

Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

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Palestine will live!

by Alice M.

For more than 60 years the courageous and heroic Palestinian people have refused to give up their resistance to the brutal occupation, oppression and massacres by the Israel Zionist state and its partner in crime US imperialism. They are admired and supported by the great majority of ordinary people of the world.

At the time of writing, the Gaza massacre by the Zionist regime in Israel has killed more than 800 Palestinians and maimed and wounded more than 5,000. Many more thousands have been left homeless, displaced, grieving and horrified at the depth of devastation and suffering inflicted on their people. Whole extended families have been massacred.

Schools, hospitals and the entire infrastructure of Gaza have been flattened by the relentless Israeli carpet bombing.

The bloody Israeli bombardment and invasion of Gaza has ignited world-wide protests, condemnation and outrage by ordinary people around the world.

Hundreds of thousands are taking to the streets in angry rallies, protests and occupations in solidarity with the people of Gaza, demanding an immediate stop to the bombing and withdrawal of Israeli troops and artillery from Gaza.

The people demand an immediate arms embargo and boycotts of Israel.

Demands to take Israel to International Criminal Courts echo around the world.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians in the Occupied West Bank cities of Ramallah, Bethlehem, Nablus angrily marched to the Qalandia checkpoint on the East Jerusalem border. Confronting heavily armed Israeli troops, bullets, and tear gas, they demanded an end to the siege of Gaza and the occupation of Palestine. Several were killed and hundreds more wounded.

In Israel, more Jews are joining in protests against their government's slaughter in Gaza, with many declaring solidarity with the Palestinians. More Israeli soldiers and army reservists



publicly condemn their government and refuse to fight in the Israeli army.

The main criminals, the Zionists and the US imperialist ruling class fuel racism, religious hatred and conflict, to turn the people against each other and divert attention from their own murderous activities as the main source of suffering and wars of aggression.

They exploit the historical persecution of the Jewish people and the horrors of the 2nd World War Holocaust to manufacture fear of the Palestinian and Arab people to justify the occupation, oppression and slaughter in Gaza and the West Bank.

The Zionist occupation of Palestine and the oppression of the Palestinians was always a land grab.

The Zionist state would not be able to sustain the ongoing occupation, oppression, expansion of settlements and the violent theft of Palestinian lands and homes without the encouragement and strong support from the US, economically, militarily and politically.

The ongoing slaughter of thousands of Palestinians on such a massive scale could only be achieved with the support of the big imperialist powers, led by US imperialism, and its grubby puppets.

The Zionist Israeli state is a vital economic and military base and outpost for US imperialism in the Middle East.

The Israeli capitalist economy is intertwined with US imperialism and its main multinational corporations and banks, including IBM, Chase

reserves intensified.

Russia's major investment in the Palestinian gas fields is seen as a threat to US hegemony in the region and Israel's control of the gas fields.

The hand of US imperialism is behind most ferocious wars, occupations and invasions raging around the world today.

Its covert criminal activities bankroll wars, terrorism, depose governments, fuel racism and religious conflicts for the single purpose of protecting and expanding its economic and political hegemony of the world. It is the biggest and most vicious terrorist.

The Palestinian people stand at the front of the global struggle against US imperialism and its Zionist puppets. They must be supported. They are part of the struggle against the US empire in all corners of the world.

The Australian government is a US puppet, carrying out every wish and demand of the US over Israel, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, etc.

We will unite and redouble our efforts in the fight for an anti-imperialist Australian independence from the US dictates.

This is our practical contribution to the people of Palestine and all people of the world oppressed by the US and its lackeys.

Solidarity with the Palestinian people's struggle for liberation and sovereignty!

Manhattan Bank, General Electric, Boeing, Citi Bank, Goldman Sachs, Dow Chemicals and the US advanced arms manufacturer Lockheed Martin.

Since 1985 the US government has provided Israel more than \$3 billion annually in grants to its arms industries and war mongering military.

Rich natural gas fields off the coast of Gaza, valued at \$4 billion, were discovered in 2000. Sixty per cent of these off-shore gas reserves belong to Palestine. Israel's government has declared that capturing Palestine's gas fields is an objective of the assault on Gaza.

In January 2014 the Palestinian Authority began negotiations with Russia on Russia's investment in the development of Palestinian gas fields. The race for Gaza's rich natural gas

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Abbott heaps insults on injury

by *Bill F.*

Not content with the pain and suffering being inflicted on working people by his vicious austerity budget, Prime Minister Tony Abbott wants to re-write history by insulting past generations of Australians.

In his fawning welcome to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Abbott referred to the World War II attack on Sydney by Japanese submarines in June 1942, which ended with the death of 21 allied seamen as well as the Japanese submariners.

He gushed, "We admired the skill and the sense of honour that they brought to their task, although we disagreed with what they did."

"Admired" their skill and honour?!



"Disagreed"?!

What weasel-words to cover the truth that the military honours funeral for the Japanese submariners was a desperate attempt to protect the lives of some 22,000 Australian prisoners of war after the fall of Singapore!

The Australian people already knew about the brutality of Japanese fascism following the invasion of China and the Rape of Nanjing in 1937.

They already had experience of resistance to Japanese fascism when the wharfies of Port Kembla refused to load scrap iron for Japan in 1938, despite threats and attacks by Industry Minister 'Pig Iron Bob' Menzies.

By June 1942 Darwin and Broome had already been bombed with the loss of hundreds of civilian lives.

