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Trade unionists oppose AUKUS militarisation

Sophie Bolt

CND (Committee for Nuclear Disarmament) is delighted to be hosting trade unionists from Australia, Japan, and New Zealand and in Britain to co-ordinate and build opposition to the AUKUS Treaty. The deal is driving nuclear proliferation and risks increasing tensions across the Asia Pacific. It is also an outrageous transfer of wealth from the Australian population to fund the British and US nuclear industry.

Now in its fifth year, this highly controversial treaty – signed between the US, Britain, and Australia – ties Australia into spending $AUS368 billion over the lifetime of the nuclear-powered submarines, plus at least another $AUS180bn in costs to store the radioactive nuclear waste.

The treaty effectively ties Australia even closer into a military alliance with the US, totally at the expense of the Australian population – who are put on the front line in any military confrontation, whilst paying the price through cuts to public services.

In September, the British government confirmed that "while the UK's AUKUS submarines will be constructed in Barrow, Australia will build its submarines at Osborne Naval Shipyard in South Australia."

So, not only is Australia building its own submarines, it is also paying half of all the design, development and research costs for the British ones too, including the expansion at Rolls Royce in Derby. This is the site where the nuclear reactors are built for both Britain's nuclear-armed Vanguard (and the new generation of Dreadnought) submarines, and the nuclear-powered Astute submarines. The company also has the contract to build the nuclear reactors for Australia's AUKUS submarines.

Yet Rolls Royce is way behind schedule with the construction of these reactors. In fact, the government's own spending watchdog has repeatedly issued warnings that the program is "unachievable."

The AUKUS deal will also see a huge development around Port Kembla in eastern Australia to accommodate a nuclear submarine base. Secret government documents have said that this "could be a target for Australian military adversaries."

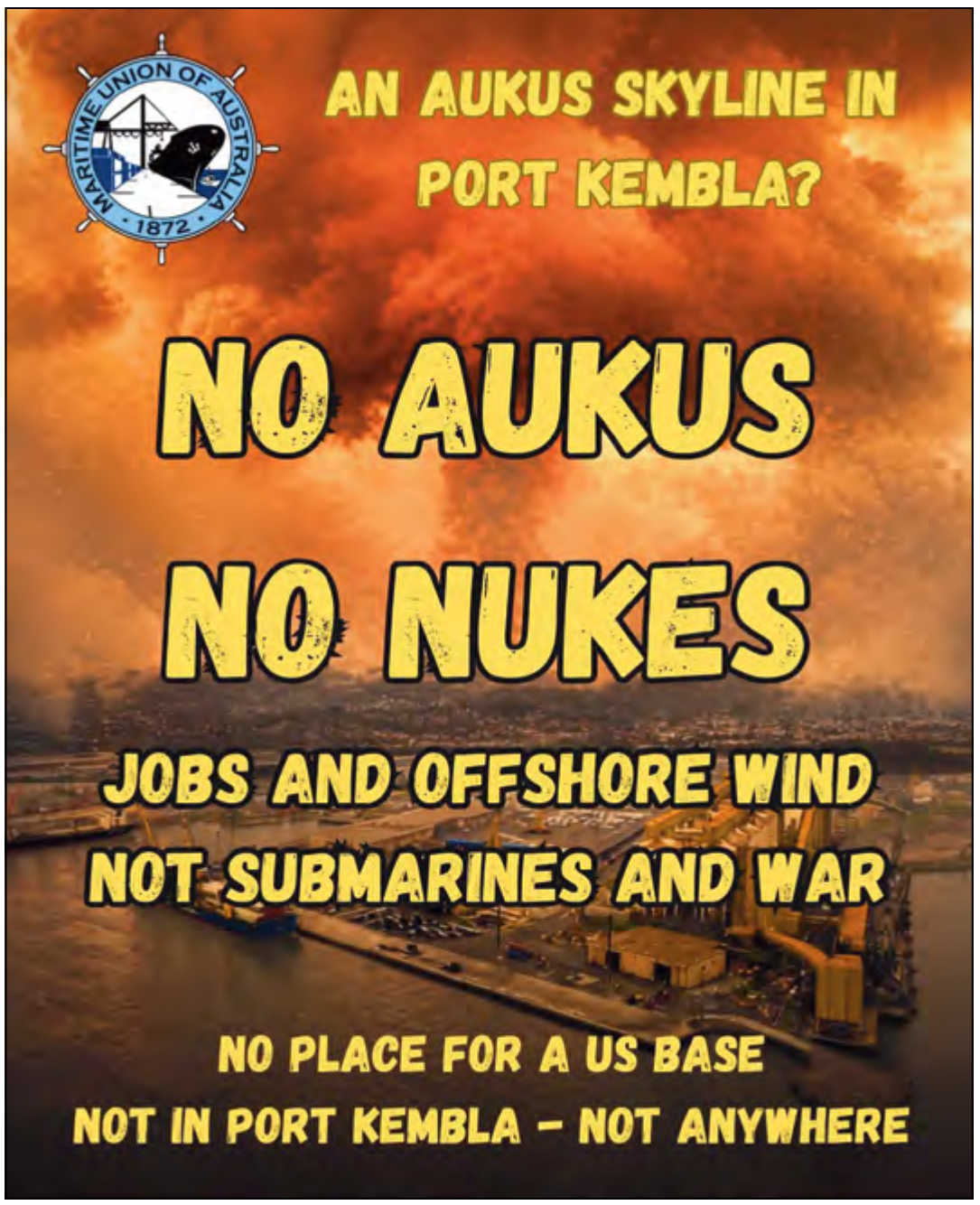
Not surprisingly, there is a huge amount of opposition in Australia against the treaty, particularly from the trade union movement, where the Australian Maritime Union has been taking a leading role.

An independent public inquiry set up into the treaty has now completed its consultation and published its findings and recommendations. It has the backing of former prime ministers, retired military and naval officers, leading strategists and academics, human rights lawyers and union leaders (see 'Peace Notes, *Guardian* 2215' for a comprehensive treatment of the inquiry's findings).

In his submission, former Australian prime minister Malcolm Turnball states: "The UK's submarine industrial base is in absolute disarray and the delivery of SSN-AUKUS has been acknowledged by the House of Commons as "a lengthy and complex undertaking" the delivery of which is attendant with very great risk. The arrival of the SSN-AUKUS boats in the early 2040s seems highly optimistic." He goes onto say: "We're writing the cheques. We're taking the most risk."

Key objectives of the inquiry are to assess if the AUKUS nuclear-powered attack submarines will keep Australians more secure and the implications for peace and security in the region.

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Guardian

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Victoria votes

Victorians have to vote. Early voting opened on 18 November, and the state election is officially on 28 November.

It's an important election for several reasons. With more than seven million people, Victoria is the country's second biggest state by population, so while issues and voters vary by state, what happens in Victoria has implications for the rest of the country. Rightly or wrongly, the election is watched for what it means for the rest of the country.

Voters have not been well served by the media for this election. There has been a lot of horse-race journalism – reporting on who looks successful, who seems confident, who's had a 'gaffe,' rather than on the issues that will affect people's lives. Mainstream media, including media outlets that see themselves as 'progressive' or 'centre,' have worked hard to minimise and marginalise the Greens, ignore the socialists, and to amplify One Nation's signal.

This paper is about the issues that matter to working class voters. We encourage Victorian voters to ask themselves where their candidates stand on the real issues.

One issue that is overlooked in a lot of reporting is the different parties' approach to First Nations people. Voters should ask where candidates stand on issues like self-determination and land rights, truth-telling about genocide and the stolen generations. What are the parties going to do about ending deaths in custody?

The Liberal-National Coalition have signalled their support for racism by promising to tear up the treaty recently signed between the Victorian government and First Nations people. It's a way of showing their support for racism and erasure. Labor is proud of signing the Treaty, but should be ashamed of its backflipping on bail laws that have put First Nations people in danger.

On public education, does your candidate support fully funding state schools instead of diverting funds to private education? How about fully-funded apprenticeships?

On the issues of housing and cost-of-living, voters should look for candidates who support high quality publicly-owned and managed housing. We need a government that removes profit extraction from public services, such as childcare, disability and aged care – all services that should be returned to public ownership.

Any candidate who really cares about public welfare will advocate for free community-controlled primary health care, free public dental and GP services.

Climate action is an area where the state government has an enormous influence. Voters should look for candidates who support a faster transition to renewables and a moratorium on new gas and coal projects. Any candidates worth voting for will be acting to stop the construction of energy-hungry AI data centres.

Regardless of your ethnic background, racism is a class issue, used to divide and weaken workers. It serves the interests of big business to pit workers against other workers. Migrants are not responsible for unemployment – bosses are, when jobs are cut and when workers are underpaid to increase profits. Migrants are also not the reason for the housing crisis – that's the fault of decades of state and federal government policies that favour housing as a wealth creation project for some, rather than as a human right for all. Those governments have not built the public housing this nation needs.

Any party that appeals to racism, directly or indirectly, is doing the work of the big end of town by distracting workers.

This election, look to the real issues and vote accordingly. If you support media that covers issues that really matter to workers, consider donating to the Press Fund that keeps this paper going.

Trade unionists oppose AUKUS militarisation

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SOVEREIGNTY THREAT

Its principal findings don't hold back, calling AUKUS the riskiest, most expensive and all over the worst military decision an Australian government has ever made. It argues that AUKUS jeopardises national security and undermines national sovereignty.

The key recommendation of the inquiry is for the termination of Pillar 1 of the treaty – that is to cancel the nuclear submarines programme.

It is critical to get behind this powerful campaign being waged in Australia. It is absolutely clear that this treaty is against the interests of us all – Australian, British and US populations alike. It puts us all on the front line of any war led by the US, we pay for it through cuts to public services. We all need to be working together to halt the global war drive and growing nuclear dangers.

It is very significant that we are seeing such strong leadership from the trade union movement on challenging the wrong priorities of our governments – which seem intent on dragging us into wars that could go nuclear, whilst failing to tackle the serious threats from climate breakdown and broken public services.

This public meeting is a critical part of our work to build international co-operation and solidarity across the trade union movement.

Speakers include Warren Smith, the Maritime Union of Australia's deputy national secretary, who has been playing a critical role in building opposition to AUKUS.

In Britain, the University and College Union (UCU) have been leading the campaign for Wages not Weapons, and to reframe the debate on real security. UCU president Maria Chondrogianni will be joining the panel, along with Brian Leishman MP and RMT's Alex Gordon. We will also be hearing delegates from the International Transport Workers Federation's Dockworkers sections of Japan and possibly New Zealand.

Sophie Bolt is general secretary of CND. CND's meeting *AUKUS and reframing security – why we need international trade union solidarity* took place on 16 November in London.

AUKUS Public Inquiry Findings

AUKUS is the worst, most costly and riskiest military decision ever made by Australian governments, and without adequate public scrutiny.

The report does not find against submarines: a submarine capability over which Australia has national control should remain core to the ADF. It finds that AUKUS undermines our sovereignty, risks our national prosperity, distorts our defence budget and fails to promote regional peace.

1 AUKUS is much more than submarines
Declining trust in government, over-reliance on the US, increased risk of war with China, and high-level nuclear waste.

