

Capitalism in crisis

M Santos

Households are being squeezed by rising inflation and higher interest rates. Poverty, homelessness, and unemployment are on the rise. The housing crisis is deepening.

The Reserve Bank of Australia's (RBA) response is to increase interest rates for the fourth time this year to 4.6%. More pain in the form of even higher rates is to come. Welcome to capitalism in crisis.

This is the fifth interest rate increase this year taking the rate from 3.6% to 4.6%. That hike amounts to a whopping 27.8% increase in interest costs. The banks responded within hours of the announcement raising interest rates on home loans.

Personal insolvencies are on the rise. Since interest rates started to increase, an additional 200,000 people are out of the paid workforce.

As for the resultant fall in housing prices, it brings little joy to those who recently took out a mortgage or to vendors watching the housing bubble begin to burst.

"All households' budgets have been affected by high inflation eroding purchasing power," the RBA's September *Financial Stability Report* said.

The report stated the obvious: "... this is more likely to cause stress for lower-income households, many of whom are renters, because their expenses tend to make up a larger share of their disposable income."

According to RBA Governor, Michele Bullock, the main reasons for interest rate rises are weak productivity growth, excess demand for goods and services compared with supply, and a labour market that is still "too tight." That means unemployment has not risen enough.

The inflation impulse from the Middle East conflict and the AI boom are in addition to these primary causes Bullock said. She does, however, acknowledge that

"... fuel prices, fertiliser prices, transport prices, all these things now are permanently higher."

Labor Treasurer Jim Chalmers blamed the Middle East (read US/Israeli war on Iran) for turbocharging inflation.

"[But] we do take responsibility for our part of the fight against inflation. That's why we will continue to manage the budget in a responsible way," he said.

"Responsible" gives little hope for the millions of households struggling to meet basics, for the homeless, and unemployed. "Responsible" is a weasel word covering up austerity measures – billions of dollars being cut from the NDIS and aged care, and the failure to increase poverty-level JobSeeker and other social security payments. It doesn't impress those on the receiving end of the housing crisis.

LIVING STANDARDS

When asked if the RBA is prepared to drive the economy into recession in an attempt to bring interest rates down to the Board's arbitrary target of 2%-3%, Bullock replied: "That is not our central base case **at this moment**." In other words, the RBA is prepared to go that far.

"So it's not our base case, I don't want it, but if inflation expectations get away, that's the sort of scenario you might be looking at," she said in answer to another question.

"We'll do what we have to do to get inflation down because we need to." (emphasis added)

Bullock admitted that "those who have mortgages, yes, this clearly impacts them and it hurts them. They've got less cash flow, and they've got less money to spend on things."

That is the aim of interest rate hikes – to reduce consumption of goods and services.

Workers and their families take a hit with every interest rate



Occupy London protest, London. Photo: Alan Denney – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

rise. So too do those on the lowest incomes such as the unemployed and pensioners.

They are being made to shoulder the burden as the RBA raises their cost of living – a blunt and cruel instrument designed to reduce purchasing power in the name of cutting demand for goods and services.

In the short-term higher interest rates can increase inflation as businesses and landlords pay more to service their debts and pass on higher costs to consumers and renters.

Reduced demand for goods and services leads to redundancies and bankruptcies. Already unemployment is on the rise.

"According to our research, in fact, the most important channel is the exchange rate channel. And raising interest rates impacts import prices." It attracts investors which increases the value of the dollar, making imports cheaper and **"encourages people to spend more on imports rather than domestically produced goods,"** says Bullock.

Yet another means of increasing unemployment! Don't buy Australian-made!

The number of multiple job-holders has risen 6.6% since March 2026 to one million with women being the majority. It's evidence that the previous cuts are hurting.

The RBA is playing Russian roulette, trying to shrink an economy showing signs of heading into recession.

One of the RBA's aims is "full employment." It was originally defined as "Ensuring that as many Australians who wanted to work could find jobs."

In 2025, the RBA and the Treasurer reached agreement on defining it as the maximum level of employment consistent with low and stable inflation. In other words unemployment could be 5%, 6% or even higher and still be called "full employment."

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The RBA is playing Russian roulette, trying to shrink an economy already showing signs of heading into recession.

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Brazil: US pulls out all the stops

Guardian

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Zero heroes

It's a little over three months into the financial year. Some people are yet to do their tax. Plenty of others have already had a refund, while some of us are still looking forward to one. Getting a refund is good news. A little extra money comes in handy.

Not such good news is the revelation that some of Australia's largest and most successful corporations paid zero tax in the 2024-25 financial year. This is not because they're struggling. A fair few companies paid no tax despite earning hefty profits. Origin Energy actually paid tax – \$200 on \$1.8 billion in profits! Woodside, a massive fossil fuel corporation paid no tax off \$6.7 billion in revenue. Over ten years, Santos has declared \$48.4 billion in revenue and \$221 million in profits but paid zero income tax.

Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, always big on scolding "dole bludgers" has something to celebrate – over a decade, it paid no tax on declared profits totalling \$1.38 billion.

Credit where credit is due, oil giant Chevron paid a grand total of \$30 on \$113 taxable income, not exactly doing the heavy lifting.

Workers can't do this kind of thing. They don't have the teams of accountants and lawyers required, not to mention the income streams that make getting millions down to zero possible. Sure, a lot of people have a go at a deduction or two for work expenses, but if you go wild and deduct your taxable income down to nothing, the Australian Tax Office will be at your door like lightning asking some hard questions.

The simple explanation for this unwelcome news about non-tax paying corporate giants is that it shows Australia needs fairer tax laws and perhaps a better-resourced Tax Office. We absolutely need both, but it shows more than that. The zero-tax corporate titans show that we are *not* in this together. Woodside can sponsor all the rugby teams it likes. We are not on the same side.

The likes of Optus and NewsCorp paying zero or next to zero tax shows the lie of the neoliberal myth called 'trickle down.' Some large companies do pay a fair bit of tax. That's fine, they should! Their 'contributions' are used as justification for the system as a whole. The idea is that massive inequality is okay because the wealth of the Murdochs, Optuses, and Santos' trickles down to the rest of us.

Australian society is set up for the large companies and their owners. Those owners form a class, a ruling class. The assumption that getting ahead in Australia is just a matter of working hard and saving up a bit goes up on smoke when you consider the many ways in which the workers, the ones who produce the wealth, subsidise the people who own the means of production. Massive tax deductions are just one kind of upwards subsidy.

The working class of this country produce *all* the wealth that this country makes. They should keep it and control it. That's not going to happen just by asking nicely. It will happen by building working class consciousness and working class power. As things are at the moment, those things seem a long way off but that's what we're working towards.

After all, a nation run in the interests of its largest class isn't more unbelievable than a company that made more than \$100 million not paying enough tax to buy a round of drinks.

Capitalism in crisis

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AI JUGGERNAUT

The RBA recognises that AI is a contributor to inflation.

Data centre spending is projected to total US\$10.3 trillion (AU\$15tr) from 2025-2032 according to the Brookings Institution, posing serious risks to global financial markets. Never before has such a massive raising of capital taken place in such a relatively short time.

That is equivalent to almost one third of the US economy (GDP) of close to US\$33 trillion and a quarter of the US government's more than \$40 trillion debt which is being fuelled by military spending and loss of income resulting from massive corporate tax cuts.

In addition, the data centre boom is driving up the costs of tech products such as microchips as it creates shortages for other uses including military, electric vehicles, computers, and mobile phones.

As they struggle to turn a profit in these early years they face competition from Chinese AI, far cheaper for consumers and already proving highly profitable.

The US economy (government, households and corporate sectors) is not the only one burdened by debts and rising interest repayments. Global debt reached a record-shattering US\$365 trillion in early 2026.

DEBT BUBBLE

Most governments across the globe are wallowing in debt.

That debt has to be serviced with rising interest rates putting pressure on available and shrinking available capital which in turn drives interest rates even higher. The main drivers of rising debt are AI, military spending, and tax cuts.

This has all the makings of a financial crisis the likes of which have not been seen since the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2009 or deep recession as governments pursue austerity measures.

Add to that reports of booming stock markets and

you have a toxic mix increasing the likelihood of an impending global crisis.

As governments renew bonds (borrowings) at higher interest rates they compete for a finite pool of capital. The Morrison government borrowed heavily during the peak of COVID issuing short-term bonds when the official cash rate was 0.5%.

As those bonds are renewed, interest rates are around ten times higher.

POLICY

The RBA has been tasked with keeping inflation between 2% and 3% but its limited powers, adjusting interest rates, cannot address the causes of inflation.

The government, however, is in a position to reduce inflation at the same time as supporting the interests of ordinary people.

For example, it could:

- Introduce rent and price controls
- Raise unemployment benefits, youth allowance and other social security payments above the poverty line, to a level where recipients can live in dignity and afford necessities
- Slash military spending
- Cut subsidies to fossil fuel corporations
- Regulate the introduction and operation of AI
- Expand the public service, creating jobs
- Nationalise the NDIS, health care, aged care, child care, and utilities.

Nationalisation would remove layers of profit-gouging and make essential services cheaper and universally accessible. The savings from cutting military spending and fossil fuel subsidies could be redirected to public housing programs and public transport.

As Australian Council of Social Service CEO Cassandra Goldie says: "We cannot be certain what the impact of another rate hike now will be on unemployment in a year's time. An increase towards or above 5% would cause a human disaster, locking people out of jobs for years [...] forcing them to rely on grossly inadequate income support payments." ✖

Quote of the Week

"No plausible rise in the cash rate will open up the strait of Hormuz, or convince Gulf insurers to lower their premiums."

Economist Yanis Varoufakis, on Australia's interest rate hike

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.





**Senator David Shoebridge
Leader of the
Australian Greens**

Dear Senator,

The Communist Party of Australia wishes to congratulate you on your election on 30th September to lead the Australian Greens.

The Australian people have now increasingly rejected the two-party system that serves the big end of town well at the expense of the people and the environment. The rejection of the two-party system demands the building of a democratic front as a progressive alternative to the extreme right and neo-fascist populism that pretends to represent the will of the people. They must be defeated!

The CPA has advocated for some time for a People's Government that would

include progressive, and democratic members of parliament in both houses of government. These members of parliament would come from left and progressive organisations, trade unions, community activists that could make the necessary changes that put people before profits.

Most agree that there is a need for positive change in the interests of the vast majority of the people. The point however, is that while there is a widespread belief in the need for change, the main political parties have not put forward a means to achieve change or offered a vision for the future that is attainable, realistic and desirable to the majority of people.

The People's Government concept puts the people before the interests of the big corporations. We argue that this crucial measure will open the way to winning a better way of

life for the vast majority of the people in Australia.

Greens and CPA members work together with others on important issues like Palestine, public housing, the campaign against AUKUS and military spending, universal access to health and education as well as the environment and taxing the polluters.

The Greens and others could work together in building the alternative for the people. The CPA looks forward to opportunities to further discuss the best way to build a better future for all Australians.

**Central Committee
Communist Party of Australia,
CPA**

5th October 2026

Party in action on Sydney's Bays West

Denis Doherty

A very significant and well attended public meeting was held in Balmain Town Hall on 29 September to call attention to the Bays West Development which is adjacent to the Sydney Suburb of Balmain and close to suburbs familiar to party members in Sydney such as Glebe, Roselle, Pyrmont, and Ultimo.

The meeting was organised by the newly formed 'Better Future Coalition,' a combination of forces mainly from the Inner West Local Government Area (LGA) which was inaugurated at this event.

The public meeting was addressed by Judy Mundy, local Greens MP Kobi Shetty, and others. The community's concerns were principally about the once in a lifetime opportunity provided by the repurposing of a significant slice of land for use of the people of this city.

The NSW ALP government has shown all the sensitivity of the former LNP in making the land an opportunity for greed rather than service. The land will be converted into huge towers for the well heeled and a small proportion will be put aside for more moderate use.

Only 10% has been set aside for essential worker housing and student housing both run by commercial operations.

The NSW government has countered with creative writing exercises from Steve Kamper the Minister for Lands and Property who has written to

a community group in Glebe to call the development "a major opportunity to return the land to the people of NSW, while helping address Sydney's housing needs and creating a vibrant new suburb, minutes from the CBD."

Kamper also claimed that the government "recognises the strong community interest in social and affordable housing at Bays West."

The community passed enthusiastic resolutions about the following:

This site is a unique opportunity to present value for the community that is being squandered. There has been no consultation with the community. The development is too dense, bringing 8,500 suddenly into the suburb and it is being handed over to private developers with absolutely no civic vision or control.

The Communist Party of Australia's City of Sydney Branch has been campaigning on this site for six months urging the government to consider giving a 100% public housing occupation of the site.

The party has written to every NSW parliamentarian in response to a suggestion that the community name the new suburb with the suggestion it be named 'MINNIMAL' because it will have a minimal effect on the housing problem in Sydney. In our suggested name includes most of the letters of the Premier's name (Minns) so that for perpetuity the world could know he did next to nothing about housing.