Appealing to the honour of fascists never works.

The worst fears of the Australian people were realised. Our prisoners of war were treated appallingly in places such as the Thai-Burma Railway, Changi prison in Singapore and the Sandakan death march in Borneo, and wherever else they fell into captivity.

And just who is Shinzo Abe?

Well, he's an apologist for Japanese wartime atrocities and crimes.

He claims the Nanjing slaughter never took place. He wants to disavow the apologies given to Korean 'comfort women'. He insists on paying respects at the notorious Yasukuni Shrine which honours many Japanese war criminals.

He is changing the post-war Japanese Constitution to allow Japanese militarism to re-emerge and engage in conflicts beyond Japan.

While all of this weighs heavily with generations of Australians still affected by the horrors and losses of World War II, it just bounces off Abbott.

He's all gung-ho for Gallipoli celebrations around a war that had nothing to do with Australia's defence and a lot to do with defending British imperialism. His weasel-words insult all those that fought and all those that died defending Australia from Japanese imperialism and fascism.

His mission is to prove his loyalty to US imperialism by cementing a political and military alliance with resurgent Japanese militarism and locking in another shonky "free trade" agreement.

It's all part of the US 'pivot' into the Asia-Pacific region, a strategy that drags Australia into US, and now Japanese, war plans to contain or provoke China, and all the possible miscalculations this might involve.

Investment invasion

True to form, Abbott recently gave a speech at a conference hosted by *The Australian* and the Melbourne Institute at which he then tried to white-out 50,000 years of indigenous history.

"Our country is unimaginable without foreign investment... I guess our country owes its existence to a form of foreign investment by the British government in the then unsettled or, um, scarcely settled, Great South Land."

Labor Senator Nova Peris, the first indigenous woman to be elected to federal parliament, said Abbott was "highly offensive, dismissive of indigenous peoples and simply incorrect... British settlement was not foreign investment. It was occupation."

Abbott will not succeed in re-writing Australia's history, and like other apologists for imperialism, fascism, invasion and occupation, he will barely rate a footnote.

Rural Roundup

by *Duncan B.*

Further to the story in last month's *Vanguard* about the foreign take-over of Australian agribusiness, it was reported that a Chinese firm has bought Gippsland export meat processor Tabro, for \$25 million.

It was also reported that private equity firms are interested in the \$500 million float being planned by dairy exporter Murray Goulburn.

At least one firm is interested in taking the whole \$500 million offer.

A new *Agricultural Land and Water Ownership* survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that the amount of foreign ownership of Australian land has risen by 4.7 million

hectares since 2010, rising from 44.9 million ha. to 49.6 million ha.

The level of foreign ownership of water has increased 55% to 1.8 million megalitres in the same period.

Recently the exploitation of foreign workers involved in the horticulture industry has been exposed in the rural press.

The workers, most of whom are backpackers, are being supplied to farmers by dodgy labour hire companies. It is alleged that the workers are being underpaid and some do not have the correct visas.

They are forced to live in sub-standard accommodation, up to 20 in a house, and being charged exorbitant amounts for the privilege.

August 31

March Australia rallies all across the country

Smash the austerity budget!

Get prepared, get organised!

Bring flags and banners and all your mates!

The only way to move forward is to fight back!

Vanguard

Vanguard is a national monthly newspaper which expresses the viewpoint of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist - Leninist), the CPA (M-L). Readers are encouraged to comment on, criticise or contribute material to *Vanguard*. Articles, digital graphics, cartoons, clippings, comments or a few lines are all very welcome. All material should be sent to:

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PO Box 196, Fitzroy, Vic. 3065**

Vanguard strives to provide a Marxist analysis of Australian society, economy and politics. An important aspect of developing this analysis is an intimate knowledge of and close involvement in all aspects of Australian struggle.

Readers and subscribers should be aware that *Vanguard* is unlikely to be published in 2015, but will continue online at www.cpaml.org. As with a newspaper, there are costs involved and supporters are encouraged to contribute whatever they can by sending donations to the above address.

The CPA (M-L) may be contacted through *Vanguard* at PO Box 196, Fitzroy, Vic, 3065.
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The age of entitlement keeps getting bigger for mining corporations



by Max O.

A recent report by the Australia Institute on the mining industry shows that this sector has been the foremost beneficiary of state and federal government assistance.

Handouts to the mining corporations rank with government health and education budgets.

At least \$17.6 billion worth of assistance to the mining industry was found by the Australia Institute when it examined the past six years of budgets from each of the states.

What royalties or rents the states receive from the miners, well over half of that money is given back via direct and indirect grants.

The Productivity Commission released figures last year which showed the mining sector received \$492 million in direct subsidies from the Federal government in 2013.

Although the Australia Institute argues that if tax concessions to the mining industry were included, the subsidy is actually ten times greater – \$4.5 billion.

Mining corporations pay lowest tax

The Institute points out that the mining corporations have the lowest company tax rate because the industry has so many concessions.

The average tax rate for companies is 21%, whereas the mining sector pays only 14%.

Why is this so, when one considers that our minerals are a finite and sovereign resource?

The conflict over royalties/rent between landowner states and corporate capital has been swayed by the World Bank's neo-liberal policy of the need for mineral rich countries to offer

incentives to attract so-called high risk investment from mining companies.

