

Stop arming Israel – Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions NOW!



The rally in Naarm/Melbourne.

Marcus Browning

Pro-Palestine rallies took place across Australia as part of the Global Day for Gaza, protesters are gathering in capital cities and various regional locations.

In Sydney, there was a sea of Palestinian flags as thousands gathered at Hyde Park before marching through the CBD. In London an estimated 250,000 people attended the solidarity demonstration paused at Westminster Bridge to allow the supportive pair to take photographs with them.

In a statement to mark International Day for Palestine, Saturday 10 October, the Communist Party of Britain said it “salutes the mass solidarity movements forcing the UK government policy change on Palestine.”

The CPB has called “for all necessary action to end Israel’s continuing genocide of the Palestinians and illegal occupation, and for maximum attendance on the National March for Palestine: Three years of genocide – stop arming Israel – sanctions NOW!”

NOBEL RECOGNITION

In related news, South African international jurist and human rights defender Navi Pillay has been awarded the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize. She was instrumental in the finding that Israel is committing genocide. Amnesty International’s Secretary General, Agnès Callamard said:

“We pay tribute to Navi Pillay whose commitment to international law, unwavering independence and guiding moral light have made her one of the most respected human rights figures of our time. Not only does this award honour an extraordinary individual, it also comes at a time when everything Navi Pillay stands for is coming under increasing attack, as powerful states attempt to hollow out the rule of law and jettison fundamental international rules and norms.

“From her early days as a young lawyer fighting apartheid in South Africa, Navi Pillay showed a courage and humanity that should inspire us all.”

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Global Day for Gaza

Peter Farmer

Communist Party of Australia comrades turned out to show solidarity with Palestine at the Global Day of Gaza rallies around the country. Comrades turned up, showed the flag and sold/distributed *Guardians*.

At rallies in Naarm/Melbourne, on Gadigal land in Sydney, in Borloo/Perth, in Nipaluna/Hobart, thousands turned out to demand:

- that Australia stop arming Israel (the government hides behind the fiction that Australia is just a part of a large weapons chain and Penny Wong’s laughable pretence that F-35 bombers have ‘non-lethal’ parts)
- that Australia sanction Israel
- that Australia speaks out more clearly against the ongoing genocide.

Demonstrations in Naarm/Melbourne and Sydney saw huge turnouts, including Jews Against the Occupation, giving the lie to the story that there’s anything anti-semitic about opposing an ongoing genocide.

In Naarm/Melbourne a crowd of thousands turned out.

Many marched with their unions and professional groups. Health workers marched together, defying the recent imposition of the dangerous and contentious IHRA definition of anti-semitism on their authorising body APHRA.

In Nipaluna/Hobart, Greens Senator Nick McKim attended to say “stop the slaughter, and free Palestine.”

The Tasmanian Palestine Advocacy network’s Feras Shaheen told the ABC that new measures were needed to end the war in Gaza, and urged everyone to do what they can.

Nala Mansell of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and Feras Shaheen, from the Tasmanian Palestine Advocacy Network, spoke, urging the crowd to keep up their advocacy and for everyone to do what they can in their workplace/town.

In Tarntanya/Adelaide Greens Senator Barbara Pocock spoke, urging the Albanese government to take real action.

There were rallies to mark the day worldwide, in Berlin, London, New York and elsewhere.

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Guardian

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Migration race to the bottom

Australians are being told that migration is the big issue of the moment. Politicians are panicking about migration again. They should be panicking about what this country is doing to make climate change worse, with impending fire seasons and memories of catastrophic floods fresh in our minds.

However, One Nation are apparently doing well in the polls. The racist party is having its tyres pumped up by a media that is always happy to help out by victimising migrants. So migration is under attack.

The major parties aren't taking One Nation's recent successes well, or sensibly. The Liberal-National Coalition is going for a pale imitation of Pauline Hanson's racist party, blaming migration for a housing crisis caused by years of Coalition (and Labor) policies. It wasn't migrants who made Australian governments encourage the use of houses as a speculative wealth-building asset. It wasn't migrants who made both Labor and the Coalition not spend anywhere near enough on public housing.

The main problem with the Coalition's approach is that everyone knows they're impersonating One Nation. If people want the real thing as far as racism and blaming migrants for everything goes, they know where to go.

Labor isn't much better. With one face, they decry racism. With the other, they act as though One Nation is right, imposing cuts on international student numbers and temporary workers.

Labor is hurting universities by limiting international students and making life harder for those students in a futile attempt to signal that it is Doing Something about migration. The universities rely on those students because years of underfunding by both Labor and Coalition governments have left them with little choice, so Labor's cuts will be catastrophic for the university sector. Of course they're not considering replacing the funding they've just taken away from universities.

This is 'vice signalling' by both parties. The media has convinced many voters that migrants are to blame for Australia's problems, so Labor the Coalition are signalling that they share One Nation's racist assumptions about migrants.

It's a mistake by both parties, and moves the debate onto One Nation's territory, validating their racism, while ignoring issues that really matter to working people. It won't work for the Labor or the Coalition, but will be a boon for the racist party.

Both major parties are avoiding dealing with actual problems.

Housing is a real problem. Rents are at an all-time high. A massive public housing building program would make a huge difference here. A nation that can afford \$368 billion for nuclear-powered submarines that won't show up can afford to build and run quality public housing.

A shortage of skilled workers is an issue, as is a shortage of people prepared to work on farms. Training skilled workers is something Australia could invest far more in.

Migration enriches Australia, both financially and culturally. Doing it well would mean enabling migrants to join in the nation's life instead of using migrants as a stop-gap measure to fix problems like housing, paying for education, and training skilled workers, problems that capitalism puts in the 'too-hard basket.' Capitalist governments blame migrants instead.

For a socialist government, none of those issues would be in the too hard basket. Instead the country would be run by working class people for working class people.

Stop arming Israel

Continued from page1

"This award is recognition that international justice is the cornerstone of any lasting peace in the world. As the International Criminal Court (ICC) comes under renewed attack with further sanctions imposed by the United States today, this award should remind world leaders of the vital role that the ICC and other international criminal tribunals have to play in seeking justice, truth and reparation for crimes under international law and human rights violations that are being perpetrated every day from Palestine to Sudan, Myanmar to Ukraine.

"From her early days as a young lawyer fighting apartheid in South Africa, Navi Pillay showed a courage and humanity that should inspire us all. Her life's work has been a powerful challenge to impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide – most recently while leading the landmark UN inquiry that found Israel responsible for genocide in Gaza.

"Navi Pillay's richly deserved award is a collective win for those on the frontlines in the fight for human rights, who continue speaking out and standing up for justice, accountability and the rule of law."

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BACKGROUND

Pillay started her career as a defence lawyer for anti-apartheid activists and was the first woman to open a law firm in what was then known as the Natal province in 1967.

She went on to be appointed an acting judge in the High Court in South Africa in 1995 and in the same year was elected by the UN General Assembly to be a judge on the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, where she served for eight years as president. She also served as an International Criminal Court judge from 2003 to 2008.

In 2008, Navi Pillay was appointed as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. In 2021, she was appointed chair of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory. She oversaw the UN report which found that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza.

Israel's illegal occupation of the West Bank and genocidal siege of Gaza must be dismantled. The Palestinian solidarity movement demands an immediate, permanent ceasefire, an end to Israel's siege and illegal occupation by campaigning in line with the demands of the Palestinian people themselves, including Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions.

Freedom for Palestine – Stop arming Israel – Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions NOW! ✳



The rally in Boorloo/Perth.

Survey Time! Prizes!

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

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

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



NSW Greens condemn armed 'intimidation unit'

Sue Higginson, justice spokesperson for the NSW Greens has said she's shocked by the way the NSW commissioner of police has presented a new police unit for the state.

The Minns government announced the roll out of the New South Wales Police Armed Response Command (ARC) on 8 October 2026. This is the specialist unit launched in response to the 14 December 2025 Bondi Beach terror attack. Its first 60 officers, who, like all others, will be armed with long arm rifles, will be out on the beat in the Sydney metropolitan area from November.

"ARC will be a high-visibility, intelligence-led unit capable of rapidly responding to emerging threats, patrolling high-risk areas and providing an increased police presence at places of worship, major events and other locations where it is needed," the NSW government press release explains.

In the wake of the Bondi shooting, the government decided that a 24/7 permanent specialist force was needed. Although it is not the first time that NSW police have been equipped with long-arms, the new unit marks an escalation in the manner in which constituents in Greater Sydney are policed. Sue Higginson warns that some of

the noise around the ARC conflates protest with extremism that warrants such policing.

In a press release, NSW Police Commissioner Mal Lanyon said the ARC would be "a deterrent for those who wish to commit harm, incite hatred, or cause fear."

Given the Minns government's habit of conflating peaceful protest with antisemitism, the top cop's announcement is causing fear itself.

TENSION

Since February, when the NSW police bashed and brutalised demonstrators at a protest, there has been a tension between the public and the state.

Around 3,000 NSW police officers set upon a group of 20,000 pro-Palestine protesters opposing the official visit of Israeli president Isaac Herzog on 9 February 2026, following a direction being issued for the crowd to disperse. The crowd refused to do so, in contravention of a law that prohibited street marches on Gadigal land in the Sydney CBD, which was later struck down as unconstitutional.

The scale of this excessive force incident against the public was unprecedented. The violence has been captured in numerous

social media clips and mainstream media reporting. There has been no official condemnation of what occurred.

NSW premier Chris Minns, police minister Catley and commissioner Lanyon have all refused to apologise for the clear misconduct and illegal actions of the NSW police that night. Instead, they've argued that police were just following orders, and that the policing transgressions have not only been justified but could be ordered once more.

Higginson pointed to Lanyon's characterisation of the ARC as having a purpose beyond responding to incidents, which comprises of acting as "a deterrent for those who wish to commit harm, incite hatred, or cause fear." And she went on to characterise this as being "by definition an intimidation unit," and further, that it marks "an escalation in state violence."

"After everything we know about the impossibility of defining and judging the inciting of hate and community division, I'm shocked that the commissioner of police would blatantly state that this unit is about intimidation," the Greens justice spokesperson insisted.

The addition of the ARC on Sydney streets comes after a three-year campaign that the

NSW premier has waged against the local Palestine solidarity movement that sprung up in October 2023, since the beginning of the Gaza genocide. This culminated in Minns suggesting that the Palestine protest organisers had unleashed forces that they couldn't control which helped spur the Bondi massacre.

The ARC also comes on the back of a raft of antiprotection and hate speech lawmaking, under questionable circumstances that occurred in early 2025. This included the enactment of a controversial 'incitement to race hatred' offence.

The ARC follows two distinct antiprotection laws being progressed by Minns, only to then be struck down as unconstitutional by the NSW Supreme Court.

"It's a political failure of the Minns Labor government that they will now have weapons of death around our streets and put the fear of police violence into our communities," Higginson said. "To believe you can intimidate your way to community cohesion is authoritarian and draconian."

Sydney Criminal Lawyers
(edited for space) ✖

WA uni staff oppose merger

More than two-thirds of Western Australian university staff surveyed by the National Tertiary Education Union oppose merging Curtin, UWA and Murdoch, with the union vowing to vehemently fight the proposal.

The state government has announced a steering committee to establish a business case for a potential merger, with NTEU WA Division Secretary Professor Scott Fitzgerald asked to represent staff on the body.

An NTEU WA Division survey

of 936 university staff, conducted between July and September, found 68.7 per cent oppose a merger, with just 11.9 per cent in support and 19.4 per cent undecided.

Opposition was strongest at the three universities named in the proposal, at 75 per cent of Curtin respondents, 68 per cent at Murdoch and 66 per cent at the University of Western Australia.

Staff who oppose the merger most often pointed to the disruption that followed the merger creating Adelaide University in South Australia, the scale of likely job losses, the size and complexity of the proposed institution (48 per cent) and distrust of how it would be governed.

Professor Fitzgerald said the survey left no doubt about where staff stand.

"Staff across WA have told us clearly that they oppose this merger, with opposition outweighing support by nearly six to one. It runs highest at Curtin, Murdoch, and UWA – the three universities that would be merged," he said.

"That's exactly the message I'll be delivering as part of the steering committee. Beyond that, we'll be using everything at our disposal to fight hard against a merger.

"It's highly concerning that the committee's work is centred on a business case. Public universities exist to serve students, staff, and the wider community. Any decision about their future should be through that focus, not a simplistic approach that puts profits over people.

"Staff want real governance reform and an end to the

corporatisation of their universities. A merger would double down on an approach that has already failed them. What we need now is an inquiry into university governance."

NTEU National President Dr Alison Barnes said staff around the country had seen what mergers deliver.