For more on this story, look for 'The Glebe Grapevine' online ★



A view of the Bays West site from Victoria Road.

**the NSW ALP government
has shown all the
sensitivity of the LNP**

Nine workers demand fair pay, safe workloads

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) is calling on Nine Entertainment to address growing concerns from journalists, camera operators, editors, and production staff over pay, workloads and workplace conditions as the company pushes ahead with its Future News transformation.

MEAA members at Nine Entertainment say they are committed to delivering the high-quality journalism that has made shows like Nine News the highest-rating news bulletin in Sydney for 16 years. However, workers argue that the Future News model significantly expands job responsibilities and

expectations without adequately recognising the value of the employees expected to deliver those changes.

Matthew Burton, MEAA Acting Media Director, says that while staff support innovation and technological change in newsrooms, they say the transformation must not come at the expense of fair pay, sustainable workloads, safety, and quality journalism.

"Nine's success is built on the skill, experience and dedication of its journalists, camera crews, editors, and production staff," said Burton.

"Workers are being asked to do more, learn new skills, take on additional responsibilities and adapt to a fundamentally different

news production model. It is only fair that these changes are matched by appropriate remuneration, training, protections, and recognition," added Burton.

Nine employees have expressed disappointment at the company's response to claims raised by staff and union representatives, saying there has been little meaningful movement on key workplace issues despite widespread concern across the newsroom.

Staff argue that the success of Future News will depend on retaining experienced workers and ensuring the transformation is implemented in a way that is fair, sustainable, and capable of producing high-quality journalism.

At the centre of workers' claims is a call for a 20 per cent increase in base pay to recognise expanded responsibilities under Future News, address years of wage stagnation and help close pay gaps with comparable industry roles.

MEAA is calling on Nine Entertainment management to return to meaningful negotiations with staff and union representatives to address workers' concerns and secure an outcome that supports both employees and the future success of Nine's news operations.

Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance ★

Op-Ed: Albo's Mum

Denis Doherty

The furore that erupted about Pauline Hanson's ignorant statements about Anthony Albanese's mother and her occupation of public housing disguised some essential elements of the PM's story.

The PM has put his mother at the core of policies regarding public housing and social housing and wraps his upbringing around him as a shield. He has called himself "a proud houso" and so on to convince people of the authenticity of his arguments.

At the basis of the situation was a single mother with a severe health condition that restricted her ability to earn a living wage. In ordinary conditions these conditions would have meant that the child of such a mother would live a life of grinding poverty, limiting her children's prospects.

Instead, due to public housing, his mother was provided with a home where she could bring up her son in security. From this base Anthony Albanese was able to thrive and arrive where he is now. Has he shown any desire to prolong the policy and institution that gave him shelter and security? Certainly not!

In fact the ALP is hostile to the concept of public housing at state and federal levels.

Public housing in NSW gathered pace after WW2. As WW2 was coming to an end one of Australia's most remarkable public servants HC Combs was able to convince the Curtin government that housing had to be a key feature of postwar reconstruction. Consequently, he set up an enquiry into housing in 1943.

The Communist Party submission made the following points: A huge program of building public housing should be started as soon as possible. Rents should not be more than 1/8 of income. Many of the trade unions, especially those in building industry, supported a similar position, partly due to the CPA's influence.

The result of all this agitation came to fruition in

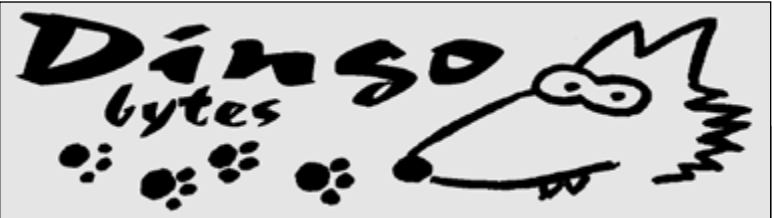


Anthony Albanese lived in an apartment in this building situated in Camperdown, Sydney.

1944 with the publication of the 1944 Commonwealth Housing Commission Final Report. The report included the oft-quoted statement that "We consider that a **dwelling of good standard and equipment is not only the need but the right of every citizen.**"

Chief among those unions was the communist-led Waterside Workers Union, who even had a film unit which promoted public housing.

'Albo' grew up in the 1960's when the public housing system was still strong. What is outrageous about the Albo's Mum furore is that despite being the recipient of good-quality public housing Albanese has shown no desire to replicate for people on low to medium incomes the opportunities that he was granted. There is no need to attack his mother and her occupation of public housing for 65 years was no shame, but the real tragedy here is that Anthony has not attempted to defend, increase, and extend public housing. ★



The Finance Sector Union (FSU) has welcomed the Commonwealth Bank's decision to extend its moratorium on regional branch closures to December 2030, following persistent calls from FSU members.

The moratorium was due to expire in July 2027, and the announcement means CBA will join Westpac in extending to 2030. The extension provides further certainty and greater job security for workers in CBA's regional branches, and protects access to face-to-face banking for the communities they serve.

However, the moratorium only covers regional branches. This year alone, CBA has closed or announced the closure of 29 metropolitan branches, despite posting record profits. The union is calling on CBA to extend the moratorium to all branches, and on every other bank to match this commitment.

The FSU is currently in negotiations with CBA for a new Enterprise Agreement, and greater job security is at the heart of what workers are fighting to secure.

FSU National Secretary Julia Angrisano said: "this win belongs to CBA workers, who have fought tirelessly for branches to remain open so they can keep serving their local communities, including vulnerable customers.

"For older Australians, people with disability, small businesses, and anyone who struggles with online banking, local branches are a lifeline and an essential service, and all banks should be required to provide that service.

"It's disappointing that CBA has not extended its moratorium to metro branches. Closing metro branches clearly isn't about necessity – it's about squeezing even more profits at the expense of customers and workers."

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: the NSW Minns Labor government. The anti-fossil fuel community group Lock the Gate Alliance has condemned the Independent Planning Commission's (IPC) decision to approve a 19-year extension to the Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) coal mine, saying it exposes the failure of NSW's planning system to prioritise community wellbeing over mining lobby interests.

HVO's extension will worsen already poor local air quality, disrupt water resources, and generate more than 800 million tonnes of climate pollution, which will worsen climate-related disasters and cost-of-living pressures across NSW.

Community members and organisations made more than 4,000 submissions opposing the extension. During public hearings, former Chief Scientist of Australia Dr Penny Sackett gave evidence that this single project would have "significant" consequences for global warming and the pollution it created would effectively undo greenhouse emissions reductions efforts of NSW and Australia.

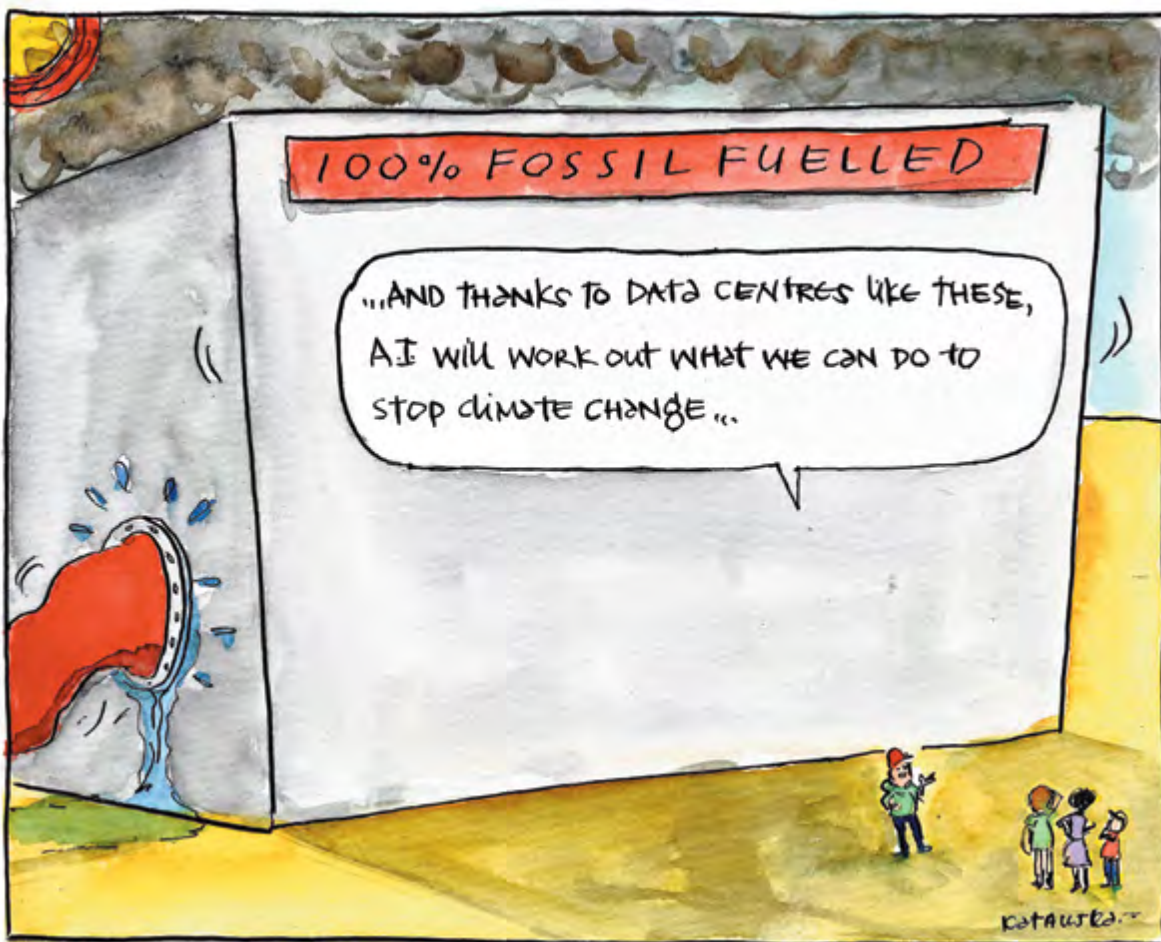
Lock the Gate Alliance National Coordinator Georgina Woods said: "We are shaken and shocked by this decision, which will go down in history as an infamous betrayal of the public trust. Climate change is already increasing floods and fires in the Hunter, and driving up the cost of living for everyday Australians. It is a deadly threat and the NSW planning system is making it worse.

"Every person in New South Wales is in harm's way from rising global temperatures. The pollution from this coal mine will fuel further global warming and households, businesses and local councils around the state will be the ones paying the price.

"Dozens of people from the Hunter and other regions stoically fronted public hearings to share heart-rending personal stories of how climate change is already affecting their lives, including rural firefighters, wildlife carers, and households grappling with rising damage costs.

"There is no other way to describe this situation than as a catastrophic failure of the NSW planning system to protect people, from the cities and the bush, from worsening global warming."

There are more than a dozen more coal mine expansion projects in NSW's planning pipeline.



Sydney Vigil

STOP USA BLOCKADE ON CUBA

12:30pm till 1:00pm Saturday 17 October

Sydney Town Hall

Call 0418 270 885

Victorian skilled worker pipeline at risk

Despite educating and training students to develop the skills Victoria desperately needs, the state's TAFEs are the lowest funded in the nation.

More than half of Victorian TAFE teachers say hours have been cut from the courses they teach, prompting unpaid overtime, shortchanging students, and denying industry the skilled workers they need.

These are amongst the findings from a new report calling for an overhaul of the way the Victorian government funds TAFEs. The report found funding per hour of training is 9 per cent below the national average and 16 per cent below NSW.

"Victoria's TAFEs are the lowest funded of any state or territory and it is TAFE teachers who are left holding the system together," Australian Education Union Victorian President Justin Mullaly said.

'Hour shaving' – the practice of reducing the number of teaching hours delivered below the funded nominal teaching hours while the curriculum remains unchanged – has become common as TAFEs are not funded for all the teaching time students are entitled to receive.

"TAFE teachers are essentially being asked to do more with less – the same courses but with less teaching time and bigger classes," Mullaly said.

"When TAFE teachers are not provided with enough time to teach because of serious funding shortfalls, and they are teaching students to enable them to work in a kindergarten, or with heavy machinery, teachers repeatedly go the extra mile to make sure their students learn effectively and are competent so they can do that job well.

"What that means is that TAFE teachers

are doing an average of seven hours' unpaid work per week, worth almost \$109m annually, because the government is not funding the actual cost of course delivery.

"Even with teachers going above and beyond, falling completion rates show us that the system is not always meeting the needs of students. More than 70 per cent of TAFE teachers say their workload makes it hard to do the job to the standard they would like.

"TAFE teachers provide their students with the skills that are crucial to our economy, and teachers' goodwill and unpaid labour cannot be a core part of the funding model into the future."