The oft-mentioned risks for mining companies which are used to justify the need to offer attractive incentives for them to mine however slash the benefits that a country receives, and in the long term, set in motion hostility from the people who witness the pillage of their resources.

In fact, their influence is so pervasive that most governments cower to their wishes.

Witness the media campaign orchestrated by the mining lobby and the capitulation by the federal ALP government which emasculated the Super Profit Mining Tax to a Minerals Resource Rent Tax to appease the rapacious greed of the mining giants.

In fact, Gina Rinehart receives more rent from her leases to the foreign owned mining corporations than any of the Australian governments receive.

For example, the biggest mining states of Western Australia and Queensland, have paid out over six years \$6.2 billion and \$9.5 billion each in assistance.

Government subsidises corporations to repatriate their profits overseas

The Federal government increased the exploration and prospecting deductions by \$220 million to \$550 million on last year, while deductions for capital works expenditure rose by \$127.5 million to \$495 million.

It also raised the fuel tax credits to the mining industry by \$458 million, increasing the fuel subsidies to \$2.45 billion.

“Despite a slight fall in commodity prices, the mining industry is still enjoying large profits and continues to grow...”

“This type of industry assistance is usually used to help industries when

Editorial

Saving capitalism from itself

– the pitchforks are coming – but they need to be carried in an organised fashion

Some members of the ruling class are alarmed that their obscene accumulation of wealth at the expense of workers has reached such enormous heights that it is threatening their own existence.

In the online *Politico Magazine*, billionaire Nick Hanauer warns “that the Pitchforks Are Coming – For Us Plutocrats”.

Hanauer says he is “one of those 0.01%ers, a proud and unapologetic capitalist...”

“What sets me apart, I think, is a tolerance for risk and an intuition about what will happen in the future. Seeing where things are headed is the essence of entrepreneurship.

“And what do I see now? I see pitchforks.”

What concerns him is that the divide between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ in the USA is at record levels and that the 0.01%ers’ “gated bubble worlds” will be destroyed by the “pitchforking masses”.

His solution to save capitalism from itself is to convince his fellow ruling class 0.01%ers that this ‘extreme’ inequality in wealth is “self-defeating” and that policies similar to those of Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Great Depression of the 1930s are necessary to “pre-empt the revolutionaries”.

He says Roosevelt type policies will mean the minority ruling class will “escape with our lives” and “get even richer”.

However, times have changed for US imperialism since the 1930s.

In the 1930s US imperialism was on the rise and super profits extracted from the developing countries enabled the semblance of a welfare state to emerge under Roosevelt’s policies.

In 2014 US imperialism is on the decline and in debt to other rival imperialist powers, making a saving of capitalism from itself approach called for by Hanauer less likely.

Hanauer is concerned with what will happen

“When things reach a tipping point and go from being merely crappy for the masses to dangerous and destabilizing... revolutions, like bankruptcies, come gradually, and then suddenly... if inequality keeps rising as it has been, eventually, it (revolution) will happen.”

Hanauer does not advocate violent repression and further restriction of bourgeois democratic rights as a solution to social upheaval arising from the nature of the system of which he is a top beneficiary.

However, rest assured that other members of the ruling class do not hesitate to use all means at their disposal to protect their class position.

So the real lesson from Hanauer’s plea to his rich ruling class colleagues is that spontaneous uprisings on a large scale are arguably inevitable, but not enough to sustain a revolutionary change of society in which the people control the means of production and the distribution of wealth in society.

Leadership and organisation deeply embedded within the 99% is essential.

they are financially vulnerable or establishing themselves.

“This is clearly not the case for the mining industry, whose pre-tax profits account for 6% of GDP,” argues the Australia Institute.

These handouts are even more galling when one considers that the mining industry is largely foreign (83%) owned.

They are inefficient and inequitable subsidies that increase the profits for the mainly foreign wealthy owners of mining companies at the taxpayers’ expense.

Cutting out these handouts would help the federal government to fund the promised Gonski Education and Disability Care reforms, instead of this money being repatriated to overseas mining shareholders.

The only way out of this economic plunder is to break the control that the IMF, the World Bank and the mega-mining corporations have over our governments.

An effective Super Profit Mining Tax should be re-instituted, leading to the eventual nationalisation of all mining companies.

Marxism Today

Commonwealth Bank scam of customers is a good reason to nationalise the banks

by Max O.

The recently reported fact that thousands of Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) customers lost savings during the global financial crisis, between 2006 and 2010, after advisers misled them into buying risky products, fabricated documents and forged signatures, demonstrates once again the parasitic, decadent and moribund nature of capitalism.

Marx once remarked the reprehensible purpose of money: "Money is therefore not only the object but also the fountainhead of greed."

Banksters of greed

The fallout over the CBA's nefarious financial scams was brought to light by a Senate select committee report that recommended an independent inquiry into a financial planning scandal at the CBA.

It also charged the Australian Securities Investment Commission (ASIC) for being a timid corporate watchdog that failed to act over the CBA's fraudulent behaviour, forgery, and financially scamming its customers out of millions of dollars.

The Senate committee report also made the accusation that included allegations of a cover-up and that the bank's ability to address compensation issues was compromised.

The Senate committee stated in a damning 519-page report that: "... confidence in ASIC's ability to monitor the CBA's ... compensation process is severely undermined. The CBA's credibility in the matter is so compromised that responsibility for the compensation process should be taken away from the bank."