"The experience of university staff across Australia is that mergers all too often bring stress, higher workloads and other damaging impacts on staff," Dr Barnes said.

"WA university staff are right to fear job cuts from this plan. When executives cut jobs it has dire consequences for not just those who leave but people who stay and are expected to do more with less."

National Tertiary Education Union ✖



South Australia's communists are celebrating the October Revolution and another year of struggle of the Communist movement locally and internationally!

When: Saturday November 7th, 6-10pm.

Where: Fidel's, 66 Wattle Avenue, Royal Park, South Australia.

Entrance by donation, suggested \$10 unwaged, \$20 waged

Limited entry, RSVP essential!

RSVP: sa@cpa.org.au

ACT youth workers strike

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) says youth workers at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre have faced severe and systemic underpayment over the years, with workers losing hours of pay a week for essential onsite security and equipment checks. Some youth workers at Bimberi have accumulated up to hundreds of hours of unpaid time.

After 12 months of bargaining, the ACT government initially proposed a 10-minute allowance and later discussed 20 minutes. The union is urging the Barr government negotiate fairer conditions for Bimberi youth workers that pay them properly.

As well as this, the union is also seeking a meal allowance which to date has been rejected by the Barr government.

Workers are also anxious about qualifications. Previously, workers moved up the pay scale by completing the required certificate onsite at Bimberi or

locally through the Canberra Institute of Technology. Both are now unavailable.

The Community and Public Sector Union says they will take ongoing industrial action at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre until the ACT government engages in meaningful negotiations over pay and conditions.

Rebecca Fawcett, CPSU National Secretary said that Bimberi youth workers do important work in supporting rehabilitation and education, and community safety, and that the Barr government needs to recognise this by paying these public sector workers properly.

"At a time when workers are facing cost of living pressures, we need to make sure ACT public sector employees are compensated correctly so they can continue providing important services Canberraans rely on."

Maddy Northam, CPSU Regional Secretary pointed out that Bimberi youth workers are required to complete essential security and equipment checks before they can reach their posts, but are not paid for that time.

Northam said "these workers are simply asking to be paid for the work their employer requires them to do."

"Members have had enough – Bimberi youth workers will keep taking action until the ACT government comes to the table with a fair offer that respects the work they do."

Community and Public Sector Union ✖

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by donating to Press Fund

High Court energy verdict 'a landmark'

The Australian Greens say the recent High Court ruling against MACH energy is a landmark step that strips bare the government's pretence that it is not responsible for the emissions burned overseas. The High Court is making clear that the 80 per cent of our coal and gas that is exported overseas is their responsibility.

In its first-ever climate judgment, the High Court has dismissed an appeal by MACH Energy over the proposed expansion of the Mount Pleasant coal mine in the Hunter Valley, finding that planning authorities must consider the global climate impacts of a project's emissions and how to minimise damage.

The ruling puts fossil fuel companies and governments on notice as Australia continues to approve new coal and gas projects amidst the Pacific pre-COP meetings and ahead of COP31 where it is leading climate negotiations. Governments and fossil fuel companies are accountable for the climate damage caused by their projects.

Senator Steph Hodgins-May, Deputy Leader and assistant spokesperson for Climate Change & Energy said:

"The Prime Minister said he wanted the coal corporation to win this case, but today, despite his fealty, the local Hunter community has won.

"Congratulations to the two retired science teachers who spent four years challenging this massive fossil fuel company owned by a billionaire in a Virgin Island tax haven.

"The High Court backed the community in calling out the Labor government for continuing to ignore the climate consequences of fossil fuel projects. This ruling now makes that impossible.

"For too long, big coal and gas companies have tried to pretend that the emissions from their products are someone else's problem once they leave Australian shores. They're not.

"When Australian coal is burned overseas, the climate damage doesn't magically disappear at the port. It comes back to communities here through worsening heat, drought, bushfires and floods.

"This judgment sends a clear message to governments and fossil fuel companies that the climate impacts of their projects cannot simply be ignored or pushed down the line.

"With the HVO expansion and Browse proposal currently on their desk, the Albanese government should be paying close attention. The ICJ and now the High Court have made it clear – climate impacts must be considered in fossil fuel project assessments.

"The case shows that Australia's national environmental laws are broken. Without a climate trigger, communities have to spend years in court to get climate impacts properly considered when the responsibility on government should be clear from the outset.

"You cannot claim to be serious about climate action, to lead climate negotiations at COP, all while continuing to approve new fossil fuel projects and pretending their emissions are someone else's problem.

"The Greens will keep pushing to make the big fossil fuel corporations profiting from these projects accountable for the damage they are causing, and force Labor to take responsibility for the climate consequences of the projects it approves."

Greens Australia 🇺🇦

Crisafulli cuts workers' comp service

Queensland's Premier David Crisafulli has made a lot of anti-worker calls. One of those decisions was the move to end funding for a service that has supported injured Queensland workers for 27 years.

Since 1999, the Workers' Compensation Information and Advisory Service (WCIAS) has provided free, confidential and independent information to Queensland workers navigating the workers' compensation system.

Over that time, WCIAS has helped tens of thousands of injured workers understand their rights, make claims, meet deadlines

and challenge or review insurer decisions.

Workers usually contact the service at one of the hardest points in their working lives – while dealing with an injury, recovery or return to work. They are already dealing with insurers, paperwork, deadlines and decisions they may never have encountered before.

WCIAS existed so they didn't have to navigate that system alone. Demand for the service has continued to grow, particularly from workers experiencing psychological injuries.

In September this year, the Office of Industrial Relations

cancelled the tender process for the service.

Queensland Unions says that at a time when we should be strengthening protections and support for workers who are hurt on the job, stripping that support away takes Queensland in exactly the wrong direction.

Getting hurt at work is hard enough. Injured workers should not also have to fight the system alone. Jacqueline King, secretary of the Queensland Council of unions says that the state's union movement will not quietly watch support for injured workers disappear.

Queensland Council of Unions 🇺🇦



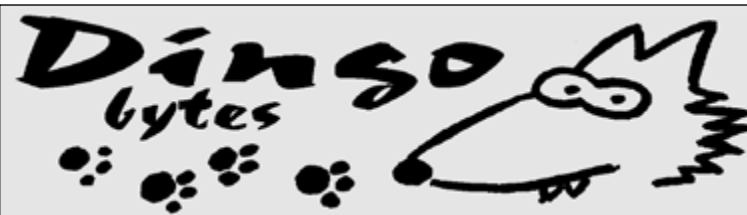
Sydney Vigil

STOP USA BLOCKADE ON CUBA

4:15pm till 5:00pm Tuesday 17 November
USA Consulate, 50 Miller Street North Sydney

Call 0418 270 885

www.cpa.org.au



For more than 12 months, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) has been highlighting the plight of vulnerable foreign seafarers aboard cruise ships operating in Australian waters under a Ministerial exemption from Australia's federal workplace laws.

Under the Coastal Trading Act, ships that are registered overseas in foreign ports under Flag of Convenience arrangements can operate in Australian waters with a ministerial exemption to Australian maritime employment laws.

"International cruise companies like Carnival make hundreds of millions of dollars in Australian waters by exploiting international seafarers below decks and behind closed doors far beyond the scrutiny of the public, and they have been doing this with a permission slip from successive federal governments that allows them to avoid employing Australian seafarers, that we have always said has never been fit for purpose," said Jake Field, MUA National Secretary.

Federal Minister Catherine King renewed this exemption with additional requirements for cruise ship operators to demonstrate compliance with seafarers' rights and protections enshrined in the ILO's Maritime Labor Convention, to which Australia is a signatory.

These requirements will make it necessary for ship owners to demonstrate they are not impeding or interfering with crew members' right to collectively organise or to lodge complaints about health, safety, or human rights abuses without fear of retribution. The MUA says it's a start.

The international cruise ship sector has generated billions for global shipowners like Carnival Cruises and the business model which underpins this profit relies on workers paid less than \$2.50 an hour, who work 12-16 hours a day, for 30 or more days at a time without a day off. These workers are denied sick leave, they subsist on tainted water and disgusting food, and are coerced or bullied by management into keeping silent about the systematic and pervasive mistreatment.

"All of this is done in the name of providing an enjoyable, unforgettable holiday experience to Australians in our own country but comes at the price of pervasive, mass scale human suffering," said Field. "In the meantime, because these global shipowners have the green light to run a business that maximises the economic upside of modern slavery, there is no way skilled Australian seafarers will ever get a chance to work in this sector, in service of our own domestic tourism industry."

The conditions identified by the MUA are happening aboard ships that are "home ported" in Australia, that operate from one Australian port to another, or do a big loop out from a port like Sydney and return three nights later without having called in to another port.

"The billionaires who run this industry are telling Australians they can't have a holiday unless we let them snip us on the way through for mega profits on the backs of hard-working international seafarers who they treat like slaves. When the Union highlights this exploitation and abuse to the passengers of these companies, they're appalled. Eventually this abuse and manipulation must end and the MUA will continue to fight for that outcome," said Field.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is the festering fascistic US State machine. The firing squad execution of Fort Hood shooter Nidal Malik Hasan will be livestreamed, the Pentagon has announced. The army said the execution would take place at Fort Hood on 3 December. Hasan was convicted of killing 13 people and injuring 32 others at the base in 2009.

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth told *Real America's Voice*: "We'll make sure that people are able to watch it, that it's public." Asked whether Hasan had made any final requests, he replied: "Don't care. We'll see him on 3 December."

The decision has raised questions about how the death penalty is carried out, especially after the botched lethal injection of Christa Pike in Tennessee.

Hasan, an army psychiatrist, was left paralysed after being shot during the attack and now uses a wheelchair.

Does Australia's social media ban do the job?

UNSW Sydney

Australia's world-first social media ban has been sold to the world as a policy to help protect children. But is it doing more harm than good?

Australia introduced the world's first social media ban for under-16s last December. Since then, some 20 other countries have adopted similar bans, including the UK, Canada, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brazil, and Austria.

The ban was pitched as a measure to protect young people's health and wellbeing from harmful content. This includes cyberbullying, violent or sexually explicit content, scams and content that encourages unproductive or unhealthy behaviours.

Associate Professor Noam Peleg from the School of Global & Public Law at UNSW Law & Justice agrees that there's online content young children shouldn't be exposed to without guide or support. But he argues the ban breaches children's rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"Any decision or process of adopting a decision concerning children – in our case, legislation – should take the rights of children into account, including listening to children," he says.

"In other words, you can't form a policy about children without listening to them and then claim that it's done for their own good."

A/Prof Peleg says limiting children's access to social media platforms effectively

prevents children under 16 from taking part in public forums, whether socially or politically.

"The ban significantly limits children's access to information. They cannot engage with others. They cannot produce their own knowledge. They cannot be part of these knowledge production processes, which all now happen online," he says.

"Conversations happen online in forums, blogs and social media; you don't send a letter to the newspaper anymore. Children have been removed from these spaces. Freedom of expression equates to the right to information and the right to assembly."

A/Prof Peleg also argues the ban wasn't designed around how children engage with the online world, but around adults' concerns about online harm.

"The outcome is an adult-centric process. It provides a so-called solution that might make sense for adults who are panicked by Instagram or TikTok," he says.

The eSafety Commissioner's first evaluation of the social media ban found most children aged 10 to 15 were still using social media in March as often as they were before the ban came into effect.

"The ban doesn't correspond with the ways in which children engage with these platforms," A/Prof Peleg says.

Part of the problem, he argues, is that the legislation relies on categories that don't reflect how young people engage with the online world.

Under existing measures, age restrictions apply to Facebook, Instagram, Kick, Reddit,



Photo: pxhere.com (CC0)

Snapchat, TikTok, Threads, Twitch, YouTube and X (formerly Twitter). But other platforms with social or communication features, including YouTube Kids, Roblox, Messenger, Discord and WhatsApp, are excluded.

A/Prof Peleg describes what adults define as social media as "a very 2010s term." He adds that "for young people, the existing social media categories make no sense, especially when they're engaging with multiple apps all at once."

"If we don't understand how children

engage with the online world, we don't protect children," he says.

Rather than take aim at users, A/Prof Peleg says the real focus should be on holding social media and other companies, like gaming companies, accountable for allowing harmful content on their platforms.

"We should be regulating the platforms and removing the harm. At the moment, the law doesn't handle the source of the harm," he says.

University of New South Wales ★

Kosciuszko's heritage deserves a voice

Richard Swain

There is something badly missing from the increasingly heated debate about feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park.

Country.

Too often, the debate begins with the heritage of horses and ends with the welfare of horses, while the mountains, rivers, wetlands, and native animals being damaged and pushed to extinction beneath their hooves are pushed to the margins.

