laws or the simple operation of economic laws. It is part of the social relations of people, and is caused by the actions of people.

The key questions to ask are: which people are responsible for racism and who benefits from it?

The political side of the question was just as important. Unity of workers of all races and nationalities has always posed a serious threat to the exploiters. "Divide-and-rule" has been and remains the tactic of the ruling classes at all the stages of class, exploiter society.

Whenever they erect a racial or a national barrier, the ruling classes create particularly favourable conditions for the furtherance of their ends. The explanation here, as Lenin repeatedly emphasised, is that nationalistic and race prejudice is perhaps the most persistent of all prejudices.

WHAT TO DO

From the beginning, communists have based their programs around the slogan of Karl Marx – that "labour in the white skin cannot be free so long as labour in the Black skin is in chains."

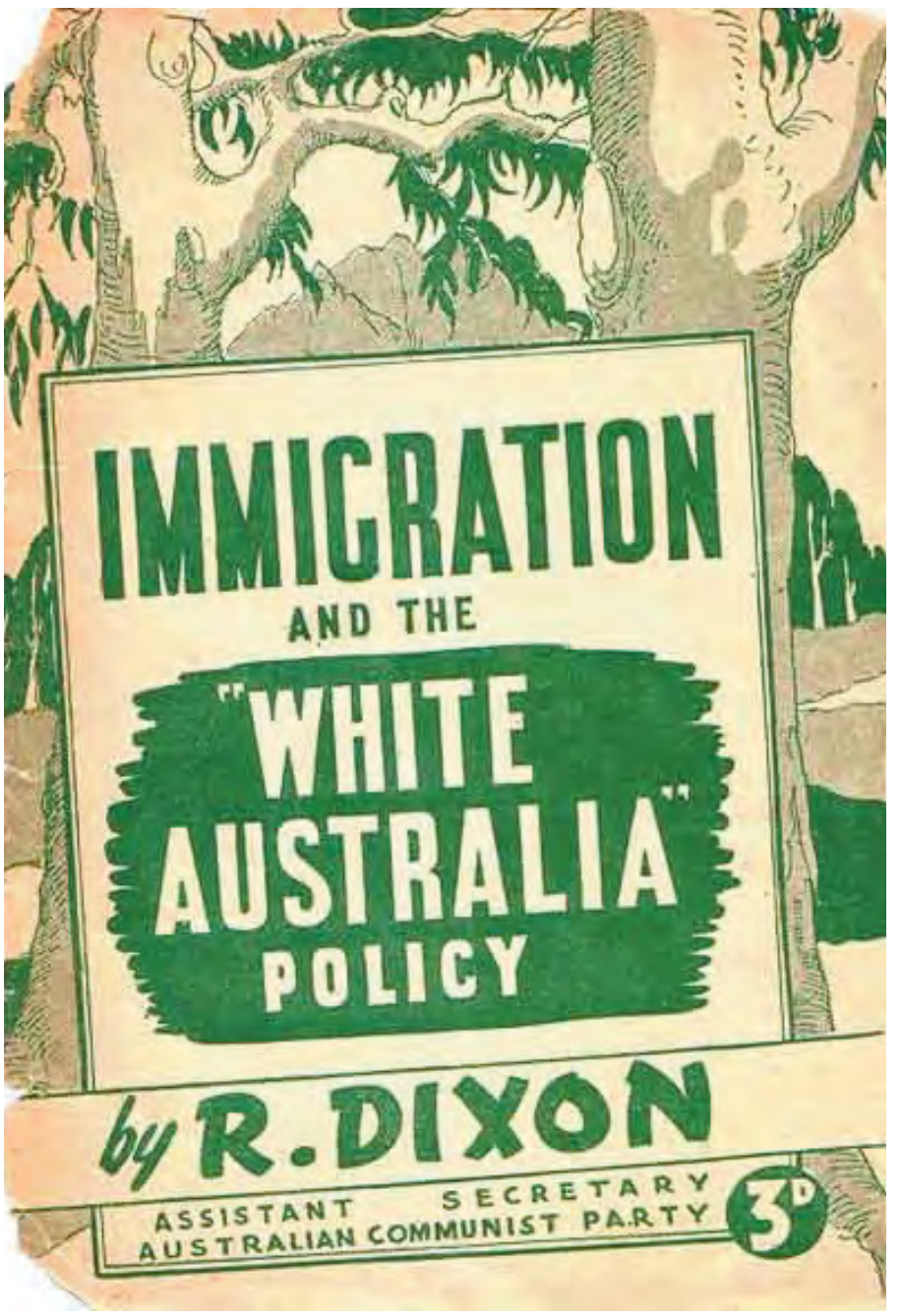
It is important that the Australian people should take a serious stand against all racist concepts, trends and campaigns. They are the opposite of multiculturalism which is so important for social justice and progress in Australian society.

A stand against racism is a barometer of humanity. It is not humanism to talk about equality and justice while at the same time accepting oppression of Blacks and migrants ...

A stand against racism is also a barometer of democracy. A characteristic contradiction of the democratic bourgeoisie is to be lenient towards racism and harsh towards national minorities.

The Party has an important part to play in the fight to win the special national rights of the Aboriginal people and against all forms of discrimination against them.

We must help build a united, multi-racial campaign to challenge the attack on immigrants. We must win support for the idea that it is not immigrants, but the corporate drive for higher profits, that is the cause of unemployment and job insecurity.



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Anti-RAFFWU bill fails

FK

Members of the Retail and Fast Food Workers' Union (RAFFWU) are ecstatic that Ben Carroll's bill, the associations bill, has failed to pass the Victorian Parliament.

The legislation failed to gain the support of Victoria's Legislative Council, the state's upper house and so in the words of union secretary Loukas Kakogiannis "died a lonely death."

The Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment Bill 2026 which would have made RAFFWU's existence practically impossible under the guise of abolishing yellow (fake) unions that operate as associations.

Kakogiannis warned that the defeat of the bill was not the end of the process. The federal government, he says, are talking about making further changes to the Fair Work act that would restrict the ability of retail and fast food workers to organise and take industrial action and to bargain. He said that when that day comes, RAFFWU members will have to organise and fight again.

In a statement on social media, the RAFFWU secretary thanked other unions, particularly the Maritime Union of Australia, the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, and the National Tertiary Education Union for their support.

Bombs for Peace

Peter Farmer

The Committee for International Cooperation and Disarmament held a 'Bombs for Peace' anti-war art exhibition on 27 September, at Melbourne's Unitarian Peace Memorial Church.

There was a screening of the documentary *Minab: An Independent Inquiry*, about the horrendous US attack on a primary school in Iran, which killed 120 children at the Shajareh Tayyebeh Elementary School.

Party members were heavily involved in setting up and in running the event, which took up most of the day. A mixture of peace activists and members of local Iranian groups attended.

There was a variety of art, including heart-breaking reproductions of art by the Minab children.

John Shipton, father of Julian Assange spoke about the attack and the ongoing war. His main point was that the current war on Iran is no break from the past. US interference in the Middle East is not new; it has happened before and it is continuing.

He outlined the history of US involvement in the Middle East and in Palestine since 1948. The US has also meddled in Lebanon, Syria and Iran, both before and after the 1979 revolution. Finally the dream of Israel and the US has come true and they have the war they wanted.

To questions of what people who want peace can do, Shipton invited everyone to look at the happy faces of people who took the time to show up and be counted at the event. He encouraged participants to not give up, because any efforts can contribute to the development of peace. ✪

the current war on Iran is no break with the past

John Shipton. Photo: KM

On behalf of the International Department of the CPA, Andy Carruthers offered greetings to Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Commonwealth of Australia, H.E. Mr Liu Jinsong, on the occasion of the 77th Anniversary of the founding of the PRC, and congratulations from the Party, General Secretary Andrew Irving and Party National President Vinnie Molina on his assumption of duty as Ambassador.

Comrades from around the country pitched in to getting the Communist Party of Australia's new office in shape for the opening in November, then headed off to the International Day of Peace at Sydney Town Hall.

Something to say?