State backs the banksters

Whilst the Coalition government has commenced royal commissions into the former Labor government's home insulation scheme and the 'trade union corruption' allegations, it definitely shies away from an inquiry into this banking scandal.

Finance minister Mathias Cormann gave preference to Senator Bushby's minority report and made the weasel comment, that he (Bushby) made a "very persuasive argument that yet another inquiry might not be the best way forward."

Likewise, Prime Minister Abbott prevaricated, stating, "We do have an inquiry into the financial governance going on now and we want to ensure that investors are as safe as they can be in a market economy."

The obvious man to head this inquiry into the banking system is the one with the biggest conflict of interest, and that is none other than David Murray, the former CEO of the CBA.

Marx long ago argued that as capitalism concentrated wealth into the hands of the rich and impoverished the masses, it would cause economic crisis and intensify class conflict: "Accumulation of wealth at one pole is at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole."

Falling rate of profit

To overcome the tendency to the fall in the rate of profit and when capital experiences crises, Marx observed:

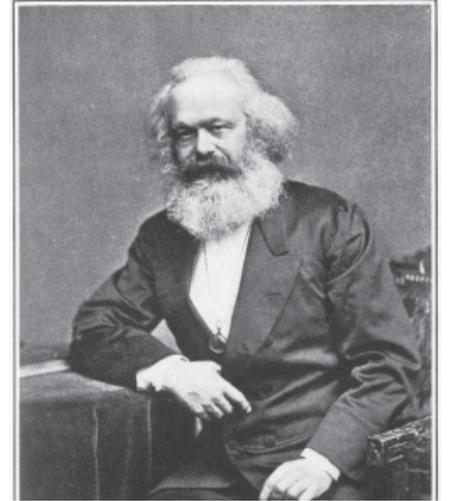
"If the rate of profit falls, there follows, on the one hand, an exertion

of capital in order that the individual capitalists, through improved methods, etc., may depress the value of their individual commodity below the social average value and thereby realise an extra profit at the prevailing market-price.

"On the other hand, there appears swindling and a general promotion of swindling by recourse to frenzied ventures with new methods of production, new investments of capital, new adventures, all for the sake of securing a shred of extra profit which is independent of the general average and rises above it."

More and more capital relies on profiteering from investing in financial instruments, such as derivatives and a plethora of other risky products to fleece money off ordinary people as opposed to accumulating profit from the process of production.

This swindling through financial speculation, called financialisation, postponed the serious economic crisis that arose in the 1980's and has now compounded the depth of our current crisis.



Karl Marx

Looting keeps capital afloat

Whilst capitalism has so far deferred the fatal economic crisis, each crisis is getting bigger and bigger.

These flagrant instances of looting and fraud by the banking and financial system are now essential to the survival of capitalism. The old capitalist proverb that, "Money makes the world go round" should be updated to; "Illegal money stops the (capitalist) world from tipping over!"

The immorality that comes out of the financial system reflects the rottenness of the capitalist profit system.

Sooner or later the expropriators will need to be expropriated and the banking and financial system nationalised under people's state ownership.

Flight MH17: More questions than answers

by Bill F.

The loss of human lives on Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 is a terrible tragedy and almost certainly a shocking criminal act. There can be no justification whatsoever for attacking civilian aircraft.

Flight MH17 was brought down over Ukraine territory controlled by pro-Russian forces who have proclaimed the "Federal State of Novorossiya" based around the Donetsk and Lugansk regions.

The area is a war zone, as the Ukraine government tries to suppress the rebellion in the eastern part of the country.

Along with sorrow for the victims and their grieving families and friends, there is also the demand that those responsible be exposed and punished.

A United Nations endorsed investigation has been launched to uncover the true circumstances.

However, many of the countries supporting the investigation have already endorsed the position of the United States, Australia and others that the pro-Russian forces shot down the plane with a sophisticated missile supplied by Russia.



If this investigation is to have credibility, it will have to tick off question marks already being raised by aviation experts as well as the Russian government.

Question marks

When the location of the plane was announced and there were calls for immediate access to the site by rescue teams and crash-site investigators, why did the Ukraine government refuse a ceasefire to allow this to happen? Why did they persist in attacking separatist positions?

Was there a Ukrainian BUK surface-to-air missile system stationed in the Donetsk region at the time?

Did Ukrainian air control order the plane to fly at a lower altitude of 33,000

feet? Did Ukrainian air control order the plane to divert slightly from its scheduled flight path? Why?

Was there a Ukrainian SU fighter plane in the immediate vicinity of flight MH17?

Where is the US satellite evidence that shows the missile trajectory and infrared image of the mid-air explosions?

Why was a commercial airliner flying over a war zone?

Why did the Ukraine Prime Minister Yatsenyuk resign as soon as the investigation was announced?

Don't hold your breath waiting for the answers. Propaganda rules.

Ukraine is caught between the competing interests of US imperialist-controlled NATO and Russian imperialism. Both want control over the coalfields of the Donbass and its strategic location.

Tax the big corporations – make the rich pay!

by Ned K.

The link below is worth reading for a case study of how multinational corporations are bleeding the public purse by tax evasion, price and profit transferring.

The coal mining giant corporation Glencore pays no tax according to the *Sydney Morning Herald* article in the link below. Glencore, with its head office in Switzerland, is now one of the biggest coal producers in the world, after the takeover of Xstrata in May last year.