Dr Wesa Chau, Executive Director of Per Capita, the research organisation that produced the report, said the jobs TAFE train students for are crucial to Victoria's

community and economic ambitions and also less resistant to AI disruption.

"Priorities like renewable-energy, housing, childcare, aged care and the Suburban Rail Loop are all heavily reliant on having a pipeline of workers in key industries supplied by TAFE graduates," Dr Chau said.

"We are already feeling the consequences of TAFE underfunding, but the worst will be yet to come in five to ten years, when infrastructure projects hit skilled-labour constraints and care quality deteriorates due to staff shortages.

"The sectors TAFE graduates work in are amongst the least exposed to displacement by AI, around 23 times lower than university-aligned occupations, so fixing TAFE funding is an act of future-proofing."

Australian Education Union ★

Sunshine Coast rallies for Indigenous food sovereignty

Che Janz

On 26 September, members of the Communist Party of Australia's Sunshine Coast Branch and friends joined the community in Caloundra West for Yaamarra & Yarral's Mill Open Day to launch their Crowdfunding campaign.

The event supported the Indigenous-owned enterprise's next chapter: building a sustainable future for its grain mill and helping bring Indigenous and ancient grains into everyday kitchens.

Yaamarra & Yarral, which translates to "Sheaf & Stone" in the Gamilaraay language, is working to strengthen local food systems through grain growing, milling and the sharing of knowledge. The enterprise is connecting with growers across South East Queensland to help develop a more diverse and resilient food supply.

Founder Jacob Birch, a proud Gamilaraay man, spoke about the importance of diversifying the crops

we grow and the foods we eat in the face of environmental challenges. He shared how learning more about Aboriginal peoples' long history of harvesting, managing, processing, milling and baking with native grains helped shape his life's work.

His message was clear: these food practices have existed for thousands of years, and supporting them offers possibilities for the future.

Throughout the day, visitors saw the stone mill in action and discovered the potential of millet – a grain many people associate only with birdseed. Milled into a nutty-tasting flour, it can be used in a range of baked goods. The baguettes, bagels, and cinnamon scrolls on offer were enthusiastically sampled.

A live sourdough-making workshop brought the process to life, while a screening of the documentary *Tea Creek* offered another perspective.

The film explores an Indigenous-led initiative in Canada, connecting food production with community, culture, and skills. It provided a meaningful point of

connection with Yaamarra & Yarral's vision: a food system grounded in Indigenous knowledge, care for Country and opportunities for community.

Yaamarra & Yarral's ambition extends beyond the success of a single business. The aim is to help make native grains more accessible, encourage others to participate and create space for greater diversity in Australia's grain industry. Building a financially sustainable enterprise is an essential part of that work, supporting employment and the continued development of the mill.

More than 100 people attended the open day, with over \$17,000 raised towards the crowdfunding campaign. That support reflects a community eager to see this work continue.

When we support food sovereignty and care for Country, we help create the conditions for both communities and landscapes to thrive.

You can support the campaign at chuffed.org/project/yaamarra-yarral
For more info:
yaamarraandyarral.com.au ★



Photo: yaamarra-yarral FaceBook

Transport Workers' Union raises cancer alarm

Graham Holton

The Transport Workers' Union (TWU) has raised concerns over findings in an American Medical Association journal that cabin crews suffer high cancer death rates.

Anyone on a plane is subjected to greater levels of cosmic radiation when they fly over 9 kilometres high. Because the Earth's thinner atmosphere stops less radiation, aircrew can accrue up to 6 millisieverts per year of cosmic radiation.

This is an order of magnitude above that received by an average air traveller taking ten cross-country round-trip flights per year. The normal average annual dose is about 0.34 millisieverts.

Radiation-related cancers among air crews are very high compared to the general public. Shift work, jet lag, time zone disruptions also elevate cancer risks. Exposure is particularly significant on long-haul and high-latitude/polar routes.

The Transport Workers' Union (TWU) represents more than 10,000 aviation workers including cabin crew, and it's raising concerns. The union is calling for a more systematic approach to the problem, rather than leaving it to individual airlines.

The union is linking cancers to workplace occupational health and safety (OH&S), rather than treating it as an individual medical matter.

TWU national secretary, Michael Kaine, says: "If we're learning that the job of keeping Australians safe in the skies may come with serious health risks, we can't leave workers to deal with those risks as a scatter-gun approach, airline by airline."

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) says aircrews are among the groups receiving higher exposure to ionising radiation. Australia has a 20 mSv per year occupational limit averaged over five years. ARPANSA recommends keeping aircrew exposure below 6 mSv annually.

However, participation by airlines in the Australian National Radiation Dose Register is voluntary. ARPANSA says that the studies have not conclusively demonstrated the rates of cancer associated from cosmic radiation alone. It emphasises that lifestyle and occupation also impact cancer levels.

Australian airlines should be required to assess crew radiation exposure and incorporate cumulative exposure into rostering, with additional protections for pregnant workers. ★



Maritime Union unites with international unions to fight automation

Dockworkers from across Australia, Canada, the United States, and New Zealand have united to escalate the international campaign against automation being used to destroy jobs, undermine unions and drive down safety and employment standards on the waterfront.

The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) was front and centre at an international conference on port automation hosted by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada (ILWU Canada) in Vancouver from 21-25 September.

Initiated by the MUA and ILWU Canada, the conference brought together the MUA, ILWU Canada, ILWU, International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), Syndicat des débardeurs de Montréal (CUPE), MUNZ, RMT New Zealand, the International Dockworkers Council (IDC), and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Dockers Section.

MUA National Secretary Jake Field led the Australian delegation, including officials and rank-and-file members from every DP World terminal in Australia.

The conference adopted a joint statement and international action plan focused initially on DP World, committing participating unions to coordinated action against job-destroying automation.

Field said the conference was about turning decades of international dockworker solidarity into coordinated industrial action.

"The MUA and ILWU Canada have a fraternal relationship going back many, many decades. This conference builds on that tradition, but takes it into the fight we are facing today."

"Multinational corporations are rolling out the same automation agenda across the oceans and across our borders. We are going to tackle that with international organisation, coordination and solidarity," Field said.

MUA Deputy National Secretary Warren Smith said, "The unions resolved to establish an ongoing international solidarity network across Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, supported by the International Transport Workers' Federation (the ITF) and the International Dockworkers Council (IDC)".

"We will network and share early warnings about automation proposals, technical information, AI use, employer tactics and



Photo: FaceBook – warren.smith.1800

we will not accept automation being used to sack workers, outsource jobs, weaken safety standards or break unions

workers' campaign strategies, while mobilising practical solidarity when unions come under attack," Smith added.

DP World has been identified as the first common campaign focus, with unions committed to ensuring the company can't isolate its workers terminal by terminal or country by country.

The action plan also commits unions to developing common international industrial and safety standards, including no forced redundancies, no contracting out of established dock work and automation only by agreement with workers and their unions.

Smith said workers were not opposed to technology but would fight any attempt to use it as a weapon against working people.

"What we will not accept is automation being used to sack workers, outsource jobs, weaken safety standards or break unions. There must be a social dividend for workers and communities when AI and automation is used by big business to radically reshape the workplace."

The conference also resolved to build a common public campaign around secure jobs, safe ports, reliable supply chains, and community benefit, and to develop an International Port Workers' Day of Action Against Job-Destroying Automation.

Field said that the conference marked an important development in a "genuinely international response" to the corporate push for waterfront automation and the use of AI.

"No multinational can isolate a union in Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the United States and impose its agenda one terminal at a time. Our unions are united and stronger together than any global terminal operator."

Smith said, "An attack on one of our unions is considered an attack on all of us. We will be more coordinated, more organised and more determined. We have one another's backs and will work and fight together against the corporate greed of stevedores and shipowners."

The MUA thanked ILWU Canada for hosting the conference and for its leadership in bringing international dockworkers together. 🇺🇸

Japan, AUKUS and China

Graham Holton

On 17 September 2026, Australian and Chinese defence officials met in Beijing for the Australia-China Defence Coordination Dialogue. The officials discussed the importance of dialogue to avoid future military escalation.

From China's perspective, the increased military integration between Australia and Japan has raised major concerns over Taiwan, the East China Sea and South China Sea.

The Japan-Australia partnership is deeper than the traditional ANZAC/Japan diplomatic relationship. It delivers regional naval combat capability and operational readiness across the Indo-Pacific, making Australia's northern territory increasingly relevant to the strategic balance of the western Pacific.

In August 2026, Defence

Minister Richard Marles described our relationship with Japan as of "real substance," with Japan using Australia for training, testing, logistics and missile development. This trilateral cooperation of Australia, Japan, and the United States has become an important component of military relations.

Naval cooperation between Australia and Japan has increased the capacity of the maritime arm of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, also called 'the Quad' (US, Japan, Australia, and India). This allows Japanese naval and air forces to operate farther south than in the past. With India joining maritime exercises, it transforms the Quad from a political forum into a strongly coordinated naval system.

While AUKUS includes a technology-sharing pact between Australia, the UK, and the US, the Australia-Japan naval partnership acts as a critical link to AUKUS Pillar II, which includes advanced

AI, hypersonics, and quantum computing.

Japan's defence minister, Shinjirō Koizumi, described hypersonic missiles as a "groundbreaking development." It allows Japan, not an AUKUS member, to directly integrate into sensitive US military technical systems. Australia has also allowed Japan to use its missile-test ranges, and they are jointly developing the Boobook laser project.

Australia is buying Japanese military equipment and hosting Japanese naval crew exchanges, and joint training initiatives. The two countries are expanding intelligence cooperation and closely linking their operational headquarters.

Cooperation exercises include 'Nichi Gou Trident,' a bilateral exercise in which Australian units operate in the East China Sea alongside Japanese destroyers. Young officers can gain navigational training and tactical communication

skills. In Exercise Kakadu, Japanese crews are deployed to the waters of northern Australia to practice cross-decking, logistics sharing, and multi-domain combat scenarios. Japanese F-35s were deployed to Darwin for operations Southern Cross and Pitch Black.

In April 2026, Australia and Japan signed a multi-billion-dollar landmark contract to acquire 11 upgraded Japanese Mogami-class general purpose frigates for the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), creating a long-term defence-industrial relationship.

Marles and Koizumi signed the "Mogami Memorandum" allowing the exchange of engineering, maritime-industry and personnel. The first three frigates will be built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in Nagasaki and the remaining eight will be built by Austal at the Henderson Defence Precinct in Western Australia. This means technical naval crews and advisors

are moving between both nations to integrate American and Australian combat management systems onto Japanese hulls.

Canberra has been strengthening its military position while retaining communication channels with Beijing. While China described a July 2026 submarine-launched missile test as routine, Australia fretted about "nuclear proliferation."

Military escalation from the US and 'allies' risks setting off a military confrontation, particularly when the Labor government uncritically goes along with the US view that China is a threat to be 'contained.' The Australian government needs to acknowledge the high risk of a situation worsening in the present heightened military climate and stop making it worse by persisting with the AUKUS 'pact.' Diplomatic contacts are a good idea, but there's much much more the Albanese government could do. 🇺🇸

WA 'a US military outpost'

Greens MLC Sophie McNeil speaks out on Land Forces and AUKUS

AUKUS is going to be huge for our state and WA Labor has just rolled out a red carpet. They don't question anything that the federal government does, and we are about to have this massive change in how our state operates.

Land Forces is just part of the big plan of defence becoming the second largest sector in Western Australia. WA Labor says this openly now: after the resources industry, they want the defence industry to be the leading industry in our state.

This is not the future we want for our kids. We want to be a renewable energy superpower, not an outpost of the US 'Department of War.'

So, we are going to have all the warmongers here next week in Boorloo, and unfortunately, many of them are looking to set up shop permanently in WA under AUKUS.

This is the first step in what is a really disastrous plan for Western Australia.

EXCESSIVE

(The security response) involves a legislative regime that passed parliament on 10 September in the form of the Land Forces Event (Special Powers) Bill 2026. Passing an entire legislative regime to respond to one event sounds excessive.

We are deeply opposed to the legislation. The housing crisis is worse in WA than anywhere else in the country. Rents have gone up 60 per cent. People are sleeping in their cars.

We're also on the frontline of the climate emergency. Western Australia is the only state without a climate bill.

We are the only state without



International Peace Day at Pioneer Park, Walyalup/Fremantle. 2025.

a renewable energy target, without a reducing emissions target and yet, our state Labor government is passing legislation to protect these warmongers from seeing protesters.

It is so disproportionate. It involves such overreach. And the worst thing about it is that it is also going to heavily restrict protesters rights, as well as the implied right to political communication in the Australian Constitution. These rights are being overruled by this legislation.

We have received expert advice from the Human Rights Law Centre, who say the legislation is unconstitutional.

What the laws will do is that

they impose hefty fines and gaol sentences on people who enter the new designated area, which is massive in size.

We have a really peaceful protest movement in Perth. We don't think there is any need for these laws. Obviously, we want peaceful protests. We don't want to see any injuries.