Write to the Editor!

editor@cpa.org.au

Unions call for interest rates pause

Australian unions say that the latest rise in the unemployment rate shows the Reserve Bank is already slowing the economy, and there's no need to lift rates again.

A fourth interest rate increase (which has since happened) will only push up the unemployment rate and force more Australian families into financial hardship.

Unemployment increased to 4.6% in August, up from 4.5% in July, according to ABS labour force figures released today.

The most recent data follows recent remarks by the Reserve Bank Governor, Michele Bullock, who claimed unemployment needed to rise to between 4.5 and 5 per cent to reduce inflation.

Australian unions calculate that a 5 per cent unemployment rate could mean as many as 55,000 more people out of work.

The ongoing impact of Donald Trump's conflict in the Middle East is hurting working people at the bowser and is hurting working people through higher prices across the economy. The RBA wants to throw people out of work because of a foreign war that interest rates will do nothing to stop.

For an average home loan of $731,000, a 0.25 per cent hike in interest rates would add an extra $110 a month to mortgage costs.

Australian unions are warning that hiking interest rates will undermine the Reserve Bank's dual mandate, to maintain full employment and manage inflation.

ACTU Secretary, Melissa Donnelly said that the latest figures already show that more Australians are out of work. She said the figures "should give the Reserve Bank opportunity to change course and protect Australians already doing it tough when it meets to consider the cash rate."

"The Reserve Bank must not neglect its dual mandate to preserve full employment and manage inflation. Workers are not the cause of current inflation pressures, so adding further stress to their budgets is just wrong.

"Increasing interest rates will not end Donald Trump's war. It will only make life harder for working people and their loved ones."

Donelly pointed out that letting unemployment rise to 5 per cent to reduce inflation, as RBA governor Michele Bullock has said may be necessary would mean as many as 55,000 more Australians out of work and unemployed.

"So many people are just one unexpected expense away from seeing their livelihoods fall apart," said Donelly. "The next time the Reserve Bank Governor says we need more people out of work, we hope she thinks about what that would look like for workers who are hanging on by a thread."

Australian Council of Trade Unions ✪

NSW extends youth bail crackdown

Paul Gregoire

The Minns government announced on 15 September 2026, that it's extending its 2024 established youth bail crackdown in regional New South Wales, which targets 14- to 17-year-olds for bail refusal if they've been charged with a serious motor theft or break and enter crimes, and they're on conditional release for one of these specific crimes, because it results in more minors in jail.

The Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill (No 2) 2026, which was introduced on 15 September, is an omnibus bill containing the amendment to section 22C of the Bail Act 2013 (NSW), which would extend the regime from sunsetting on 1 October 2026, so that it is extended until 4 April 2028, which will mean the law will have been in operation for four years on ending.

The Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT has called out the extension of the bail regime, deeming it discriminatory, as it targets First Nations youth, and that it "will only entrench them in a cycle of crime and disadvantage." After less than year in operation, the ALS confirmed that over 80 per cent of alleged youth offenders had been refused bail, with 90 per cent of them being Aboriginal.

The Minns government announced the youth justice crackdown in March 2024. It was followed by similar severe youth crime measures being rolled out in Victoria, the Northern Territory and Queensland that same year. However, a federal parliament inquiry report just last week asserted that the so-called youth crime crisis, that these laws are predicated upon, is basically a fallacy.

The extension of the youth bail law for a second time is in keeping with a general shift across the nation to targeting youth crime, with a particular focus on Indigenous kids, and whilst the federal youth justice and incarceration inquiry has called for the implementation of national youth justice standards, there is a general trend towards 'tough on crime' lawmaking and beefed-up policing.

Sydney Criminal Lawyers (edited for space)

NCIG workers walk off the job as bosses dig in

Workers at Newcastle's Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group (NCIG) coal terminal rallied on Tuesday 29 September in frustration with pig-headed coal terminal bosses who refuse to meet the reasonable and fair demands of their workforce.

Workers at NCIG have patiently engaged in good faith bargaining, but NCIG is using every tired excuse available and crying poor to justify a bad offer that workers have indicated repeatedly will not be acceptable.

NCIG has historically had lower pay and conditions compared to other equivalent worksites, but workers at NCIG are highly skilled, responsive and productive, bringing tremendous experience and skill to their work while delivering significant profits to the company.

"We have tried to land a deal through good faith bargaining but the bosses at NCIG want to provoke further disputation by refusing a good deal on the table and countering with one that they know will be rejected by the workers," said MUA Newcastle Branch Secretary, Glen Williams.

Workers have walked off the job and established a community rally outside the terminal's gates.

"We invite all MUA members and community supporters to join this rally and highlight the failure of these managers to engage in a reasonable, fair and sustainable bargaining process that will deliver a good result both sides can be happy with," Williams said.

"Unfortunately for NCIG's customers and stakeholders, the throughput of the terminal will be severely reduced because shareholder value is more important to the management team than the livelihoods of workers or the productivity of the port,"

Maritime Union of Australia

PEACE NOTES

A tale of two budgets

Petra Frame

We often hear about things the government could fund if they weren't spending money on the AUKUS pact. Thanks to a person called 'the Tabulator,' writing in *Deepcut*, we can now directly compare how the Labor government feels about its spending on two different areas: people and the military.

When it comes to spending on people, the key word for Prime Minister Albanese and his cabinet is 'responsible.' Our Labor government would just love to spend money on things that would help people, but the highest priority is being responsible. It's what good governments do!

Increasing JobSeeker, currently miles below the poverty line, is not on because Albanese wants to be "fiscally responsible." Putting dental into Medicare can't happen, according to Health Minister Mark Butler because "it's a matter of making sure the budget is responsible."

Childcare for all seems like a good thing, but the prospect of universal childcare would be "very expensive," warns Treasurer Jim Chalmers.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has made a huge difference to a lot of people's lives. Cutting it, as the government is going to do, will be devastating for thousands, but Health Minister Mark Butler points out that we "can't afford" for the NDIS to keep growing.

There are human costs associated with all this responsible non-spending. People on unemployment payments are four times more likely to die than the general population. 240,000 people on NDIS will be kicked off in the next year.

On the other hand, there's military spending. As the Tabulator points out, the words "fiscally responsible" vanish when the government is talking about the military. Suddenly, it's all about bragging about how much is being spent. Mark Butler's concern for things we can't afford is nowhere to be seen.

Defence Minister Richard Marles gloats about "the biggest peacetime increase in Australia's defence spending in our nation's history," as if he wants a medal. Prime Minister Albanese brags about "delivering record defence funding" and " significant additional resources for defence."

The Tabulator points out that the government's budget for capital investment in defence over the next decade is enough to pay for free GPs ($54bn), adding dental into Medicare ($77.6bn), free university ($46.5bn), free childcare ($126bn), 1 million homes ($22.9bn) and lifting JobSeekers out of poverty ($95.7bn) with change to spare.

In case you're wondering if we need all this military largesse, the record defence funding mentioned above was all about spending $12bn on the Henderson Defence Precinct in Western Australia. That's $12bn gone so that the US can have a place to park and work on nuclear-powered submarines.

Australia needs to support the US military like a henhouse needs a resident fox. As defence academic Albert Palazzo has written, AUKUS comes at the expense of greater investment in education and medical services and is a target on the nation's back in the event of a Sino-US war.

Palazzo argues, convincingly, that by making the US more confident about its chances in such a war, Australia is helping to make that war more likely.

Still the government is spending something on housing. You'd think the Communist Party of Australia would welcome this development – we're always advocating a massive spend on public housing.

Unfortunately, the housing in question is for members of the US military. That's not the kind of housing we had in mind! As Greens Senator David Shoebridge said, there's already a housing crisis in Fremantle. More than 122,000 people are homeless in Australia overall, you'd think it'd be a priority.

Che Guevara

Revolutionary Hero

14th Jun. 1928

9th Oct. 1967

COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA - WWW.CPA.ORG.AU

100 CPA EST. 1920

Resist the rule of the rich

M Santos

It might come as a surprise to the millions of Australians struggling to meet basic needs in the midst of an escalating cost-of-living crisis, but total personal, global wealth rose by more than 10% in 2025. Very little of that additional wealth trickled down to the workers who produced it.