Long before horses arrived, these mountains, rivers and wetlands were respected Country. They remain living cultural landscapes and some of the most environmentally significant places in Australia.

As a Wiradjuri man who has spent years working on and caring for these landscapes as a Snowy River guide, I've seen firsthand what happens when horses are allowed to trample, trash and pollute fragile

Country that was never built to withstand them.

Of course horses have cultural meaning to some people. But that cannot give them immunity from control when they are damaging a national park.

Nor should emotionally powerful claims about feral horse control be allowed to drown out decades of scientific evidence.

This matters far beyond Kosciuszko. Misinformation and disinformation about feral animal control is becoming a political risk to effective invasive species management across Australia. It is not confined to anonymous accounts or fringe groups online.

Misleading and unsubstantiated claims are being irresponsibly repeated and amplified by politicians, commentators and journalists, giving them legitimacy and reach. When those claims gain enough traction, governments can come under pressure to weaken,

delay or abandon evidence-based control programs.

That threatens not only feral horse management, but aerial control of deer, pigs, and other invasive animals needed to protect native wildlife and Country across Australia.

The question is not whether horses have cultural meaning for some.

It is whether that cultural meaning should outweigh the protection of the mountains, waterways, native animals and cultural landscapes that were here long before them.

THE SCIENCE IS NOT UNCERTAIN

Claims that there have been few studies of the environmental damage caused by feral horses simply do not stack up.

Even a quick online search, and bibliographies created by the Kosciuszko Science Conference

2018 and the NSW Scientific Committee, show there have been over 20 peer-reviewed Australian field studies that confirm the role of feral horses in environmental damage. A similar online search will find no peer-reviewed Australian studies saying the opposite.

Feral horses graze and trample vegetation, compact and erode soils, damage waterways and reduce water quality. The habitat of threatened animals, including the corroboree frog, alpine tree frog, alpine she-oak skink, mountain pygmy-possum, and broad-toothed rat is affected by horse damage.

The NSW Scientific Committee has listed feral horses as a key threatening process.

The federal Threatened Species Scientific Committee has described feral horses as an 'imminent threat' to efforts to prevent new extinctions and warns they may be the crucial factor that causes the final extinction of some alpine species.

There is simply no longer a credible scientific debate about whether they cause environmental damage.

Horses are not being singled out. Deer, pigs and other introduced hard-hoofed animals also cause enormous damage in Kosciuszko and should be controlled.

Indeed, hundreds of thousands of feral animals, including pigs and deer are routinely controlled using aerial shooting across NSW.

The fact that other threats exist does not make horse damage disappear.

Richard Swain – Hon Associate Professor, Fenner School of Environment and Society. He is a Wiradjuri man, Snowy River guide and Indigenous Ambassador with the Invasive Species Council.

National Indigenous Times ★

Unions urge non-compete ban

More than three million workers could gain up to \$4,300 a year in extra pay under proposed laws banning non-compete clauses for low and middle-income earners, according to new union analysis.

Australian Unions are urging the Albanese government to resist pressure from big business to weaken its draft proposals.

Non-compete clauses restrict workers from moving to another employer or establishing a competing business. The clauses currently cover about 1 in 5 workers in Australia, including hairdressers, early childhood educators and construction workers.

The federal government's proposed laws would ban non-compete clauses in employment contracts for workers earning under \$190,100 a year.

The reforms would also prohibit "no-poach" agreements, where employers agree not to hire each other's workers. The draft laws also scrap wage-fixing arrangements that workers have not agreed to through a proper collective bargaining process.

In its submission to the Treasury, Australian Unions applied the e61 Institute's 2024 estimate that banning non-compete clauses could lift affected workers' wages

by 4 per cent. Based on average full-time earnings in May 2026, that would mean an increase of around \$4,300 a year.

The Business Council of Australia argued the reforms are too broad and could discourage business investment.

ACTU Secretary Melissa Donnelly said that non-compete clauses "are holding back more than three million working Australians from landing a better-paid job. Removing these unfair restrictions could increase affected workers' pay by 4 per cent, or around \$4,300 a year for a full-time worker on an average wage."

Donnelly said that workers with valuable

skills are being "handcuffed to lower-paid jobs." She cited hairdressers, early childhood educators, and tradies as examples of workers currently unable to move into more productive jobs where their skills and talent can be put to better use.

"Working people shouldn't have to pay for a lawyer or get their boss's permission to take the next step in their career. Workers deserve the freedom to pursue a better job and a better life. Non-compete clauses deny that opportunity for too many people," said Donnelly.

Australian Council of Trade Unions ★

Aged care: dying while they wait

M Santos

The aged care system is in crisis and misdirected government policies are making it worse. Around 3,600 elderly patients, medically cleared for discharge, and unable to vacate beds due to a shortage of residential aged care places are causing bed-block in public hospitals. The additional residential places needed for them to leave hospital are not being built.

The government's base price for aged care funding, the Australian National Aged Care Classification (AN-ACC), was increased by 2.6% from 1 October 2026 from \$295.64 to \$303.19 per day. This is a reduction in real terms with inflation running at 4.0% and a rise in the number of older Australians.

In addition, budget allocations over the past four years have not been met by almost \$3 billion. The government underspent (effectively cutting spending) by \$1.4 billion in 2025-26 alone.

The cuts will affect 3.2 million Australians aged 65-plus. Department of Health, Disability and Ageing figures show around two million of them have annual incomes below \$37,000.

Parliamentary Budget Office analysis found around \$1.6 billion of the savings would come from age pensioners. Consistent with other policies such as health care, Job-Seeker and the NDIS, the Labor government is hitting the most vulnerable the hardest as it attempts to fund around half a trillion dollars in spending on AUKUS and US war plans in coming years.

CRUEL CUTS

This situation is nothing short of cruel and heartless. It takes 12 months on average to get a spot in an aged care home or secure at-home support.

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) director of policy Samantha Edmonds called the figures "confronting."

"It's so detrimental to the health and wellbeing of older people to have those wait times, to watch their health and wellbeing decline," she said.

"There's the potential for people maybe to not eat properly because they're not getting assistance to help cook meals. There could be potential for falls or other issues because, you know, we haven't got the assistive technology in there to make those changes."

"People are literally dying while they wait," Greens older people spokesperson Penny Allman-Payne said.

"Labor's treatment of older people is appalling. It is simply shameful that they're making people in their 80s or 90s wait the better part of a year to get the care they need at home."

Senate estimates figures show that in December, there were more than 230,000 Australians currently on the wait list for aged care, either for an assessment or a package at their approved level.

A Senate report revealed there were more than 48,000 people on the triage waiting list, which Senator Pocock described as "the waiting list to get onto the waiting list to get an assessment for a package."

SHORTAGE SET TO RISE

CEO of Ageing Australia Tom Symondson said, "we could see the number of beds go

backwards in Australia for the first time since 1963, when national funded care started."

Due to the largely privatised nature of aged care, providers don't only aim to meet costs. They also expect to make substantial profits, enough profits to keep expanding.

Symondson says providers reported around 3,800 planned aged care beds have been cancelled or otherwise shelved since the government announced what are real cuts to the AN-ACC price.

If profit margins are not large enough, new beds do not get built, just at a time when the demand is rapidly rising.

Even not-for-profits are feeling the pinch. Katherine Burton, Abound Communities CEO, a Victorian Not For Profit aged care provider reported that plans to build a new 80-bed facility in Berwick, on Melbourne's southeast fringe, have been shelved.

"Our residents are not financially well off, and most come to us not able to pay anything," she said. "They can't afford residential accommodation deposits, so we are reliant on government funding for their care."

"If the funding increase falls behind costs, we don't even break even, and end up having to use our reserves, which erodes our balance sheet. None of that puts us in a position to build more beds."

Burton said the funding for personal and clinical care would have to significantly increase to around 7 to 8% (not AN-ACC's 2.55%) to create an opportunity to invest.

There is a two-class aged care system with those who can afford hefty deposits running into hundreds of thousands of dollars accessing luxury residential care and those who can't.

'SUPPORT AT HOME'

The NSW Retirement Village Residents Association (RVRA) carried out a national survey of retirement village residents in relation to the government's new Support at Home program.

The findings show 30% of village respondents waited seven months or more for assessment by My Aged Care, while 24% waited seven months or more for approval after assessment.

A further 28% then waited three months or more to receive services from a provider. The Weekly SOURCE reported that 200,000 older Australians are still waiting for care.

"[Residents] want to remain independent, and they value the support that helps them do that. But too many are telling us they are waiting months, struggling to understand the system, and going without help when they need it," RVRA president Roger Pallant said.

The system is difficult to navigate. Some residents reported increased out-of-pocket costs under the new arrangements, with others saying they had reduced or stopped services because they could no longer afford them.

"If older people cannot understand the system, cannot get timely assessments, cannot find available providers, or have to pay privately for essential services, then the system is not yet meeting its promise," Pallant said.

ALGORITHM CUTS

Crikey exposed the use of an Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT), an algorithm-based tool being used to determine funding packages for older Australians.

The government uses the IAT to



Photo: needpix.com

determine the level of funding a person receives for Support at Home packages by issuing a questionnaire, completed by state and territory aged care assessors, which is then analysed by an algorithm.

Aged care clinicians and carers say the tool that determines federal home support funding packages is "cruel" and "inhumane," stripping away clinical expertise and leaving elderly people with inadequate support.

IMMIGRATION CUTS

There is a chronic shortage of workers in the aged care system, similar to healthcare and the NDIS, particularly nurses, personal care workers and support staff. The system is heavily dependent on migrant labour.

Symondson said the sector "couldn't exist" without its migrant workforce and warned that any migration changes that reduce the number of workers available would have a devastating impact.

The Greens are the only parliamentary party not proposing savage cuts to immigration.

BACK-TO-FRONT POLICES

Natalie Siegel-Brown, outgoing Inspector-General of Aged Care, in an address to the National Press Club this year pointed to structural system faults in aged care.

"[...] residential aged care is, by far, the most expensive part of our aged care system. The average annual cost to the taxpayer for a person in residential aged care is around \$123,000, compared with around \$30,000 to support someone to remain independent at home.

"Every unnecessary or premature entry into residential aged care driven by the barriers and disincentives in the home-care system, drives avoidable expenditure at the most expensive end of the system.

"That is the design failure."

"The question now fights on the battle lines of 'how will you ever manage ever-growing demand?' instead of 'how do you stop generating so much demand in the first place?'"

"We have misconceived the problem, and so we are fighting the wrong battle."

"Right now, we are instead spending the aged care budget in ways that make ageing at home harder. By doing so, we are pushing people – unnecessarily – towards crisis."

This crisis results in higher demand for more costly residential care, greater stress on an under-funded public hospital system, and even avoidable loss of life.

POLICY

The government must change its focus to preventative care by increasing funding for care at home and making the system far less complex to navigate.

Funding for residential beds needs to keep up with rising costs. Adequate, affordable services at home would reduce demand for residential places and save billions of dollars.

The Howard government's 1997 Aged Care Act set in train privatisation of aged care in Australia resulting in the disastrous failure of the system today. Private, for-profit aged care is more expensive and results in short cuts to the detriment of care.

The system should be nationalised. ✖

Labor's treatment of older people is appalling

Workplace deaths surge

Australian Unions are demanding better enforcement of safety standards including prosecutions along with the immediate endorsement and implementation of Safe Work Australia's Best Practice Review, in response to an increase in the number of workplace deaths, particularly in remote parts of Australia.

Figures from Work Safe Australia show that 222 Australian workers were killed at work in 2025, the highest annual death toll in more than a decade.

Workers in remote Australia are around eight times more likely to be killed at work than the national average, highlighting a significant safety divide between metropolitan and remote Australia.

Six industries account for around three-quarters of workplace fatalities – agriculture, construction, transport, manufacturing, health care and social assistance, and public administration and safety.

Vehicle collisions remain the leading cause of workplace deaths, whether on roads, farms, mines or worksites, tragically continuing to claim more workers' lives than any other type of fatality with major companies like Cleanaway again recording multiple fatalities over the last 12 months.

Mental health claims have also increased from around 6,600 to 17,900 serious claims over the past decade, making psychological injuries the fastest-growing category of workplace harm and highlighting the ongoing stress that Australian workers are under.

ACTU Assistant Secretary, Liam O'Brien called the finding



Construction worker with no hard hat, no gloves, no safety boots, or fall prevention. Photo: M Santos

"shameful," saying that the public expect health and safety regulators, who currently have an exclusive monopoly on enforcement, to carry out thorough investigations and go after employers that breach safety standards. Workers through their unions should also have the power.

"Too often rogue employers, such as Cleanaway, continue to breach safety standards that cost workers their lives. These companies must be held accountable."