2 AUKUS jeopardises national security
Makes Australia a nuclear target, could accelerate a regional arms race, and diverts funds from climate and proliferation threats.

3 Australia needs a national security strategy
Unlike our AUKUS partners, Australia has no strategy against which AUKUS can be judged.

4 AUKUS undermines sovereignty
A de facto US naval base near Perth; operational decisions made in Washington and Hawaii.

5 AUKUS lacks strategic justification
Attack submarines are an offensive platform suited to US plans to contain China, not to defending Australia's approaches.

6 Unacceptable risks for Perth residents
Up to 2,300 US personnel and families; 550 houses for US families; no missile defence, evacuation or civil defence plans.

7 No political or social licence
The community is fearful, concerned and unconvinced; it has been denied information; impacted and First Nations communities have not been consulted.

8 Costs are substantial and unexplained
$368 billion is an estimate only, with no cost-benefit analysis; nuclear waste adds an estimated $180 billion+.

9 Delivery is highly uncertain
The Virginia-class build rate of ~1.1 a year must double; no delivery guarantee and no compensation; risk of a submarine capability gap.

10 Legal concerns
Federal laws override state and Aboriginal heritage protections; the waste site is unidentified; new AFP AUKUS Command powers.

11 Conflicts of interest
A "revolving door" between government and industry; the nuclear safety regulator reports to the Defence Minister.

12 Dangerous nuclear risks
Australia would be the first non-nuclear-weapon state to store high-level weapons-grade waste, for tens of thousands of years. After 60 years neither the US nor the UK has solved this, and the Government has still not identified where AUKUS waste will be stored.

13 Negative social impacts
No social or environmental impact assessments; no commitment to Free, Prior and Informed Consent for First Nations peoples.

14 Opens the door to nuclear weapons
A "don't ask, don't tell" policy; future Virginia-class (Blocks V and VI) will be nuclear-armed; incompatible with the NPT and the Treaty of Rarotonga.

15 Fails to provide more jobs
No evidence for the 20,000 jobs claim; education, health and clean energy spending create up to three times more jobs.

16 Military-industrial influence on education
Defence funding is distorting STEM and university research priorities.

17 Pillar II and AI concerns unaddressed
Erodes Intellectual Property and indemnity controls; lethal autonomous weapons need regulation.

18 Viable alternatives exist
Options include the French Suffren-class, South Korean KSS-III and German Type 212CD; at least 12 submarines are needed for a viable submarine service.
aukuspublicinquiry.com

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NSW Health promotes the private sector

Arthur Martin

I recently had the experience of having to go to an emergency department at a public hospital in NSW. I have nothing but positive things to say about the staff. The family member who needed care was seen quickly and triaged.

We had to wait some time but received excellent quality of care, and my family member was able to be discharged with a treatment plan. No issues there.

During our wait in the ED, I found myself reading through the many signs and posters on the walls. There were your standard waiting room signs: treat staff with respect, these are the NSW Health core values, something about health and safety, and so on. But one poster stood out to me.

An official NSW Health poster promoting the benefits of private health insurance! A blatant advertisement that spruiked the ability of private patients to:

- choose their own doctor
- "extra benefits" (not specified)
- accounts made easy
- no hidden costs (this supposed benefit might need a fact check)

The poster states that choosing to use private insurance will directly help the hospital. It does not say how.

This made me curious, so I found a brochure online that goes into a little bit more detail.

The brochure clarifies that NSW Health is encouraging people to take out private insurance for use in public hospitals in this campaign. They frame it as being beneficial to both NSW Health and patients.

The mechanism by which it helps the public sector is simple: by billing the private insurance that you, the individual civilian, pay for out-of-pocket, instead of Medicare which is paid for collectively through our taxes, some financial pressure is taken off of the system. Ostensibly, the money saved can then be invested in other areas, though one would imagine the health unions are wondering where these savings are actually going.

This mechanism transfers the payment from the collective to the individual, with a private sector middleman reaping a profit-based benefit.

The ethics of the government promoting private-sector, for-profit insurance should be considered. NSW Health, like any other body that provides healthcare to the general public, is an institution that requires a high level of trust in order to function at its best.

When that body is seen to be providing a boon to a specific group in the private sector, this may demonstrate to the general public that this institution is perhaps not so trustworthy if it is willing to promote handouts to a group of dodgy, for-profit companies and try to spin it as a positive for patients.

So who loses? Patients, of course. At best they can ignore the poster. At worst they will either lose trust in the advice and statements of NSW Health, thinking there may be an ulterior motive to try and provide profits to an industry (one may recall the conspiracy theories over COVID-19 vaccines). They might feel one down to the supposedly lucky ones who can afford the private health insurance.

The patient might also feel pressured and take out private insurance that they cannot afford or which provides poor benefits for premium prices.

None of this is necessary. We need public institutions that have confidence in the good work they're doing. We need socialism.

Finance workers: AI is doing more harm than good

A Finance Sector Union (FSU) report has found the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in finance has increased workloads, contributed to worker stress and compromised the security of confidential information.

Researchers conducted hours of in-depth interviews with workers in banking, insurance, and superannuation in frontline, technical and management roles to gain the most comprehensive picture yet of the impact AI is having on the sector today.

Among the key findings of the report, *No Longer a Hypothetical – Stories from Finance Workers on the Impact of AI Today* are that despite most finance workers seeing the benefits of AI, the haphazard way it is being implemented and the lack of regulation and job security guarantees has increased anxiety and workloads.

The report also found that the rollout of AI in most workplaces has been rushed, with little or no training provided and poor communication and leadership from management.

Workers say the technology has given false information to customers, leading to extra work to fix errors and frontline workers bearing the brunt of customer frustration.

Other workers expressed fears that confidential data could be inadvertently leaked if AI training and regulation are not improved.

FSU members presented the report to Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations Amanda Rishworth, Minister for Science, Technology and the Digital Economy Senator Tim Ayres, his Assistant Minister Andrew Charlton and numerous federal government backbenchers during a visit to Parliament House.

FSU National Assistant Secretary Nicole McPherson also fronted the Joint Select Committee on the Adoption of Artificial Intelligence to bolster the union's case for more stringent government oversight of AI.

The report is the latest initiative to support the union's national campaign to ensure AI is used ethically in finance through strong regulations based on evidence and genuine worker consultation.

McPherson says "For Australia to truly experience the full benefits of AI, social licence from workers is essential, not a nice to have."

"Finance workers are not anti-AI. They see and understand the potential benefits from using AI in their jobs.

"But right now the use of AI is coming with increased workloads and stress because the sector's attempts to embed AI in everyday work practices have been rushed with inadequate worker consultation.

"Buying an AI tool and implementing it is not the same as creating productivity. Productivity comes from skilled workers using reliable technology and using it well.

"If AI produces more material than a person can safely check – as we know is happening right now – then AI has not removed the work, it has intensified it.

"We welcome the federal government's focus on appropriate regulation of data centres and big tech, and look forward to seeing the government's plan to protect workers and their jobs.

"Recent mass layoffs at NAB and Westpac only strengthens our argument for a speedy resolution of this issue."

Bank workers' testimonies were included in the report.

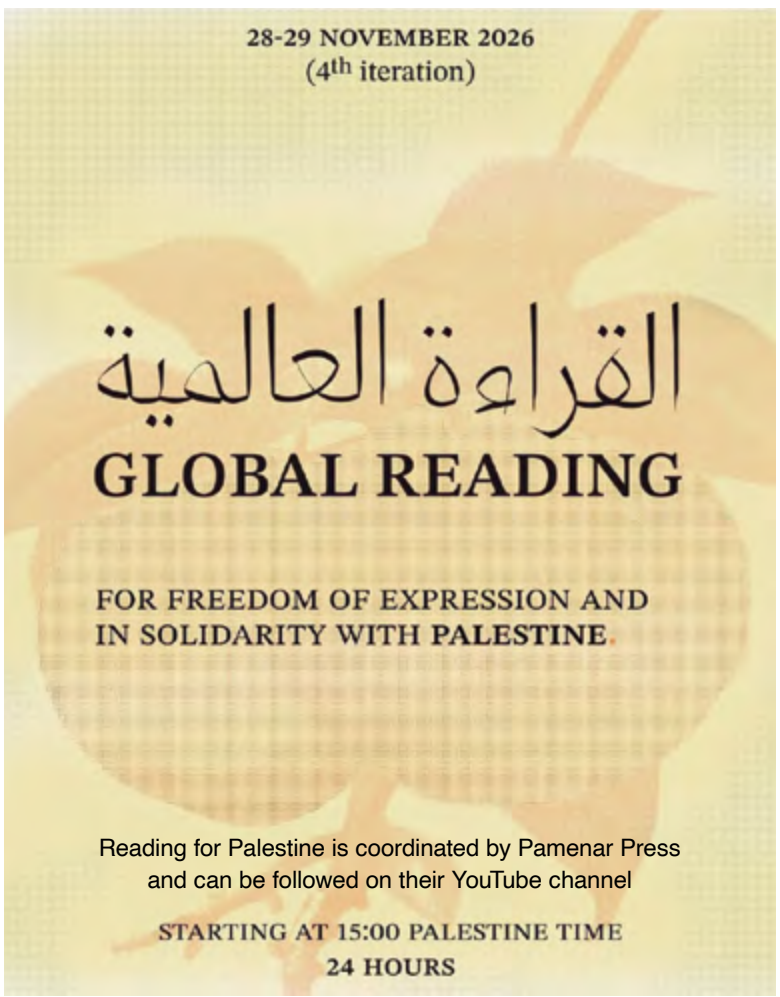
Amelia said "No structured training was provided, it was 'go ahead and figure it out.'"

Alan commented that "no one seems to know what's actually happening."

Another worker pointed to potential issues with AI being given access to privileged legal advice.

Finance Sector Union

(workers names have been changed to protect their anonymity)



Western Australia: Beyond the Boys' Club

Western Australia continues to have one of the most gender-segregated workforces in Australia, despite growing demand for skilled workers in industries such as construction, energy and transport.

A new report released by UnionsWA reveals that while women are increasingly interested in entering these sectors, many continue to face significant barriers to recruitment, retention, and career progression.

The report *Beyond the Boys' Club: Reframing WA's Construction, Energy and Transport Industries to Build and Deliver Gender Equality* presents the findings of the UnionsWA Workplace Gender Equality Project, funded through the Australian government's Advancing Gender Equality in Gender Segregated Industries program.

Drawing on the experiences of more than 400 workers across Western Australia, it provides one of the most comprehensive examinations of women's experiences in traditionally male-dominated industries ever undertaken in Western Australia.

The research shows that women in construction, energy and transport continue to face structural barriers that make entering, remaining, and progressing in these industries unnecessarily difficult. These barriers are not isolated incidents or individual challenges. They are embedded in workplace systems, cultures, and practices.

Women consistently identified workplace culture, inflexible work arrangements, caring responsibilities, discrimination, and limited career progression as major barriers to attraction and retention across all three industries, reflecting findings from existing research across men-dominated sectors.

The research found that women often experience multiple forms of disadvantage simultaneously, with factors such as race, migration status, disability, sexuality, age and caring responsibilities compounding gender inequality in the workplace.

Across the research, the strongest message was that improving gender equality requires systemic workplace reform – not asking women to adapt to existing workplace structures.