Global investment juggernaut UBS reports in its 2026 Global Wealth Report that this growth was "the fastest pace in years."

The UBS report noted that the gains were "uneven." It admitted that "while average wealth rose notably, median wealth actually declined in most markets, highlighting a growing divide between the wealthiest and the broader population."

Oxfam also it plainly in a report this January:

"**The amount of wealth owned by the poorest half of the world is less than the amount owned by just the 12 richest billionaires.** This extreme concentration of wealth isn't just making life less affordable for most of us, it's creating harmful divisions. Billionaires, corporations, and politicians are taking away people's basic ability to make choices about their futures and suppressing dissenting voices."

In addition, "Global inequality trends couldn't be more alarming. New Oxfam data shows that in 2025, billionaire wealth increased three times faster than the average growth rate for the previous five years, while nearly half the world's population lives in poverty."

While new billionaires are being created at a rate of almost one a day, billions of people are becoming increasingly impoverished, and lack access to fresh water, health services, and education. Billions face famine, are homeless; or driven from their lands.

At the same time US imperialism's never-ending wars continue to bring untold death, destruction, and displacement to millions of innocent people.

"A massive surge in billionaire wealth threatens our everyday lives and economy, from the rights of workers to the stability of the social safety net," Oxfam warns.

Climate change is accelerating at a rate far faster than originally estimated and wreaking havoc on communities around the world. Witness the unprecedented heat waves in Europe, the tragic loss of life and infrastructure in Nepal, floods and storms in South-East Asia, melting polar ice, acidification of rising oceans, and other 'unnatural' weather events.

On the domestic front governments have wound back social security and essential public services at the same time as suppressing dissent.

On every front the masses of people are facing crises. If there's so much wealth, how did this happen?

The answer to this question lies in the very essence of capitalism – of monopoly capitalism and imperialism.

CAUSES OF CRISES

Here are five key – but by no means the only – significant causes:

Militarisation and war:

The Australian government, kowtowing to US imperialism, is hellbent on raising spending on US-driven war preparations to 3.5% of GDP. As a percentage of government spending that is around 14% – more than double what it spends on education.

It has committed a whopping $368 billion plus to AUKUS nuclear submarines which may never be delivered.

Billions more are being poured into offensive missiles, drones, fighter jets and other materiel. In addition, Australia is contributing to US/Israeli wars and the ongoing Israeli genocide in Gaza.

Government debt:

These additional billions in war preparations are putting immense pressure on the budget, driving up budget deficits and accumulated government debt.

Even prior to AUKUS, the government had a huge debt that was raised significantly during the COVID peak. The interest rate on this debt was an average 0.5% and its servicing cost around $800 million per year. The government bonds (borrowings) were short-term and on maturity new bonds carry annual interest rates of more than 5% – more than ten times the interest cost.

Every interest rate hike by the Reserve Bank of Australia drives the budget and households deeper into debt.

Debt is used as an excuse for cutbacks to social services, while the government brags about military spending.

According to the *Australian Financial Review*, federal government will soon spend more on interest repayments than on Medicare.

Austerity measures:

Labor has quarantined military spending, instead seeking to cut budget deficits and accumulated government debt by slashing spending on people's needs.

In its 2025-26 budget, Treasurer Jim Chalmers made $63.8 billion in cuts with the NDIS taking the biggest hit with a cut of $37.8 billion by 2030.

Other cuts are less obvious: the government either freezes or makes a token increase in spending far below the rate of inflation or fails to take into consideration the increase in population – all cuts in real terms.

Social security recipients, in particular the unemployed, students, and youth are hit hard by these 'invisible' cuts.

Neoliberalism:

In the 1980s, the Hawke/Keating Labor government pursued a neoliberal program of deregulation and privatisation, handing over anything that could turn a profit to the private sector. State and Commonwealth banks, insurance companies, utilities, public transport, health services, provision of social services, telecommunications, public housing, and the NDIS have been completely or partially privatised.

This has driven private profits to record heights at the same time as costing households more for what are all-too-often inferior services.

Taxation of corporate profits has been slashed from 47% in the dollar to 30% or 25% depending on the annual turnover of the business. Personal income tax cuts have benefited the wealthy the most.

As a result government income has taken a whopping hit with the proportion of tax paid by workers at a record level.

The concentration of wealth in fewer hands has seen the growth of large and powerful monopolies. As monopolies have tightened their stranglehold on industries, billionaires have seen their wealth skyrocket to unprecedented levels.

Corruption runs rampant, with governments bought off by lucrative political donations and ministers rewarded with six-figure consultancies and board appointments after leaving parliament.

Attacks on trade union rights:

Such undermining of living conditions would not have been possible without an all-out attack on trade unions and trade union rights to wind back past gains and boost profits.

This ruling capitalist class offensive, aided by its loyal servants in successive Labor and Coalition governments, has taken economic, political, and ideological forms.

The right to strike is all but illegal. Class consciousness has been suppressed, and workforces casualised. Working conditions have gone backwards, and trade union density decimated alongside a resultant decline in trade union militancy over the past four decades.

Recently there has been a resurgence in trade union struggles for higher wages and improved working conditions.

PEOPLE'S POWER

It is not surprising that people in Australia and around the world are disillusioned with the major parties that have governed them over recent decades, and are seeking an alternative.

In Australia, across Europe, in the US, the UK elsewhere there has been a resurgence of fascist forces, with fringe extreme right parties such as billionaire-backed One Nation gaining traction as the media mainstreams them and shuts out pro-people, pro-climate action parties including Greens and communist parties.

The survival of humanity depends on defeating monopoly capital and the billionaires behind it. Imperialism must be defeated.

As Oxfam declares: "We must resist the rule of the super-rich, demanding our governments take immediate action to radically reduce inequality, cut back the power of the billionaire class, and build back the political power of the people."

Trade union and other democratic rights must be restored to facilitate the struggle for a better life and world.

The AUKUS agreement, the US-Australia military alliance must be cancelled and all US bases and other military facilities and presence removed.

In Australia, that involves building the widest anti-fascist, anti-monopoly popular front from the ground up. Such a front must aim to include trade unions, left and progressive political parties, peace and environmental activists and other progressive individuals.

The *Guardian* urges readers and supporters to consider joining the Communist Party of Australia in that struggle to save humanity and defeat monopoly capital and its parasitic billionaires. ✪

Debt is used as an excuse for cutbacks to social services, while the government brags about military spending

Popaganda

Will Stone

Slovenian industrial provocateurs Laibach have a new album out. MUSICK, reads as a portmanteau of music sickness, or being "sick of music," and also evokes Muzak and magick.

The band's diagnosis is that most music "suffers from overproduction," facilitated by streaming services, and now reaches us as "emotional wallpaper," generated for shopping, sleeping, exercising and self-improvement.

MUSICK, and its companion piece MUSICK: ENCORE, is not only a critique of this process but "music that seduces," they say. The album's sound falls somewhere in-between the Europop of Aqua's Barbie Girl and the hyperpop of SOPHIE or Charli XCX.

Laibach insist they have "always been a pop group – even if we have not always looked or sounded like one." Which is a bit like a Dalek saying it has always been a warm and approachable presence at children's parties.

"Pop music is an extraordinarily efficient ideological machine," they say. "It compresses desire, obedience, repetition and identification into three or four minutes. It gives the listener the illusion of individual choice while millions of other individuals are making exactly the same choice at exactly the same moment.

"In this respect, pop and totalitarian spectacle fit together and complement one another perfectly. A hook is also a command.

"Industrial music traditionally exposed the machinery behind modern society. Contemporary pop is that machinery – with better lighting, smoother interfaces and a more attractive subscription model."

It's pop-aganda, then, if you will. Helping them sharpen these so-called hooks is Richard X, the producer behind Sugababes, Goldfrapp, and Kelis. He co-produced Allgorhythm, the first single from the album featuring Ghanaian singer Wiyaala, which draws from the Pet Shop Boys, Johann Pachelbel's Canon, and Culture Beat's Rhythm Is a Dancer.