Westfield, the biggest corporation in the retail shopping centre sector in Australia is not far behind Glencore, paying less than 5% tax rate when the average (too low) corporate tax rate in Australia in real terms is 22%.

The Australia Institute has also revealed that state governments have heavily subsidised the mining industry corporations to the tune of billions of dollars all up.

Richard Denniss, the Director of The Australia Institute claimed last year, "If we'd (meaning the then Labor Government) done nothing more radical than leave the tax rates unchanged from 2006, if Howard didn't do his last year and Rudd hadn't done his first year's tax cuts, then since 2006 we would have collected another \$170 billion.

"We gave away \$170 billion in tax cuts, and the top 10% of income earners got more than the bottom 80% combined."

The attack on the people's standard of living by the Abbott Government's 2014 Budget is an intensification of a taxation policy trend accelerated by Howard and Rudd whereby the wealthiest corporations and executives bleed the public purse.

Taxation policy and government budgets are very much a class question.

Since Rudd's retreat from the 40% resource tax on big mining corporations, there has been a massive transfer of wealth through government subservience to big corporations, most of whom are foreign owned like Glencore.

This is what is behind the attacks on the people by the government in the latest federal budget.

The only need for austerity is austerity on maximising profits!

However this goes to the heart of what drives the system, maximising profits and accumulating private capital.

Just what lengths the political servants of the big corporations are prepared to go to serve the latter's interests was demonstrated in late June this year by Liberal Senator and Employment



Glencore miners

Minister Abetz.

The Senate passed a Bill to preserve government guidelines for contractors hired to clean commonwealth government buildings.

The guidelines came about because of the cleaners' union Clean Start campaign which pressured the previous Labor Government to ensure that cleaners in these government buildings

continued to be paid above award rates of pay and conditions.

While the Bill was being tabled in the Senate, Abetz was secretly signing away the guidelines by administrative decree!

David O'Byrne in a press release for the cleaners' union United Voice said, "This makes a mockery of Prime Minister Tony Abbott's statement in

Parliament on 16 June when he said, 'I want to make it absolutely crystal clear that no cleaner's pay is reduced'"

As is demonstrated by the large turn-outs to Bust The Budget and March Australia rallies around Australia, the working class, which constitutes the large majority of Australians, is not going to sit back and tolerate the attack on their living standards for the benefit of multinational corporations and their political allies.

There is a mood for a change in direction of this country, and exciting years of struggle lie ahead as the people shape the country's destiny through their own struggles.

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/glencore-tax-bill-on15b-income-zip-zilch-zero-20140626-3awg0.html>

As inequality grows, so does resistance

by Bill F.

The Australia Institute recently published a research paper called *Income and Wealth Inequality in Australia*. It exposes the vast gap between the very wealthy and the very poor in this country.

Most startling is the revelation that the seven richest people in Australia have greater wealth between them than the whole bottom 20% of the population, or 1.73 million households.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the combined wealth of the bottom 20% amounts to \$54 billion, while the BRW Rich List credits the top seven fat cats as owning more than \$56 billion.

Gina Rinehart (mining)	\$22 bn
Frank Lowry (Westfield)	\$7 bn
James Packer (media)	\$6 bn
Pratt family (packaging)	\$5.6 bn
Ivan Glasenberg (Glencore)	\$5.6 bn
Harry Triguboff (property)	\$4.9 bn
Wing Mau Hui (property)	\$4.8 bn

While successive Labor and Liberal governments have all raved on about balancing the budget, they have facilitated the progressive transfer of national wealth to the wealthiest sector of the population at the expense of the rest.

This has occurred over the past decade at an increasing rate due to the reduction of marginal income tax rates and concessions that amount to nearly \$170 billion in foregone revenue for the government.

Tax not paid stays in the pocket, and the top 10% have benefitted far more



the bottom 80% of taxpayers.

The Abbott-Hockey austerity budget continues this transfer of wealth, with further cuts to company tax, and the indexation of the age pension to CPI rather than male average earnings. Age pensioners will be falling further behind community standards while company profits will be boosted.

This is a stark reminder of how the capitalist state always works in the interest of the ruling class and the handful of individual characters who have clawed their way to the top of the pyramid.

While this exposure is well and good, it falls short of exposing the even greater transfer of wealth taking place every day through the repatriation of corporate profits overseas, interest paid on foreign loans, and bank, insurance and superannuation fees.

The corporate takeover of government services and utilities through privatisation has hit working people especially hard, paying much more for water, gas, electricity and public transport.

If the sweep of austerity budget

measures goes through parliament, working people will cop massive increases in healthcare, education and childcare costs, as well reductions and restrictions in services and benefits.

Again, further wealth transfer to the 'private providers', with second-rate services for the working poor and overwhelmed charities for the unemployed, the disabled, the pensioners.

The myth of Australia being an egalitarian society has been well and truly shattered.

The myths that most of us are 'middle class, and that there are no serious class tensions, have also been shattered.

As the anti-budget rallies have shown, large sections of the people have had a gut-full.

They are talking, mobilising, organising. Many still look to parliamentary solutions, but with more scepticism than belief. Many are looking beyond parliament, placing more faith in community and social action to force change.

Harder times are coming, but the spirit of the people is cause for optimism.

Drones: a new weapon in the war on workers

by Nick G.

In 2012, Henry Kieser was flying surveillance drones over striking workers at the Lonmin mines in South Africa. The drones supplied intelligence on where strikers were gathering and helped identify leaders and organisers within the crowds.