Australian Council of Trade Unions ✳

Reproductive Leave campaign continues

Two years ago, Queensland public sector workers made history. Through union campaigning, workers secured access to 10 days of paid reproductive health leave.

Now, we want workers across Australia to have that same right. Throughout September, Queensland Unions continued the It's for Every Body campaign, calling on workers who have had access to reproductive health leave to share their experiences through a confidential survey.

Reproductive health can affect workers at every stage of their lives. Menstruation, pregnancy, miscarriage, fertility treatment, contraception, endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome and other chronic

reproductive health conditions can all have a real impact on a person's working life.

Yet for too many workers, managing those conditions still means using up sick leave, losing income or simply trying to push through. Queensland has already shown there is another way.

Queensland unions say they are working to win 10 days of paid reproductive health leave in the National Employment Standards, so access to this leave isn't determined by who someone works for or where they live.

Queensland Unions

The It's For Every Body campaign can be accessed at itsforeverybody.au ✳

PEACE NOTES

Denis Doherty

US nuclear threat

Talk about using nuclear weapons is becoming commonplace. The media has cooperated with this talk with the use of words such as 'tactical nuclear weapons' or 'low yield nuclear weapons' but the reality is that any use of nuclear weapons will cause a response.

The Pentagon has launched a review of US's nuclear posture, focused on providing more "options" for the White House, two top officials said this week. In a talk in Sydney a year or so ago Vijay Prashad said most of the Pentagon officials are rather ordinary, but Elbridge Colby is very intelligent, and he is the one tasked with providing the Pentagon with producing the policy to use nuclear weapons when the US is losing a war. The world shudders at the possibility.

Albanese receives dubious award

The Atlantic Council has awarded Anthony Albanese a 'world citizen award.' The Atlantic Council is funded by big US corporations and exists to promote US interests in the world. In another mark of his fall into right-wing and corporate clutches Albanese has accepted the award whose criteria for receiving such an award were working with the US to increase its role in the world and fostering US values in the South Pacific.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) won the 2017 Nobel Peace prize for their work on nuclear disarmament.

Here's what ICAN had to say about Albanese's gong: it has issued a very critical media release about the award. They say Albanese is undeserving of the award because of his inertia on signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The media release reads in part: prioritising military integration with the US and escalating nuclear enmeshment risks alienating Australia's closest Asia-Pacific neighbours, the majority of whom have already outlawed nuclear weapons by signing the TPNW. It also potentially contravenes Australia's international obligations not to allow stationing of nuclear weapons under the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

Acting Prof Tilman Ruff AO, ICAN founding chair noted that Albanese said he would sign and ratify the TPNW eight years ago. He has not done that.

The media release also listed Albanese's support for AUKUS and the numerous and growing list of US bases in Australia.

US attacks Netherlands

There seems to be no limit to what the US will do to protect Israel from repercussions for its genocidal actions. The US has begun to sanction the Hague, and the Dutch authorities are currently involved in this response.

The US wants to make the International Criminal Court inoperable and has threatened military action if Netanyahu is arrested.

The ICC has been preparing for months for the possibility of sanctions. Earlier this year, the court migrated from Microsoft products to a German software provider. The tribunal has also changed insurance and other financial providers to companies without a footprint in the United States.

Dutch and court officials are hoping for a six-month grace period before the sanctions come into effect, arguing that the institution needs time to sever itself from American companies, which could face huge financial penalties if they are found to be in violation. Beyond migrating to European-based alternatives, the Netherlands and the European Union have few options to protect the institution.

The EU "blocking statute" can be used to protect European court staff by preventing European companies from complying with the US measures, though it's unclear whether the statute would shield the ICC itself, because it's an international body, not a European one.

A small but growing number of the global tribunal's member states have announced plans to leave the institution in recent months, including Venezuela and Chad.

Chad's Foreign Minister, Abdoulaye Sabre Fadoul has said that "the American side expressed its concerns regarding the functioning of this institution and requested that Chad reconsider its membership."



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www.cpa.org.au

Mutual Obligation, collective punishment

Owen Bennett, Australian Unemployed Workers' Union (AUWU)

On 26 October 2026, the government is restarting the cancellation and reduction of unemployed workers' income support payments for failing to meet their 'Mutual Obligation' requirements.

Over the past year, these financial penalties have been on hold after so-called 'glitches' in the semi-automated compliance system dating back to 2018 led to thousands of people having their payment illegally cut off. At least ten people died after having their unemployment benefit unlawfully cancelled.

Despite these financial penalties being on hold, the punishment of unemployed workers has not stopped. Far from it – during the 2025-26 financial year, there were 1.1 million payment suspensions imposed on unemployed workers by the multi-billion dollar privatised employment services system.

After 26 October, it is expected that over the course of the next year more than one hundred thousand payment suspensions will be converted into payment reductions or cancellations once the threshold of 'persistent non-compliance' is reached.

The scale of punishment directed at unemployed workers is immense. Since the automated compliance system – known as the Targeted Compliance Framework (TCF) – was introduced in 2018, over 15 million financial penalties have been imposed on

unemployed workers, the vast majority applied with no direct human oversight.

Since 2018, at least ten people have died after having benefits unlawfully cancelled, most of them First Nations men living in remote areas.

The punishment of unemployed workers has not stopped. During the 2025-26 financial year, there were 1.28 million payment suspensions imposed on unemployed workers by the multi-billion dollar privatised employment services system, up from 1.1 million the previous year.

Worse still, unemployed workers with a suspended payment have no right of appeal. Their only option to restore their payment is to 're-engage' with their privately run – and in many cases for-profit – employment service provider. Typically, this would mean attending a 'make-up' activity like Work for the Dole. According to the last review of this program, over 60 per cent of Work for the Dole sites do not meet basic safety standards.

Combined with 'starvation rates' unemployment benefit – which is \$580 per fortnight below the Henderson poverty line, the second lowest in the OECD – and the chronic lack of work – there has consistently been over 2 million job seekers competing for around 200,000 listed job vacancies – Australia's modern unemployment policy is best understood as a kind of collective punishment.

A recent study by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare – a government

agency – estimated that Australia's punitive approach to unemployed workers contributes to the deaths of 3,000 unemployed workers each year. Confronted with the sheer scale of this punitive system, many unemployed workers do whatever they can to avoid dealing with it. This can take the form of accepting substandard employment, crime, or sleeping rough.

This system of collective punishment does not come cheap. A 2023 parliamentary committee estimated the costs of running the mainstream privatised employment services system – known as *Workforce Australia* – at \$9.5 billion over 4 years. Even with this expenditure, however, the system has consistently broken the law. In 2020 and 2021, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) identified two separate IT errors which were illegally reducing and cancelling the benefits of unemployed workers.

Despite these systemic flaws, neither the Department nor the government showed any interest in intervening to shut the system down to protect unemployed workers. In fact, a departmental brief in September 2023 warned the government against shutting down the system due to the high likelihood it would 'reduce employment outcomes for individuals and have significant implications on providers (both in terms of payments – viability – and interactions with the performance framework).' The Albanese Labor government accepted this advice.

The illegality continued. In 2024, the Department identified two more IT errors causing people to lose their payments. Finally the Department decided to pause income support cancellations. A few months later a further IT glitch was uncovered, leading to other aspects of the TCF being paused, although payment suspensions were allowed to continue.

It has been over eight years since the first illegal penalty was imposed on an unemployed worker under the TCF. However, there has been no suggestion of imposing any penalties on those responsible. On the contrary, in July 2024 the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations Tony Burke was promoted to the Home Affairs Ministry.

Similarly, in late 2025 DEWR secretary Natalie James – who was receiving \$967,000 per year – received a payout worth over \$845,000 to leave her role 18 months before its scheduled end date. That the Labor government has decided to restart all TCF compliance measures on 27 October – despite no guarantee being provided that this system will be able to operate legally – is a testament to this sense of impunity.

The Australian Unemployed Workers Union is holding a rally outside federal Department of Employment offices in Melbourne on 27 October at 12pm. See auwu.org.au for further details. ✳

Illegal for Israelis to tell the truth about Israel

Caitlin Johnstone

Benjamin Netanyahu has just ordered Israel's military, its attorney general, and its security agency Shin Bet to investigate and prosecute the soldiers who anonymously shared their experiences in the Gaza Strip with the award-winning investigative documentary NAZA.

According to Haaretz,

Netanyahu accused the soldiers of "serious information security offenses, criminal defamation and harm to Israel's diplomatic and security interests," adding that "there is concern that those involved in the defamatory film committed serious criminal offenses by exposing highly classified information and creating a breach in the information security of a highly sensitive intelligence unit."

Netanyahu's accusations of

"defamation" are contradicted by his other accusation of "exposing highly classified information." The 24 soldiers interviewed for the film are being prosecuted not because they told lies about Israel, but because they told the truth.

The prime minister is claiming the truth causes "harm to Israel's diplomatic and security interests" because Israel is a state that can only exist on a foundation of endless lies.

"That which can be destroyed by the truth should be." This quote by PC Hodgell certainly applies to an apartheid state which assassinates Palestinian journalists, bans the foreign press from witnessing its atrocities in Gaza, constantly attacks press outlets who report on its abuses, spends hundreds of millions of dollars a year on foreign propaganda, and prosecutes soldiers who tell the truth about its war crimes.

It also applies to the US empire, which prosecutes whistleblowers, imprisons journalists for exposing US war crimes, shrouds its actions in a veil of government secrecy, exerts extensive control over the flow of information via Silicon Valley, and manipulates the minds of the public using the most sophisticated propaganda system ever devised.

caitlinjohnstone.com.au ✳



Rally in support of Palestine, marking the 3rd anniversary of genocide, 11 October, Boorloo/Perth. Photo: Vinnie Molina

Op-ed: Whatever happened to the republic debate?

A Carruthers

The short answer to the question in the headline is: it failed. That the republic debate, failed to make a proper impact on the course of articulating an Australian nationhood or nationality.

By now, the 'republic debate' has joined the ranks of failed referendum questions, almost an academic curiosity rather than a national priority.

The Republican idea remains captive.

In hindsight we now know that it also failed to begin *at the beginning*, at the centre and the origin of things, meaning with articulating First Nations sovereignty.

Treaty and Truth-telling are the current priorities on the back of the failure of the Voice Referendum, but does that mean then there is no roadmap to a new idea of what nationhood means to Australia as an independent state, not just to itself but to the world?

Are we just always going to have the Union Jack on our flag, just like the 16 or so other nations with Union Jacks on theirs?

The fact is we have to begin at the beginning. We have to start again, again. The fact that we still have an embarrassing national flag with the Union Jack on it, and a Governor-General answerable to the King, has to wait.

We have to fight harder than ever before to lay out a path, given we have no leadership from the major parties. We need to fight to put First Nations civilisation and culture *at the core and centre* of what nationality means.

This requires a large-scale effort to defend the gains of land back, land rights, civil rights and most importantly economic and social rights – lifting the living standard of Aboriginal people.

We need not just closing the gap, but propelling First Nations people forward to a bright future.

Our political struggle, the working-class struggle, needs to ramp up its articulation of the cultural and national struggle, the struggle for full national liberation of the First Peoples. All progressive people in Australia must unite to force this back on the agenda.

Articulations of First Nations sovereignty cannot just come from universities and cultural centres; word needs to spread to the peripheries of capitalist society.

A lot of the Voice material was out-of-touch with common people. It was too liberal-sounding, too

moralistic. It should have been more revolutionary, straightforward, bombastic.

People *can* get behind a good, honest campaign. Everybody needs to have a stake in it and see why it's joyful and hopeful to advance into the future with a new, bold, and appropriate vision of nationhood and statehood based on 65,000 years of history.

Geopolitics and imperialism play a role too. Paul Keating, ex-PM, was an enemy to working people in many of the policies he is responsible for, but his views on national sovereignty seem advanced in comparison to the average MP today.

Recently Keating noted that ever since the early part of the century, the ALP has been too scared to challenge the Western alliance structure.

The quality of thinking among the current ALP leadership is very low, extremely unambitious. There isn't anyone with a vast enough vision of the future to articulate a way forward and cut the umbilical cord tying us to the royals. The ALP knows that the last time they tried these large-scale changes in the Whitlam era, the CIA and the Crown came swooping down on them.

The US-UK geostrategists have a creepy foothold on our country. The ruling cliques need to keep the military bases under foreign control. Both major parties are fully involved.

We need to map out a path. We need to ramp up our call for Treaty, Truth-Telling, and finally how we are to present ourselves to other nations as an independent state, a Republic, *with an Indigenous head-of-state*, an Indigenous Congress or representative body in Parliament.

All of this is possible, and necessary.

We need to be a bold, forward-thinking, revolutionary country that keeps moving and changing with the times. Our Constitution has become stale and rigid. It hasn't changed for 50 years.