The tune was considered catchy enough to be considered as Slovenia's Eurovision entry, until the country withdrew from the contest after Israel was allowed to compete. Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and Iceland also joined Slovenia in boycotting the competition over Israel's participation.

Laibach back the decision, saying: "Eurovision insists that it is an apolitical event while organising itself entirely around nations, flags, national broadcasters and competitive state representation.

"Under such conditions, it is impossible to claim that an artist represents a country only when this is convenient, but becomes a completely private individual when the actions of that country are questioned.

"This does not mean that artists should be personally persecuted, censored or held individually responsible for the actions of their government. Cultural workers are often among the most articulate critics of state violence. But Eurovision is not an independent artists' festival. It is an institutional spectacle in which countries represent themselves through artists.

The companion release, MUSICK: ENCORE, brings six extra pieces, a set of remixes, and a guest list that is an excellent introduction to Slovenia's pop scene.

Its highlight is the inclusion of Laibach's standalone single, Yom Kippur, released last October to commemorate the Gaza peace plan, which has since been violated.

The peace anthem is a sombre masterstroke that features a Palestinian Children's Choir, who sing "We don't want war and killing" and "Where is humanity?" in Arabic. It's a reminder that behind the jackboots and heavy irony is Laibach's ability to make incisive and vital political statements.

"It is the moral wound inside the album," Laibach said. "The song was conceived as a secular requiem and a demand for remembrance, repentance and responsibility. It is dedicated to the innocent victims of war, especially the tens of thousands of children killed or maimed in the genocide in Gaza.

Laibach. Photo: Nika H Praper and Ludvik.

"The title refers to the Day of Atonement, not as an accusation against a religion or a people, but as a universal metaphor for individual and collective guilt – and for the responsibility that states and societies continually refuse to recognise.

"Placing it beside Eurodance, hyperpop and the synthetic pleasures of MUSICK is therefore deliberate. Entertainment and catastrophe do not occupy separate worlds. They appear on the same screen and pass through the same algorithm: a dance track, an advertisement, an image of a dead child, another dance track."

The elephant in the room is Donald Trump. The US president's shenanigans, his spat with the Pope and controversial AI-generated image of himself as Christ posted earlier this year, have arguably out-Laibached Laibach. The band are withering, conceding that the stunt was "very Laibach, but without the analytical discipline," and "a bit too obvious."

They add: "Trump is difficult to caricature because he has eliminated the distance between caricature and political reality. Satire traditionally exaggerates the behaviour of power until its obscenity becomes visible. Trump begins with the exaggeration and then governs through it.

"Does he do it better? He does it with considerably greater resources and more dangerous consequences."

Morning Star (edited for space)

Book Review:

Palestine and Marxism

by Joseph Daher

Reviewer: Graham Holton

This book is worth a look, and a good place to start, but it's also in danger of being done for deceptive packaging.

Joseph Daher traces the history of Palestine within a context of Zionism and Middle East politics. Despite the book's title Daher contributes little to Marxist theory. His class analysis is brief, providing little engagement with racial capitalism, labour process theory, or settler-colonial Marxism, ideas developed by other scholars. Rather than a deep Marxist analysis, regional politics is seen through a Leftist perspective. It is largely a synthesis of existing literature rather than presenting any substantial new material or arguments. It's not quite what's on the tin.

As for what *is* in the tin, Daher's central argument is that Palestine must be understood as a settler-colonial society embedded within global capitalism. He combines a historical overview of Palestinian liberation within the broader struggles against imperialism and for neo-liberalism.

Daher argues that since 1967, governments in the Middle East have emphasised adopting neoliberalism rather than anti-imperialism. This is true as far as it goes – neoliberalism was on the way well before Frances Fukuyama's famous declaration that the US liberal-capitalist way of doing things was so universal that it represented "the end of history."

It's also true that the US put serious resources into undermining and defeating secular anti-imperialist movements in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Daher's is a very broad-brush assessment of Palestinian resistance and politics. He ends with the position that Palestinian liberation depends upon democratic and working-class struggles across the Middle East rather than nationalism.

Daher is dismissive of the strategic role played by the 'Axis of Resistance,' an informal coalition of Iran, the Houthis, and Shia militias in Lebanon and Iraq. His analysis of regional powers neglects the constraints imposed by US and Israeli military dominance. He obscures the differences between authoritarian governments resisting Western influence and Western-backed regimes.

Many Marxists will find Daher too critical of Hamas and Hezbollah, despite their role in resisting Israeli occupation. Some may find him too dismissive of the importance of national liberation in regional politics. Daher is very critical of Iran and the former Syrian Arab Republic. He writes them off as "authoritarian" and minimises the context of their anti-imperialist struggle.

There's a somewhat idealistic call for "struggle from below," without engaging with how those "below" should deal with existing states and groups engaged in anti-imperialist struggles.

It's not all bad news. There's some quality information here about the politics of Arab nationalism and Islamism, both topics that don't get the close look they deserve.

This book is interesting if you're starting on understanding Palestine, but Ilan Pappé, and Norman Finkelstein and Adam Hanieh hold deeper analyses.

Trump has eliminated the distance between caricature and political reality

Worth Streaming?

The Airport Chaplain

Reviewer: Peter Farmer

Hugo Weaving as Tobias the chaplain.

The Airport Chaplain **was based on a real encounter with an airport chaplain. Elsie McCreadle, one of the creators, had a minor crisis involving a lost phone and was rescued by a hard-working and helpful chaplain at Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport. She was intrigued as well as in need of a show to pitch, so she did some research and *The Airport Chaplain* is the result.**

Good for her. Whether or not you enjoy watching a drama-comedy about an airport chaplain will depend on a few factors.

One is reverence. Not for the various deities invoked. This Australian series is about a chaplain, but there's a determined focus on the human factor, so as long as you're okay with airport chaplains existing in the first place, that need not bother you. You're unlikely to need an airport chaplain, but some people might, and chaplains don't make your plane ticket more expensive. The reverence that might make the difference is for Hugo Weaving, who plays the title character.

Weaving is a veteran actor who moved from local art-films such as *Proof* to being something of a professional villain in Hollywood blockbusters like *The Matrix* and *Captain America*. Weaving is also a serious and accomplished stage actor, which is all well and good. The rest of the cast do a great job, but are somewhat overshadowed. At no stage are we not aware that this is the great Australian actor Hugo Weaving.

Another factor is your tolerance for Australian comedy-dramas. This reviewer found a lot of the lines rather forced. I get what they're trying to do, but it's a bit 'insert line showing disrespect for doing it by the book here.'

The plot is lively enough. We begin with Tobias the chaplain having a hectic day. He saves a small child from becoming a security incident (boo officious airport security staff, hurrah doing-it-his-way chaplain). He deals with a narcississtic pest who wants help taking his dog on a holiday. While racing from A to B, Tobias gives ten dollars to a homeless guy who's just hanging around the airport waiting for a passing chaplain to prove how nice they are. Tobias is harried, always on the phone and hiding from what's presumably an important past we're going to learn more about.

There are a few flashbacks that will presumably go on to show us Tobias' traumatic past and explain why he spends more time in the airport than at home.

Speaking of doing things by the book, something our chaplain hero doesn't do because he just wants to help people, he has a new boss who's a stickler for following rules, so we're treated to some scenes of him being rude to her and her being vexed. Nobody's going to go broke betting that a grudging respect will develop between the two.

Also as sure as the sun coming up tomorrow is the likelihood that Mira, his new boss, will turn out to have her own moving personal struggles.

These predictable treats are still to come. In the first episode, Tobias gets to be all white saviour by comforting a Chinese Buddhist who has bought his father's body into the country. Apparently only the presence of a nice-but-eccentric airport chaplain stops the airport from sending the body to a funeral parlour instead of to a more Buddhist place. It didn't make sense, but it didn't have to. The point being to show us that Tobias is non-racist and understanding.