Unions WA

www.cpa.org.au

Mass layoffs, wage theft double blow to NAB workers

The Finance Sector Union (FSU) is appalled but not at all surprised by the revelation that NAB underpaid workers $172 million dollars over a decade.

In one of the worst cases of employee 'underpayment' in Australian corporate history, the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) has found NAB short-changed 65,999 workers $127 million in wages from as far back as 2012.

The bank will have to continue paying back all the wages plus $34 million in interest, $8 million in superannuation, a $2 million 'contrition' payment to the Commonwealth, and implement measures outlined in a 56-page enforceable undertaking to prevent it happening again.

Back-payments will range from less than $5 to more than $87,000, including superannuation and interest, with an average back-payment of about $1,934.

This is not a minor payroll issue – it's a systemic failure that continued over successive enterprise agreements and multiple CEOs.

The FSU first raised concerns with NAB about staff underpayments a decade ago but NAB rejected the allegations.

The union provided assistance to the FWO's investigation.

The news is the latest blow to NAB's already demoralised workforce, which was stunned last month by the announcement that 2500 staff, or 6% of its workforce, would be made redundant in the next year.

The redundancy process was so poorly handled by NAB management that FSU asked the federal health and safety regulator Comcare to investigate how the bank was managing the safety and wellbeing of its employees.

FSU National President Wendy Streets called the underpayment "theft, pure and simple ... unacceptable at any employer."

"It is hard to believe a big four bank with all its resources would make such a colossal mistake over such a long period of time.

"But if you look at the utter contempt NAB has shown towards its workers lately, it becomes a lot less surprising.

"This latest insult is the last thing workers needed after learning that 2,500 of them are no longer needed at the bank.

"Australian taxpayers should also be outraged that millions of dollars were spent on an investigation to correct a mistake that shouldn't have been made in the first place.

"This was not an accident or a one off, the bank knew there was an issue and didn't act – NAB executives must be held accountable for that.

"The FSU has been calling out wage theft for decades now and yet it still keeps happening on a grand scale."

Finance Sector Union



Why should Vincent Namatjira have all the fun? Our cartoonist Graham Drew has drawn this prominent Australian supporter of swimming teams and far-right political parties.



National Tertiary Education Union members at Deakin University are taking strike action this week as part of wider industrial action over job security, workload and AI protections.

As the *Guardian* went to press staff, were set to strike on November 19 with work bans in the days leading up to the stop work action. Deakin management has failed to offer any responses to staff's key claims despite bargaining with the NTEU since July.

Union members are seeking a 20 per cent pay increase over the life of the new agreement, protection from the adverse effects of AI, job security guarantees, and limits and meaningful consultation on major changes.

NTEU Deakin University Branch President Professor Reece Walters said staff were immensely disappointed management had not seized the opportunity to repair its fractured relationship with the workforce.

"After 50 hours of talks, management has dragged the chain and provided nothing in writing to a single staff claim," he said.

"NTEU members feel utterly disrespected and have been left with no option but to take industrial action, which is an incredibly difficult decision given our commitment to students.

"Deakin staff have been through hell for years. For all the senior management rhetoric about 'rebooting,' 'resetting,' and 'restoring staff confidence' – we've got nothing but vacuous obfuscation and meaningless waffle in response to staff claims.

"Deakin's senior management should be making our beloved institution a unique place that sets it apart from other providers, but instead we have nothing. It's beyond disappointing.

"One of the architects of Deakin's failed and egregious plan for massive job cuts earlier this year has gone on to other senior university pastures. It's a disgrace. But it typifies the broken nature of the sector.

"It appears we have some senior university appointments in Australia driven by a nepotistic cocktail circuit of failing upwards – and University staff, students and the communities we educate deserve much better.

"If management doesn't start taking these negotiations seriously then this, regrettably, will be a long and ugly fight."

NTEU National President Dr Alison Barnes said: "Universities are trying to bring in a new kind of academic job where staff are worked to the bone during the busiest teaching months and then left with no hours and no pay for the rest of the year.

"Deakin University has put this on the table and the NTEU will fight anything that increases already out-of-control workloads."

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is the WA government. The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance's National Media Section has condemned the behaviour of MPs outside WA Parliament House on 11 November, and calls on Premier Roger Cook to withdraw and apologise for his comparison of journalists doing their jobs to the horrific attack on Helen Haines.

The union said genuine questions surrounding the business dealings of Riverton MP Jags Krishnan, and his disclosures to parliament about his debts, are entirely a matter of public interest.

Journalists attempting to question Dr Krishnan were simply doing their jobs in their workplace.

While it would have been reasonable for Dr Krishnan to choose to decline to answer questions, journalists should be free to interrogate politicians on behalf of the voting public without being physically blocked by other MPs or verbally admonished.

"MEAA notes with concern that further attempts have been made to block journalists' ability to ask questions, with bollards and ropes being installed at the entrances to Parliament House.

"Journalists have the right to do their jobs without physical interference. Journalism is not a crime.

"Premier Cook's comments – comparing journalists doing their job to the attack on Helen Haines – were gratuitous, disrespectful and completely inappropriate, both to working journalists, and to Dr Haines. The Premier should apologise."

SA comrades celebrate the Russian Revolution

Ron Hall

South Australian comrades came together appropriately on 7 November (Gregorian calendar) to celebrate the Great October or Russian Revolution (Julian Calendar) at Fidel's. The event included the recognition of the 100th anniversary for Fidel Castro-Ruz (1926-2016) and the 10th anniversary of the naming of Fidel's Bar – three celebrations in one!

In those 10 years Fidel's has continued as the head office of the Party in South Australia, a Workers' Library, as well as a well-equipped centre offering space for community and progressive groups to conduct a variety of activities which have included, regular popular music sessions and writing Christmas cards for women in prison.

A significant feature of the evening was a riveting insight into the challenges faced by a human rights activist operating in Latin America. This revealed how quite a number of them have been killed in trying to help people fleeing from injustice in life threatening situations, often in the jungle or other difficult environments.

Originally from Colombia, after arriving in Australia the speaker, Jorge Navas, served as a most effective and respected union secretary until retirement. His bilingualism makes him an ideal person for his new activist role.

Speaking in relation to the Russian Revolution, he referred to the socialist changes so necessary in the capitalist-dominated world, in particular with regard to the right-wing political coercion currently dominating South America.

Instrumental in the formation of the Australia Cuba Friendship Society in South Australia in 1984 as its very first secretary, Jorge received official ambassadorial recognition for his contribution to Cuban solidarity in Australia.

Although he regretted the number of ultra-conservative governments prevailing in his homeland and surrounding countries, he saw Brazil as a possible turning point along with the rejection of President Trump's extremism, including that of many of his Republican sycophants. Indeed, Jorge urged Australian comrades to offer support to those striving for progressive change in the US and beyond.

Significantly, this accorded with a statement made during the recent Global Picket for Cuba by a concerned US doctor who had just returned from the blockaded nation and was very impressed with the medical system there. She insisted it was in the hands of US voters and activists to bring about the necessary humanitarian changes in their government's policies towards this small but valiant nation.

Jorge recognised that Australians had to be stirred to serious action with the same message as that being advocated in Europe and the US. United action on the Left for a socialist Australia, he saw as vital.

This positive message was underscored by comrades soon after joining in rousing renditions of *Solidarity for Ever* and *The Internationale*.



Jorge Navas

Naarm celebrates the October Revolution

GB

The anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution is the most significant date in the calendar of the working class.

The Naarm/Melbourne Branch of the Communist Party of Australia celebrated this year by watching the important historical film *Battleship Potemkin* which commemorates the real-life 1905 mutiny aboard the Russian battleship *Potemkin*, where sailors rebelled against tyrannical officers after being served maggot-infested meat – an event viewed as a prelude to the 1917 Russian Revolution.

The most famous sequence – the Odessa Steps massacre – takes place on the Primorsky Stairs in the Ukrainian port city of Odessa. In the film, faceless Tsarist soldiers (Cossacks) march down the steps in a rigid phalanx, ruthlessly slaughtering innocent Ukrainian civilians who had gathered to support the mutinous sailors.

At our celebration, which we hold each year, we bring together members and supporters and mark the continued development and growth of our party, while reminding ourselves of just what it is we are working towards. Comrades and allies socialise and celebrate the victory of the October revolution.

This year, CPA General Secretary Andrew Irving spoke, explaining why we celebrate the revolution, while comrade Tom gave a presentation on the contribution the October Revolution made to the international movement.

It is 109 years since the October Revolution that took place in Russia in 1917 after a protracted revolutionary struggle led by the Bolsheviks among them Vladimir Lenin. The October Revolution profoundly affected the course of development of human history. It was a glorious achievement that will never disappear despite the reactionary setbacks made by capitalism and imperialism today. The waves of the revolutionary earthquake triggered by the October Revolution reached all corners of the Earth, including Australia.

In fact, the inspiration for forming the Communist Party of Australia came directly from the 1917 Russian Revolution and the desire of Australian workers for a better world.

The struggle of the working class led by communist revolutionaries and a party rooted in Marxist-Leninist ideology triumphed by capturing state power from the capitalist class in Russia, for the first time since the short but significant history of the Paris Commune. It meant that the class of the workers and the majority of poor, the exploited and oppressed took charge of state power in Russia. Thus socialism, a superior socio-political system than that of capitalism had become a reality.

The October Revolution inspired the working class everywhere. The poor, and the oppressed of all countries in the World saw that a new and better system of life than that of capitalism, colonialism, imperialism, feudalism, and slavery was possible through the united struggle of the exploited and oppressed.

It was possible for the working class and the majority in society to defeat the mighty capitalist armies and capture state power and use the power to crush the capitalists, exploiters, and oppressors. The workers and the popular masses could take charge of the politics, economics, and state affairs of their country guided by the communist party.

A new and better society called socialism was possible and had been born in Russia with the October Revolution. Socialism was not a utopia but a scientific mode of production and system that could be built on earth.

Today the imperialist states are using every means at their disposal to viciously hold off their approaching and inescapable demise. But as both Mao and Lenin said, the enemy will not perish of himself. Neither the reactionaries nor the aggressive forces of US imperialism ... will step down from the stage of history of their own accord.

That is why Marx and Engels in 1848 ended their manifesto with these famous lines: "Let the ruling classes tremble at a communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!"

Qld Education School held at Caboolture

Graham Holton

The Sunshine Coast and Brisbane branches put on a great education school at the Caboolture Library Qld on Saturday 14 November. The school covered Political Economy and Unequal Exchange, with members and potential members engaging in topics ranging from the basics to more complex ideas of Marxism.

Marx critiqued the mechanisms of capitalism; exploitation, surplus value, commodity fetishism, and to recurring economic crises.

Capitalism experiences recurring crises because of its internal contradictions of overproduction, tendency of falling profitability, underconsumption and limits on purchasing power, financial speculation, and unemployment. In comparison, the Soviet Union did not experience the Great Depression of 1929, in which up to 60 per cent of workers in other countries were laid off.

Stock market crashes, bond defaults, and bank failures cause losses for investors, pension funds, and financial institutions. This then impacts ordinary people who may lose retirement savings invested in the market. A bankrupt company cannot pay its debts to smaller businesses and tradesmen who are in turn hit by the crisis.