That intelligence was fed into decisions that led to 34 strikers being shot and killed by security forces, and many more wounded and arrested.

Kieser is the owner of the fascistically-named Desert Wolf company, whose product range increasingly specialises in unmanned aerial surveillance vehicles, or drones.

He was influential in South Africa's COPE political party, founded in 2008 as a breakaway from the ANC. When COPE president Mosiuo Lekota was ANC defence minister, Desert Wolf received a big defence contract.

In June, Kieser unveiled his newest product, the Skunk, a copter-like drone with a lifting capability of 45 Kg from eight powerful electric motors with 16 inch propellers.

The load capacity allows the Skunk to be equipped with 4 high-capacity paint-ball barrels releasing at up to 20 paint-balls per second each, with 80 pepper-balls per second "stopping any crowd in its tracks".

Each Skunk can carry 4000 paint, pepper or compressed plastic balls.

A remote operator has full control over each marker. According to a blurb from Desert Wolf, "He can select the RED paint marker and mark the protester who carries dangerous weapons, he can select the BLUE marker to mark the vandalising protestors and if needed the pepper-balls to stop the advancing crowd before they get into a 'Life threatening situation'.

"He can also set the releasing frequency of each marker from as low as 1 ball per second up to 20 balls per second. If all markers releases at maximum rate, then you disperse 80 balls per second. This high frequency will only be used in an extreme 'Life threatening situation'.

Lasers and strobes included

The drone also includes on-board speakers to give orders to crowds, as well as bright strobe lights and "blinding lasers" to disorientate victims. Blinding lasers are prohibited for use in war under the Geneva Convention, but included on the Skunk for use against striking workers.



The "good" bourgeoisie

Kieser justifies this high tech weapon of suppression as a safe and human alternative to the violence that occurred at Marikana.

"Our aim is to assist in preventing another Marikana. We were there and it should never happen again."

"Anyone who was at Marikana would rather have this technology than live ammunition," he continued. "People who say it's inhumane compared to 9mm bullets are idiotic."

Taking away the right to strike

What is really idiotic is being driven by commercial greed to develop military-style weaponry to suppress striking workers and people engaged in demonstrations and protests.

James Nichol, a British lawyer representing the families of dead strikers at Marikana, said: "It's absolutely outrageous. Using pepper spray like ammunition to scatter the crowd. People are entitled to be on strike. Who would make the decision? It's absurd."

He added: "What we know about drones is in Pakistan they have killed funeral parties and they have killed wedding parties. Innocent people would be caught up in this. It seems to be the thin end of the wedge.

"One of the lessons of Marikana is that the state should stay out of industrial disputes. If they want people firing back at drones which then crash and hurt innocent people, be it on their heads. It's disgraceful."

Rehad Desai, spokesperson for the Marikana Support Campaign and director of a documentary film, *Miners Shot Down*, said: "The government are increasingly turning to authoritarian methods instead of dialogue and mediation. It's to be expected that they would adopt such equipment to quell dissent. But the more violent the

equipment, the more violent the reaction will be.

"Why would it be more 'humane' to pepper spray people on their way home than to shoot them? I don't see the analogy."

Tim Noonan, a spokesman for the International Trade Union Confederation, told the BBC: "This is a deeply disturbing and repugnant development and we are convinced that any reasonable government will move quickly to stop the deployment of advanced battlefield technology on workers or indeed the public involved in legitimate protests and demonstrations."

Orders already placed

Kieser is set to make big money. He already has an order for 25 Skunks from one mining company, which he refused to name.

At 500,000 South African Rand per Skunk, that's 12,500,000 Rand (or \$A1,250,000) as a starter.

But 25 Skunks from just one mining company? That's a lot of "crowd control".

F35 theatrics

by Bill F.

In late July, the first F35 Joint Strike Fighter for the Royal Australian Air Force was 'handed over' at the Lockheed Martin plant in Texas, complete with rock music, a didgeridoo and an aboriginal message stick.

This theatre was designed to tart up the fact that Prime Minister Tony Abbott, Defence Minister David Johnson and Ambassador Kim Beazley were all absent, while the US was represented by an Under-Secretary.

It was poor cover for the embarrassment of the aircraft being two years behind schedule and still not operational.

South Africa's platinum belt is currently deadlocked in a strike which, after five months, is the longest in the history of the country's mines and has pushed many workers and their families into dire poverty and hunger. Maybe those workers will be the first to be on the receiving end of Mr Kieser's "humanitarian concern".

Other orders are being finalised from "mines in South Africa, some security companies in South Africa and outside South Africa, some police units outside South Africa and a number of other industrial customers."

Taser drones

Desert Wolf is not alone in thinking up new ways to harass and attack the people.

A Texan company has developed CUPID (Chaotic Unmanned Personal Intercept Drone) to identify and taser individuals from the air. A regular police hand-held taser delivers a charge of around 50,000 volts, but in a gesture no doubt designed to show the power of love, CUPID will up the ante to 80,000 volts.

People cannot be stopped

The logic of class struggle is inexorable.

The bourgeoisie exploits the people and the people fight for justice.

The bourgeoisie imposes repressive measures and the people develop resistance.

The more violent the repression, the more violent the resistance.

The more sophisticated the repression, the more sophisticated the resistance.

Ways will be found to stop the drones.

Problems with software, avionics and a recent engine fire that grounded all test flights mean that pilot and maintenance training will be further delayed.