In a fast-changing world this decrepitude is setting us back big time. Whose fault is that? The ruling class; they're the ones who want to keep things as they are, because they just don't care.

We need to keep in view that our nationality was and always will be First Nations nationality. The time will come that this will need to be presented to the international assembly of nations.

We need to sort out what we think we are before we tell the world. We need to not just talk about "decolonisation" in think



Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pours soil into the hand of traditional land owner Vincent Lingiari, 1975. Photo: Mervyn Bishop – Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (public domain)

tanks and universities, but *do* decolonisation by changing the nature of the settler-imperialist state and what it stands for, by fighting for land back and self-determination, cultural sovereignty and Blak pride, and by kicking out the ALP-Coalition political duopoly, ending their stranglehold on this nation and the death of our political vision.

For us Communists, our pride and patriotism has revolutionary foundations – in breaking off from the colonial and imperial masters, liberating the working class and all ethnic groups, just as Ireland did, just as Vietnam, China, Cuba, and so many other countries did.

If they can do it, so can we. We can win independence. It starts with First Nations national liberation. No matter that the major parties have given up, we can't. ✖

Australia the 'terrible neighbour'

The Australia Institute, together with the Australian Conservation Foundation, has published a full-page apology to Pacific Island nations after another huge coal approval.

As leaders gather in Fiji for crucial pre-COP31 climate talks, co-hosted by Australia's Climate Change & Energy Minister Chris Bowen, delegates will see this message in the *Fiji Times* (photo).

Climate change is threatening the very existence of several Pacific Island nations. Pacific leaders have repeatedly asked Australia to reduce its reliance on, and export of, fossil fuels.

Yet, despite the rhetoric of Minister Bowen and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at events like the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia continues to expand fossil fuel mining.

Recently the Hunter Valley Operations coal mine extension, which will generate 809 million tonnes of climate pollution out to 2045, was given planning approval in NSW.

"Australia is a terrible neighbour to its Pacific family," said Noah Schultz-Byard, Strategic Director at The Australia Institute.

"Australian leaders fly around the world making all sorts of bold statements about meaningful climate action, then they return home and approve new coal and gas projects.

"For nations like Kiribati, Fiji, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, and the Marshall Islands, the climate crisis is real and it's happening now. It is not some distant dystopian prediction.

"This round of COP negotiations has become a crucial test for Australia. If we are to have any respectability in the international climate space, then strong, real-world commitments to phasing out fossil fuels are an essential minimum outcome from this year's conference."

The Australia Institute

(From the CPA Political Resolution, 2026: The Party should work for climate justice, a just transition from primarily fossil fuels to a biodiverse, sustainable future for working people. We are for the development of productive forces which serve working people by provision of quality jobs.)

We need to fight to put First Nations culture at the core of what nationality means

Letters to the Editor
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Trump's Orwellian world

Welcome to the Orwellian world of 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 when 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 AIs do give warnings that answers may have errors, this is a direct manipulation of AI. This raises the question of how similar are Trump's actions with George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*? In the novel the sinister Ministry of Truth's

motto is: "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past." Trump's administration has certainly been changing the past to agree with the president.

The really Orwellian danger is for the Chatbot will not disagree with President Trump. It is effectively saying that the president's statements define what is an acceptable interpretation of the known facts – alternative facts. AI makes people uncertain of any objective truth existing independently of his political power. If AI is quickly becoming a primary source of information for millions of people, the political implications are significant and dangerous.

Graham Holton

Classical music

Beatrice Rana: Wonder from Italy

So many modern concert pianists are utterly disappointing. Especially those who emerge from the competitions. The big competitions are backed by big money, with Deutsche Grammophon contracts or BBC Proms awaiting the winners and plenty of media hype. But so often competition winning pianists are so lacking in colour, risk-taking.

Bruce Liu, a Canadian, who won the 18th Chopin Competition in Warsaw in 2021 looked like an exception to the rule. Liu is equipped with a feeling for history; he lists Samson François and Michelangeli as among his favourite pianists. But recent recordings are sounding ponderous, all-too-contemporary, with heavily rounded phrasing and not enough spontaneous detail. We will have to wait and see how his playing develops.

A real exception is Beatrice Rana, a risk-taking pianist from Italy. She is thrilling, and exhibits the kind of abandon you can hear in Hofmann, Horowitz, Cziffra, Argerich, or Pletnev.

Rana does not improvise like the former three, and is very much a modern pianist, able to execute whole concerts without placing a wrong note, but she is able to bring that modernism back to the nineteenth century roots of modern piano playing.

Typically her execution of Romantic-era piano works, like Chopin, Liszt, are as they should be; thrilling for the audience, accelerating to the endings and crescendo-points rather than holding back just to get the right notes.

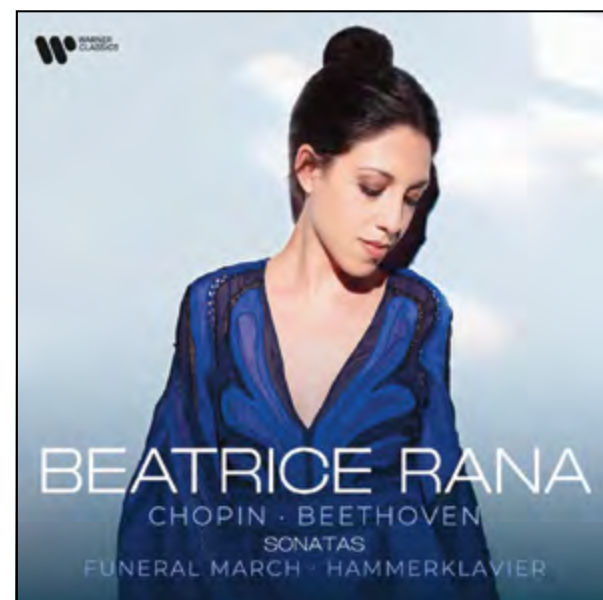
She is also an extraordinary Bach player, possible the best we have heard in recent times. Rana doesn't pull the tempo around; the freedom of her phrasing doesn't disturb an almost metronomic beat beneath it. Her contradiction is between a very sturdy spinal rhythm and an incredible abandon and latitude with phrasing.

I wonder if Rana can develop the improvisatory quality one day of the likes of Cziffra, moving from interpretation to improvisation to, even, composition; and back. Jazz has been the domain of improvisation really since the 20th century. But it could be even more thrilling to hear Rana crunch octaves with a few additional notes added between to make them thunderous chords, or embellish phrases and melodies, as Horowitz used to do.

Classical pianism is a gift from historical human civilisation, shared by all humankind, and the feats committed by the great pianists are not forgotten. That it should continue is dependent on the advancement of pianists equipped with both an understanding of this history and their own will to make a mark on it.

Rana has it. But will the industry allow it to develop, or subdue it, as has happened to so many pianists in the contemporary age?

There's a lot of Rana on YouTube. A good place to start is her acclaimed interpretation of J.S. Bach's monumental keyboard work, the Goldberg Variations. ★



Book Review:

Capitalism and the Media: by Des Freedman

Reviewer: Gavin O'Toole

In this book, Des Freedman examines the ways in which capitalism distorts our media landscape on such a vast scale that, like ants in the shadow of an elephant, we cannot see it.

The author insists that if we are to understand and resist the polarisation, disinformation and sheer damage caused by the ideological deformities of contemporary communications and entertainment media, we must grasp their intimate relationship with capitalism.

Freedman's book is first and foremost a lucid examination of capitalism as an all-embracing system of social relations, and thereafter a forensic study of the role occupied by media within that inescapable reality.

Yet for a social system so central to every aspect of our lives, and the irresistible force that determines the conditions for all media production, capitalism is strangely invisible within media content itself.

As Freedman notes, "capitalism remains a spectral presence in the upper echelons of contemporary society," especially in news sources associated with the world of finance: the *Wall Street Journal*, *Economist*, *Nikkei* etc.

Freedman's objective is to restore capitalism as the essential analytical backdrop for the study of communications

while also downplaying as distractions specific variants explored in critical scholarship – from "culture" to "surveillance" or "informational" capitalism.

The immutable characteristics of the capitalism sketched out by Marx and his successors – as a harmful, exploitative, anti-democratic and imperialist systems – have not changed in a digital world in which media technology is increasingly prominent.

That is because they understood capitalism not just as a set of economic imperatives that shape society, but as a social phenomenon in its own right that responds to, but equally steers, economic forces in dynamic and innovative ways.

This context is important for understanding media in the digital age, argues Freedman, because it cannot then simply be reduced to an instrumental role as a mere component of capitalism, but resides at its beating heart: capitalism itself is "the variable," and the media serves to conceal its omnipresence.

The author writes: "This involves processes of mystification and abstraction that place the media centre-stage as key vehicles through which real relations of power are obscured and fragmented."

He goes on to examine the "digital revolution," a notion which he argues illustrates a narrow preoccupation with technological development that marginalises broader capitalist imperatives.

A form of digital "enclosure" creating new fiefdoms is reasserting the primacy of private property through, for example, social media ecosystems and paywalls offering huge benefits to owners and shareholders but no accountability to users.

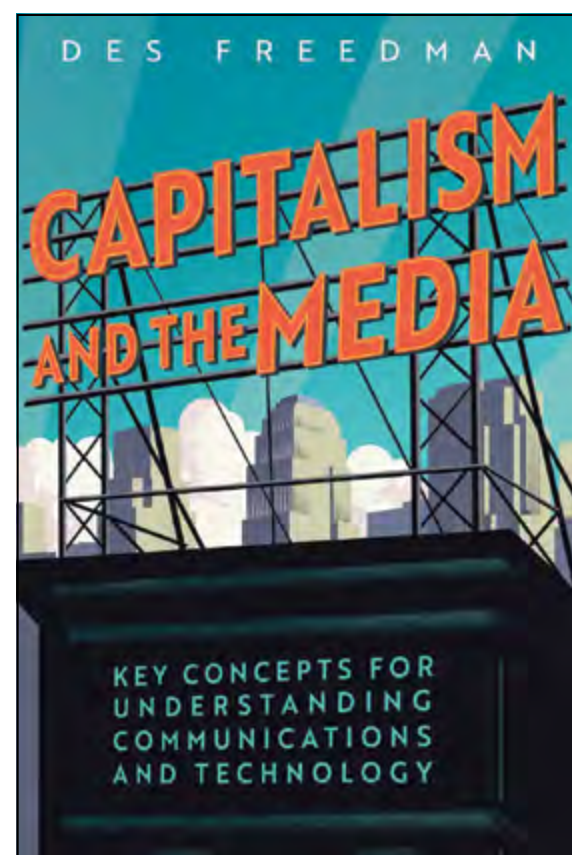
Class war, labour exploitation, commodity fetishism and monopolisation by a new oligarchy are as much facets of this landscape as they ever were, and are simply intensifying traditional cycles of profit and accumulation – evident, for instance, in the streaming bonanza at the heart of the aforementioned Warner takeover.

And of course, the ideology of capitalism, moulded through hegemonic media structures into a pervasive "common sense," continues to justify the resulting inequalities, injustice and oppression – from racial violence to Israel's genocide in Gaza.

Yet resistance is possible, Freedman concludes, because of capitalism's "contradictory consciousness" and inherent tensions, but only through social mobilisation that makes us less inclined to swallow the "received wisdom" of our masters.

There is clear evidence that radical change can be realised, aided by the media, he says, because capitalism's contradictions have eroded its "vener of immortality" in the eyes of billions, strengthening the conditions for its destruction.

Morning Star (edited for space) ★



Book Review

Twelve Days That Shook the Middle East: Origins of a Genocide

by Dr Marwan Bishara

Reviewer: Ron Jacobs

In the final pages of his new book, journalist and political analyst Dr Marwan Bishara writes: “Israel has not learned the most important lesson. No foreign power, large or small, has ever won a colonial war in the past century.”

It is this understanding that informs the previous 300 or so pages of *Twelve Days That Shook the Middle East: Origins of a Genocide*. 300 pages describing the horrors unleashed on the Palestinian people in the first days of the ongoing genocidal war waged by Israel against those whose land it occupies.

The narrative Bishara relays is not a hopeful one, but nor is it one defined solely by despair. Desperation perhaps, and certainly way too much death and destruction, but also a determination that represents the decades of the Palestinian struggle against colonial occupation and unwarranted repression.

The book opens with a discussion of the talks which resulted in

the Oslo agreements; talks held without any representatives of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) present and therefore talks determined to confirm Israel's occupation.

The chapter continues, providing a brief summary of the history of Washington and Tel Aviv's attempts to eliminate the concept of Palestine from the world before 7 October 2023, up to and including the Abraham Accords, which would have led to normalisation between Israel and the wealthiest Arab nations, while simultaneously diminishing the Palestinians from a world all too willing to erase them.