Crises are part of the capitalist economic system. These worsening economic crises are not accidental but arise from capitalism's dynamics. They are now occurring more frequently.

Since the year 2000 the worst crises have been the dotcom Crash, the Global Financial Crisis, COVID-19, and the Interest Rate Crash. Under Trump 2.0 we have had a string of crashes due to his tariff policies hitting world trade.

Arghiri Emmanuel's analysis on Unequal Exchange was an extension of Karl Marx's *Capital*, picking up where Marx left off. Unequal Exchange is a transfer of value from the imperial periphery to the core through low wages in the periphery, and cheap commodities purchased in the core. Migrant labour contributes to Unequal Exchange through commodified labour power, with poor countries paying for upbringing, education, etc. of the migrant. They are paid less than core wages, but higher than that received in the periphery.

Marx showed that the use value of labour power produces commodities whose exchange value exceeds the costs of labour power. The difference between the use value, and the exchange value of labour power is the surplus value. The more surplus value expropriated, the less of the value generated goes to the worker.

The School was a productive and enjoyable day for all. There will be others.



Zionists and fascists in lockstep

Marcus Browning

Last month at Crown Casino's Melbourne Palladium the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce gathered to hear Pauline Hanson give vent to her various takes on racism and division, the face of fascist One Nation introduced as "forthright and controversial."

The gathering of Zionist members of the ruling class (Liberal Party donors Solomon Lew and Charles Goode, Mark Korda and NAB's Chris Venus) heard Hanson declare that the Albanese government had "betrayed the Jewish community."

She targeted Palestinian supporters who oppose Israel's genocide in the West Bank, referring to the pro-Palestinian protesters as "the barbarians who marched on the Opera House, with flares hunting the Jews."

Hanson's guest appearance at the corporate event is part of the strategy of sections of the ruling class and their mass media promoting and normalising One Nation's rolling bandwagon of hate.

Along this line, the government-appointed antisemitism envoy Jillian Segal has overseen the setting up of an Antisemitism Business Advisory Council headed by former Westpac chairman Lindsay Maxsted.

Jillian Segal is a South African-born Australian lawyer and business executive and an ardent Zionist. She has been chair of the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce since 2015, and is the immediate past president of the extremist pro-Israel Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ).

Segal's husband John Roth, a businessman and co-owner of the Gelatissimo ice cream chain, became the subject of public attention in mid-2025 following revelations that a family trust linked to him made a $50,000 donation to the reactionary political lobby group Advance as it ran a racist campaign for a NO vote in the referendum for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

Significantly, Segal's report also claims that antisemitism has been "packaged in the language of social justice and human rights" because "this antisemitism is coded or couched in language that tries to give it a friendly face." Segal's initial recommendations exploiting the murders of 15 people at Bondi Beach last December conflate opposition to Israel's genocide with antisemitism. They include:

- Withholding funding from universities that "facilitate, enable or fail to act" against antisemitism
- Including terms in *all* public funding agreements with cultural institutions or festivals to end funding where the institution or festival promotes, facilitates or does not deal effectively with hate or antisemitism
- Removing deductible gift recipient status from any charitable institution which promotes speakers or engages in conduct that "promotes antisemitism".
- Developing a university "report card," assessing each university's implementation of effective practices and standards to combat antisemitism
- Screening visa applicants for antisemitic views or affiliations,
- Ensuring the Migration Act effectively facilitates visa refusals or cancellations for antisemitic conduct and rhetoric.

Segal wants any political criticism of Zionism or Israel's genocide treated as antisemitism. But as Federal Court Judge Angus Stewart ruled, "political criticism of Israel, however inflammatory or adversarial, is not by its nature criticism of Jews in general or based on Jewish racial or ethnic identity."

Segal's recommendations are a thinly veiled threat to cancel government funding if a university or other organisation fails to crush actions against or criticism of Israel.

"Demonstrators in this country are being labelled as antisemitic in order to attempt to suppress criticism and understanding that another holocaust is being perpetrated in the Gaza Strip by the Israeli state, so that it can continue on with its genocidal mission without any intrusions," Paul Gregoire, Sydney Criminal Lawyers wrote.

Ohad Kozminsky, Executive Member, Jewish Council of Australia said that, "there is no Jewish safety in a society where criticism of militarism is banned, protest is criminalised, and war crimes are excused."

Segal drew attention to herself by failing to publicly comment on the 31 August March-for-Australia event in Melbourne which prominently featured known fascist thugs. "The envoy's refusal to condemn rising neo-Nazism reveals her ruse," Gregoire said.

"The real question for civil society is how long it will accept a snake oil salesperson, fleecing it with false proclamations about religious prejudice and social cohesion, whilst genuine examples of Jewish hatred are left to run wild on the city streets, which would appear to reveal that the ultimate impact of Albanese's special envoy on antisemitism is stoking social division in a time of genocide," Gregoire added.

"No one disputes that antisemitic incidents and Islamophobic incidents have risen in the Australia community since October 2023, however the former incidents are being weaponised and promoted, while the latter are being ignored."

A surgeon was among six people killed in an early morning Israeli air strike on Nasser hospital in Khan Younis. Another 28 were wounded in the strike, which followed deadly storms that flooded more than 70,000 refugees' tents last week.



Rally for Palestine, Sydney, November 2023. Photo: JM

labelled as antisemitic in order to suppress criticism

UN: First Peoples' rights 'unsafe' in hands of states and territories

The rights of First Peoples are unsafe in the hands of states and territories, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has said, arguing it is the Commonwealth's responsibility to uphold human rights in Australia.

Earlier this month, National Indigenous Times reported that the Special Rapporteur, Albert K Barume, would be blocked from visiting youth detention facilities in Darwin and Townsville on his visit, with the two governments also refusing to engage with him and his team.

Despite being prevented from visiting youth prisons, Dr Barume said it wasn't the state and territory governments' "duty" to engage with him.

"If you cannot be subjected to international scrutiny, you should not be in charge of human rights," he argued.

"The Commonwealth government is the state responsible for international human rights standards in Australia.

"On a daily basis as a Special Rapporteur, I write letters to states. Technically speaking, I can't be writing to the Northern Territory. Northern Territory doesn't have the numbers in Geneva. There is one subject of international law in this country, and it is the Commonwealth state."

He added: "You cannot invoke your domestic legislation to breach ... international standards. You cannot do that."

Speaking to reporters, Dr Barume said his visit was the third by an Indigenous Special Rapporteur, with many of the recommendations from the previous two reports remaining unfulfilled.

"The state of protection of Indigenous peoples' rights is a bit embarrassing," he said.

"I am convinced Indigenous peoples' rights, meaning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' rights, are unsafe in the hands of states and territories."

He argued that the Commonwealth government is the primary and sole body responsible for delivering human rights in Australia.

"This is my opinion," he said. "There are not two. There are not three. There are not seven. States are not duty-bearers for human rights.

"There is only one respondent."

The rights of First Peoples shouldn't change from state to state, he said, depending on "political agendas" and "discretionary programs."

"We're talking about human rights. Human rights should never be optional. Human rights cannot be optional.

"Every human being should enjoy all human rights on equal footing in a country."

Across the country, governments – both Labor and Liberal – have been criticised by human rights groups for introducing laws in direct violation of the Closing the Gap agreement.

Suicide rates, adult imprisonment, children in out-of-home care and the proportion of children developmentally on track continue to worsen, according to the Productivity Commission's 2026 Closing the Gap report.

In several jurisdictions – including Queensland and the NT – youth detention numbers are also worsening.

The federal government has repeatedly refused to intervene in state and territory criminal justice systems, arguing it lacks the constitutional authority to do so.

This is despite receiving legal advice that it can intervene in some areas under Australia's international human rights obligations.

During his press conference, the Special Rapporteur – who has been touring the country – also expressed shock at revelations that pregnant women in custody were still being shackled.

"When I heard about it, I didn't believe it," he said. "I had to double-check."

Baum said that "the pain, the suffering, and the ... inhuman treatment of Indigenous peoples in this country is something that should not depend on national context. It's something I don't think any Australian would be proud of.

"I met people who looked as if they were completely emptied of existence. Young Indigenous people who could not explain why they are in this predicament. What wrong did they do to live in such conditions in a country that's ancestrally belonged to them?"

National Indigenous Times

Adelaide's fossil fuel reversal

Maximus M

On 27 October, Adelaide City Council voted to ban all fossil fuel advertising on council-owned property in a narrow five-to-four vote.

This provoked massive opposition not only from the Lord Mayor Jane Lomax-Smith but also the South Australian State government. Two weeks following the original vote, the Adelaide Council voted in favour of undoing the original bill.

Despite being a small reform which doesn't meaningfully challenge corporate influence, the State Treasurer, Tom Koutsantonis called the original motion "reprehensible." The State government had hinted that the State government runs the Tour Down Under Event (sponsored by fossil fuel giant Santos) and has a higher legislative authority, which could override the Adelaide council's motion.

This backflip comes from pressure from the South Australian government who complained about potential losses of sponsorship revenues. Councillor Arman Abrahimzadeh commented that members should "deserve a spot in the national gymnastics team given the backflip that we've made".

Resistance and undoing of the Council's position to ban fossil fuel advertising reveals the fundamental contradiction within Australian capitalism, between corporate interests and environmental protection. The South Australian State government is dependent on private companies to provide employment, investment, and public revenue. The last available figure from the Australian Electoral Commission shows that Santos gave $5,500 to the Labor Party nationally as well as $9,500 to political parties in South Australia.

Public institutions are expected to address the growing climate crisis, but instead are economically complicit with fossil fuel corporations and its environmental detriment. Thus the State government lashed out as it faced pressure by its corporate overlords to protect their profits and social license.

Despite the back-down, the Lord Mayor still complains that the mere notion of this progressive bill being originally passed in the first place puts future sponsors at risk.

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, the tobacco industry invested heavily in sports, spending a combined $13 million annually nationwide, accounting for roughly 25% of sports sponsorship revenues. In 1988, the South Australian State government banned tobacco advertising in sports.

This indicates the contradiction between 'progressive' governments and the role of the state to protect big businesses.

Greens slam Qantas job cuts

Qantas will axe 850 jobs, after a deal was secured to outsource work to consultancy giant Accenture, with hundreds of roles to be sent offshore as part of an AI overhaul. It follows reports that Telstra and Coles are slashing hundreds of jobs after partnering with the same firm.

Qantas reported a $1.29 billion statutory profit after tax and its CEO took home $6.8 million last financial year. At the height of the pandemic, the airline received $2.7 billion in public funds, in part to keep its workers employed.

The Greens say it's shameful that big corporations are slashing jobs while raking in millions in profit each year.

Greens spokesperson for finance, workplace, and employment, and Senator for South Australia, Barbara Pocock says "big corporations are hiding behind claims of cost savings while raking in massive profits. It's a pathetic excuse for slashing jobs.

"Workers are paying the price while the corporate giants cash in and Labor is doing nothing to protect workers from AI-driven job cuts.

"Where is Labor, the so-called 'party for workers'? Too busy signing contracts with Accenture.

"Everyone remembers the BoM website fiasco. What started as a $4 million project ballooned to $96 million. Accenture and Deloitte kept securing contract extensions, with consultancy firms using amendments to milk government contracts for more money. It's a gravy train at taxpayers' expense.