As a single engine plane, any power failure means the plane will be lost. At \$120 million apiece, and a total bill exceeding \$12 billion, it's an expensive lemon.

The Australian government has committed to this farce simply to curry favour with US imperialism.

The F35 is just another feature of the US demand for "inter-operability" between its military forces and its puppet-allies.

The real defence interests and independence of the puppets counts for nought.

Statement: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

Since this statement was issued on 20th July, more than 850 Palestinians have been killed and more than 5000 injured

The Zionist enemy carried out a horrific massacre today against the civilians of Shuja'iyah neighborhood in eastern Gaza City, targeting homes with mortars, tanks, missiles and aircraft, killing dozens of martyrs and wounding hundreds, where many remain under the rubble of their destroyed homes amid a barrage of shells and rockets.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine pledged that the blood of the martyrs of the Shuja'iyah massacre, of the war crimes and genocide committed by land, air and sea in every inch of Gaza against civilians in their homes, children, women, and the elderly, will not be wasted, and that the enemy will never be able to break the will and steadfastness of our people and their valiant resistance which will fight and resist this cowardly and criminal enemy until the last breath.

The Front noted that the Zionist criminal occupation has brought death, destruction and devastation to our neighborhoods, camps and cities, saying that the occupation forces were incapable of stopping the resistance or its qualitative strikes against occupation forces, and have expressed their cowardice by targeting innocent civilians in their homes.

The Front saluted the brave resisters in all the Palestinian military organizations who are willing to sacrifice in order to block the progress of the occupation forces, for our people to survive and confront the war machine, and praised its ongoing painful strikes to the enemy.

Furthermore, the Front emphasized that the international community is responsible for the crimes against our people in Gaza with its ongoing military, financial, and political support to the occupation entity, providing it with political cover to commit crimes against our people.

The Front demanded that Palestinian Authority officials and spokespeople stop engaging in the language of defeatism and to instead respect the Palestinian popular mood, which shouts that no voice is louder than the voice of the resistance. Our legitimate resistance is a point of pride for all of our people; we are convinced that we will win, and we will mend our wounds, we will rise from the rubble and the ruins to rebuild our homes again.

The Front saluted with pride the steadfast people in Gaza from Rafah to Beit Hanoun who have suffered so much pain and yet refuse to concede to the threats of the occupation. People with such steadfastness will inevitably



triumph and no war machine will be able to defeat them or to force them to abandon their embrace of the resistance.

The Front saluted the inspiring sacrifices and commitment of medical personnel, ambulance workers and civil defense, who faced extreme danger and came under fire in order to evacuate the dead and wounded, as well as the journalists who lost their lives in order to deliver the tragic images in the streets of Gaza to the world.

The Front called upon the Palestinian

people throughout Palestine, in the West Bank, Jerusalem and '48 and everywhere in diaspora and exile, saying that the land of the West Bank must burn under the feet of the occupiers, in their settlements and everywhere the occupation is. It is time that the earth is turned to flame beneath the feet of the criminal enemy.

There can be no more waiting as the horrific massacres continue in Bureij, Rafah, Khan Younis, Beit Hanoun, Shuja'iyah, Gaza.

It also demanded the Arab people and

the democratic and progressive forces of the world to remain in the streets and squares, to occupy, surround and storm the Zionist and U.S. embassies and consulates in response to the crimes of the occupation forces, and to condemn the international and Arab official silence and complicity, demanding an immediate end to the siege on Gaza and the unconditional opening of Rafah crossing and in particular to facilitate the entry of medical personnel and aid.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine confirm that the crimes of the occupation will not go unpunished and resistance to the Zionist genocide against our people is our path. The banner of resistance and confrontation will be raised high by the Palestinian people.

The PFLP demanded that the PLO leadership immediately act to join the International Criminal Court and act to prosecute the fascist occupation war criminals for their massacres against the Palestinian people.

The Front expressed its highest honor and salute and deepest mourning for the blood of the martyrs whose blood was shed on the land of Gaza, pledging to march on the path of freedom, self-determination, return and liberation, for which they were killed.

Support for people of Gaza grows

by Ned K.

The Canadian-based research organisation, Global Research, created an online list of all the cities in the world where people were organising collective actions in support of the Palestinian people, particularly those living in Gaza. The list contained hundreds of cities all over the globe, including capital cities in Australia.

Adelaide in South Australia has a relatively small Middle-Eastern Australian population compared with eastern state cities. However with use of social media, and despite a blackout on the event by the mainstream media, over 1000 people attended a rally and spirited demonstration in the city on Sunday 20 July.

A feature of the event was the large number of young people and large number of women attending.

Two female students read moving poems about the plight of the people in Gaza.

The event started at Parliament House steps with speakers and songs in



Gaza protest rally in Perth

support of the Palestinian cause. Then people took to the streets and in high spirits marched up to the main retail precinct of the city, Rundle Mall, and staged a sit down.

Chanting slogans for a Palestine free from Israeli and US aggression, the on-looking crowd in the retail mall

looked supportive. Many took photos of the march and sit-in on their mobile phones.

The supportive on-lookers were indicative of surveys conducted by pro-Palestinian groups that show about 70% of Australians do NOT support Israeli aggression against the Palestinians.



Gaza protest rally in Sydney

Poor Safety – Taking its TOLL

By Marcus H.