The next chapter describes the 7 October 2023 attack on Israel by the Palestinian resistance forces in Gaza. Descriptions of the planning, the attacks and the chaos in its aftermath are interspersed with a discussion (which continues throughout the text) of Israel's lies, mistakes and misrepresentations of the fighting on the ground and the nature of those it was fighting.

It is Bishara's intention to prove

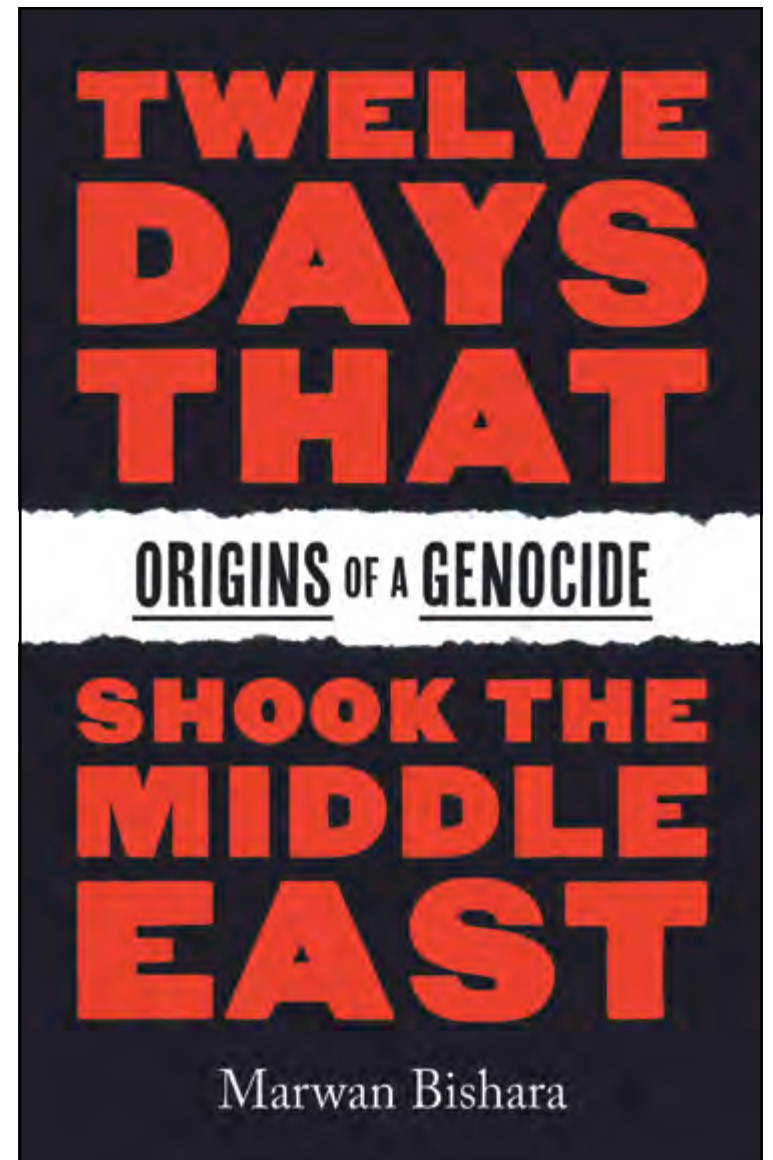
that the goal of Tel Aviv and Washington's military onslaught in the wake of 7 October 2023 was not an angry response to the attack and Israel's embarrassment, but a plan that was a long time in the making just waiting for the right moment to be unleashed. As he writes in his conclusion: “The genocide unfolding is the logical conclusion of a long and deliberate process. The evidence, as this book shows, was hidden in plain sight.”

The never-ending resupply of weapons and other materials, the veto of ceasefire resolutions at the United Nations, the repetition of Israeli lies regarding its massacres and starvation, and the punishment of those who opposed the genocide by Washington reminds the reader of Washington's collaboration, encouragement and consequent culpability.

It's a culpability that can only be genuinely resolved with the convictions of those involved for war crimes and crimes against humanity, from Biden to Blinken to Trump.

Morning Star (edited for space) ✳

The genocide is the logical conclusion of a long and deliberate process



Film Review

All About the Money

Directed by Sinéad O'Shea

Reviewer: Richard Mullen

Fergie Chambers is the heir to a family that derives enormous wealth from the Cox company, a privately owned US conglomerate. He sold out of the company in 2023, receiving a payment estimated at \$250 million (AU\$ 358 million).

He's also a communist, who has set up a communist commune in the US and engaged in various forms of activism. The US is currently seeking his extradition from Spain on charges of funding Hamas.

Sinéad O'Shea's documentary *All About the Money* was screened in Dublin as part of the Irish Film Institute's 2026 Documentary Festival, followed by a Q&A with O'Shea. Her documentary is a story of Fergie Chambers, in particular following his activities in the period from 2023 to 2025. It premiered at the Sundance Film Festival early this year, and received mixed reactions there, but also back home in Ireland – for different reasons.

Some of the audience at Sundance, according to O'Shea, were appalled by the implied politics of it. Some of the people in Dublin I talked to after the Sundance premiere were appalled by the lack of politics. After seeing the film, I side with the second

camp (and admittedly, with Chambers himself).

It is strange to watch *All About the Money* mere days after the Spanish government has decided to allow the Trump administration's extradition request for Fergie Chambers to be processed by Spanish courts. Activist and supporter of humanitarian and progressive causes around the world, Chambers has been arrested in Spain as a result of a US crackdown on solidarity, anti-imperialist activities, and communist organising. O'Shea's documentary covers a segment of his work, from organising in the US and Palestine solidarity activities there, to his move to Tunisia, and finally his move to Ireland.

It is a personal story, a humanising story of a man in very specific circumstances. It was the humanising aspect, O'Shea explained in the Q&A, that baffled some of the American audiences who felt utmost resistance to the concept of a communist with a plan of putting generational wealth to a use for the cause.

The expectation was, as Mark O'Connell cynically proposed in the Q&A, that such a story would necessarily have to be presented as a sort of “gotcha,” an irreconcilable contradiction between communist theory, praxis, and activism, and functioning under capitalism. O'Shea did not go down this vulgar path,

and she tells a story of a complex personality through the window of the years she spent talking to him and documenting his work.

The actual politics of Fergie Chambers are largely absent from this account. O'Shea admits that Chambers would have probably preferred it to be more political and less “psychological” – his disagreement with a version of the documentary he was shown before the release is documented in the last title card of the film. He nevertheless allowed the distribution of the film, and this story is now touring the festivals. O'Shea uses the opportunity in the Q&As after screenings to turn the attention of the viewers to the ongoing legal struggle of Chambers in Spain, and to call for support.

The story told by *All About the Money* is interesting, but in engaging with the very materialist grounding of the apparent contradiction of the communist millionaire, it fails to invoke any sort of materialist analysis. In *All About the Money*, things just happen.

There is an alienation of Chambers from the groups he is in, the geopolitics that shape the landscape he navigates, and the theoretical underpinnings of his worldview. Like every story, it makes choices about what to tell and what to leave out – so a perceptive viewer sees holes in the shape of certain

people, organisations, and countries which were left out of the stories of Chambers' past, Palestine solidarity activism, and political positions.

It is a difficult story to tell, there is no doubt about it – the arrest of Chambers after the film was made, and the major symbolic weight of his struggle against extradition in the realm of anti-imperialist solidarity, show that it is a long, complex, impactful story.

While it may be personified and kept on a file in a three-lettered agency somewhere under a name of one man, it has to be analysed, told, and learned from through the lens of politics and the collective.

This is not the first, or the last, time I'm calling for politics in media that portray communists. In other reviews, I've noted that non-political (or non-politicised) authorship gives us two-dimensional red characters with little sense to their eccentricity, swapping their materialist world outlook for very basic idealism.

Telling political stories without politics has become an art form in itself, and I am not sure I have the appreciation for it; not in the moment when we are in dire need of clear political understanding, education, and inspiration.

Socialist Voice (edited for space) ✳

Ukraine's peace populist

Faced with mounting casualties and harsh Russian airstrikes, some of Ukraine's biggest politicians are breaking taboos about a compromise peace deal with Russia.

The big scandal of October has been the peace plan proposed by popular MP Oleksiy Honcharenko. His call for compromises instantly led to death threats and backlash from Ukraine's western-funded liberal nationalists.

Honcharenko's 'compromises' are quite daring. For one, abandoning Ukraine's constitutional clause about joining NATO, and to give rights to Russian-speakers, both important factors in Russia's actions.

He even ridiculed the government's endless promises to create glorious weapons that will annihilate Moscow. The public sentiment Honcharenko is appealing to is quite real.

Though popular sentiment is behind him, that matters little. Even though some of the most powerful figures in Zelensky's party also supported his call to peace, no one wants to take responsibility for such "painful compromises."

Nor is the military eager for peace. Azov, Ukraine's ever-rising neo-Nazi aligned nationalist 'family', is now entirely satisfied with Zelensky's endless rewards and promotions for their commanders. Their previous statements worrying about demographic collapse due to endless war are no longer evident.

As such, Honcharenko was fighting a losing battle. One can also speculate that this entire exercise was simply an operation to let public pro-peace settlement express itself in a controlled manner.

Honcharenko was finally expelled from the European Solidarity parliamentary faction. But that's not the end of it.

Even the most pro-NATO political figures have been worrying about the costs of endless war. Last week, Kira Rudyk of the ultra-pro-western Holos party claimed that 300,000 Ukrainians have died in the war. This is quite a massive number, and dwarfs any other estimates by other pro-western/nationalist politicians.

Of course, Rudyk brought up the number to demand that the west intensify its military support for Ukraine. Nevertheless, even mentioning casualty numbers, let alone such massive ones, does seem to be hinting about how unsustainable this war is.

The fact of the matter is that Zelensky and most of the Ukrainian elite have invested far too much to stop. Apart from the military gravy train, any end to the war without a tangible

'victory' would raise the question as to why Zelensky continued the bloodbath so long.

Unsurprisingly, the president accused Honcharenko and others calling for compromises with Russia of 'abandoning state interests.'

Nevertheless, despite state repression, public sentiment is not entirely without outlet. On 3 October, there was a small protest on Maidan square in the capital. Size aside, it was unique in its demands – protesters called for peace and criticised Zelensky's corruption.

The protests were partly in support of lawyer, journalist and soldier Oleksandr Todorov, who was imprisoned in late September after speaking his mind a bit too much on social media about Zelensky's military profiteering and 'the chaos in the country and army.'

Todorov had gathered a protest of 10 people with these pro-peace demands on 10 September, after which he was imprisoned for deserting his unit, the 41st brigade. Two years ago, Todorov complained of having been forcibly mobilised into the unit without undergoing a medical examination – he says he has hepatitis-C, and also must take care of his sick 86-year old father.

Until 2014, Honcharenko was part of the 'pro-Russian' Party of Regions, where he defended the rights of Russian-speakers in his native Odessa (also Todorov's homeland). Then, when nationalists took power in 2014, Honcharenko re-branded, joining the 'European Solidarity' party of the new president Petro Poroshenko (President of Ukraine from 2014-2019).

Poroshenko, though originally posing as somewhat of a moderate, quickly donned his ultranationalist mask, trying (and failing) to run for re-election in the 2019 elections under the slogan "army, religion, and language" – the last two refer to Poroshenko's repression of the Russian language and the 'Russian-linked' Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Over the past few years, Honcharenko has created a new populist brand which consists of constantly drawing attention to Zelensky's corruption, mobilisation abuses, and problems in the army, while still presenting himself as a committed nationalist. Notably, he releases content in both Ukrainian and Russian, recognising that the latter language is preferred by many.

His main emphasis is that there is no realistic strategy for endless war.

Honcharenko calls the strategy of hoping for a military breakthrough "absurd".

Events in Ukraine 🇺🇦



Oleksiy Honcharenko. Photo: Ukrainian TV Streaming – wikimedia.org (CC BY 3.0)

**protesters
called for peace,
criticised
corruption**

Brazil: CIA influence 'paying off'

US funding and interference have played a role in the South American country's presidential election, independent journalist and political analyst Pepe Escobar has told RT.

The US has sought to influence Brazilian politics for decades, including through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and has played a role in the country's current presidential election, Escobar said.

In the first round of voting, in which right-wing Senator Flavio Bolsonaro, son of former President Jair Bolsonaro, finished ahead of incumbent left-wing President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Both fell short of the

50% threshold needed to win outright. The two are set to face each other in a runoff on 25 October.