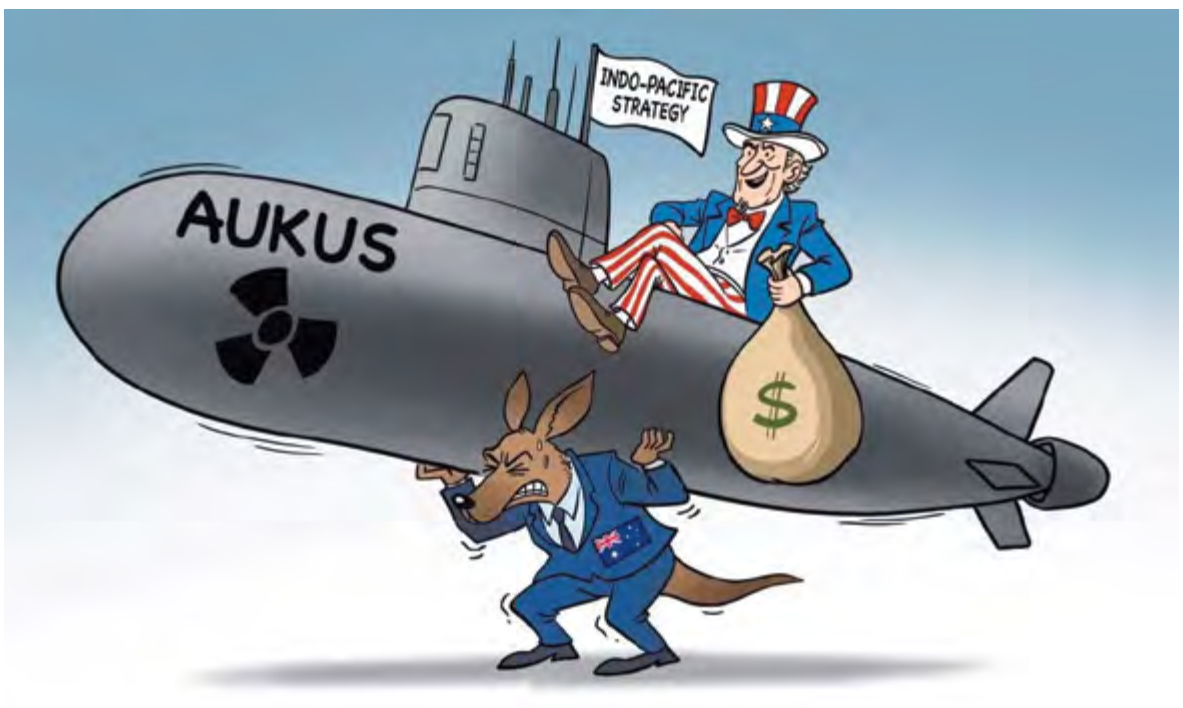
"Accenture's BoM website contract was a disaster. How on earth does a company with that track record keep winning lucrative contracts with big corporations and the government?

"Workers across the country are fed up with the corporate greed of the 1%. They're facing job insecurity, AI-driven job cuts and inadequate wages that simply aren't keeping pace with inflation, rising living costs and the fuel crisis.

"AI is transforming our workplaces and economy but that's no excuse to let it run rampant. We cannot allow corporations to use AI to undermine workers' skills, destroy jobs and drive down conditions. Workers' rights and job security must come first.

"Working Australians deserve a fair share of the productivity gains from AI and new technology, not more job insecurity while billionaires and big corporations pocket the profits and wages fall behind."

Greens Australia



GREEN NOTES

Iran-US conflict and climate change

Graham Holton

Higher oil prices in Australia, following the Iran-US Conflict blocking the Strait of Hormuz, have made renewable energy and electrification more economically attractive. The 2026 US war on Iran forced crude oil prices above US$100 per barrel. It's a significant accelerator of the transition from petrol and diesel to electric transport, which will reduce future CO2-emissions. This is part of the ongoing structural change in Australia's energy economy.

Petroleum is increasingly perceived as geopolitically risky and volatile, making Australia's electricity system move rapidly towards renewables. The high price of crude oil has increased the incentive to electrify, with an increase in electric vehicle (EV) sales, electric buses, electric alternatives to industrial processes, electric trucks, and alternative fuels for shipping and aviation.

The economic situation has made electrification appealing – unless we're talking about the Queensland government which has just binned a fleet of electric busses and ordered more diesel busses during a diesel price crisis.

According to the latest National Greenhouse Gas Inventory report, Australia's greenhouse gas emissions fell by 2.2 per cent over the past twelve months, driven by record clean energy generation and lower fossil fuel usage. The strongest reductions came from renewables replacing coal and gas in electricity generation. Renewable energy now supplies a record 51 per cent of electricity in Australia's main energy market.

The EV Index of Australia's transport technology shows a transition with 281,103 new light vehicles sold in Australia in the March quarter. Battery electric vehicles (BEV) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV) sales recorded their highest market shares at 34,435 and 19,184 respectively.

For the financial year to March 2026, CO2-emissions fell by 7.5 million tonnes to 455.6 million tonnes, with emissions 25 per cent below 2005 levels. Electricity CO2-emissions fell by 5.6 million tonnes, and coal mining and oil and gas production emissions fell 1.5 million tonnes; partly because of lower underground coal production.

Transport is one of Australia's major sources of emissions. Trucks, agricultural machinery, mining equipment, and other commercial vehicles cannot simply stop operating because diesel becomes more expensive. Unlike electricity, transport remains heavily dependent on petroleum, leaving diesel with the same environmental impact. Diesel demand in Australia has actually increased, with freight a major driver.

Consequently, Australia's total transport emissions may fall only marginally. NIEIR reports that EVs reached 14.6 per cent of new Australian vehicle sales in March 2026, meaning 85.4 per cent of new vehicles are petrol or diesel. Even if oil prices eventually fall the effect would persist long afterwards, because cars purchased today remain on Australian roads for roughly a decade.

The climate paradox is that a war disrupting fossil-fuel supplies has lowered fossil-fuel consumption. But this is offset internationally by the US-Iran war which released 5 million tonnes of CO2-emissions the first fourteen days. Since then, the conflict has generated enormous emissions from military weapons, equipment, aircraft and ships, and the destruction of oil and gas facilities and infrastructure, resulting in a disruption to regional economies.

The war has caused untold suffering and death in Iran. The International Energy Agency (IEA) expects global oil demand to fall by around 2.5 million barrels per day in 2026, partly because the enormous price shock is reducing oil and gas demand. Global oil production is expected to continue to fall as economies adjust to higher oil prices.

End fossil fuel addiction

M Santos

Tens of thousands of protesters from across the globe gathered in Antalya, Türkiye to demand climate justice as the 31st annual climate conference (COP31) was being held. Some held signs demanding "polluters pay." "Some fought back tears, while others wept openly, recounting the lives and livelihoods already lost to climate change," the UN reported.

They reflected the needs of billions of people around the world impacted by climate change; their futures dependent on decisive action to address the climate crisis.

"The future of our planet cannot be negotiated on the terms of those profiting from its destruction," UN Secretary-General António Guterres told the media.

As co-host of the climate conference, Australia had an opportunity to put the phasing-out of fossil fuels at the top of the framework for negotiations. They failed dismally. Instead, they opted for greenwashing with a slick slogan of increasing electricity's share of final energy consumption to 35 per cent by 2035.

When PM Anthony Albanese addressed the Leaders' Summit on the first day he could not even bring himself to mention the words 'fossil fuels.' Nor did Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in his speech to the Leaders' Summit.

Climate and Energy Minister Bowen, who presided over negotiations said, "We meet at a moment of consequence. Whether it be glacial collapse in Nepal, heat deaths in Europe, or an intensifying El Niño. Climate change is here ...

"Every fraction of a degree, and every delay, increases the risks to lives, communities, economic growth and the environment."

But then, ignoring the urgency of phasing out fossil fuels, he went on to say: "We need to shift electricity from a fifth to a third of global energy consumption.

"Not only is this good for our planet. It strengthens nations' energy security, reduces emissions and helps us better shield households from volatile bills and price shocks. This is why the Action Agenda goal of a global effort to increase electricity's share of final energy consumption to 35 per cent by 2035 is so important."

Increasing electricity's share of energy consumption might sound good but there is a large loophole – it does not specify how that electricity is generated. Is it by gas or coal or by clean renewables? The door is left wide open.

The '35-by-35' pledge being proposed is a gimmick, a substitute for making commitments to a timeline for the phasing out of fossil fuels. Greenpeace Australia Pacific said, "we must ensure electricity comes from clean, renewable sources that actually displace fossil fuels and align with the science of 1.5°C."

Bowen managed to utter the words 'fossil fuels' twice in his opening address without connecting them to any concrete action or plan.

KICK POLLUTERS OUT

New analysis released today by the Kick Big Polluters Out (KBPO) coalition reveals the notable presence – and more importantly influence – of major polluters that have been granted access to attend COP31.

"Further analysis shows that 30 of the top 100 banks that fund fossil fuels are also at COP31, collectively representing more than US$2.2 trillion in fossil fuel financing from 2021-2025 (nearly 40% of fossil fuel bank financing worldwide)," KPBO reports.

COP31 is the fifth consecutive annual meeting to be held in a petrochemical state. The previous four were held in Brazil, Azerbaijan, United Arab Emirates, and Egypt.

HEIGHT OF HYPOCRISY

Albanese takes the prize for arrogance, hypocrisy and dishonesty: He said he was "Proud to be a leader on climate action," while failing dismally to give leadership.

"Proud to be a renewable energy leader, creating the clean industries, businesses and jobs of the future. And proud to be here fighting for the interests of our Pacific family.

"We sought this role because we wanted to speak for the people of the world who need urgent action," Albanese claimed. The urgent action that the people of the world need is not on his agenda.

Australia is the third largest exporter of fossil fuels and the Albanese government has approved 39 new, expanded or extended coal, oil and gas developments since its second term began in 2025. These approvals include new coal mines, a mega-polluting gas export project, and a gas drilling approval until 2080.

The Greens are the only Australian parliamentary political party that fights for genuine action on climate change.

URGENCY

Mia Mottley, prime minister of Barbados, called out governments who had "not tried hard enough" to curb emissions since the Paris agreement.

"The UN tells us that, even if every pledge is delivered, we are heading for 2.6 degrees," she said. "On current policies, 2.8 degrees is where we will end up. Let me be plain: overshoot is not a new target. It is a debt, a debt of heat, borrowed against our children's future. And it must be repaid."

Extreme weather events driven by human-caused climate change have already taken hundreds of thousands of lives and done billions upon billions of dollars of damage to property and infrastructure.

As we enter one of the strongest El Niño events in history, it is critical that phasing out fossil fuels as rapidly as possible be placed at the top of the COP31 agenda. Millions of people face famine and millions more death from extreme heat, flooding, storms and wild fires.

This year is on track to be one of the four hottest years ever recorded, ocean temperatures and sea levels hitting record highs, and glacier melt accelerating at an alarming pace, according to a report by the World Meteorological Organisation.

In the lead-up to COP31 many environmental and other groups voiced their disappointment at the failure to put the phasing out of fossil fuels on the official agenda.

Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, the president of North Macedonia, said: "We are the first generation to fully understand the consequences of our choices – and perhaps the last with time to change course. Future generations will live with the consequences of our decisions."

Brazilian President Lula da Silva warned that climate change was losing ground on the international agenda as wars and trade disputes overshadowed the fight against global warming.



Prime Minister Anthony Albanese with President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Photo: instagram albomp

"We started talking more about weapons and tariffs than the survival of future generations," he said, defending international cooperation at a time when climate science and multilateralism are increasingly under attack.

Lula announced that Brazil would develop national roadmaps to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and end deforestation."

Albanese's patronising references to "our Pacific family" fooled no one. The Pacific islands, some of them on the brink of being submerged by rising oceans, are demanding a fossil fuel treaty with concrete plans and timelines.

They have described Australia's ongoing expansion of fossil fuel projects as "immoral and unacceptable."

Failure to provide an overwhelming response to the climate crisis means "the world we know is over," president of the Marshall Islands Hilda Heine warned.

FINANCE

Guterres warned that "climate disasters were erasing decades of development gains and pushing vulnerable countries deeper into debt. Even tripling adaptation finance would meet less than 30 per cent of what is needed."

"Too many countries with credible energy transition and adaptation plans can't access finance at the speed, scale or terms required to put those plans into action," Bowen said. Too true.

The rich nations have even failed to honour their inadequate finance commitments.

Trump has pulled the US out of climate negotiations, instead dismantling environmental programs and encouraging fossil fuel usage and production instead of clean renewables.

Australia's total climate finance from 2020-25 for "our Pacific family" was $1.3 billion. This is compared to $62.4 billion in fossil fuel subsidies by Australian state and federal governments over the same period, not to mention the $368 billion floor price for the AUKUS pact (see page 1, this issue).

At the end of the first week, no agreement had been reached on financing the poorer nations who made the least contribution to climate change but are experiencing some of the worst consequences.

We are the first generation to fully understand the consequences of our choices – and perhaps the last with time to change course.

The far right can be defeated

Vijay Prashad



Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's election win. Photo: Lula Oficial/ Ricardo Stuckert – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Earlier this year, the axis of politics appeared to favour the far right of a special type and its hyper-imperialist ambitions. The United States, led by President Donald Trump, conducted a blitzkrieg against Venezuela, abducted its president Nicolás Maduro and his wife and National Assembly member Cilia Flores, illegally imprisoned them in New York, and effectively handed the country's oil to US multinational corporations.

About two months later, the United States and Israel began a war of aggression against Iran, which appeared to repeat the Venezuela story. However, Iran's strikes against US military bases in the Persian Gulf and against Israel itself transformed the global balance of forces and exposed the limits of hyper-imperialism's military power.

After the military strike on Venezuela, Trump's hunger to seize all Latin American countries seemed to extend to the world. Iran's retaliation sent him back to Latin America, where he set his focus on fomenting the Angry Tide. Elections in Costa Rica, Peru, and Colombia delivered victories for the far right, whose real prize was always Brazil – the largest country in Latin America, with a landmass half the size of South America.

After the first round of elections on 4 October, it appeared that the far right's candidate, Flávio Bolsonaro, would prevail over President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. However, millions of people mobilised to prevent this outcome in the second round on 25 October, and Lula prevailed. His victory establishes a crucial social-democratic defensive line against the Angry Tide in Latin America.

A Bolsonaro victory would have emboldened the continent's reactionary forces and given confidence to neo-Nazi currents far beyond Brazil. Preventing that outcome matters enormously. Democratic space, public institutions, and social protections are material conditions for working-class organisation.

Lula's victory came alongside massive mobilisations in India and Europe against austerity and for social justice. These developments have different histories and possibilities, but together they demand that we reconsider the mood of resignation that has settled over too much of the global left. By early November, the focus of possibility had shifted to the United States, where Trump's Republican Party suffered a decisive defeat in the midterm elections. This defeat has dented the ambitions of US hyper-imperialism because it has deepened divisions within the institutions through which US power operates. Disputes over budgets, investigations, and political authority will complicate the administration's freedom of manoeuvre.

These fissures create openings for struggle, particularly since there will now be eight members of the US Congress affiliated with the Democratic Socialists of America. The average age of these representatives is 38. If they fall in line with the Democratic Party leadership's habit of war and austerity, these members will face pressure from grassroots forces that can turn popular exhaustion with war into demands against the institutions and interests that sustain it.

In South Africa, the Communist Party (SACP) contested democratic elections independently under its own name for the first time since 1994. The SACP has exceeded its own expectations, receiving more than 700,000 votes and winning over 260 seats across the country. The SACP's manifesto connects electricity, employment, housing, and water to questions of property ownership, capital, and power. The SACP's electoral intervention has helped create political space for an African left that joins social emancipation with national sovereignty and is unembarrassed to stand alongside the anti-imperialist aspirations expressed in the Alliance of Sahel States, including through Burkina Faso's President Ibrahim Traoré. Such solidarity requires political engagement and independent judgement.

The upsurge of students and workers is gathering force in India and rebounding through other parts of Asia and Africa as peasant and other oppressed communities feel the immensity of the opportunity. Brazil's example demonstrates that the far right can be defeated. That fact matters to people worn down by repression and repeated disappointment. Confidence becomes a material force when knowledge of Lula's victory brings a new person to a meeting, persuades a workplace to organise, or sustains a village through another difficult week of struggle.

For years, it has been clear that the objective conditions favour the left far more than the right. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) published an important report called A World of Debt 2026 that shows that developing countries paid $995 billion in net interest on public debt in 2025. In developing countries, home to 3.7 billion people, interest payments on debt exceed spending on either education or health, with many countries falling into both categories.

These figures describe a hierarchy of priorities enforced by the power of finance capital. Creditors demand payment while children in our countries sit in classrooms without teachers and patients suffer without medicine. If developing countries borrowed at rates available to developed countries, UNCTAD estimates that they would save around $500 billion annually. Countries that most urgently need investment face higher costs for obtaining it and then must curtail the very expenditures that could improve living conditions and strengthen productive capacity.

The International Monetary Fund's October 2026 World Economic Outlook report registers some of these facts and then urges governments to provide temporary, targeted income support during cost-of-living crises. A temporary payment is necessary but insufficient. Humanity needs public systems that can guarantee essential goods, direct investment, and reduce dependence on volatile markets.

Liberals cannot address these issues, since they defend an economic framework that subordinates public provision to private accumulation and then express bewilderment when its victims lose confidence in the institutions administering it. At that point, they ask people to defend democracy, even though they have narrowed the economic choices democracy is permitted to make.

The far right of a special type enters this breach with a counterfeit rebellion. It directs anger toward migrants, minorities, women, and the left while protecting the power of those who own the banks, the land, and the largest corporations.

For years, we have asked why the working class drifts toward the far right and what the left must do to gather its forces and provide an alternative. Working people are neither permanently reactionary nor automatically revolutionary. Our political direction develops through struggle, through the organisations available to us, and through our experience of whether collective action can change our lives.

Gathering our forces begins by assembling trade unions and peasant organisations, women's platforms and youth groups, movements of the oppressed and the discouraged. These forces, sometimes hidden in unexpected corners across the world, require each other. They also require an assessment that goes beyond defeatism and shows us how the world is indeed in motion.

What is clear to us is that whatever the program, peace and anti-imperialism must be at its centre. War destroys productive capacities, raises the cost of living, and diverts resources from human development. Across borders, these struggles require cooperation among movements and governments willing to challenge the privileges of creditors and the coercion of imperial power.

There is no single electoral formula for this work. In one country, a broad alliance may be necessary to block the far right. In another, independent communist intervention may become essential to restore a working-class voice. The test is whether a tactic strengthens popular organisation and advances the capacity to act beyond the next election. Alliances must be judged by the social forces they mobilise, the commitments they secure, and the room they create for further struggle.

Our internationalism must make these experiences available to one another, without pretending that Brazil supplies a ready-made model for India, or that South Africa's choices can be copied across a continent shaped by distinct histories of liberation and unfinished struggles over class power. None of the openings before us guarantees an advance. Each places a responsibility upon organised forces. The question is whether the left can turn relief into confidence, confidence into organisation, and organisation into lasting power. The world is in motion. We must move with our people, carrying a program they can make their own.

Tricontinental Institute

Alliances must be judged by the room they create for further struggle

Letters to the Editor
Guardian
299 Enmore Road
Marrickville NSW 2204
email: editor@cpa.org.au

The myth of the self-made billionaire

With so much in the news about billionaires, it is worth examining the truth of who actually created their great wealth.

The media argues that billionaires became wealthy through extraordinary intelligence, creativity, and entrepreneurial genius. In actuality their great wealth is based on the skills, knowledge, and labour (physical and intellectual) of thousands of workers.

Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg, and Bill Gates all have entrepreneurial ability, strategic vision and technical understanding, but none of them could not have achieved their success without employing the intellectual and labour abilities required to operate their corporations. A billionaire does not possess all the skills to run a business, whether it is in artificial intelligence, pharmaceuticals, aerospace, telecommunications, or computer technology. Their wealth is inseparable from the collective skills and abilities of these employees.

While the workers possess the technical knowledge to develop and operate a corporation, they do not control the corporation's assets, investment decisions, or the distribution of its profits. The business's success is dependent on scientific knowledge, publicly developed infrastructure, employee expertise, and a large number of employees.

Marx writes in *Capital* that wealth is accumulated through the relationship between capital and labour. Workers sell their labour-power to employers in exchange for wages. They produce value exceeding the value represented by their wages, called the surplus value. Employees produce the goods and services from which the company derives its income. It is the owners of the means of production who control the resulting surplus value. The capitalist, as the owner of the means of production, appropriates the surplus value.

The billionaire's wealth is also dependent on what society has provided. Publicly funded education and scientific research produces skilled employees with accumulated scientific and technological knowledge. IT and the internet developed through years of research involving universities, government agencies, and publicly funded scientific institutions. The government built the infrastructure, roads, ports and communications that were necessary for the businesses to grow. Importantly, the state's legal protection of private property and corporate ownership protects the billionaire's accumulated wealth.

A substantial part of that wealth consists of the share ownership in their companies. This gives the billionaire a claim over the economic benefits generated by an entire organisation. The company's value increases as investors expect these companies to generate future profits. The question becomes this: who collectively produced the wealth? Who owns the means of production? Who controls the surplus value, and who benefits from it?

Marx's central insight is that the productive capacity of society is collective, while the owners appropriate the wealth, inseparable from the labour of their employees. The factory worker, software engineer, delivery driver, scientist, and technician are fundamental to the success of their corporations. The employees have little influence over the wealth they helped generate. Under capitalism the owners of these corporations accumulate fortunes of billions of dollars, not the workers.

Graham Holton

Classic Film Review: *I am Cuba*

Reviewer: Graham Holton

***I am Cuba* (*Soy Cuba*, 1964) is a collaboration between the Soviet director Mikhail Kalatozov and the Cuban film industry. The film is a brilliant landmark of radical political cinema and one of the most visually stunning films ever made.**

An extraordinary political film. It explains the need for a revolution shown through the lives of ordinary people. *Soy Cuba* is a passionate condemnation of US imperialism; a portrait of social inequality, and a celebration of revolutionary resistance.