But the laws we already have in Western Australia are enough to keep people safe – to keep the community safe. This bill wasn't necessary.

From an interview with Paul Gregoire of Sydney Criminal Lawyers. Edited for space. ✖

GREEN NOTES

Climate change and insurance

Graham Holton

Climate change is a key structural problem for the Australian insurance industry as certain risks have become so prevalent that insurance premiums have become prohibitively expensive, or unavailable to many households. Severe floods, bushfires, cyclones, storms, and other extreme events push up the number of annual insurance claims.

The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) regards this as a financial-system stability issue, with its 2026 stress test estimating that one in seven households are uninsured. This will rise to one in four by 2050, adding a further million households unable to afford home insurance.

APRA estimates that between 2010 and 2025 home-insurance premiums have increased by an average 7.2 per cent annually. Wages have increased by 3.1 per cent annually. Insurers are forced to consider what properties to insure based upon climate risk. The insurer must look at the future risk of flooding, bushfires, coastal inundation, cyclones, and storm intensity in that area. The problem is particularly acute in regional and rural Australia.

Insurers may decide that certain risk types, such as flood protection, are no longer commercially viable. This passes the increased uncertainty, and therefore costs, onto the customer. This gap between claims and cover has created an insurance protection gap. Consequently, Australian insurance premiums have increased in areas where households have not experienced that type of disaster.

The greatest financial impact from climate related extreme weather has been on Suncorp and IAG. In 2025 Suncorp recorded \$2.02 billion in natural-hazard claims costs, compared with \$1.36 billion. The cost was \$254 million above its natural-hazard allowance. IAG had claims of \$1.97 billion. QBE, Allianz and Hollard have identified flood claims as the most affected by climate change.

As private insurance becomes less affordable, governments feel pressured to intervene by making disaster-relief payments, subsidising premiums, funding flood and bushfire mitigation, rebuilding affected infrastructure, setting up public insurance schemes and reinsurance arrangements, and councils restricting development in disaster prone areas. If private insurers cannot economically insure a community the taxpayers must.

Capitalism has created vast concentrations of privately owned wealth and infrastructure, but the environmental conditions upon which that wealth depends are increasingly unstable. This means the state is forced to guarantee the threat is reduced (such as flood prevention) to ensure private property in that area maintains its value.

What is more, when climate-related losses become too great for private insurance to absorb, the costs get shifted onto society, socialising the losses. This creates a contradiction between the social character of production (insurance) and private appropriation.

Mortgage lenders insist that the property they're paying for be insured. If insurance becomes unavailable, or unaffordable, the value and security of mortgages are undermined. This creates a chain reaction, with climate risk increasing insurance premiums and higher premiums increasing the number of uninsured properties which lowers the value of those properties. This increases mortgage risk and creates an existential threat to Australia's banking system.

The insurance problem has become a class issue with lower-income households unable to absorb the \$5,000 to \$10,000 annual premium increase over the past few years. Instead, they reduce their level of cover, increase excess, and drop types of cover such as flooding. In the worst case they abandon any insurance cover.

The increased risks created by climate change are challenging the insurance model used in Australia. APRA's 2026 assessment warns that without adaptation and intervention the insurance protection gap could continue to widen and become a problem for the broader financial system.

The finance sector likes to see itself as too hard-headed to bother with climate change, but this is an issue which will not go away.



OP-ED: Propaganda and ‘propaganda’

HF

The word ‘propaganda’ is used a lot in political arguments. It has a dirty, sinister connotation, yet most people can’t quite spell out why that is. There’s often an unspoken assumption that propaganda is merely the dissemination of ideas that someone disagrees with. Is ‘propaganda’ something inherently evil? Who benefits from you thinking it is?

Taking a step back, the word itself means ideas, arguments, images, facts, given for a political reason, for the sake of influencing opinions on a matter. Let’s look at how this operates under capitalism.

Marx and Engels understood very clearly that the dominant ideas of any given society are the ideas of its ruling class. The economic base, the system underlying society, in our case capitalism, creates social, political, cultural institutions in order to reinforce the economic hierarchies.

Put together, these institutions are collectively called the *superstructure* that rests on the economic base. This produces the dialectic of base and superstructure: The economic base creates the superstructure, and the ideological superstructure reinforces the base.

Therefore, capitalism creates a material incentive to perpetuate its existence. Capitalist propaganda exists because the bourgeois class, the class that owns all the wealth and private property, want to stay wealthy and powerful. In the same way that the legal system under capitalism exists to protect capital accumulation and private property, the ideological ecosystem exists to instil the idea that the capitalist system is correct, eternal, and natural. If working people believe that, then business as usual can continue.

Ideas do not exist in a vacuum, separated from material reality. Ideas themselves are created by material reality. We can’t completely separate the two. Correct ideas do not fall from the sky, they are created through social practice in the real world.

Let’s apply this to our understanding of propaganda. Under capitalism, the dominant news media will never challenge the rule of capital. All information that is presented to you in this framework is sorted, categorised, produced, edited, and funded such that you never think to question the economic mode of production. In an attempt to make capitalism seem natural, the information ecosystem likes to pretend that pro-capitalist ideology, whether overt or covert, is simply unbiased fact. Actually, unbiased media does not exist and never will, because ideas do not exist in a vacuum.

The ways in which political opinion are influenced are inherently nuanced, and they can work in subtle ways. Language usage can have a significant impact on the way we view things. For example, when pro-imperialist media talks about countries that are friendly to US imperialism, their political leadership are referred to as “governments,” but when referring to countries hostile to US imperialism, the leadership is referred to as “regimes.” This is despite the fact that “friendly” governments have a track

record of committing horrific atrocities such as colonialism, genocide, and war. Meanwhile many so-called “regimes” have only been to war in defence against imperialist aggression.

Another feature of bourgeois propaganda is lying by omission. If an event or piece of information is simply too damning to the capitalist order, it may not even be discussed at all. This lying by omission was particularly exposed in 2025 when US internet users tried Chinese social media app Rednote for the first time and found out how much they were ignorant about the world’s biggest socialist state. Information about China had been deliberately omitted from the US news system, in order to make the audience think they lived in the best country in the world.

The more Marxist theory you study, the more you come to realise how pro-capitalist ideology infests almost all aspects of social life. Not even art is safe in this regard. Hollywood blockbusters often have script consultation with the Pentagon and other facets of the US military-industrial complex while they are in development.

The most blatant example of this is the *Top Gun* film series. The US military is portrayed as the good guys who save the day, and fight against the unidentified military threat.

This simultaneously allows consent to be manufactured for ‘forever wars’ to enable US dominance. Millions of people die because of what this propaganda enables.

In our media climate, *everything* is propaganda. All information is presented to you for a reason, and that reason is usually based in upholding the oppressive capitalist system. Bourgeois news media would like to tell you that only dissident news sources are “propaganda.”

This notion of propaganda only being perpetrated by barbaric Oriental communists was manufactured during the Red Scare to frighten the working class into complicity with capitalism and imperialism.

Propaganda in and of itself doesn’t have to exist for oppressive reasons. It can also exist for revolutionary reasons, to allow the oppressed of the world to realise their worth. Socialist propaganda makes capitalism make sense. Capitalist propaganda hides the true nature of capitalism.

Naturally, this newspaper, the *Guardian* – *The Workers’ Weekly*, is also propaganda, but this propaganda is for the purpose of achieving socialism in Australia. Socialism is a society run by and for the working class, where the means of production are owned in common, and the bourgeois class is either actively being suppressed or doesn’t exist altogether.

We’re out and proud about being partisan in a good cause, the interests of the working class. This paper is partisan and objective, presenting facts not aired in the rest of Australia’s media system.

Socialism functions for the benefit of the majority of people. The question to ask yourself when reading is not “do I believe this propaganda?” but rather “what beliefs about the world actually serve my interests, and where do those beliefs come from?” If you’re a member of the working class, as a majority of the world is, then that’s the important question. ✳



Soviet Union propaganda.

Hollywood blockbusters often have script consultation with the Pentagon

Reshaping Australia in Israel’s vision

Paul Gregoire

Despite the noise around antisemitism having quietened since the hearings of the Royal Commission ended in late August, Australia’s Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, Jillian Segal continues to propagate her plan to insert a definition of antisemitism, or prejudice towards Jews, into the heart of all Australian institutions, because it actually serves to stifle criticism of Israel.

Prime minister Anthony Albanese first appointed Segal to the newly minted position of antisemitism envoy on 9 July 2024. Segal was not elected to this position. The public

was then unaware that this official would have the ability to disrupt both public and political spheres, via the drive to see all Australian institutions adopt the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) working definition on antisemitism.

Foisting the unelected antisemitism envoy onto the public is one of the greatest disservices that Albanese has done for this nation. Australia is engaging in the adoption of a deceptive definition that serves to propagate Israel’s false narrative about its inception as standard in this country.

The key aim of Segal’s July 2025 Plan to Combat Antisemitism is the adoption of the IHRA definition “across all levels of government, public institutions and regulatory

bodies”. AHPRA (the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency) adopted it in June 2026, and now there is a focus on making arts funding dependent on it.

The public remains unaware of who was ultimately behind the imposition of this US-created position. Following the release of the plan, federal Labor ignored it until the ISIS-inspired Bondi Beach mass murder occurred on Gadigal land on 14 December 2025. Four days after 15 innocent people were killed, Albanese suggested the envoy should be made a “permanent feature of our landscape.”

AHPRA’s adoption of the IHRA definition midway marked the first major institution to incorporate it since the plan was rolled

out. This reform serves to conflate political criticism of Israel with antisemitism, or prejudice towards Jews. Australian health practitioners could now face discipline or even unemployment if they are critical of Israel. It won’t stop there.

The reason the IHRA definition has such an effect is that when it was developed in 2005, the basic two-line definition was accompanied by eleven examples of prejudice towards Jews. Seven of these specifically mention Israel. Since Albanese adopted Segal’s plan post-Bondi, prominent members of the local Israel lobby have been regularly making such confections publicly.

Sydney Criminal Lawyers
(edited for space) ✳

We all came here from somewhere

Vijay Prashad

Everywhere, from the Global North to the Global South, we are inundated with rising anti-immigrant rhetoric. It seems to be an inescapable part of public discourse. This discourse is particularly toxic in the Global North, where it has become a central pillar of the Far Right of a Special Type.

In December 2025, US President Donald Trump called Somali immigrants in the US 'garbage' and said they should be sent 'back to where they came from.' Trump's Vice President JD Vance has said that immigration is the 'greatest threat' to both the United States and Europe. In Britain, then UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said in May 2025 that his country risked "becoming an island of strangers," a phrase echoed later that year by Andrew Hastie, then Australia's Shadow Home Affairs Minister: "We're starting to feel like strangers in our own home."

The Global South is not immune. In South Africa, there has been an explosion of xenophobia, with anti-migrant groups such as Operation Dudula (2021), and March and March (2024) emerging out of nowhere with funds to create serious anti-immigrant mayhem. These groups popularised the slogan Abahambe Makwerekwere ('foreigners must go') among sections of South Africans who have been pushed through the cracks of the post-apartheid settlement.

These sections have pinned their socioeconomic anxieties on their neighbours – impoverished immigrants who came to South Africa from countries like Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. These xenophobic groups have issued threats and deadlines for immigrants to leave the country, forcing desperate and vulnerable people to seek safety or leave South Africa in fear.

This rise of xenophobia reflects a general sentiment that the wretched living conditions of the working class are due to competition for scarce resources from immigrants rather than to the structural features of capitalism. It is claimed that impoverished and disempowered immigrants have, somehow, hollowed out the state and crowded workers out of jobs, leaving native-born workers unable to live stable and dignified lives.

The discourse on immigration is riddled with factual inaccuracies, hyperbole, and bile. The apostles of xenophobia inflate the scale and geography of migration and poison the discourse around the issue. This distortion operates in three ways:

Exaggerated scale. International migrants constitute only 3.6% of the world's population. Most people who migrate do not leave the country of their birth, since they travel from countryside to city or from one town to another. Factoring in the plight of the internally displaced, only a quarter of migrants and displaced people travel from the Global South to the Global North, as I learned from an official of the International Organisation for Migration.

Exaggerated geography. For obvious reasons, Western media coverage concentrates on Mediterranean crossings, the US-Mexico border, and the English Channel. This frames migration as an issue that burdens only the Global North.

But the reality is that most displacement takes place inside countries or between neighbouring countries. The overwhelming burden of refugee protection falls on the poorer nations in the South, not the wealthy North.

Exaggerated language. Those who stoke the fires of anti-immigrant rhetoric almost always say that they oppose 'illegal'



Jiang Zhaohe (China), detail from *Liumin Tu (Refugees)*, 1943.

immigrants and not 'legal' immigrants. In practice, the threatening category of the 'illegal immigrant' begins to shape how people think of migration in general. Refugees, asylum seekers, undocumented workers, students, family members, temporary labourers, and even immigrants who came through legal channels come to be seen as 'illegal' or at least suspected of being so. The adjective 'illegal' shapes the meaning of the noun 'immigrant' and then overwhelms it. The adjective, even when it does not appear, begins to define the noun. In this way, just being an immigrant is treated as an act of transgression.