In episode 2, we see some racial profiling as a Black passenger is pulled over. It's all a bit the *Australian Border Force* show. At this point *The Airport* has a bit both ways – racial profiling is bad and we furrow a brow at it, but is the passenger really hiding something, in which case the ABF guy's "gut feeling" is justified? The show then diverges from the *Australian Border Force* sub-plot into surrealism as the security staff let our chaplain hero stick his nose in and solve things with the power of empathy and being Hugo Weaving.

Verdict? It's okay. Australian TV needs to do more showing, not telling. A lot of us have no argument with the show's propositions that it's bad to racially stereotype people and good to be a bit tolerant, but we don't need to be hit over the head with them.

These harsh words notwithstanding, check it out if you like seeing Hugo Weaving act well, and stick around if you don't mind unsurprising resolutions to problems.

A study in fascism: Stefan Zweig's *Chess*

Graham Holton

Stefan Zweig's novella *Schachnovelle* (1942) has been republished as *Chess*, and made into a brilliant German movie (*Chess Story*) with English subtitles.

Chess is an allegory of European society in crisis, where capitalist modernity has produced the commodified rationality of the chess champion Mirko Czentovic. His psychologically fragmented opponent Dr B brings psychological insight and compassion to a story suffused with the foreboding of Nazism in Europe.

In the novella fascism is more than an evil; it is a system that reduces people to objects. Before the rise of Nazism, educated Europeans assumed that their culture guaranteed morality and civilisation, and prevented the rise of barbarism.

The novella demolishes these assumptions. *Chess* is a psychological study of isolation and totalitarianism, exploring class power, ideology, alienation, moral collapse, and the dehumanising effects of fascism and bourgeois individualism; symptoms of a society dominated by capitalism.

The novella is more than a battle between two chess players. It powerfully depicts the destruction of human personality under authoritarian power, with alienation taken to an extreme as the commodification of intellectual life. Here is expressed the collapse of liberal European civilisation, and the psychological consequences of domination and isolation.

Mirko Czentovic, who plays chess with passengers on an ocean liner to Buenos Aires, Argentina. A passenger, Dr B, tells the defeated players the winning moves to beat the champion. We learn that Dr B had been arrested by the Gestapo after the annexation of Austria. He learnt to play chess from a stolen book of chess masters' games which he memorised.

By playing against himself, Dr B developed the ability to separate his psyche into two personas. This was his defence against the mental torture by the Gestapo.

The game of chess between Czentovic and Dr B becomes a battle of wits and sanity, a clash between genius and traumatic obsession. Dr B was warned by his doctor that playing chess would cause a psychological collapse. As the game is played the narrator sees the strain resurfacing. Soon Dr B is playing in his mind a different game to that on the board. He resigns from the game, apologising.

The novella parallels Dr B's mental collapse with Zweig's own mental exhaustion. The game serves as a final, tragic allegory for the destruction of European civilisation. In real life, Stefan Zweig, and his wife Lotte, fled Nazi occupied Austria to live in Petrópolis, Brazil. Disillusioned by the collapse into Nazi barbarism of the Europe they loved, isolated in Brazil, Stefan and Lotte took their own lives in 1942.

Chess is well worth the read. *Chess Story* can be seen on Prime Video and Apple TV.

Hope rises in Berlin immigrant communities as Left wins

On 20 September, Berliners delivered an unprecedented victory to The Left (Die Linke in German) party, a camp long seen as radical for its anti-capitalist and pro-migrant stance. Elif Eralp, the party's Berlin leader, is of Turkish descent and is likely to become the city's first mayor with an immigrant background. She would also be Berlin's first mayor from the Left.

The party's win has brought relief to pro-migrant residents at a time when the far-right AfD party continues to gain support in eastern states, as well as to young people below 30, who, lured by the promise of affordability, represented the bulk of the Left's voter base at the polls.

"It was my first time voting," Skeva said. The neighbourhood, where the smell of sizzling kebabs wafts from stalls onto busy streets, is home to a large immigrant population. "I want them to tax the rich and to provide more opportunities for everyone," she added.

Eralp, who has been likened to New York's progressive mayor Zohran Mamdani, campaigned to end high rent prices and chronic housing shortages in the ever-expanding city. The Left party's plans include issuing rent caps – a phrase Eralp wears on a gold necklace – and expropriating homes from big corporate landlords.

She has also promised to clean up dirty neighbourhoods, prioritise social spending on vulnerable groups such as the homeless, and fight for non-citizens' rights to vote in local elections.

"I am going to be happy to see all the new changes they promised," said security worker Michael Akan, 26, a Left voter from Wedding, a diverse working-class district. "High rent prices are a problem for me, and gas prices too."

States cannot regulate gas or other commodity prices, but Akan, like many of the Left's supporters, believes Eralp's anti-poor policies will somehow cascade and ease their living situation. Her party won 25.7 per cent of the state's vote – the highest – and a poll by broadcaster ZDF showed Eralp's own ratings at 36 per cent, the highest among candidates for the mayor's post.

As leftists celebrated in Berlin, the far-right AfD party, which opposes migration, also cheered its strong gains in the election. The party clinched 16 per cent of the vote in Berlin to come in third place. On the same day, it also won state elections in north-eastern Mecklenburg-Vorpommern state, making it the AfD's second state election victory in two weeks.

Against that backdrop, there was "no question" about whom she would vote for, said Ana S Pareja, who runs the Bartleby and Co bookstore, a cosy space on the edge of Neukolln. In her bookshop, surrounded by Spanish literature, Pareja organised voting workshops for eligible European nationals and, before the Sunday polls, encouraged those in her network to choose Eralp.

"We are going to have a woman who has an immigrant background and who is like us," Pareja said."We don't know what will change immediately, but every proposal Elif Eralp has is important, from rent to rubbish to the untouchable subject," she added, referring to solidarity with Palestine.

TABOO

Indeed, showing support for Palestine is somewhat of a taboo because of Germany's strict pro-Israel stance. Demonstrators have been cracked down on, and cultural centres shuttered. This year, Germany stripped three pro-Palestinian bookshops of a prestigious national award for "left-wing extremism."

While Eralp has been criticised for failing to articulate a stronger stance against Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, or for failing to propose clearer policies against anti-Semitism, the politician has reiterated that she stands in support of Palestinian, Jewish and other vulnerable communities. Her supporters hope that the state, at least, will halt the attacks on pro-Palestinian voices.

Despite the victory, Eralp's work is far from done. Her party does not have a parliamentary majority, so it will have to form a coalition with other like-minded groups. An alliance is likely with the former governing coalition of the Social Democrats (SPD) and the conservatives (CDU).

However, both parties have already baulked at Eralp's policies, particularly the prospect of housing expropriation – meaning the Left has to convince them, or, as some of its supporters fear, make heavy compromises. Negotiations could take weeks, even months.

For now, though, some Berliners are simply revelling in the feeling of having fought back against the fears of a Germany-wide takeover by the far right.

"The first change is that this is symbolic," Pareja, the bookstore owner, said. "That's important for people to regain hope and trust that was lost."

Al Jazeera

North Korea-Russia bridge is not a threat to AUKUS

Graham Holton

The new road bridge linking the DPRK (North Korea) and Russia across the Tumen River opened on 7 September 2026.

The US$100 million link between Rason/Tumangang in the DPRK and Khasan, Russia accommodates up to 300 vehicles a day, with passenger traffic expected to increase alongside freight. The bridge will create greater economic and political potential in the region.

While the DPRK maintains 98 per cent of its trade with China, Russia is becoming a major economic and strategic partner. Political analysts have pointed to increased Russia-DPRK and China-DPRK border crossings as evidence that Pyongyang is increasing its access to the two large economic and logistical networks.

The DPRK is supplying Russia with workers, ammunition and military personnel, in return for foreign currency, energy, and economic support. The bridge's strategic value will increase as Russia-DPRK military cooperation expands. The north eastern city of Rason is close to the Russian, Chinese, and DPRK borders, providing access to the Sea of Japan, making the region important to China's Jilin, which is seeking better access to maritime trade.