A recent death on the Melbourne waterfront was the latest fatality in the stevedoring industry in Australia, and the latest safety issue on a workplace controlled by Toll Holdings.

Statistically, waterside workers are more likely to be killed on the job than any other Australian worker.

Anthony Attard, a father of three and a delegate of the Maritime Union of Australia, was crushed to death on May 20, when in the process of loading cargo onto a ship docked at the Port of Melbourne; the forty-two year old was crushed by a trailer.

At the time of the fatality, a National Stevedoring Code of Practice was in the process of being drafted through a tripartisan body consisting of regulators, stevedoring companies and the Maritime Union of Australia.

Just one week after Mr. Attard was tragically killed, Michael Kilgariff, General Manager of the Australian Logistics Council, of which Toll Holdings is a member, condemned the code, “We would prefer the stevedoring code of practice not go ahead at all.”

The death of the unionist, who MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin described as “a family man and comrade to all” and represented his colleagues on the Enterprise Bargaining committee, was the third death in the stevedoring industry this year.

With his members coming to terms with yet another needless and preventable fatality, Crumlin, also the President of the International Transport Federation, said “The MUA has long campaigned for better safety and now demands that this crisis in waterfront safety be addressed by regulation, safety must be mandatory and it must be law”.

You’re killing us no more!

On June 18, MUA members from around Australia descended on the Toll Groups headquarters to demand safety on the waterfront, occupying the head office, the members sent a clear message to the executives; “Safety must be law, you’re killing us no more!”

Chris Cain, State Secretary of the Western Australian branch of the MUA said “Anthony Attard’s death has again highlighted the need for a national code of practice” Cain added “our members have a right to go home safely”

According to Bobby Patchett, assistant secretary of the Victorian Branch, a Toll manager briefed the deceased man’s workmates, stating; “this death is no different to a pedestrian fatality, we have got to move on.” Patchett said this disrespectful



Angry maritime workers occupy the offices of Toll in Sydney

statement equated to ‘we have got to move forward with business and unload this ship’.

In a similar incident in November 2004, a driver was run over by a prime mover at a truck depot. In 2009, Toll was fined \$220,000 for breaching the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 for failing to ensure the premises were safe and without risks to health.

Bullying uncovered in Melbourne

At the Toll Distribution Centre in Somerton, located in the solid working class northern suburbs of Melbourne, bullying and intimidation tactics handed down by Toll management were revealed in a recent survey conducted by the site’s Occupational Health and Safety Representatives.

The workers at the Somerton Distribution Centre, members of the National Union of Workers, provide their labour to service the Coles supermarket stores across the state of Victoria. In June 2012, the NUW members at Somerton waged a heroic two week long strike, fighting for justice with other Coles Distribution Centre’s around Australia.

Earlier this year, in February, the workplace Union Delegates took up another fight, this time in defence of casual workers at the Coles shed. Toll management, in a pathetic example of human relations, sent a threatening text message to these casual workers.

‘We require you to work. If you are unavailable to work, you will need to speak with HR and explain your circumstances. Pls reply YES. If you are unavailable, pls reply NO AND THE REASON, and contact will be arranged with HR. Pls DO NOT ignore this text. Texts ignored will result in no further shifts being sent’

In this current period of the casualisation crisis, in which 40% of Australian workers are placed in insecure, precarious employment, the National Union of Workers are leading the fightback against casualisation, ensuring dignity, respect and permanent, secure jobs are reinstated into workplaces.

In early May results from a survey relating to Toll Somerton workers were handed down. The Toll Somerton OHS Survey was conducted by the site Safety Representatives and workers had the opportunity to voice their concern regarding bullying and harassment perpetrated by Toll management.

73% of those surveyed responded by saying they had experienced harassment or bullying while performing their warehouse duties. 72% of respondents felt they had been pressured into meeting pick rate targets. Most workers surveyed stated that humiliation was the predominant form in which the bullying had prevailed.

Just a few container lengths from the Toll shipping yard in which Mr. Attard was killed, Toll operates a warehouse, in which it is understood a majority of workers are placed through a third party labour hire provider.

Reportedly, these casualised workers are believed to not receive an hourly rate, but are paid on a rate per unloaded container. One worker said that this was creating an unsafe workplace, and one that created an individualised environment.

The casual worker said “we don’t receive an hourly rate; we are paid by how many containers we unload in a day. This causes workers to take short cuts, and work unsafely, just so they can get a shift the next day”

In 2012, the union, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters produced a report *Toll Group: An Inside Look at*

Toll’s Exploitation of Workers in the U.S. The Teamsters investigated low wages and poor working conditions inside Toll facilities in the United States.

At one site in California, it was discovered Toll had provided only dirty portable toilets for workers to use as bathrooms, did not provide potable water, and did not provide sheltered areas for workers to take breaks or to eat their meals.

Workers at the Somerton site said often times management would come onto the warehouse floor in groups of two and three to question and intimidate workers who they had considered had not met their ‘pick rate’.

As the workers point out, the Enterprise Agreement, negotiated between the employer and the employees does not provide for ‘pick rates’, nor did the company seek this in the latest round of negotiations.

Visitors to the Toll shed are confronted by the Toll Holdings mission statement in relation to safety, which states; *Embedded in our Toll values is the belief that all injuries are preventable and everyone has the right to go home safely.*

Anthony Attard should have had that same basic right; every worker does have the right to go home safely and in the same condition they started work that day.

Vanguard Blog

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