Brazil's government has previously accused Washington of interference in its internal affairs, while Trump has denounced the prosecution of the former president – who is serving 27 years under house arrest for plotting a coup – as a "witch hunt." Brazil's Federal Police have since opened an investigation into alleged US interference in the election, following a request from the Attorney General's Office over reported US funding of projects aimed at undermining the country's Supreme Court.

"The Americans put a lot of money in this election," Escobar said, calling for a federal investigation into possible foreign influence.

He singled out Brazil's influential evangelical churches, claiming that the CIA had spent "decades" funding efforts to cultivate them and that this was now "paying off."

Escobar's remarks come as US involvement in Brazilian politics has already become a point of contention between Brasilia and Washington. Flavio Bolsonaro met US President Donald Trump at the White House in May, while his brother Eduardo has lived in the US since 2025. Eduardo was sentenced by Brazil's Supreme Court in June to four

years and two months in prison for coercion after the court found that he had sought US pressure on Brazilian authorities in an effort to interfere with proceedings against his father.

Escobar attributed Bolsonaro's strong showing in part to the influence of evangelical voters, who now comprise some 27% of the country's population, a historical high from the 15% in 2000.

A Bolsonaro win could have implications for the BRICS grouping, of which Brazil is a founding member.

RT.com 🇺🇦

Spain to hold snap general election

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has announced that the country will hold a snap general election on 29 November. The decision was announced from the Moncloa Palace, as mass protests over the Spanish housing crisis continue.

The measure becomes official when the Royal Decree is published in the BOE (the Official State Gazette), normally the

following day. The prime minister proposes dissolution under his sole responsibility (Article 115 of the Constitution), but the Council of Ministers deliberates first and the King decrees the decision.

Sanchez argued that the Parliament needs to be composed of a larger progressive majority so a government can take measures to help ease the housing crisis.

While he highlighted his government's achievements in

social welfare, industry, economic growth, and the energy transition, he acknowledged management mistakes and areas that need correcting.

The eviction of Maricarmen Abascal, an 87-year-old woman forced out of her rented home in Madrid after 60 years residency, ignited nationwide demonstrations, including a camp in Puerta del Sol, and prompted the government to approve two housing decrees – one

banning evictions for vulnerable people until 2030 and limiting rent hikes, the other extending rental contracts indefinitely. Abascal has since died.

However, soon afterwards Congress voted down both measures, with far-right party Vox, and conservative party PP and conservative/Catalan separatist party Junts voting against.

Sanchez also approved interest-free loans for first-time

homebuyers, tax breaks for tenants, and incentives for small landlords who rent at affordable prices. Introducing the measures, the Prime Minister admitted that the new measures would not solve the housing problem, and hinted at more active interventions in the housing market in future.

Telesur 🇺🇦

French communists demand urgent education changes

With millions of students in the streets demanding a future for working-class youth, French communist leader Fabien Roussel is proposing a pact to change the direction of French education.

The national secretary of the French Communist Party (PCF), who was chosen by party members as their candidate in next spring's presidential election, presented his plan for young people on 6 October.

Roussel spoke at a press conference at PCF headquarters, joined by Camille Mangin and Bastien Bonnargent, the leaders of the Union of Communist Students and the Young Communists, respectively.

"The government is choosing repression to silence the protests," Roussel charged. "We have a duty to understand," the anger driving the high school movement, he said, shortly before leaving to join the students in the streets of the capital.

The demonstrations Roussel was heading to are part of a nationwide student revolt that has rattled the French government. The movement began in mid-September at Lycée Saint-Exupéry in Creteil, a working-class suburb south-east of Paris, where students walked out in solidarity with teachers demanding more staff.

Within days, "blockades" – students barricading their school entrances, a long-standing tactic of French youth protest – had spread across the Paris region and then the whole country.

By 30 September, about 1,200 high schools, roughly half of France's public lycées, had seen some kind of disruption, and more than 400 were closed outright on 2 October.

The students' complaints are concrete. Chronic teacher shortages leave classes uncovered for weeks at a time: nearly 10 per cent of teaching hours in public

secondary schools went untaught in the 2024-25 school year. Classrooms are overcrowded and many buildings are falling apart, with leaking roofs, broken toilets and no cooling during increasingly brutal summer heatwaves.

Students organisations are demanding more teachers, smaller classes, emergency money for school repairs, and a major overhaul of Parcoursup, the system that sorts them into colleges.

Those demands collide head-on with austerity. The government of Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu, under pressure from President Emmanuel Macron to shrink France's deficit, presented a 2027 budget on 1 October that eliminates 1,588 teaching positions, citing falling enrolment.

The state's answer has been the police. Officers have fired tear gas and stun grenades at crowds of teenagers, and more than 6,000 people have been arrested since 28 September, most of them minors.

Roussel is calling for a supplementary budget Bill to put €5 billion (£4.2bn) toward renovating high schools.

"Sixty per cent of schools were built before the 1980s," Roussel noted, and some are no longer fit to house students as the climate changes.

He also wants another €3.5bn (AU\$5.6bn) to hire the 90,000 teachers needed to reduce class sizes and to guarantee that any absent teacher is replaced within 24 hours. Right now, 15 million teaching hours go unfilled.

To pay for it, Roussel would redirect part of the €211bn (AU\$339bn) in public aid that businesses receive with no strings attached, and shift some money from the defence budget.

Morning Star (edited for space) ✳



Global Briefs

UN: The United Nations has warned that publicly broadcasting the execution of US Army psychiatrist Nidal Hasan would violate the international ban on torture. The Pentagon has announced plans for the convicted killer to be executed by a firing squad – the first execution by firing squad since WW2. Hasan was convicted over the 2009 shooting at a US military base that killed 13 people and wounded 32 others. Hasan was shot by a responding officer and was left partially paralyzed. The military jury sentenced him to death.

On 6 October 2026, the acting Secretary of the Army directed that Hasan be executed by firing squad at Fort Hood on 3 December 2026, at 1pm local time. The decision to make the execution public and livestream it came on 8 October 2026. Secretary of Defence, self-styled 'secretary of war' Pete Hegseth said that Hasan would face a firing squad and that "we'll make sure that people are able to watch it, that it's public." The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights said that "the livestreaming of an execution is tantamount to a public execution and breach the absolute prohibition of torture," and such events "constitute a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

BANGLADESH: Bangladesh wants to join BRICS and seeks US \$3 billion for gas, power and solar products through the New Development Bank, minister for post, telecommunications and information technology said. Russia is already a key partner, with over 1,300 Bangladeshi specialists trained for Rooppur Nuclear Plant and plans to extend cooperation into AI, healthcare, agriculture, and satellite technology.

UKRAINE: President Volodymyr Zelensky has dismissed Donald Trump's call for him to be replaced. "I suggest Ukraine gets a new leader who can make a deal," Trump declared, adding that "for some reason, Zelensky never does deals." The remarks came after Trump reached a deal with Russian President Putin on diesel supplies and eased US sanctions on the fuel amid a global shortage. Earlier Trump warned that Ukrainian attacks of Russian refineries could worsen diesel shortages. "I've told him [Zelensky], do whatever you want but don't hit the diesel fuel, because there's a big problem, a big shortage," Trump said, before bluntly warning over continued refinery strikes: "You'd better damn well stop."

MALAYSIA: Malaysia has closed schools in its capital and several states as smoke from Indonesian forest fires pushes air pollution to unhealthy levels. The move affected about two million students. Indonesia's Ministry of Health has recorded more than 170,000 respiratory infections, but the actual figure is likely to be much higher as only those who sought out healthcare were recorded.

VENEZUELA: Thousands of Venezuela's workers and students marched through Caracas under heavy rain on 7 October to commemorate Hugo Chávez's 2012 election triumph, as Socialist Party leader Diosdado Cabello warned against foreign attempts to distort the his legacy.

Diosdado Cabello led the massive demonstration marking the popular victory of 7 October 2012, the last electoral campaign headed by Commander Hugo Chávez. During his speech, Cabello defended the pride of popular and native identity against what he described as the classist and imperialist contempt of oligarchic sections of the community. "We, the marginalised, the Afro-descendants, the workers, the native people, the mountain folk, we have reasons to fight because we want a world of equals," he asserted.

YEMEN: Yemen's Ansar Allah Houthis have issued a new warning for airlines, workers and travellers to avoid Saudi airports after an attack on Saudi King Khalid International airport killed 12 people and injured more than 300.



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Canada faces food insecurity

Owen Schalk

Food prices are rising, while food insecurity is at an all-time high in cities across Canada. The rural communities where most of Canada's food is produced contend with depopulation, decaying infrastructure, and social service underfunding. Extreme weather events and high temperatures, driven by runaway fossil fuel emissions, are putting undue stress on livestock and crops.

Frenzied militarisation led by the imperialist NATO bloc – which already accounts for 55 per cent of global military spending according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute – will exacerbate global warming and strain Canadian food production even further.

On top of this, international unrest resulting from the illegal US-Israeli war of aggression on Iran has driven up fuel and fertiliser prices, punishing small-scale farmers who already struggle under high debt burdens, exorbitant input costs, and uncertain succession plans resulting from a history of Canadian agriculture policies friendly to corporate farming and hostile to family farms and smallholders.

La Via Campesina – an international farmers' movement that brings together millions of peasants, landless workers and smallholder farmers around the world – offers the following assessment of the national and international dimensions of the global food crisis:

"On the one hand, rising prices for fuel and synthetic fertilisers – linked to the aggression by Israel and the United States against Iran – are significantly increasing agricultural production costs. On the

other hand, poor harvests in several regions of the world due to extreme weather conditions (drought, heatwaves, untimely rains, floods) are all creating supply pressures.

"Past experience has shown us that even modest pressures on agricultural markets can lead to significant rises in food prices. The mechanism behind [food price] inflation is well known: the agri-food industry, financial players who speculate on agricultural commodity markets, and large retailers capitalise on the climate of panic to increase their margins in order to reap exceptional profits."

In this context, a responsible state would intervene to stabilise food prices, constrain agribusiness and grocery baron profiteering, and construct an economically resilient, ecologically sound food system that recognises the importance of small-scale localised production in coordination with planned national development goals.

A state concerned with the population's health and wellbeing would strengthen public plant breeding and food safety research, insulating these critical aspects of the Canadian food system from market distortions while expanding upon the already rich accumulation of knowledge that exists in these public departments. Such a state would dramatically reduce fossil fuel emissions, a policy that necessitates massive decreases in military spending.

In all these areas, Prime Minister Mark Carney is doing the exact opposite of what people in Canada need. As a result, he is putting Canada's entire food system at risk.

In January, the Liberal government announced sweeping cuts to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the country's largest agricultural research organisation.



Canola field, Saskatchewan, Canada. Photo: Nas2 – commons.wikimedia.org (CC0 1.0)

militarisation will strain food production

Public funding for AAFC has been cut by 15 per cent, and 665 employees have been fired. Worse still, Carney announced the closure of seven agricultural research facilities across Canada.

In a report on climate change and agriculture, AAFC notes: "Increased temperatures, longer growing seasons, shifting precipitation patterns, and an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme events from climate change will bring challenges to Canada's

agricultural sector." Across Canada, "wetter than normal springs will present challenges such as the need to delay seeding."

Furthermore, the AAFC writes: "Flooding and other extreme events, including wildfires, may result in loss or relocation of livestock and damage to crops; and increased frequency and intensity of storms could result in power outages, affecting livestock heating and cooling systems as well as automated feeding and milking systems."

Farmers and rural dwellers are already experiencing the adverse impacts of extreme weather and higher temperatures on their communities' agriculture operations. These impacts will only intensify as Carney pushes new oil and gas extraction and the massive expansion of Canada's fossil fuel-guzzling military machine.

People's Voice (edited for space) ★

Kenya races to trace all contacts after first Ebola death

Dianne Penn

Kenya's first Ebola death has triggered a race to trace everyone the victim came into contact with, as the United Nations and partners provide full support, the World Health Organization's (WHO) top official in the country has told UN News in her first interview on the case.

Speaking in Nairobi on 7 October, WHO Representative Dr Neema Rusibamayila Kimambo said the coming days would be decisive in preventing community spread of the Bundibugyo strain of the virus, which has now claimed its first life in Kenya.

The victim, a local man who had lived in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) for several years, fell ill there, where a deadly outbreak continues to spread in the east.

He flew to Nairobi via Kampala and Entebbe in Uganda on 3 October, went straight to hospital and died in the Kenyan capital on Monday.

Authorities have since identified the people who had come in direct contact with him from social contact and his admission to hospital. So far, there have been no other infections.

"This is an outbreak of an imported case, one who came in and went straight to hospital, but the government is working to

identify all the relevant contacts as part of their response to this outbreak," Dr Kimambo told UN News.