Some analysts see this strategic interconnectedness as a growing problem for the AUKUS pact, particularly Australia's ability to operate with the US and UK in the Indo-Pacific. The Australian government describes the Russia-DPRK military relationship as affecting Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security.

Previously, the Ukraine war and East Asian security were seen as separate military theatres. Now Australia's defence planners are concerned that several military theatres are increasingly interconnected.

The DPRK's improved military capacity is seen as a growing threat to Northeast Asian security, which in turn impacts US/Japan/South Korea military cooperation and Australia's involvement in AUKUS.

In December 2024 the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the High Representative of the European Union issued a joint statement condemning increased DPRK-Russia cooperation.

Despite extensive demonisation by Western media outlets and politicians, neither the DPRK or China have started any wars. The US, on the other hand, has started at least five. AUKUS itself has already connected Atlantic, European, and Pacific militaries, so it's wrong to say that a bridge between the DPRK and Russia has suddenly connected these regions.

The reality is that although China, Russia, and North Korea share borders, and cooperation between the three is increasing, each has its own interests. Any 'threat' is an exaggerated fear that AUKUS countries are exploiting to increase their military budgets.

Rason DPRK. Graphic: ASDFGH – wikimedia.org (CC BY 3.0)

Japan: 80% of US military don't go to court after offences

Out of non-traffic Penal Code offences in Japan involving US military personnel, their family members, or civilian employees attached to the US military, only 15.7% went to trial last year, while 84.3% were exempted from prosecution.

This has come to light in materials which the Japan Peace Committee obtained from the Justice Ministry through an information disclosure request.

According to the materials, the number of indictments against US military-related members totalled 21, while 113 cases were dismissed. The 15.7% is less than half of the overall prosecution rate in Japan (37.7%). Of crimes committed by US service persons, 60% took place in Okinawa Prefecture.

What stands out is the low prosecution rate for sexual assaults. The percentage of US military personnel charged with sex crimes in 2025 stood at only 10%. Nine out of ten US military personnel were not indicted though they were arrested for non-consensual sexual intercourse and non-consensual sexual intercourse resulting in death or injury. The total number of arrests for sex offenses in 2025 was 12, up five from the previous year. Seven of those were in Okinawa.

The trend of low prosecution rates for US military-related members has persisted for many years. Behind this lies the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and a secret pact under which Japan renounces its jurisdiction over crimes and accidents committed by US servicemen.

Article 17 of the US-Japan Status of Forces agreement, signed in 1960, states that the United States has the primary right to exercise jurisdiction over offenses committed by US soldiers in Japan "on duty," while Japan has the primary jurisdiction over crimes occurring "off duty." However, under the 1953 secret pact concluded at a Japan-US joint committee meeting, Japan promised not to exercise its jurisdiction over US military-related crimes except for those it considers to be "substantively important."

Japan Press Weekly

Thousands commit to popular front politics at French festival

"I'm always on the side of the people, of those who fight to defend their livelihoods, of those fighting for the dignity to feed their children and pay their bills," declared Fabien Roussel, National Secretary of the French Communist Party (PCF) to a crowd of thousands. "I know which side I am on when there are barricades."

Roussel spoke at the 91st edition of Fête de *L'Humanité*, the festival of the PCF-affiliated daily newspaper *L'Humanité*, held from 11 to 13 September. The event drew over 500,000 people from across France and around the world for festivities, music, and political discourse and was the venue at which Roussel officially declared his candidacy for the French presidency in 2027.

The theme of the festival recalled the 1936 declaration of the Popular Front, a broad anti-fascist coalition of Communist, Socialist, and democratic forces united against the rise of fascism in Europe. Through mobilisation of unions, mass demonstrations, and electoral struggle, the Popular Front defeated an insurgent far-right movement.

Holding the government accountable to its election promises, unions and workers continued to mobilise and agitate for their demands, winning the cornerstones of modern labour and democratic rights in France.

Facing the renewed threat of a far-right parliamentary majority in snap elections in 2024, France's major union federations united to call for the formation of the "New Popular Front (NFP)," by which left-of-centre forces would field a single unified parliamentary list and a shared political program. The previous alliance had broken down during the European Parliament elections, prompting French President Emmanuel Macron to dissolve parliament despite the threat of a far-right takeover.

The NFP – composed of the Communist Party (PCF), the Socialist Party (PS), the populist France Insoumise (LFI), Greens (EELV), and other minor parties – won an upset victory and a plurality in the National Assembly, denying a majority to both the fascist National Rally (RN) and Macron's neoliberal allies.

However, the alliance was unable to install its consensus candidate for prime minister nor counter-balance the immense power of the French presidency, leading to the current period of political instability, austerity, militarisation, and rising far-right sentiment.

Fabien Roussel, National Secretary of the French Communist Party (PCF). Photo: Zouhair NAKARA – wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 4.0)

With the next presidential elections now on the horizon, RN leader Marine Le Pen – convicted of embezzlement along with dozens of other party leaders, but allowed to run due to legal technicalities – stands as a clear frontrunner in recent opinion polls.

By returning to the iconography of the Popular Front, the Fête de *L'Humanité*, organised jointly by the PCF and *L'Humanité*, demonstrated the path out through a broad unity of forces under working-class leadership.

As the PCF, *L'Humanité*, the CGT, and other progressive forces look to next year's elections and after, the festival made clear that the spirit of working-class unity is here to stay.

People's World (edited for space)

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

instagram.com/communist.party.australia/

Global Briefs

CHINA: China has said it opposes "illegal" US sanctions against Iranian airlines. The US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent earlier warned that "all the Iranian airlines will be shut down around the world" within days as the US administration escalates economic pressure on Iran. China rejected the US threats, stating that "China consistently opposes illegal unilateral sanctions that lack a basis in international law or authorisation from the UN Security Council," and called for disputes involving Iran to be addressed through political and diplomatic means.

ETHIOPIA: Seven armed groups across Ethiopia have announced a new alliance against the federal government, bringing together forces that have previously fought either separately, or in some cases, against each other. The alliance admits the contradictions but says the groups intended to address them through political discussions. "We will sit at the table later to solve our problems peacefully," said one of the group's leaders. "We think we will be successful, we have been talking with each other for more than a year." So far the federal authorities have not publicly responded to the announcement.

UK: Prime Minister Andy Burnham confirmed that Britain will provide military support to Saudi Arabia in its war against Yemen, his first authorisation of military action as prime minister. Independent British MP and former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has strongly criticised the decision: "Helping the US to bomb Iraq. Now, helping Saudi Arabia to bomb Yemen. This is a terrible and shameful decision, which drags Britain further into conflict, deepens its complicity in Saudi war crimes, and proves that no lessons have been learnt whatsoever," Corbyn concluded.

POLAND: If established, a permanent US military base in Poland could be named "Fort Trump," according to Polish President Karol Nawrocki. The Polish President expressed hope that the US and Poland would finalise the draft of a permanent American base. Nawrocki said the decision to create it is only a matter of time, and that he would like to see the construction completed before the end of Trump's term in 2029. Nawrocki noted that Poland was ready to accept part of the American military if the US reduced its presence in Germany.

MEXICO: Mexico's Chamber of Deputies has approved a bill to amend an article in the Mexican Constitution to prohibit dual nationalities for those seeking the presidency of the republic, state governorships and the head of government of Mexico City. The decision was backed by 334 votes, rejected by 109 votes, with one abstention. The constitutional reform seeks to safeguard national security and independence in face of geopolitical pressures.

US: The US government has denied missile strikes on a primary school and a sports complex in the Iranian towns of Minab and Lamerd, and has said that it is investigating what happened. However a new report from the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran, a UN human rights body, has said that there are "reasonable grounds" for thinking that the US committed war crimes in the two strikes. Around 177 civilians were killed in the strikes.