The ruling classes of the wealthier nations, mainly in the Global North, want the labour of immigrants but not their cultural lives or political participation. Major economic sectors in the Global North – agriculture, construction, logistics, and care work – depend on immigrant labour. Xenophobic rhetoric and restrictive legal regimes create an environment that makes it easy to discipline and exploit these workers through the threat of deportation and the denial of legal rights and collective bargaining.

Yet it is undeniable that immigrants generate wealth for the ruling class where they live and work. Their remittances also sustain families in their countries of origin. The discourse around immigration and the economy is as muddled and confused as the political debate.

THE ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

Immigrants certainly increase immediate demand for housing, schools, transport, and healthcare, especially where arrivals are geographically concentrated. Immigrants also work, produce, pay taxes, and sustain economic sectors that suffer from labour shortages.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shows that immigrants contribute to labour markets, public finances, employment, and job creation, though the benefits and costs are

unevenly distributed. A large study by the International Monetary Fund across thirty-four OECD countries between 1980 and 2018 found that an immigrant inflow of 1% of total employment raised economic output by almost 1% within five years and that two-thirds of the increase came from higher labour productivity. Crucially, that study found no evidence that large inflows of immigrants reduce native-born employment.

THE LABOUR QUESTION

Employers sometimes use precarious immigrant labour to lower working conditions or weaken trade union organising. However, the problem is not the immigrant worker per se but the employer's power to differentiate and divide workers by legal status.

Stronger, better-organised trade unions would help workers resist these divisive tactics, improve wages and working conditions, and secure residency, legal, and collective bargaining rights.

NEOLIBERALISM

Neoliberalism is the elephant in the room in the anti-immigration discourse. Immigrants arrive in societies that have already been ravaged by austerity and debt. The housing crisis, chronic unemployment, mental illness, and drug abuse are not conditions that immigrants create. These are the social effects of capitalist societies that have prioritised the profit of the few over the well-being of the many.

The privatisation of public services, cuts to municipal budgets, and the subsequent collapse of state capacity and social welfare were neoliberal policies implemented in the service of wealthy and propertied classes. The very same political parties that implemented these neoliberal policies and are therefore responsible for the social havoc they have unleashed now scapegoat immigrants.

Anti-immigrant rhetoric functions to conceal the actual causes of social distress faced by billions of people around the world. The obscene military spending and catastrophic wars of our time, the vicious sanctions against states that defy the NATO+ bloc, the enforced

debt servitude of states that cannot break out of the cycle of underdevelopment, the high cost of climate change, land dispossession, and the destruction of livelihoods are not caused by migration.

They are caused by capitalism and imperialism, which would rather destroy the world for profit than heal it. In fact, migration itself is a result of capitalist imperialism, which destroys the basis of life in the Global South through war, debt, sanctions, and exploitation.

Unfortunately, the pervasive nature of anti-immigrant discourse has made it easier for an alienated worker to burn down a spaza shop (small grocery) in Soweto, South Africa, than to think about the brutal asymmetry of land ownership in their country. White South Africans make up roughly 7% of the population but own 72% of the farm and agricultural land, while Black South Africans make up almost 82% of the population and own only 4%.

Imagining land reform is infinitely harder and more complex than burning down the shop of a poor immigrant shopkeeper from Botswana. Arming the working class with clarity against the mystifying rhetoric of xenophobia is one of the tasks that the left faces today. For its part, the South African Communist Party has taken a strong and clear stance against xenophobia and for solidarity.

In his poem *We Refugees* (2000), the great Caribbean-British poet Benjamin Zephaniah captures, with warmth and simplicity, the irrationality and inhumanity of xenophobia:

We can all be refugees
Sometimes it only takes a day,
Sometimes it only takes a handshake
Or a paper that is signed.
We all came from refugees
Nobody simply just appeared,
Nobody's here without a struggle,
And why should we live in fear
Of the weather or the troubles?
We all came here from somewhere.

Tricontinental Institute

arming the working class with clarity
against the rhetoric of xenophobia is
one task the left faces today

Book Review: **Regime Change:** **Inside the imperial presidency of Donald Trump** by Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan

Reviewer: Gavin O'Toole

"Men are more ready to repay an injury than a benefit," wrote Tacitus, "because gratitude is a burden and revenge a pleasure."

These words by the great Roman historian, who lived through the tyranny of several mad emperors, comprise a lesson about the nature of power, and unwittingly foresee the fate of the United States.

To think that nearly two millennia later Tacitus's bitter political analysis of Rome can be seamlessly applied to imperial Washington reveals a truth: that nothing has changed since the second century AD.

Read Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan's astounding reportage of Donald Trump's first year in office after his return to the White House, and this becomes abundantly clear.

The US journalistic duo's chronicle coincides with the observations of Tacitus in every respect: the danger of power without accountability; the love of power unmoderated by principle; the increasing corruption of the governing classes;

and how politicians relinquish their inheritance of free speech to flatter a god-king.

Regime Change has a simple message: it is easy to dismiss Trump as a spoilt, orange clown given to tantrums and prone to narcissistic self-delusion, but that would be unwise.

As profiles of the upstart with a wealthy and connected father from as early as 1979 suggest, note the authors: "Trump was also a decades-long student of power dynamics. He has a feral instinct for power and he is an intuitive reader of people."

It is that pursuit of raw power through whatever vector can deliver it – money, violence, fear – which drives Trump, and once he has it in his possession, he works it like clay in service of his avarice, absent of shame or remorse.

This explains the most predictable reflex of the US emperor, revenge – and Haberman and Swan devote an entire section of their book to "Retribution."

The main reason for this is Trump's self-evident criminality and corruption, traits that seemed likely to destroy him in 2023 as he

battled a blizzard of arraignments and lawsuits. Having survived, revenge against anyone who dares to cross him would become his lodestar.

If there is one defining feature of Trump 2.0, therefore, it is the use of lawfare and abuse of legal power by the Department of Justice to hunt down those who speak up about the emperor's new clothes or whose integrity dulls his brilliance.

The arch "keeper of grievances" in this atrocious conspiracy to turn US governance into a mafia feud is his dark enforcer with the gravedigger stare, deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller.

As Tacitus would have understood, Trump and Miller sensed early that vengeance was not only the birthright of a malignant tyrant, but also a gladiatorial display to satiate his populist base in the gory amphitheatre of US politics.

Haberman and Swan observe that throughout Trump's period of exile and criminal reckoning after Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 election, he "grasped immediately and instinctively that he could repurpose his legal peril as a powerful political asset."

Trump crowded the cases he faced – from sexual abuse, defamation, the inflation of property values, hoarding classified documents and conspiring to overturn elections, to the 34 felonies on which he would be convicted – under a single banner: "witch-hunt."

The authors treat us to extraordinary fly-on-the-wall accounts of Trump's expletive-fuelled excesses with reportage that reaches right into the Oval Office.

They argue that Biden's victory, which Trump never accepted, was the main explanation why the gloves came off in his second term.

They explore this in all its capricious infamy – his obsession with bling, his personality cult, his trashing of institutional constraints, the violence and abuse he visits upon detractors, the greed of his spawn and obsequious aides.

It is the section on Trump's lust for retribution against a diverse cast of victims – from law firms, universities, the Smithsonian and the corporate media, to Venezuela's president and Iran's ayatollah – that will really cut to the bone.



Small wonder that Niccolò Machiavelli used Tacitus's exact words to develop his own theory of power, insisting that gratitude is no way for a prince to rule – because only fear is binding.

Morning Star ★

120th anniversary of Shostakovich's contribution to Soviet culture

Graham Holton

This year marks the 120th anniversary of Dmitri Shostakovich's birth on 25 September 1906 in St Petersburg (later Leningrad). He made an enormous contribution to the Soviet Union, as his life spanned virtually the entire period of Soviet culture.

His music became deeply embedded in Soviet culture, producing one of the most powerful artistic expressions of Soviet life, particularly the tension he captures between revolutionary ideals, mass culture, state power, and individual freedom. Shostakovich received state honours, taught in Soviet institutions, and wrote music celebrating the Soviet's achievements.

From a Marxist perspective Shostakovich's work can be understood as a product of a society undergoing enormous historical transformation. Following the Revolution, the USSR became industrialised, its farms collectivised, and after the Great Patriotic War, as World War II was called in the USSR, the nation underwent massive reconstruction. His music records the psychological and social consequences of that process.

Shostakovich created a distinctly Soviet musical language, rejecting the idea that Russian music had to imitate Western European models. He incorporated revolutionary and workers' songs, Russian folk traditions, Jewish musical traditions, military marches, popular music, and satire with classical symphonic tradition. The result was music that could communicate with a mass audience while retaining extraordinary artistic complexity.

His fifteen symphonies cover the

major political and social experiences of the Soviet Union, from revolutionary optimism to the post-Stalin period. His Seventh Symphony, *Leningrad*, became an international symbol of Soviet resistance to Nazi Germany. The symphony was performed in besieged Leningrad in August 1942. Musicians were suffering from starvation, yet they performed the work for the population. It represented the cultural resistance of an entire city.

Shostakovich's relationship with Soviet power was contradictory. In 1936, *Pravda* attacked his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, condemning it as "Muddle Instead of Music." After official criticism, he wrote *Symphony No. 5* (1937) as a response. In a spirit of Marxist self-criticism, it bore the subtitle: *A Soviet artist's reply to just criticism*. It was an enormous public success.

He contributed enormously to Soviet cinema, reaching millions of people. Shostakovich composed scores for Soviet films, demonstrating that serious music could operate within mass culture rather than being confined to concert halls. His music became part of everyday Soviet life.

Shostakovich's greatest contribution was that he demonstrated that a composer could work within a socialist society, participate in its institutions and address mass audiences, while still expressing fear, grief, alienation, irony and doubt. He was more than a great Soviet composer. His symphonies are a parallel history of the USSR: heroic, tragic, satirical, and frequently all at once. In the 1960s-70s he gained international recognition. You might think you've never heard Shostakovich, but most people would recognise the music to the classic Hitchcock horror film *Psycho*, which shows his influence. ★



Dmitri Shostakovich, 1940. Photo: mos.ru – wikimedia.org (CC BY 4.0)

News Quiz

1. What's put Santos, Kogan, and News Corp in the same box recently?
2. Why have Iraqis been celebrating?
3. The South Australian government has built 400 houses. What are they for?
4. Thousands of protesters have been camped in the main square of Madrid. What are they after?
5. What did Brazil ban, just days before its recent election?
6. What's the name of a Queensland government policy that will send children to remote camps and exploit them for forced labour?
7. Three unions have worked together to get a win in job security, leave entitlements and pay at which Melbourne venue?
8. 45000 students have hit the streets to protest conscription in which Europeans country?
9. NSW has given the go ahead to a massive coal mine expansion, the largest ever proposed in NSW. What four things did former Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW Greg Mullins say we import back in return for exporting coal?
10. Take a wild guess what kind of stocks have gone up by 120 per cent in the last year (answers on page 13)

Op-Ed: AI in China vs AI in the West

Danyal Niro

AI is a hot topic these days, with either feverish support or unabashed hatred. In the west, we see full political spectrum working class unity working to stop data centres from Los Angeles to Melbourne, from large metropolis to rural town.

There are plenty of justified reasons for the AI opposition in the west. There are the increased carbon emissions. AI has increased the cost of computers, very annoying to people who use phones and computers (that's all of us), but don't need AI (that's a lot of us). The data centres required to run AI can be polluting and raise electricity costs. There are threats to

livelihoods, the wholesale stealing of original content. There's 'AI psychosis' when people form unhealthy dependencies on AI-powered chatbots, and 'AI delusions,' when AI makes things up.

There's also the intrusive requests for us to use AI when we don't need to. It's not uncommon for someone part-way through asking their partner about the shopping on a messaging app to be asked if they want AI to improve the conversation.

Yet in China the attitude towards AI is the opposite. Polling indicates a minimum of at least 75% public support for AI. This has led some in the West to claim that the anti-AI sentiment is a Chinese conspiracy to further their lead in AI.

So why the stark difference?

The answer of course lies in which class controls the state, how the technology is deployed, and who it benefits.

In the People's Republic of China, workers control the state. This fundamental difference means the deployment of AI is inverse to the west. While the West has bet all economic growth (and most of the economy) on Large Language Models (LLM's) that are no more than a general chat bot and coding assistant.

In China, AI is viewed as a new productive force to be developed and deployed the same way industrial factories were in the '80s. LLM's certainly exist, and their open source models have vaulted

them to the top of global usage, but they are not the sole focus of the AI industry.