CONTACT TRACING UNDERWAY

She said a list of contacts has been identified, including around 10 of the man's relatives who "have been very cooperative, and some actually volunteered themselves and they are now already placed under quarantine."

Meanwhile, 21 health workers who served him in hospital, as well as lab nurses and others, have also been contacted.

Even though these professionals used infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, "the plan is to make sure that they are all under quarantine and decisions have already been made where the staff of the Nairobi Hospital are to be quarantined," she said.

The Kenyan government is also working with the airline to contact the roughly 23 passengers and four crew members who were on the flight from Entebbe to Kampala.

Incubation of the disease is roughly 2-8 days, making early measures vital.

United Nations ★

Greeks protest visit

Thousands of Greeks demonstrated 6 October in Athens against Greece's involvement in war, sending the message: "Butcher Rubio is not welcome."

Protesters sent a clear message against the visit of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Greece's involvement in the wars of the US, NATO, and the EU.

With a mass rally in Syntagma Square, a march and a surprise

protest opposite the US embassy, demonstrators demanded: "Out with the bases of death! No involvement in the wars of the US, NATO, and the EU!"

Behind the banners of their unions and organisations, workers, the self-employed, women, university students, and school pupils delivered a defiant response to the government's celebrations of the so-called "strategic relationship" with the US and Greece's

"enhanced geopolitical status." They condemned arms programs, military spending and agreements that serve imperialist plans and draw the country deeper into wars.

Large police contingents repeatedly attempted to block the demonstration, including by using tear gas. The march continued, with demonstrators chanting: "Intimidation will not prevail – the people's struggle will defeat it!"

Meanwhile, the surprise protest

by workers opposite the US embassy conveyed the message that the US Secretary of State was unwelcome, effectively thwarting the attempt to impose silence around his visit.

In the face of repression, the protests demonstrated the strength of the organised popular movement against repression and bans. Greece's working class sent a clear message against involvement in war and the country's transformation

into a launchpad for military operations.

The baton now passes to the dockworkers' strike on 30 October, at more than 60 ports worldwide, and to the escalation of strike action in the period ahead.

World Federation of Trade Unions ★

Bureaucratised genocide

Laura Mercedes Giráldez

It is the future that is being mutilated. The roar following a bomb impact no longer stuns him quite as much, though the fear remains. He knows well what war can do to him. With every blast, he knows the danger is drawing closer. He drags himself through the rubble of what was once his city.

Escaping the explosions is becoming increasingly difficult. What was once a feat with two legs seems like a death sentence when one or both are missing. Doing it alone is nearly impossible; doing it with help becomes an ordeal that slows progress and exposes the helper to various dangers.

This is the reality for some 10,000 children in Gaza – living with amputations, limb injuries, and spinal cord or brain damage resulting from the prolonged armed conflict with Israel, according to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates.

Since October 2023 when hostilities resumed more than 5,000 limb amputations have been performed. One in five of these operations involved a child or adolescent patient.

UNICEF says Gaza has recorded the highest number of child amputees per capita in the world. It is not a record that anyone with even a shred of humanity would want them to hold. It is the future that is being mutilated. Over 50,000 injuries resulting from armed clashes in the coastal enclave require long-term rehabilitation, yet no facility dedicated to such care remains fully operational.

More than 900 wheelchairs intended for Palestinian children with amputations, neurological injuries, and other disabilities remain in storage in Jordan after Israeli authorities blocked their entry into the Strip.

According to local media reports, these consist of two shipments from the Australian organisation Kids on Wheels Alliance that arrived in Jordan in February 2025. Meanwhile, a third shipment from the West Australian group Wheelchairs for Kids arrived in October of that same year.

The devices, essential for children with severe mobility challenges, sit in storage at facilities managed by the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization, rather than fulfilling their fundamental purpose: improving the children’s quality of life and restoring a measure of dignity to them and their families.

In an investigation published by *The New Arab*, Australian activist Mohammad Helmy explained that the wheelchairs were handmade by Australian volunteers and adapted to allow children with amputations to navigate destroyed streets.

“Keeping mobility equipment trapped in warehouses while children crawl through the rubble is not a security measure; it is a deliberate policy of collective punishment and total destruction directed against the Palestinian people,” he remarked.

More than 11,000 children in Gaza have suffered life-altering injuries. There are statistics, the assistive devices sent to these children, and the public outcries. What is missing – besides their limbs? Humanity, and respect for universal, fundamental human rights laws.

Granma



‘Naturally suited to childminding’

Lexi Goff

Prior to the 1850s in US and throughout the British empire, teaching was a relatively well-paid male-dominated profession. Wealthy families were the primary purchasers, paying for access to a formal education or hiring private tutors.

As the concept of public schooling expanded so too did the demand for labour. The pool of men able to fill the role was thinned and schools turned to hiring women more. This was particularly true for teaching children in their earlier years.

Women in these roles were mostly seen as unskilled labour “naturally suited to childminding,” a role which historically has been unpaid or paid at very low wages, and so the social value for their work was not seen as comparable to their male counterparts. Women had fewer socially acceptable options for work and limited opportunities to access higher education, making them significantly cheaper than their male counterparts. They served as an additionally exploitable workforce within the industry.

In 1849 a member of the Littleton school board in Massachusetts said, “God seems to have made woman peculiarly suited to guide and develop the infant mind, and it seems ... very poor policy to pay a man 20 or 22 dollars a month, for teaching children the ABCs, when a female could do the work more successfully at one third of the price.” This attitude mirrored the broad devaluation of domestic labour and started the cycle of devaluing early educators and public educators in general. This continues to the present day within teaching and many other roles which are predominantly women-led. Nurses, cleaners, educators, midwives, childcare workers, and administrative workers are overwhelmingly women and undervalued relative to comparable professionals.

In each of the above examples we can see the direct ties the role has to the unpaid domestic labour done by women to maintain and reproduce the workforce. These roles are often either dismissed as being “unskilled” or as caregiving which is often not seen as “real work”.

These attitudes are often held in contradiction. For example many people would readily accept that nurses, childcare workers, and teachers have difficult jobs and are “essential workers” deserving of praise, and yet when workers in these fields push for pay rises the public reaction often turns to devaluing the jobs themselves or attacking the workers for being selfish in asserting themselves over the needs of their students/patients/clients.

Low investment in these jobs is a perpetuation of the unpaid domestic labour which has always been expected of women within the capitalist model. As teachers we hear it constantly; “we don’t do it for the money, we do it for the kids”, the profession seen as a virtuous act of service more than a source of income.

Similarly, childcare workers are vital to parents engaging in the workforce and provide children with education and social skills during critical developmental years, but when calls come for a liveable wage, they are dismissed as glorified babysitters. Attitudes towards these fields present additional barriers to industrial action, continuing the cycle of undervaluing the profession.

There has also been a notable shift in teaching over the past few decades with the transfer of the unpaid domestic labour of child-rearing, once expected from the household, being now increasingly shouldered by educators. Teachers are expected to provide the social and emotional skills children need without additional compensation or training. We are regularly expected to provide social care and fulfil specialised psycho-social roles for an increasingly complex collection of students. Unrecognised domestic labour continues to this day to find its way onto the shoulders of women. The fight for genuine recognition of the work women do continues.



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Brazil's angry tide

Vijay Prashad

Brazil's general election on 4 October delivered a severe warning to the Left.

Flávio Bolsonaro, the presidential candidate of the Liberal Party (PL), finished ahead of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, with approximately 47 per cent against 45 per cent. Neither secured a majority, sending them into a runoff on 25 October.

More troubling was the advance of *bolsonarismo*, the Trump-esque movement inspired by Bolsonaro through Congress. The election has strengthened a political movement whose ambitions extend beyond defeating Lula to reshaping the institutions that obstruct its exercise of power.

The imprisonment (house arrest) and electoral exclusion of Jair Bolsonaro have not dissolved his movement. His son Flávio carries its presidential banner, while other members of the family have won seats in Congress. Michelle Bolsonaro, Jair's wife, and Carlos Bolsonaro, his son, enter the Senate; Jair Renan, another son, and Renato, Jair's brother, enter the Chamber of Deputies. 'Nepo-bolsonarismo' is an appropriate name for this family's expansion through the state. Yet the family is only the most visible expression of a broader project, rooted in powerful economic interests and a deeply organised reactionary politics.

CONTINENTAL STAKES

Lula's defeat would affect workers and peasants throughout Brazil, but also the possibilities for regional cooperation and an independent Latin American foreign policy. Brazil's size, industrial capacity, raw minerals (such as critical minerals), agricultural resources, and diplomatic reach give its politics continental significance. A government that subordinates these assets to Washington's priorities would weaken the space available to neighbouring countries seeking their own paths of development.

Lula retained a commanding position in the Northeast, while Flávio led across the other four regions. São Paulo's enormous

electorate provided a particularly important advantage to the Right.

These divisions cannot be explained by an opposition between an enlightened population and an ignorant one. They require an examination of the different conditions of work, the organisation of political life, and the capacity of competing movements to interpret people's frustrations.

Lula has a substantial social record. Unemployment fell to 5.3 per cent in the quarter ending in August, the lowest rate since 2012. Such improvements matter enormously to families for whom a regular wage brings relief from daily uncertainty.

But an improved indicator does not settle the political argument. Employment can coexist with exhausting journeys, expensive housing, inadequate public services, and debt. The distance between statistical improvement and lived experience remains terrain on which the Right operates.

Bolsonarismo translates these frustrations into resentment against the Left, all public institutions, and vulnerable sections of society. Its promise of order offers an immediate language for fear, while concealing the economic arrangements that produce insecurity.

The Left cannot answer this merely by advertising government achievements. It must connect those achievements to a credible program for changing everyday life, and explain which interests prevent further advances. A worker struggling with debt needs more than reassurance that the economy is performing well.

This has been the problem for Lula, whose program for the future does not seem to promise more than what has been delivered till now.

STRUGGLE FOR INSTITUTIONAL POWER

The Senate election is particularly consequential because 54 of its 81 seats were contested. Senators serve eight-year terms, so the results will shape national politics well beyond the next presidential administration. The PL won 19 seats and will hold 28 in the new Senate, making it the largest party. The PT will have nine. The



Lula's presidential campaign, 2022. Photo: Oliver Kornblihtt/Mídia NINJA – flickr.com (CC BY-NC 2.0)

bolsonaristas have established a formidable position, although the PL remains short of a majority and must bargain with other parties.

The bolsonaristas have made their confrontation with the Supreme Federal Court a central political objective, including demands to impeach its ministers. The danger of using legislative power to intimidate the judiciary has plainly grown.

This is part of a struggle over the conditions under which the far right can govern. Judicial proceedings against Jair Bolsonaro did not remove the social forces supporting him. Those forces now seek greater leverage over institutions capable of restraining them. For the Left, defending democratic space must accompany the struggle to expand social rights. Workers' organisations cannot afford to lose the freedoms through which they organise, educate, and confront capital.

THE RIGHT ADVANCES

All 513 seats in the Chamber of Deputies were up for election this year. The PL secured 121, consolidating its position as the largest

party in this chamber as well as in the Senate. The federation of the Workers' Party, Communist Party of Brazil, and Green Party won 88 seats, with the PT itself taking 70. The federation's growth is significant, but it leaves Lula's allies far from a majority. Parties of the Right hold 303 seats, while the broader parliamentary Left holds 124.

The outcome strengthens the far right in a legislature already dominated by conservative interests. If Lula wins in the second round, he will confront substantial congressional resistance, but if Flávio wins, the same Congress could facilitate a reactionary program.

Yet the election also brought important representatives of a fighting Left into the Chamber. Jones Manoel, the communist historian, and Elias Jabbour, the communist geographer, were elected for the Pcdob (Communist Party of Brazil). Their victories suggest an audience for political education and socialist arguments. They offer resources for rebuilding confidence among people who have grown impatient with the narrowing ambitions of parliamentary politics.

Manoel has already offered to assist Lula's runoff campaign,

including its digital communication, while proposing stronger attention to demands such as free public transport. This is a useful example of political clarity: criticism of the government's limitations can coexist with active mobilisation against the far right of a special type.

Such unity does not require workers to abandon their demands. It becomes stronger when those demands supply the campaign's energy and direction.

TASK AHEAD

The angry tide has advanced, but it has not carried away the millions who still seek another Brazil. The new communist deputies, the surviving mass organisations (especially the landless workers of the MST), and Lula's enormous electoral base provide foundations for resistance. The immediate task is to defeat Flávio Bolsonaro. The longer task is to build a popular power strong enough to prevent the oligarchy from deciding, election after election, how little change the majority will be allowed.

Globetrotter (edited for space) ✨

the angry tide has not carried away the millions who still seek another Brazil



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