ISRAEL: Doctors Without Borders estimate that around 90% of water and sanitation infrastructure have been destroyed since 2023 in Gaza, including wells, reservoirs, pipelines, desalination units and wastewater facilities. Palestinians have been experiencing inhumane conditions with sewage contamination and shortages of safe drinking water. Now the infrastructure destruction in Gaza is being felt in Israel itself – pollution has caused a vast micro algae bloom, stretching for up to 100 km along the Mediterranean coastline. It clogs filtration systems serving Israeli desalination plans and has forced five of the six main desalination facilities offline. As Israeli environmental organisation Zalul pointed out – "Pollution does not recognise political borders."

Swedish communists celebrate best result in 35 years

Statement from the Communist Party of Sweden

The final results of the Swedish parliamentary elections have now been announced, and they show clearly that the Communist Party of Sweden has achieved its best election result in 35 years.

We are deeply grateful to our cadres and sympathisers who have worked extremely hard to inform voters about our party and to deliver communist ballots to polling places, as municipalities have no legal obligation to distribute our ballots. The work of our cadres and sympathisers is of the greatest importance to the struggle for socialism in Sweden.

The assistance we have received from our fraternal parties is also a source of deep gratitude for our party. Its significance cannot be measured in votes alone, but also in the solidarity it demonstrates and in the affirmation of the international character of our common struggle.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our voters, who have held their heads high as they cast the ballot affirming their demand for a new and better world. Their vote acknowledges that socialism is still the only possible way forward for humanity.

Despite the obstacles placed in our way by the capitalist Swedish state, we have managed to achieve a significant increase in our electoral support. Unlike the parties that are part and parcel of the bourgeois political system, our party is forced to pay for the printing of our ballots and then take responsibility for distributing them to the polling places ourselves. The big parties receive millions of euros in state funding, while we rely on our own resources. Every cent our party has raised through membership fees and donations from sympathisers has made a difference.

But our work is not done. While the caretaker parties of capitalism now engage in elaborate political theatre to determine which parties will get their turn at administering the capitalist state, we continue our struggle for socialism and revolution.

We know that, no matter which party or parties win this game of musical chairs, the people will be on the losing side. Therefore, we continue our struggle. While those caretaker parties all ultimately represent capital, our party has no interests other than those of the working people.

We realise that our share of the vote is still significantly smaller than that of the big, established parties, but we also know that the votes we receive carry so much more power than those of the other parties, because all our votes carry with them the future. We see our reach growing. We see that more people are listening to us, and more people are voting for us.

Strengthened by this result, we continue the struggle for the future: for an existence without insecurity and poverty, without war and misery.

Source: Labor Today International

caretaker parties represent capital, our party has no interests other than those of the working people

Russian voters choose continuity

Dmitry Kamyshev

Amid dramatically different domestic and international circumstances, continuity in the Russian election results is perhaps the most notable result of all.

The 2026 result has produced some changes, but the new is considerably less significant than the familiar.

Turnout, at around 57%, was the highest in a State Duma election for a decade, although hardly unprecedented as participation has exceeded 60% four times in earlier elections.

United Russia was the clearest beneficiary, taking almost 58% of the party-list vote, up sharply from 49.8% in 2021. Even so, it remained below the party's record 64.3% in 2007, during Vladimir Putin's second presidential term.

The Communists again established themselves as Russia's principal opposition party, comfortably finishing second with almost 14%. That represented a significant retreat from their roughly 19% in 2021, and was far removed from the turbulent 1990s, when the party could attract almost a quarter of the electorate.

The ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia improved from 7.55% to about 8.8%, but its hopes of overtaking the Communists proved misplaced, while liberals New People also advanced substantially, from 5.3% to around 7.9%, climbing from fifth to fourth. A breakthrough for New People that was suggested by some summer polling never materialised.

Fair Russia provided the late drama. After appearing in danger of losing its parliamentary status, the party eventually scraped across the 5% threshold, yet even this apparent resurrection was broadly consistent with pre-election polling averages.

The larger story, therefore, is how little Russian voting preferences have changed during five extraordinarily eventful years.

Since the previous Duma election, Russia has experienced the Ukraine conflict, unprecedented Western sanctions, sweeping economic changes, and a profound reorientation of its foreign relations. Such circumstances might reasonably have produced either a radicalisation of political opinion or widespread political apathy, but instead, voters largely chose continuity. Thus, United Russia strengthened its position, but the familiar parliamentary opposition survived alongside it.

That may be the election's real surprise. Amid unusually volatile conditions at home and abroad, Russians have largely preserved the existing balance of political forces, suggesting that while there has undoubtedly been consolidation around the flag, maintaining alternative voices within the established political system still matters to a significant part of the electorate.

RT.COM

Israeli right tries to bar Arab and leftist parties from elections

In the self-proclaimed "only democracy in the Middle East," Israeli authorities have moved to bar both the main Arab electoral lists from October's general election.

The country's Central Elections Committee recently voted to disqualify the United Arab List, or Ra'am, led by Mansour Abbas, and the Joint List, an alliance of the Arab-led Hadash, Ta'al and Balad parties.

It also voted separately to bar Hadash legislator Ofer Cassif and Balad leader Sami Abu Shehadeh from the election set for 27 October.

Adalah, the legal centre representing the parties and candidates, says it will challenge the votes when the court hears the cases next week.

Ra'am called its exclusion "political and unacceptable," saying the decision was intended to prevent it from influencing the balance of power and changing the government.

The Joint List said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir were trying to discourage Arab citizens from voting "because they fear our ability to bring down the government of genocide and racism."

Its leader, Yousef Jabareen, questioned how the committee could bar parties representing more than 1.25 million voters.

Abu Shehadeh said his exclusion would be challenged in court and through public protest.

Rejecting the allegation that he supports violence, he told *The Times of Israel*, "I have never called for violence or terrorism. I oppose armed struggle."

Morning Star

cpa.org.au

Trump claims win over Greenland

US President Donald Trump has written on his social media that the US "has entered into an Agreement with The Kingdom of Denmark, and Greenland, that gives the United States permanent control over security, and all other needs, in Greenland, completely addressing ALL of our many US concerns. There will be NO COST to the United States!"

He said the US will always have the complete ability to defend the security of Greenland.

"At my direction, we worked with representatives of Denmark and Greenland to guarantee that the United States will FOREVER have the complete ability to do what is necessary in Greenland in order to secure and defend the security of Greenland, and the United States of America," Trump said.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio called it a historic victory.

"This historic agreement permanently guarantees US security interests in the Arctic at zero cost to the US taxpayer," he declared.

The office of Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen confirmed the deal was expected to be formalised during the UN General Assembly session.

The deal stipulates that if Greenland became independent of Denmark, it would remain a NATO member.

Sputnik (edited for space)

Students protest German conscription plans

Tens of thousands of students have taken to the streets across Germany to protest the government's military service reform amid Berlin's push to expand the armed forces, citing the alleged threat from Russia.

Organisers of the "School Strike Against Conscription" said around 45,000 students joined demonstrations in some 100 cities and towns. Police did not provide a nationwide figure, but reported around 2,400 protesters in Berlin, while hundreds more rallied in Stuttgart, Nuremberg, Munich, and Hamburg.

Capture from video: Ruptly/RT.com

Footage from the video agency Ruptly showed crowds marching through Hamburg carrying banners reading "We won't fight in your wars," "Education instead of bombs," "Not our war" and "Russia is not our enemy."

Some protesters also targeted Chancellor Friedrich Merz, with banners reading "No Merz, no war, no billionaires!"

"I don't want to see my child sent off to war by politicians like the ones we currently have in Germany," one protester told Ruptly. She said she was "more afraid of [European Commission President] Ursula von der Leyen, Merz ... than of any Russian president."

A student described the reform as a "form of war preparation," arguing that young people could eventually be forced "to shoot at young people ... for the interests that aren't ours ... but the interests of profit-hungry arms corporations and politicians."

Germany's Military Service Modernisation Act, which took effect in January, requires 18-year-old men to complete a questionnaire on their willingness and suitability for military service. Mandatory medical examinations for men born in 2008 or later are due to begin in July 2027.

Service remains voluntary, but parliament can activate compulsory military service if recruitment targets are not met or the security situation deteriorates.