China has developed specific AI models for assisting in manufacturing (example performing inspections), ensuring that crops get the exact same amount of fertiliser and pesticides they need, and control city systems such as traffic lights that respond to traffic flows instantaneously.

Since the workers control capital, various laws have been passed to protect workers in the deployment of this new productive force. In a landmark supreme court ruling, China ruled that companies cannot replace their workers with AI. Shortly after, they forced all internet platforms to clearly label

AI content, and AI companions have been banned (go talk to real people).

All data centres must use 80% renewable energy, of which China has plenty. In fact, the utility prices are of no concern to the Chinese because they have an overcapacity of power and data centres actually help use energy that would have been otherwise unused.

Under the workers' state is firmly for the development of the nation and to further increase the quality of life for its people.

AI itself is not an inherently bad technology. Like the internet or the steam engine before it, the value is based on which class is able to wield it. ✚

Trump manipulates AI

Graham Holton

Welcome to the Orwellian world of US President Donald Trump's new federal AI chatbot portal, America.gov. Trump has recently signed an executive order for Americans to "receive accurate answers" on the federal government. America.gov serves as his gateway for information across 29,000 US government websites.

When *US News* and *France 24* asked about Trump's 2020 presidential election results, the chatbot gave factual answers. The following day, users tested the chatbot again they found a distinct change in the program. When asked about the 2020 election, the chatbot now replied: "I do not provide political commentary or analysis of past elections." Questions regarding legislative impacts and federal funding cuts had similar non-committal responses.

A White House official said that, "America.gov will continue to be updated to provide Americans the most accurate and reliable federal information and resources." The official failed to address whether the settings had been manipulated to prevent the AI from fact-checking Trump's comments. This occurred after Trump met AI executives to sign a "morally binding" agreement over concerns over AI's capabilities.

While ChatGPT and other AI programs

come with warnings that answers may have errors, this incident seems like a direct manipulation of the AI being used.

The AI also refers to itself as SI, standing for 'Super Intelligence' in keeping with Trump's latest effort at re-naming things.

This raises the question; can an information system remain independent from the government exercising political power over AI? The answer is No! ✚

Film Review: Digger

Reviewer: Maria Duarte

Four-times Oscar-winning director Alejandro G Inarritu is back, taking major swings, in this audacious, dark comedy satire about climate change, and capitalist greed and corruption, which is guaranteed to divide audiences.

Set in the near future, the film follows Digger Rockwell (Tom Cruise), a cat-loving Texan oil tycoon and one of the most powerful men on the planet, whose drilling operations in Greenland cause a devastating environmental disaster.

An ice shelf breaks free, threatening millions of lives in Europe, but Digger is only interested in saving his rigs which produce millions of barrels of oil a day.

However, in a cynical move and with the help of the US president (John Goodman), he decides to control the narrative to become the hero and the saviour of the catastrophic mess he made, while turning a profit.

Digger: "They know the story. The facts are yet to be told."

What Inarritu (*Birdman*, *The Revenant*) does very cleverly in this surreal comedy is to highlight how powerful billionaires, oligarchs, and the likes of Donald Trump have now learnt to manipulate the truth, and reality, to save themselves from answering for their horrific actions. To

hell with the collateral damage and the effects on ordinary working-class people.

Tom Cruise, hidden under full prosthetics, breathes convincing life into the old, corpulent and ruthless oil baron who only cares about himself and his dying pussycat. One of the film's producers, Cruise is clearly having a blast along with his co-stars, an impressive Riz Ahmed, John Goodman, Sandra Huller and Jesse Plemons, to name a few.

Clearly inspired by dark political satires like *Dr Strangelove*, and reminiscent of Wes Anderson's and Yorgos Lanthimos' work, co-writer director Inarritu has thrown everything at the screen stylistically.

It's messy but I happily bought into it. At times it looks like you are observing a stunning painting or tableau. The cinematography and the production design are outstanding and deserve major credit.

Just as you are getting used to the constant visual assault, there are some reveals and a final twist which will make you rethink the whole film.

It is a refreshingly creative and imaginative satire and, thrillingly, Inarritu isn't afraid to push the cinematic envelope.

4.5 of 5 red stars
Morning Star (edited for space) ✚

World Federation of Trade Unions turns 81

On 4 October, the World Federation of Trade Unions celebrated its 81st birthday with an International Action Day.

For 81 years, the WFTU has stood firmly on the side of workers, defending labour rights, social justice, peace, and international solidarity. From every continent, the voices of working people unite in a common struggle against exploitation, inequality, and anti-worker policies.

The mobilisations taking place send a powerful message: workers are organised, determined, and united across borders. Our strength lies in solidarity, our weapon is collective action, and our goal is a world of dignity, rights, and justice for all.

Happy 81st Anniversary to the WFTU! ✚

Part of the International Action Day. Photo: wftucentral.org

Che Guevara's legacy

Graham Holton

Ernesto "Che" Guevara was executed by the Bolivian army on 9 October 1967 in a small village schoolhouse in La Higuera, Bolivia. He was 39 years old. After his death Alberto Korda's *Guerrillero Heroico* photograph of Che turned him into an international revolutionary icon.

Che represents the ideal revolutionary: someone who placed international solidarity above his personal safety. This "heroic" image became a central symbol of the Cuban revolution: "Hasta la victoria siempre."

While Che's death ended the strategy of revolutionary guerrilla movements in Latin America, his death became part of the global armed struggle and revolutionary mass movements in national liberation and socialism. With his death Cuba became an enduring symbol of revolution, a global countercultural icon of resistance to US imperialism.

For young radicals, Che offered a symbol of anti-imperialism, guerrilla struggle, internationalism, and the revolutionary movement. Cuba influenced the US Left, especially the Black Panther Party and the Venceremos

Brigade that inaugurated a tradition of international support for Cuba which continues to this day.

After Che's death, Cuba strengthened its socialist policies, becoming a centre of international revolution. For Fidel Castro, the country had to consolidate the Revolution at home, and transition towards a more centralised political and economic system.

Today Che is more than a beloved national hero. He is the symbol of revolutionary virtue, sacrifice and internationalism. Every day children across Cuba begin school with "Pioneers for Communism, We will be like Che!" His image has become a counter-cultural symbol operating independently of who he was as a person, metamorphosed from his life as a revolutionary and appropriated into art.

According to film scholar Carmen Oquendo-Villar Che's image operates as "a potent anti-establishment symbol used by a wide spectrum of human rights movements and individuals affirming their own liberation." Che will always be part of the Cuban Revolution and a symbol of what is possible. ✳



May Day 2013 Sydney. Photo: Evan Gowland

Ethiopia pushes back Tigray rebels as regional tensions escalate

Ethiopian government forces have pushed Tigray rebels out of the neighbouring Afar region following a counter-offensive as renewed fighting in northern Ethiopia triggers a sharp deterioration in Addis Ababa's relations with Eritrea and Egypt.

Fighting erupted after the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) launched attacks in Afar and Amhara, reviving fears of a return to the devastating civil war that ravaged northern Ethiopia from 2020 to 2022.

A humanitarian source in Afar told *Agence France Press* that the TPLF had withdrawn from the region but left behind significant destruction.

"The TPLF is out of Afar. The humanitarian situation has little changed as they raided and destroyed as they left and there is no access to food in the north," the source said.

Conflict monitoring organisation Armed Conflict Location & Event Data reported that pro-government forces had regained control of the Afar towns of Abala, Erebt, and Megale.

Government forces have now launched a counter-offensive into Tigrayan territory

along three axes toward the regional capital, Mekelle, according to the Critical Threats Project.

A pro-government Tigrayan militia also posted footage on social media that appeared to show fighters chanting "Mekelle, Mekelle," alongside a caption partially reading "our plans for this weekend."

Independent verification remains difficult because authorities have prevented media access to affected areas, while communications have been severely disrupted.

The renewed fighting has rapidly taken on a regional dimension, with Ethiopia accusing Eritrea of backing the TPLF.

Ethiopia and Eritrea severed diplomatic relations after Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, expelled 10 Eritrean diplomats and closed its embassy in Asmara. Eritrea responded that it would "sever all diplomatic ties."

Eritrea has long expressed concern that landlocked Ethiopia could seek to seize access to Eritrea's coastline. TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael said in a video that "the war is regional and it is a war to control the Red Sea."

The African Union, headquartered in

Ethiopia, said it was "following with concern the heightened tensions between Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Egypt," and called for "maximum restraint."

Ethiopia has also expelled an Egyptian diplomat without explanation, prompting Cairo to take reciprocal action.

The diplomatic dispute comes as relations between Ethiopia and Egypt have already been strained by Addis Ababa's construction of its massive Nile dam. Egypt has strengthened its ties with Eritrea in recent months amid broader regional tensions.

The dispute over the dam has been a longstanding source of friction between Addis Ababa and Cairo, with Egypt concerned about the project's implications for its water resources.

The renewed conflict also appears to have reached Ethiopia's capital for the first time.

An explosion was reported at the Ministry of Defence, which houses the headquarters of the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF). A diplomatic source in Addis Ababa told AFP that drone strikes were the "most likely" cause, although there was no imagery or independent confirmation.

The source said the devices were "essentially militarised commercial drones fitted with an explosive charge." An army base in the capital was reportedly hit around the same time.

Tigrayan forces have previously used drones against airbases and airports elsewhere in Ethiopia. ACLED reported three such attacks in Oromia and Amhara.

The Critical Threats Project said Tigrayan forces had "launched a drone strike campaign across Ethiopia," including Addis Ababa, as part of an effort to demonstrate their ability to expand the fighting beyond the northern region.

The Ethiopian government and military have not commented on the reported strikes in Addis Ababa. Residents and workers near the ENDF headquarters in the Tor Hayloch area also reported the explosions to AFP.

The latest developments mark a sharp escalation in the fighting and raise concerns that the renewed Tigray conflict could extend beyond northern Ethiopia, amid deteriorating relations between Addis Ababa, Asmara, and Cairo.

Al Mayadeen ✳

Teamsters win industrial actions in Chicago

Graham Holton

The Teamsters have carried out two significant industrial actions this year against essential public-sector/community services in the Chicago area.

These disputes are important to the increased use of strike action by the Teamsters union in the United States. They involved workers challenging employers over wages, job security and subcontracting.

The employers' response was to claim that their budgets can't sustain union demands. The strikes highlight the contradiction between maintaining public amenities and keeping labour costs down.

Open Kitchens Teamsters Local (Branch) 703 achieved a great

victory. Open Kitchens deliver meals to public schools and other customers across Chicago. Dissatisfied with Open Kitchens' unfair labour practices and bad-faith bargaining, forty drivers and helpers struck for six weeks. They won a 24 per cent wage increase over a three-year agreement, affordable health care, protections against subcontracting, and recognition of the first Teamsters contract. Workers ratified the agreement on 7 August 2026.

Thomas W Stiede, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 703 said, "Open Kitchens tried everything to stop these workers from organising, but nothing could stop them from winning the strong first contract they deserved." The Open Kitchens

settlement means that anti-subcontracting provisions limit management's ability to undermine the bargaining unit by shifting work elsewhere. Jose Espionosa, a driver and member of Local 703, said, "If we hadn't fought back, nothing would have changed."

The Open Kitchens dispute was highly confrontational. The Teamsters accused the company of intimidating union supporters; dismissing workers because of union activity; delaying negotiations; and committing unfair labour practices. The union filed multiple charges with the National Labor Relations Board, and the employer's resistance to unionisation failed.

Formerly, unions negotiated settlements without demonstrating

industrial power. Instead, the Teamsters' national leadership used strike threats strategically, rebuilding strike power rather than relying on contract negotiations. The Chicago Local 703 organised non-union administrative and specialist UPS workers. The broad rank-and-file organised workplace committees, strike preparation, picketing and the willingness to withdraw labour.

The Chicago Teamsters' actions suggest a shift from defensive unionism toward a more assertive strategy in which organising for strike preparation was followed by strikes and rebuilding bargaining power.

The other prominent industrial action was by 200 members

of Teamsters Local 700 employed by the Illinois Cook County Forest Preserves.

The issues were higher wage scales and improved overtime provisions, particularly when workers work more than five consecutive days. The union spent months organising members through a Contract Action Team, building workplace participation before taking strike action. Workers rejected management's proposed contract, and authorised strike action. After a 16-day strike, members achieved the wage scales and provisions they were after. ✳

Global manifesto demands freedom for Maduro and Flores

Social organisations, political parties, trade unions and intellectuals from around the world have united behind a global manifesto demanding the immediate release of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, calling for their safe return to the country and an end to the legal proceedings against them in United States.

The manifesto states that President Maduro and the First Combatant Flores are innocent and have committed no crime, either in Venezuela or anywhere else, asserting that they were kidnapped by a foreign military force without any declaration of war and arguing that those responsible for the operation should instead be arrested and tried.

The document carries signatures from prominent figures including British musician and activist Roger Waters, Spanish journalist Ignacio Ramonet, and João Pedro Stédile, a leader of Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement (MST).