It begins by portraying Cuban life on the verge of transformation. From crushing economic exploitation and inequality the working and peasant classes rise up in revolution. It is a highly stylised, technically accomplished panorama of Cuban life before and after the revolution.

The Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC) was set up by the revolutionary government, on 24 March 1959. ICAIC sought countries sympathetic to the Revolution to film in Cuba. From the USSR Roman Karmen filmed the documentary *Blazing Island* (1961). The following year the U-2 flyovers and the missile crisis resulted in President John F Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev agreeing to remove missiles from Cuba and Türkiye. Cuba was in the news.

In 1963 Kalatozov began filming *I am Cuba*; his homage to the Cuban Revolution of 1959. The poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, with Pineda Barnet, wrote the screenplay. The brilliant camera work by Sergei Urusevsky portrays liberation producing cinema as art.

In one scene the camera begins showing a public burial in close-up, then rises to the top of a building, before crossing balconies and enters a tobacco factory, then goes out the window and levitates over the crowd below. Incredibly it is seamlessly done without edits. *I am Cuba* is an astonishing piece of Soviet cinema, far better than any US film at the time.

The four episodes each analyse manifestations of class antagonism. The film begins with a young woman forced into prostitution in a club. In the second vignette, a peasant is ruined when his landlord sells off the farm that was his livelihood. Next a group of students conspires against the dictatorship and try to assassinate the chief of police. In the last vignette a farmer joins the armed struggle. The film enabled Cuban filmmakers how to understand and identity what could be imagined and portrayed through film.



After its release Mario Rodríguez Alemán, an avid supporter of Soviet cinema, Alejo Beltrán, and Josefina Ruiz praised the film's great artistic achievements. Some rank it alongside *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), with its analysis of how imperialism generates revolutionary resistance against the colonialists. In the 1990s Martin Scorsese began a campaign to restore the film and rescue it from obscurity.

Today *I am Cuba* is astonishing for its composition and the audacious handheld camera movement. The brilliant and beautiful black and white film is breathtaking in its creativity. It is a must-see, not only for its portrayal of fervent revolution, but as an appreciation of great cinema. Well worth watching.

The film is available from Criterion in Blu-Ray with English subtitles, and is free on YouTube.

Film Review: *Prima Facie*

Directed by Susanna White

Reviewer: MD

Arriving days after Russell Brand was jailed for 10-and-a-half years for rape and sexual assault comes a powerful courtroom drama directed by Susanna White which couldn't have been timelier as it explores how consent is put on trial.

Based on Suzie Miller's award-winning play, which she adapted for the big screen, the film follows Tessa (Cynthia Erivo), a young ambitious lawyer from working-class roots who specialises in sexual assault cases and knows how to defend her clients successfully.

However when she is sexually assaulted by an equally ambitious barrister and colleague Julian Brooks (Daniel Ings), whose father is a rich and powerful London judge, her world is upended. She begins to second guess herself and her confidence takes a beating. Her mother warns her against taking him to court as she could lose everything she worked so hard to achieve. "I have to believe in the legal system," she tells her mum.

The film examines how rape myths and tropes are used to eviscerate victims on the stand even against someone as strong as Tessa. Also how, due to PTSD, the trauma of sexual violence is remembered inexactly and the victim's account of events and the question of consent is effectively decimated.

Unlike Miller's one woman tour de force play, this is a traditional courtroom drama which is brought home by Erivo's superlative and totally compelling performance. Even though she knows the tactics Brooks's lawyer, the best money can buy, will use to undermine her testimony she still falls prey to them. Plus, she finds herself zoning out as she is retraumatised, having to recall every detail of her attack.

This is one woman's poignant fight for justice against a victim-blaming patriarchal system which needs to end.

Morning Star



News Quiz

1. What have Australia Cuba Friendship Societies been raising funds to buy for Cuba this year?
2. How did US Vice President JD Vance recently describe his own rhetoric, in a massive understatement?
3. A recent general strike in Spain had a 3-word slogan: Salaries, housing and *what*?
4. AUKUS has rattled Indonesia. What has an Indonesian First Admiral asked Australia to provide if the AUKUS submarines ever show up?
5. The South African Communist Party has done what for the first time since the end of apartheid in 1993?
6. Which long-gone sports scandal has been hitting the news again?
7. After the mid-term elections in the US, how many members of congress are affiliated with the Democratic Socialists of America?
8. It's totally unconvincing, but he said it! What sort of leader has Anthony Albanese said he's proud to be?
9. Qantas is about to get rid of 850 jobs. Who are they outsourcing the work to?
10. Which two recalcitrant and undemocratic governments have refused to engage with UN Special Rapporteur Albert K Barume?

(Answers on page 13)

Concussion and commodification

Graham Holton

Professional sport is more than a contest of physical ability; it is an industry in which human bodies are transformed into economic assets. The athlete is celebrated when they score goals, win premierships, attracting television audiences and sell merchandise. When a serious injury removes their capacity to generate revenue, their commercial value collapses.

The economic and social relationship between the athlete, the employer, the sporting organisation, sponsors, broadcasters, and spectators is based on profitability. When an injured athlete can no longer generate revenue, they are too often treated shoddily. This relationship exposes the fundamental contradiction in professional sport under capitalism: sportspeople are disposable commodities. This is most notable in rugby league, rugby union, AFL, and boxing.

Under capitalism human labour is commodified for the profit of the team owner. The athlete becomes more than a sport participant; they are an income-generating asset. An athlete sells their labour power through a contract. Their physical abilities, skills, and reputation generate profits. A professional player's market value is determined by their ability to win matches and championships, attracting spectators and television audiences, selling merchandise and generating publicity.

Athletes sacrifice their long-term physical health in the service of the club's commercial success. When their capacity to generate economic return is reduced due to injury, the economic consequences fall disproportionately on the player. This is the contradiction at the heart of capitalist professional sport.

The organisation profits from the athlete's physical capacities, but the club does not always accept responsibility for the damage sustained. When an athlete is injured, their contract becomes an expense rather than a productive investment. The athlete is then left to deal with rehabilitation, with a reduced income, and an uncertain employment future.

Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* provides an important understanding of professional sports. The athlete's body is a form of capital. Alienation occurs once the athlete's potential becomes an instrument of commercial production. On injury the athlete discovers that their relationship with the club is conditional upon their capacity to perform and generate profit.

The sport's physical contact and resultant injuries are commercially exploitable. Broadcasters show spectacular collisions, commentators discuss the severity of injuries, and the sporting media turn an athlete's physical suffering into entertainment. Here lies the contradiction, the sportsperson's activities that generate club profits contribute to the destruction of their body.

Sporting clubs and organisations benefit from these performances, and balance medical considerations against commercial gains. Concussion, ligament damage, spinal injuries, and chronic pain place physical demands upon athletes, who often experience long-term physical consequences.

A noted case is Geelong Cats defender Jake Kolodjashnij who had a high-profile concussion contract controversy and subsequent medical retirement. In 2024, Kolodjashnij signed a "voluntary assumption of risk" waiver after facing concussion panel concerns. The clause made him personally responsible for future legal and physical risks regarding his brain trauma.

After the secret deal became public in August 2026, the AFL investigated and fined Geelong $140,000 for failing to lodge the contract variation. In late September Kolodjashnij officially announced his medical retirement at age 31, after failing to receive medical clearance following further concussion tests.

Concussions and repeated head impacts in football cause immediate physiological disruptions to the brain and significant long-term neurodegenerative risks. High-profile AFL players forced into premature retirement due to head trauma include Angus Brayshaw (Melbourne), Nathan Murphy (Collingwood), Paddy McCartin (Sydney), and Paul Seedsman (Adelaide).

From a Marxist perspective an athlete's human worth must not be measured by their capacity to produce profits. The injured sportsperson is entitled to dignity, healthcare, economic security, and protection, and not to be disposed of as a depreciating asset. What is needed is the recognition that sporting injuries are occupational injuries.

Sportspeople must have stronger collective bargaining rights, including a guaranteed injury compensation. There must be an independent medical assessment free from commercial pressure, including long-term neurological and musculoskeletal healthcare. Players must be financially protected when their careers end prematurely. Greater participation by players' unions can ensure better safety standards.



Geelong Cats defender Jake Kolodjashnij officially announced his medical retirement at age 31.
Photo: Flickerd – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Fidel Castro: A champion of solidarity

Nuria Barbosa León

Fidel Castro passed away ten years ago, on 25 November 2016. We reprint this item from the Cuban paper *Granma* in commemoration of his life and achievements.

We were witness to his vocation for solidarity, there following a natural disaster, an act of injustice, a people in need of healthcare, or youth desperate to study. He understood that poverty is eradicated through cooperation, not with bombs.

He made internationalist solidarity a pillar of Cuban foreign policy, and offered support to national liberation movements in Latin America, Africa, and Asia in the 1960s.

Algeria was the first country to benefit from Cuban assistance in December 1961, as it fought against French colonial rule.

Another of Cuba's noteworthy internationalist efforts was the support it offered Angola between 1975 and 1988, when thousands of Cuban combatants helped the young African nation to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity against the schemes of the former Apartheid regime in South Africa, equipped with modern weaponry supplied by western capitalist powers.

The Cuban Revolution, led by Fidel Castro, also supported Vietnam's resistance to US military intervention in their country and once victory had been achieved, opened up its educational institutions to train thousands of Vietnamese in diverse professions.

The island also welcomed militants from Latin American leftist organisations, forced to seek refuge from persecution by military regimes in the 1970s.

The island's main contribution has been in the health sector, which has treated and healed millions of disadvantaged people worldwide. In 1960 Cuba sent healthcare professionals to Chile following an earthquake which destroyed the country. By 1963 the first medical brigade had been created, composed of 55 collaborators, who traveled to Algeria to help the people of that nation.

Since then the island has helped to improve health indicators in 158 countries. Other noteworthy results include the country's Comprehensive Health Program, which has benefited communities across Central America, after the region was hit by a hurricane in 1998, as well as Operation Miracle, which has provided eye surgery to people with few resources in various countries of the so-called Third World.

Solidarity with Cuba is present in practically all countries on the planet.

The Henry Reeve International Contingent of Doctors Specialized in Disaster Situations and Serious Epidemics, was founded on September 19, 2005, on the proposal of Fidel after Hurricane Katrina struck the southern United States. Although this offer of solidarity assistance was rejected by then-US President George W Bush, the initiative led to the establishment of another 40 brigades, which have responded to emergency situations in 23 countries.

Cuba has trained almost 40,000 health professionals worldwide. Also deserving of mention are the thousands of foreign post-graduate students who have received tutorship and advisory services from Cuban teachers. Likewise, over the last 17 years more than 27,500 students from 89 nations have graduated from the Latin American School of Medicine, a project created by Fidel on November 15, 1999.

In 2003 Cuba designed and implemented the Yo, sí puedo (Yes, I can) literacy method on the proposal of Fidel Castro, with the aim of ending illiteracy worldwide. This program has enabled Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua to eradicate this scourge over the last decade.

The method is implemented in various countries across the continent and world, is available in several languages including French, Creole, Guaraní, and Maorí, and continues to provide thousands with the gift of reading and writing.