The government aims to expand the Bundeswehr (German army) to more than 260,000 active troops and 200,000 reservists by 2035, citing Germany's NATO commitments and what it describes as a worsening security environment in Europe.

Defence Minister Boris Pistorius has previously warned that Germany must be prepared for a potential conflict with Russia. Moscow has repeatedly rejected claims that it intends to attack NATO countries, describing them as "nonsense."

RT.com

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Half the Sky

Women and unions

GH

Women are essential to Australia's growing trade-union movement: numerically and politically. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures for August 2024 show 14 per cent of female employees were union members, compared to 12 per cent of male employees. This changes who unions represent, and potentially what issues unions prioritise and how they organise.

Historically, unions concentrated on the male as head and breadwinner in the factory or workplace. Today, the expansion of women into paid employment means that capitalist production also relies upon unpaid reproductive labour, such as reproducing the future workforce, raising children, and maintaining households. Consequently, this reproduction of labour power means childcare, parental leave, and care-workers' wages are fundamental to the functioning of a capitalist economy.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) has introduced measures to ensure an equal representation of women in its leadership and decision-making structures. With the increasing female composition of membership, its institutional culture is changing. A major breakthrough occurred in 1995, when Jennie George became the first woman president of the ACTU. She was followed by Sharan Burrow.

Historically Australian capitalism has treated women's labour as secondary. Women were assumed to be economically dependent upon men, while occupations dominated by women were systematically undervalued. The union movement has challenged this through equal-pay campaigns.

Women have a long history of militant unionism. In 1882, Melbourne clothing workers struck against wage reductions and established the Tailoresses Union, Australia's first union composed entirely of working women. In 1902 a union campaign won equal pay for women telegraphists and postmistresses in the Commonwealth Public Service.

One of the most important figures was Muriel Heagney (1885-1974), who was a delegate to the Women's Central Organising Committee and attended the first Victorian Labor Women's Conference in 1909. In 1930 Heagney formed the Unemployed Girls' Relief Movement establishing sewing centres where women worked for a relief allowance. In 1943-47 she was women's organiser for the Amalgamated Engineering Union. She died in poverty at St Kilda, Melbourne in 1974.

In 1969 the Arbitration Commission recognised equal pay for equal work, although initially it covered less than 18 per cent of working women. Three years later the campaign produced a significant breakthrough with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

The ACTU argues that recent wage increases in female-dominated occupations have contributed to the narrowing of Australia's gender pay gap. In August 2026 the national gender pay gap reached its lowest level of 11 per cent.

Women have fought for equal pay, shorter working hours, improved conditions, maternity rights, protection from sexual discrimination, recognition of women's skills, and childcare and family responsibilities. Sectors with substantial female employment have some of Australia's strongest unions. Health and social assistance are historically highly unionised, with membership of 24 per cent in 2020. In 2024, education and training had a 27 per cent unionisation rate, the highest of any industry.

Women in the care sector are becoming the leading force in the working-class movement. This means nurses, teachers, aged-care workers, childcare workers and community service workers have significant political influence and industrial power. In sectors where women's labour is socially indispensable, their collective withdrawal of labour can have enormous consequences. A strike by nurses, teachers, aged care, or childcare workers, can turn a workplace dispute into a political emergency.

This has created a contradiction in Australian labour politics. Capitalism increasingly depends upon women's paid labour, while much of the unpaid labour necessary to reproduce that workforce remains disproportionately performed by women. Wage disputes are now challenging the economic valuation of traditionally feminised labour in Australia, making women in the trade union movement even stronger.

Trump's Middle East quagmire

Rob Warzyniak

Since the attacks on Iran in late February, US President Donald Trump has announced that the US has won the war in Iran 68 times, as of this writing. Out of those 68 times, only one claim of victory was in September: an ominous sign, no doubt, that the war is indeed going poorly.

STRAITS

Perhaps most unsettling are the words from retired US Naval Intelligence Officer Travis Akers, who said, "Before I retired in 2024, the 'worst-case scenario' in the Pentagon for the Middle East was both straits being closed. It was not even imaginable except in PowerPoint briefs and war college gaming scenarios. Under Pete Hegseth, it has become a reality in less than six months."

The two straits Akers is talking about are the Strait of Hormuz, which was open before the war and has since closed, and the Bab al-Mandab Strait. The Bab al-Mandab Strait connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean and, like the Strait of Hormuz, is a vital passage for the world's oil and cargo ships.

Since the Yemeni Armed Forces and Ansarallah (Houthis) began to advance along the coast, capturing towns and villages along the way, they have now reached the strait and taken control. With Yemen's government backed by Saudi Arabia, and the US deciding not to help Saudi Arabia drive back a Houthi advance in Yemen, control of the Bab al-Mandab Strait remains perilous, to say the least.

The worst-case scenario of both straits being closed is made even worse by the drone attacks on the Saudi East-West pipeline. Drones originating from Iraq damaged three pumping stations on the 1207-kilometre-long pipeline, and estimates for how long it will take to repair are five to six weeks. While the Strait of Hormuz has been largely closed since the start of the war, the East-West pipeline has served as the main route for Middle East oil, moving 4% to 5% of the global supply.

CASUALTIES

The fighting between the Saudis and the Houthis has escalated to the point where the US warned citizens in several Middle Eastern countries to exercise "heightened vigilance," and that "the security environment remains complex with the potential for unforeseen escalation."

This warning comes on the heels of a *Washington Post* report wherein six Defence Department insiders familiar with the agency's internal casualty accounting data said there have been more service member deaths from the Iran war than the Trump administration is admitting.

Fuel prices have skyrocketed because of the Iran war, with diesel prices hitting an all-time high. In a recent speech in North Carolina, Trump told the audience, "It's a very inexpensive price to pay for what we've done." Trump has no empathy for working-class people, so higher petrol and diesel prices mean nothing to him, especially since his second turn at the presidency has netted him a couple of billion dollars.

CHINA

Despite all this, the US and the world have China to thank for petrol prices not being even higher. President Xi spent years amassing the world's largest oil stockpile while also investing heavily in renewable energy. China now leads the world in overall renewable energy capacity and, while drawing on its oil stockpile and offloading some onto the global market, can weather the storm in the Middle East.

Retired US Navy Rear Admiral Mark Montgomery, an analyst at the Foundation for Defence of Democracies, said, "The Chinese deserve credit. They did in 10 years what took us 25 years after the 1973 oil crisis to do: really build a kind of strategic petroleum reserve that could allow you to weather this."

At the start of the Iran war, Donald Trump implored the Iranian people to rise up and overthrow their government. Now, the Iranian government is saying the Strait of Hormuz will remain closed until Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are removed from power.

US President Donald Trump. Photo: Gage Skidmore – wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 2.0)

The leaders of the US and Israel told the Iranian people to revolt, then indiscriminately bombed them, an act that will go down in history as one of Trump's most colossal blunders. We should not be surprised when Iran says the US and Israeli people are the ones who should revolt. Perhaps this is why Trump is now saying he wants his Washington arch to be a military institution, capable of holding drones and snipers.

OIL CRISIS

We are on our way to another oil crisis. While countries that could shift to renewable power did so, the US did the opposite. Ronald Reagan famously removed the solar panels Jimmy Carter put on the White House, and Donald Trump has expressed outright hostility to renewable energy.

While many on the right in the US are openly against electric cars, China has developed electric cars that cost half as much as US-built ones. You can't buy one, however, because the free-market conservatives don't want competition.

None of this bodes well for the short term, and the long term is already bleak. Very recently, the US almost accidentally went to war with China over a false AI-based military intelligence report, and Yemen's Ansarallah have essentially taken Saudi Arabia's oil offline.

Added to all of this is the United Nations officially accusing the US of committing war crimes in Iran, claiming it has "reasonable grounds" to believe the US committed war crimes in two strikes in which children were killed. The people of the US would do well to follow Iran's advice. Removing Trump from power would only be the beginning of fixing his and his administration's mess.

People's World (edited for space) ✪

Trump has no empathy for working class people, higher petrol and diesel prices mean nothing to him

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