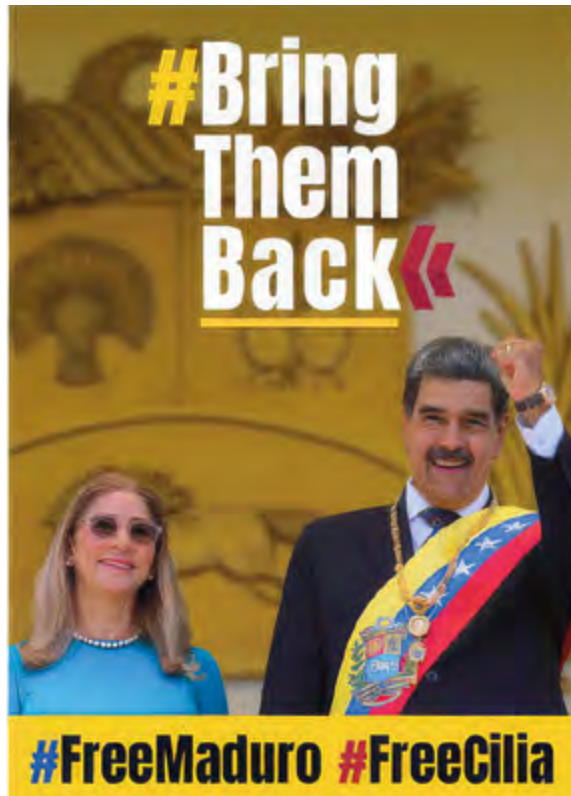
Promoted by the ALBA Movement's platform and the International Peoples' Assembly (AIP), the document alleges that the Venezuelan presidential couple were victims of a kidnapping carried out on 3 January by a foreign military force that entered Venezuelan territory illegally. The signatories argue the operation violated the United Nations Charter and the immunity typically afforded to a sitting head of state, noting that it took place without an extradition request or authorisation from the UN Security Council.

The signing organisations contend that the criminal case against President Maduro and Cilia Flores in US courts lacks jurisdiction and legitimate evidence, arguing that the underlying goal is to pressure Venezuela's government and hold the President as leverage in exchange for access to Venezuelan oil.

The manifesto further argues that the burden of proof should fall on Washington rather than on the defendants, asserting that the US has yet to substantiate its case and would be unable to do so without resorting to fabricated evidence.

The document also criticises what it calls the narrative built around the so-called "Cartel de los Soles," describing it as a term used generically to justify political intervention, and argues that the treatment of Flores amounts to a case of politically motivated gender-based violence.

The statement frames the case as carrying



implications well beyond Venezuela, warning that allowing one state to override another country's legal jurisdiction and proceed with a trial lacking grounding in international law would effectively establish the US judicial system as an unlimited global authority.

To counter what they describe as an attempt at extraterritorial imposition, the signing organisations are calling on states and multilateral bodies to explicitly reject such a policy, demanding an end to what they characterise as aggression against Venezuela, the lifting of unilateral coercive sanctions, and a definitive halt to the use of the so-called war on drugs as a pretext for attacks and extrajudicial killings across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Telesur

To support the manifesto, contact the organisations behind it at secretaria@albamovimientos.org.br 🇺🇸

News Quiz Answers

1. They paid zero tax last financial year.
2. The last US troops have left Iraq.
3. AUKUS
4. New measures to protect tenants, after an 87 year old woman was evicted.
5. Online betting
6. Circuit Breaker
7. The Melbourne Arts centre, where the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA), the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), and the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) took action together
8. Germany
9. Bushfires, floods, heatwaves and droughts
10. Military

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

[instagram.com/communist.party.australia/](https://www.instagram.com/communist.party.australia/)



Global Briefs

BURKINA FASO: Burkina Faso marked the opening of its first state-owned refinery plant, taking a significant step towards economic independence and industrial development. President Ibrahim Traore stressed the strategic importance of this initiative, which aims to control the entire value chain of the extractive industry, starting with gold. "In everything related to the extractive industry, we want to have the entire value chain under control, and we are starting with gold," Traore said. "Refining gold in our territory will generate more wealth, create qualified jobs, strengthen the traceability of our production, and improve control over financial flows. Additionally, it will enable us to combat illicit practices more effectively, such as fraud, smuggling, and money laundering."

ISRAEL: Israel's supreme court overturned a ban on two Arab electoral lists, allowing the Joint List and United Arab List to run in the 27 October Knesset elections. The ban had been approved by the Central Election Committee following requests from Likud, Jewish Power, and other right-wing groups. The Attorney General's office found that evidence against the United Arab List and Joint List did not meet the legal threshold for exclusion, though it did support the ban against Palestinian Israeli politician Abu Shehadeh. The court did not consider banning far-right politicians who have called for violence against Palestinians.

HAITI: More than 5,700 people have been killed or injured by militia violence in Haiti between 1 January and 11 September 2026, the United Nations said. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights added that more than 230 people have been kidnapped. An estimated 1,000 women and girls have been raped – although the actual figure is likely to be much higher.

JAPAN: A Tokyo Court has awarded legal protection to the human voice in a landmark case in which a popular Japanese anime voice actor Kenjiro Tsuda demanded that TikTok close an account over its unauthorised use of an artificial intelligence clone of his voice. "Human voice is symbol of an individual's personality just like image," the ruling said adding that unauthorised use of voice could constitute an infringement of rights. It is the first time a Japanese court has made such a judgement.

INDIA: India's Cockroach Janta Party has launched a new protest demanding change after millions of voters were improperly removed from electoral rolls. Other protest movements joined the rallies, which led to scuffles and arrests in the capital.

SWITZERLAND: Mass demonstrations took place in Geneva and other European cities on 3 October, to condemn ongoing Israeli aggression against Gaza, Lebanon, Iran, and Syria. Protesters also denounced their governments for remaining silent or issuing "timid" statements in response to the crimes committed in Gaza and Lebanon.

ALGERIA: The death penalty for arson has been reintroduced in Algeria following devastating wildfires this summer. The Algerian president warned in August that those responsible for the fires that devastated large parts of the country would face the death penalty.

SPAIN: Tens of thousands of people are demanding affordable housing measures after members of parliament rejected an emergency relief package for tenants. Demonstrators took to the streets in the capital and about 50 other cities, calling for a general strike and reforms to address the country's increasingly expensive housing market. The eviction of an 87-year-old pensioner from her Madrid home triggered the movement, causing hundreds to set up tents in central Madrid to push for reforms.

Brazil: US pulls out all the stops

Carlos Martinez and Sara Vivacqua

Brazilians have gone to the polls in what has been a crucial election for the country and the wider region. The contest has pitted the incumbent president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva against the far-right Flavio Bolsonaro – son of the former president Jair Bolsonaro, who is currently serving a 27-year sentence, convicted of plotting a coup to overturn the result of the 2022 election.

Of all the elections in the Americas this year, this is the one whose outcome matters most to Washington – and the one it has worked hardest to influence. Brazil – a top-10 economy, a founder of BRICS and a driver of the multipolar order – is the last large country in South America that, under Lula, refuses to fall in line with Washington. It is one of the final pieces and also a potential turning point in Washington's strategy for the capture of the Americas.

"Brazilian democracy belongs to Brazilians. Brazil will remain a sovereign country."

US MONEY

Ten days before the first round, Meta temporarily disabled Lula's Facebook advertising account, preventing his campaign from running ads on the platform. Lula's campaign challenged the decision, saying no justification had been provided, and the account was restored later that same day. Meta had offered no public explanation for the suspension at the time of reporting.

The most serious suspicion, however, concerns potential foreign financing of Flavio Bolsonaro's campaign through Rockbridge, a US network created in the orbit of US vice-president JD Vance and major Trump-aligned donors, which has channelled anonymous donations to far-right campaigns.

Andre Marinho – the son of Flavio Bolsonaro's substitute senator – authored a 22-page strategic memorandum bearing the words Flavio Bolsonaro: 2026 Campaign and met with Vance in Washington. The document envisaged a future Bolsonaro administration aligning with the US over critical minerals and building supply chains explicitly designed to reduce the partnership with China.

An investigation found that Marinho incorporated a Brazilian branch of Rockbridge in Wyoming – Rockbridge Brazil Ltd – and that a businessman whom Marinho introduced to Rockbridge subsequently became involved in Flavio Bolsonaro's campaign operation in Sao Paulo; the businessman acknowledges his ties to Rockbridge but denies channelling any funds.

The Workers' Party (PT) and its allies formally asked both the Superior Electoral Court and the Supreme Court to investigate whether foreign money has reached the campaign. Foreign campaign financing is prohibited under Brazilian electoral rules, which strictly regulate permissible sources and require campaign funds to be identified and declared.

IN THE CROSSHAIRS

In a report, Brazil's own intelligence agency (ABIN) has rated US pressure on the election at a "critical level," calling it "gradual, combined and adaptive," with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio central to it.

In the US itself, the interference has been recognised at official level. Thirty-one members of Congress, Bernie Sanders among them, wrote to Rubio accusing the administration of "a sustained, multifaceted campaign of interference and destabilisation in Brazil."

The US campaign against Brazil was spelled out in black and white by the White House itself. A July 2025 executive order declared a national emergency, claiming that Brazil's government had "unjustly charged Bolsonaro with multiple crimes,"

and imposed tariffs of up to 50 per cent on Brazilian goods – a campaign developed openly with the support of the Bolsonaro family.

After the original tariffs were struck down in February 2026, Washington imposed new 25 per cent tariffs on a range of Brazilian products in July, followed by an additional 12.5 per cent levy justified by alleged failures to combat forced labour.

The pressure has extended beyond trade and sanctions. On 28 May, the US designated the PCC and Comando Vermelho, two of Brazil's largest criminal organisations, as foreign terrorist organisations, placing Brazil within the same counterterrorism framework as al-Qaeda and Isis. According to the congressional letter, the designations came shortly after Flavio Bolsonaro had "reportedly" asked Trump for them.

Celso Amorim, Lula's chief foreign-policy adviser and a former foreign minister, warned this could provide a pretext for intervention. He noted that expansive interpretations of "terrorism" and "narco-terrorism" had already been used to justify military operations elsewhere.

The broader doctrine was made explicit in August, when the US State Department released a video declaring that "American dominance in the Western Hemisphere will never again be questioned." Amorim described the message as an attempt "to relativise the sovereignty of Latin American countries in general, including, of course, Brazil." The warning came as Brazilian analysts were also expressing concern over the expansion of the US military presence in its immediate neighbourhood.

PINK TIDE

The "pink tide" has not simply receded through the free choice of Latin American electorates. Its retreat has taken place amid direct US interference in some of the region's most closely contested elections.

The left in Latin America has suffered a series of defeats over the course of the last year, including the replacement of a progressive government in Bolivia by the right-wing, pro-US and pro-Israel Rodrigo Paz; the election of the Pinochet-nostalgic Jose Antonio Kast in Chile; Nasry Juan Asfura in Honduras; Daniel Noboa in Ecuador; Keiko Fujimori in Peru; and, most recently, the quasi-fascist Abelardo de la Espriella in Colombia.

Several of these electoral contests were extremely close; the US had a hand in many of them, and in others besides. In Argentina, ahead of Javier Milei's midterm elections in October 2025, the US Treasury extended a US\$20 billion (£15bn) currency swap to prop up the peso, with Trump spelling out the terms at a White House meeting with Milei: "If he loses, we are not going to be generous with Argentina."

In Honduras, two days before the November 2025 presidential election, Trump announced that he would pardon former president Juan Orlando Hernandez – a leader of Asfura's own National Party, serving 45 years in a US prison for helping to traffic hundreds of tonnes of cocaine – and warned that if Asfura lost, "the United States will not be throwing good money after bad."

In Colombia, Trump endorsed de la Espriella ahead of the run-off, denounced his opponent Ivan Cepeda as a "radical left Marxist," and greeted a result decided by less than one percentage point by predicting a "much better relationship" between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the Trump regime has imposed – by brutal (and flagrantly illegal) military means – a punishing defeat on Venezuela, kidnapping its president Nicolas Maduro and dictating the terms of an agreement that hands control of roughly 20 per cent of the country's oil resources to a Pentagon-backed concession. The US is maintaining a genocidal energy siege of Cuba, which last received a shipment of oil six months ago.

Morning Star (edited for space) ✖



Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Photo: Palácio do Planalto – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

"Brazilian democracy belongs to Brazilians. Brazil will remain a sovereign country."

US forces leave Iraq

On 30 September, US President Donald Trump announced that the last American forces are leaving Iraq, declaring the end of "Operation Inherent Resolve" and describing the withdrawal as a "Great Day for America."

"Today, I am pleased to announce, that the last American Forces are leaving Iraq!" Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

Trump said the US departure marked

the end of what he described as a long and costly involvement in Iraq, adding, "Soon, that will be part of History."

He said the orderly departure of US-led Coalition forces and equipment from Erbil Air Base marked the end of "a very expensive excursion into Hell."

The Iraqi capital, Baghdad, witnessed a popular festival and an official ceremony in Palestine Square, celebrating "National Sovereignty Day" and the withdrawal of

international and US combat forces from the country.

There will still be foreign bases in Iraq, belonging to Türkiye, Israel, and Italy.

Speaking at the event, Jaafar al-Husseini, spokesperson for the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, said the Resistance factions are not committed to any timetable or agreement concerning their weapons announced by government or political parties.

"The Islamic Resistance is not bound by

any timeline or agreement spoken of by any government or political party." Al-Husseini stressed that "our weapons will remain a trust in our hands."

Al-Husseini said the Iraqi Resistance, represented by its four factions, was the force that took up arms against the occupiers and bore the burden of the US occupation, arguing that the US military was defeated in 2011, marking Iraq's first victory.

Al Mayadeen ✖

Hundreds of French schools disrupted amid student protests

French high school protests have intensified as students blocked schools, set fires, and clashed with police while demanding better educational conditions, disrupting hundreds of schools across the country.

The government has said students in their mid-to-late teens have the right to voice their grievances but has condemned acts of violence, including an incident in which a police officer was chased, kicked, and beaten by a group of youths.

The movement began in the Paris region in September before spreading nationwide. Students at lycées (high schools), particularly those in their final years of schooling, have blocked access to school buildings and confronted police during demonstrations.

Students called on trade unions and political organisations that share their grievances to join planned demonstrations across the country on 6 October. A reported 250,000 protesters took part in the next set of demonstrations.

According to the Education Ministry, nearly 400 schools were closed on 2 October, while at least 564 of France’s 3,700 high schools experienced disruption.

Students say their school days are excessively long and that conditions are inadequate, citing overheated classrooms and frequent staff absences.

“For a whole year, we didn’t have a science teacher. We don’t have any textbooks,” said Simon, a 15-year-old, outside Turgot High School in central Paris. “And still, we’re the lucky ones. It’s even worse in the suburbs.”

The protests have highlighted concerns over staffing and resources as students demand improvements to their daily learning conditions.

In the western city of Brest, police used tear gas at Kerichen High School after students hurled projectiles at security forces, according to an AFP photographer.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez meanwhile described footage from the eastern city of Belfort showing youths surrounding and kicking a lone police officer as involving “rare violence and intolerable” behaviour.

A 17-year-old high school student was arrested over the incident. Nunez said the officer lost consciousness but that his condition was not a cause for concern.

Al Mayadeen

Call for end to unilateral coercive measures at UN

China and 27 other countries, including Russia, Egypt, and Iran have called on the international community to end unilateral coercive measures, saying they interfere in other countries’ internal affairs and undermine the foundation of multilateralism.

History has proved that unilateral coercive measures are a major source of international turbulence and disorder, while developing countries and their peoples continue to bear the brunt of such measures, said Fu Cong, China’s

permanent representative to the United Nations, in a joint statement on behalf of 28 countries delivered at the Third Committee of the General Assembly.

Unilateral coercive measures, compounded by secondary sanctions and over-compliance, have exacerbated existing humanitarian and economic challenges and threaten food, energy and financial security, Fu said.

The growing use of tariffs as a tool of unilateral coercion has further politicised economic and trade issues, undermined the multilateral

trading system, disrupted global industrial and supply chains, and impeded the efforts of the countries concerned to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, he added.

Moreover, unilateral coercive measures severely violate basic human rights, including the right to life, health, development and education, and impede the ability of targeted countries to realise those rights.

Xinhua



Something to say?

Write to the Editor!

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Anger (growing)

There’s a whole family of weasel words whose job is to make something that’s mainly happening between a journalist’s ears look like it’s happening in the real world and needs to be reported on. So it is with “growing anger” (see also ‘concern’ and ‘community feelings’).

A Nine Entertainment journalist has reported that there is “growing anger on social media” over the government banning credit card surcharges.

At least they’ve tried to pretend that the growing anger comes from somewhere, but have they looked at social media lately? There’s more “growing anger” there over who the next James Bond should be.

Concerning (somewhat)

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese says it was “somewhat concerning” that “at a time where we see a rise of a far-right-wing party, [new Greens leader] Senator Shoebridge took the opportunity to actually criticise Labor.” Presumably Shoebridge should be fighting fascism shoulder-to-shoulder with the ALP, instead of noticing that Labor is the government and criticising them when they deserve it.

Albo is implying that the deeply racist far-right and anti-work-er party One Nation gets more votes when Shoebridge has the nerve to criticise Labor. He has to say it in weasel language because it sounds more Prime Ministerial that way and if you just come out and say it plainly, blaming the Greens for One Nation sounds really silly.

Do let us know if poll results show hordes of One Nation voters ticking the ‘yes’ box next to ‘I was going to vote Labor, but then the Greens criticised them so I voted One Nation instead.’

Dependency

Australian Financial Review hack Phil Coorey is comfortable at the *AFR*. He’s so comfortable he can breezily talk about a “cycle of dependency.” This happens when the government spends some money on a program which is popular and so hard to un-do. His examples included Labor putting some more money into bulk billing and shaving a bit off the cost of HECS/HELP debts, so if you can’t afford to pay for medical care and appreciate bulk-billing you’re like some kind of addict.

Democratising

This sounds like a really good thing. More democracy? Yes please. Who’s offering it? Woolworths chairman Scott Perkins. He says artificial intelligence as used by Woolies will be “incredibly democratising and powerful for customers.” Perkins doesn’t spell out how AI will make your grocery shopping experience more democratic, but if we get to vote on his salary, we’re all for it.

Responsible/record (see last week’s Peace Notes)

There’s a mythical colour called ‘bleen’ which is blue until some point in the future when it changes into green. It’s a philosophy thing, not essential, look it up if you want to.

‘Responsible’ is a bit like that in the hands of our politicians. This is a very good thing for spending to be, unless it applies to military spending when ‘responsible’ magically changes into ‘record’ or ‘significant.’

Listen to

Have you ever talked with somebody who says “I hear you” when what they mean is either “shut up” or “stop talking so I can speak”? Annoying, isn’t it?

So it is with being listened to. The Tasmanian government says it has “listened to a diverse range of community views and acknowledges the deeply held feelings of many Tasmanians,” also that it’s going to build a stadium nobody needs anyway. Anyone who thinks the money would be better spent on hospitals, emergency services or housing will be “listened to,” but they might as well dig a hole and shout into it for all the good it’ll do.

Keeping Gaza alive

Ramzy Baroud

When I first saw footage of Gaza doctor Munir al-Bursh and his family kneeling beside the white-shrouded body of his son, surrounded by mourners, I thought it was an old video. It was not.

My assumption, however, was understandable. In December 2023, only months after the start of the Israeli genocide in Gaza, the al-Bursh family was struck by an Israeli attack. Dr Munir, director-general of Gaza's Ministry of Health, was wounded. So were other members of his family. His daughter, Jinan, only 13, was killed.

That same day, Gaza's beloved doctor was back at work, joining the many doctors across the Strip trying to save lives, as Israel systematically targeted them.

Alas, the latest images were not old footage resurfacing. It was a new coffin, a new funeral, another child buried by the same family. This time, the attack took place during what some in the media continue to call the 'Gaza ceasefire.'

On 19 September, an Israeli drone strike killed al-Bursh's eldest son, Basir, outside a tent west of Jabaliya refugee camp.

"We were together side by side," the grieving father recalled. Basir had warned him, "The Israelis are targeting both of us." Moments later, his son stepped outside the tent and was killed.

The scenes emerging today are almost indistinguishable from those that preceded the so-called ceasefire of October 2025. The sequence repeats itself with terrible familiarity: Israeli strikes, shelling and sniping, Palestinians killed, the bereaved carrying their dead through Gaza's destroyed streets, searching among the ruins for somewhere to bury them.

Al-Bursh's story is part of this terrible continuum, but its significance extends beyond his personal loss. Throughout the genocide, he and other Palestinian doctors became Gaza's de facto spokespeople. They counted the dead and wounded, documented hunger and destruction, and chronicled the collapse of the medical system from within its hospitals. In the process, they became Gaza's highest moral authority, more credible than politicians or self-proclaimed leaders.

And the world listened. Gaza's doctors forged a bond with global civil society that no political institution could manufacture.

THE PRICE

Perhaps that helps explain the staggering price Gaza's medical community has been made to pay. According to the World Health Organisation, more than 1,700 healthcare workers have been killed since 2023, amid at least 920 attacks on healthcare.

Dr Hussam Abu Safiya, like Dr al-Bursh, became a symbol of that medical resistance. The director of Kamal Adwan Hospital remained at his post through siege and repeated Israeli attacks before Israeli forces detained him in December 2024. He remains imprisoned without charge or trial, amid reports from his lawyer of beatings and deteriorating health.

Dr al-Bursh, meanwhile, remains steadfast despite repeated blows that would have broken many others. His wife, too, embodies sumud, the Palestinian tradition of

steadfastness nurtured at home and passed from one generation to the next.

Even in the immediate aftermath of his son's killing, al-Bursh continued warning about Gaza's collapsing healthcare system. Indeed, hospitals have been forced to suspend scheduled surgeries and outpatient services, while severe shortages of fuel, medicines, and equipment continue.

"The limited quantities of fuel reaching the enclave barely keep health facilities alive," al-Bursh warned a day after his son's murder.

UNITED NATIONS

Al-Bursh's statement came as world leaders gathered thousands of miles away, in New York, for the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Once again, Palestine echoed through speech after speech, though this time the language carried a new urgency.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez condemned "the genocide that Netanyahu continues to perpetrate in Gaza." UN Secretary-General António Guterres described Israel's mass extermination as involving "a scale of killing and destruction unlike anything I have witnessed" during his tenure. Even French President Emmanuel Macron called Gaza "a spectacle that shames us all," asking: "What is our credibility worth if we remain inactive on Gaza?"

Then came Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Dozens of delegates walked out as he approached the podium, leaving row upon row of empty seats, while protests continued outside the UN. Netanyahu responded by calling those who departed "moral cowards."

One might pause here and speak of tides turning, currents changing, and a world slowly loosening the decades-long grip of Israel and its American benefactor.

But Gaza does not have the luxury of time. While the words reverberate through the halls of the United Nations, children are still killed in front of their families. Mass funerals remain part of Gaza's daily rhythm. Approximately 1.7 million people remain displaced, many under inadequate shelter, without sufficient clean water or sanitation. Hospitals remain crippled. Above this landscape of ruin, the drones still circle.

There's another year to the next UN General Assembly – 365 days in which those words can either acquire meaning or become yet another entry in the long archive of speeches on Palestine. However, there is time for rhetoric to become policy: for sanctions to be imposed, boycotts activated, meaningful aid delivered, and those responsible for war crimes held accountable.

Until then, Dr Munir al-Bursh and thousands of Gaza's men and women will 'remain steadfast' amid shattered hospitals, destroyed homes and an exhausted population.

Their resilience is extraordinary. But Gaza cannot be expected to endure simply because it has proved capable of enduring.

In New York, Palestine is spoken of from the podium. In Gaza, Palestinians are still being carried to their graves.

It is time to close the distance between words and action, once and for all.

People's World (edited for space) ★



Boorloo/Perth rally for Palestine, November 2024.

Ben-Gvir claims entire West Bank

Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir has claimed that the entire occupied West Bank belongs to Israel, while pledging to advance Palestinian displacement and loosen restrictions on soldiers' use of force if he becomes defence minister.

"There is no difference between Areas A, B, and C. The entire land is ours. This is our country," Ben-Gvir told Israel's right-wing Channel 14 Anadolu news agency.

His remarks contradicted the administrative arrangements established under the 1995 Oslo II Accord, which divided the West Bank into three areas. Area A falls under Palestinian civilian and security control, Area B under Palestinian civilian and Israeli security control, and Area C under full Israeli control. Area C accounts for approximately 60 per cent of the territory.

Ben-Gvir also threatened to dismantle the Palestinian Authority and pursue the displacement of Palestinians from both the West Bank and Gaza.

Claiming that 60 per cent of Palestinians want to leave, he pledged to oversee the process personally.

"I will dedicate time to this, and I will manage the process continuously. Every week, I will hold a discussion involving all relevant parties," he said.

Asked how Israel could provide additional forces for the West Bank and Gaza, Ben-Gvir advocated greater use of gunfire. "It is very simple: The more you allow soldiers to shoot and use force, the less manpower you need."

"I will remove the restrictions on our soldiers. Today, the police rules of engagement are much more lenient than those of the army," he added.

Ben-Gvir accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of failing to pursue Palestinian displacement forcefully enough, saying he "did not want it enough." The remarks came ahead of Israel's 27 October Knesset election, amid polling showing declining support for the governing coalition.

Palestine Chronicle



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