In 1994, Fidel stated, "When we were helping revolutionaries in Central America, the US said that they would lift the blockade if we stopped helping them. Such a thing never crossed our mind. On other occasions they told us that they would be willing to lift the blockade, if we stopped helping Angola and other African countries, and it never crossed our minds to negotiate our relations with other countries. At other times, they said that they would lift the blockade if we broke-off relations with the Soviet Union, and such a thing never crossed our mind, because we are not a party or political leadership that negotiates its principles. At this price, the blockade will never cease to exist, because it's a price we are unwilling to pay."

At that time and throughout his life, Fidel vehemently defended Cuba against every form of US aggression. His speeches were exceptional lessons to help guide the masses in how to free ourselves from global capitalist domination.

He met with young people from around the world and the US itself, who defying the criminal laws of the economic blockade of the island, traveled to the country to learn about Cuba's reality. He spoke with them for many hours, explaining that the Revolution needs the participation of all. Fidel was, and is, an ally of global solidarity.

"Fidel believes that heaven on Earth is possible," said his Brazilian friend Frei Betto; we say: "Fidel made heaven on Earth possible."

Granma



Castro at the United Nations, New York.

Protest in Paris

Lauriane Monchâtre

Friends in Dublin have been messaging me to ask if I'm okay after the protests in Paris. I understand why they might have felt like they should worry about me. I'm a Communist Party member living in the suburbs of Paris, and TV channels all over the world are showing nothing but looting and rioting.

What I see is something else: a revolt unfolding in front of us. So of course it is not quiet, and it is not always peaceful, but it was bound to happen. Anger had been building for years over fuel prices, taxes and the decay of our public services.

This generation of high-schoolers has grown up in La France à Macron, where unchecked capitalism has deepened inequality and where their parents were met with police violence for defending the retirement age of 62.

There are three kinds of violence at play here. The first is the oldest and the least visible. It is the violence of a system built on exploiting those who have only their labour to sell. It never calls itself violence; we call it a wage, a rent, a price or a budget line. But it kills.

Working-class students everywhere rose up with clear demands and a clear method: replacement of absent teachers, smaller classes, renovated buildings and, above all, the ability to study in the same conditions as children in rich neighbourhoods.

What happened on 17 October was plain class struggle. Teachers, public and private sector workers, students and the yellow vests marched together against a "cost-of-living crisis" that is really the crisis of late capitalism. Up to 800,000 people took to the streets.

Marx wrote that force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. This is the second kind of violence, the revolutionary kind. The bourgeois are afraid of it because it shows that the working class, when organised and conscious of its own domination, can overturn their rule. A revolution is never quiet and rarely peaceful: the history of France is built on such moments, from 1789 to the Commune of 1871.

We should not romanticise it. At least 3,000 shops were damaged or looted, and their employees are now on partial unemployment. Spontaneous anger is a symptom of the contradictions of capitalism, not a strategy against it.

In capitalist society, the state's job is to protect the interests of capital and its order. When that order is challenged, the state steps in. This is the third kind of violence.

On 17 October, access to the authorised march was blocked, pushing law-abiding demonstrators into undeclared marches, and tear gas was fired in the morning, hours before the main demonstration set off.

A 17-year-old boy lost a hand to a police grenade in Saint-Étienne, a teenage girl lost the sight of an eye in Mulhouse, and another teenager lost his vision in Tours. Only after teenagers were injured did the Interior Minister suspend stun grenades at high-school protests.

Then came the curfews: from 19 October, people were (and still are) barred from the streets of parts of Paris, Lyon, Lille and Nice after 11pm. Gabriel Attal, Macron's former prime minister and a presidential hopeful, wants the power to block certain social media during riots.

This is a failure of Macron's government and another step away from democracy. First came our right to choose our own government: the left came first in the 2024 elections, and Macron appointed a prime minister from the right-wing Republican Party. Then our right to protest, with banned routes and demonstrations. Now our freedom of movement.

It is no accident that the violence put on show is the kind that can be blamed on the young, on workers, on immigrants. It fits the far-right narrative, and Donald Trump was quick to blame immigration for the fires in France.



Student demonstration on 6 October 2026, Paris. Photo: Jules – French Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0)

The class that owns the economy also shapes the story we are told about it. That is why images of burning bins and looted shops travelled across the world within hours. The first violence has no images; the third is reported as an afterthought; and the second becomes a spectacle used to justify more of the third.

Socialist Voice (edited for space)

South African Communists win 271 seats, ANC alliance stands

CJ Atkins

Running under its own banner for the first time since the end of apartheid, the South African Communist Party (SACP) won 271 municipal council seats and roughly 2.4% of the national vote in the 4 November local elections.

Party leaders say the result shows working-class voters want a left alternative in local government. They insist it does not end the SACP's decades-long partnership with the African National Congress (ANC).

The SACP finished eighth nationally, ahead of several better-funded parties, and won seats in all nine of the country's provinces.



General Secretary Solly Mapaila credited grassroots organising on a shoestring budget, and noted that the party's electoral path had been interrupted for 76 years, ever since apartheid's Suppression of Communism Act outlawed it in 1950.

Mapaila said the party was most proud of "how our comrades have humbled themselves in communities, worked together to find solutions of their problems."

The ANC saw its national support fall to a record low of about 31%, a result Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula called "catastrophic." He acknowledged that some longtime supporters had moved to other parties while others simply stayed home.

The ANC's slide has been years in the making, and much of it traces back to splits within the liberation movement itself.

In 2008, after the ANC recalled President Thabo Mbeki, a group of his allies broke away to form the Congress of the People (COPE). In 2013, expelled ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema launched the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), which took just over 6% in this year's local vote.

Most damaging of all has been former President Jacob Zuma's uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) Party, formed in late 2023, which drew heavily on ANC strongholds in KwaZulu-Natal and helped cost the ANC its parliamentary majority in 2024. Each split has carried away a share of the ANC's base.

With elections in more than 120 municipal councils giving no party majority status, the Communists' new councillors could really matter when it comes to shaping policies. One analysis found the SACP holds enough seats to give the ANC a governing majority in 18 municipalities if the two parties cooperate.

The decision to run independently of the ANC was adopted at the SACP's 15th National Congress in 2022 and reaffirmed at a special congress in December 2024. The debate inside the party goes back more than two decades.

At the heart of the decision is the gap between the promise of 1994 and what working people actually got. As the party journal *Umsebenzi Online* put it, the past three decades have been, for workers, "a catalogue of unmet promises."

Unemployment stands at about a third of the workforce and far higher among the young. Wealth remains concentrated, much as it was under apartheid. Water and power cuts are routine in many towns.

The SACP's 'Build People Power Where We Live' campaign manifesto focused on improved public services, reliable utilities, and an end to corruption in government outsourcing.

The SACP is clear, though, that the ANC does not carry the blame alone. The party has long pointed out that the negotiated settlement of the early 1990s left mining, banking, agriculture, and other commanding heights of the economy in the same private, largely white hands that held them under apartheid. Those interests, along with the "private monopoly capital" Mapaila regularly denounces, have fought redistribution at every step.

Pressure also comes from abroad. Mapaila has accused "imperialist forces" of spending money to build new parties and push the ANC toward the right-wing Democratic Alliance (DA). The Trump administration has slapped South Africa with 30% tariffs, expelled its ambassador, and boycotted the G20 summit Johannesburg hosted last year, all while backing the DA's opposition to land reform and Black economic empowerment.

Domestically, however, the "state capture" scandal of Zuma's presidency looms large in many voters' assessments of the ANC. During that period, politically connected businesspeople like the Gupta family, whose business empire spanned media, mining, and energy, bent government agencies and state-owned companies toward private enrichment, gutting public institutions and draining money meant for the poor.

People's World (edited for space)

India bypasses own rules on phone-hacking



Photo: David Baillot/UCSD Jacobs School of Engineering (CC 3.0)

Yashraj Sharma

India has exempted an Israeli phone-hacking company from New Delhi's own rules, allowing it to sell phone-extraction products and surveillance technology to government agencies and sparking concerns and criticism from rights groups and activists.

An investigation by the digital-rights group Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) found Indian Home Minister Amit Shah, a close confidante of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, signed off on exemptions from "make in India" procurement rules, clearing the way for government forensic institutions to buy at least 422 items of foreign technology, including products made by the Israeli firm Cellebrite.

Modi's federal government and state governments ruled by his Bharatiya Janata Party are not the only ones who bought this Israeli technology. States governed by the opposition Indian National Congress party, including Himachal Pradesh, Keralam and Karnataka, also purchased similar phone-extraction and cloning tools.

A review of documents revealed that India's expansive surveillance capabilities extend far beyond just cloning phones and extracting data without passwords to accessing cloud-based data from social media platforms – such as Instagram, X, and Tinder – as well as data from connected devices such as Amazon's Alexa and Google Home.

Experts argued that India's current laws offer no guardrails against overreaching surveillance and the data extractions happen in a legal grey zone.

"It is clear that there is an expansion of India's surveillance capabilities and it is becoming both wider and deeper," said Vrinda Bhandari, a lawyer in the Supreme Court who works on digital rights and privacy issues.

"It's now easier to conduct mass surveillance rather than targeted, specific surveillance and also possible to do more intrusive surveillance," she told *Al Jazeera*. "[Today,] surveillance gives you a richer picture of an individual's life."

The IFF reviewed a letter also seen by *Al Jazeera* from India's Ministry of Home Affairs dated 7 January in which Shah signed off on a wide-ranging, one-year waiver of "make in India" rules to clear a path for buying at least 422 forensic items.

Under "make in India" procurement rules, preference must be given to eligible Indian manufacturers over foreign suppliers in awarding government contracts. However, the rules allow exemptions with the approval of the minister in charge of the procuring department.

Another letter by the ministry dated 20 January showed Shah permitted the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to buy Israeli company Cellebrite's Premium Tool on a three-year licence for about 50 million rupees (AU$793,877).

In specifications demanded by the government that were revealed in a review of tender bids, "solution" software must be capable of using login tokens recovered from seized phones or computers to access more than 100 cloud services. Login tokens are in effect digital keys that keep users signed in to online accounts.

From the 422-item exemption list, the IFF identified 118 items under digital and multimedia forensics, including Israeli company Cellebrite's Pathfinder, Inseyets On-Prem Pro and Inseyets Offline.

Al Jazeera

News Quiz Answers

1. Solar power for a school in Guantánamo
2. Imperfect
3. Prices
4. Advance notice of exercises
5. Run in elections under its own banner
6. Sandpapergate
7. 8
8. A renewable energy leader
9. Accenture
10. The Northern Territory and Queensland, stopping Barume from visiting youth prisons

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Global Briefs

PANAMA: Panama's prison system director Chanan Singh resigned after four months in office amid allegations that at least 10 inmates died from starvation and inadequate medical care. Human rights organisations are demanding investigations and urgent government action. The reported deaths occurred over the past two months in three jails. Human rights groups say authorities have barred families from bringing food to inmates since June, leaving prisoners dependent on state-provided meals that they described as drastically insufficient and life-threatening.

SPAIN: Spanish neo-Nazis received military training in Ukraine with the involvement of Azov militants, according to *El Pais* newspaper. According to the newspaper, members of the far-right group National Core arrived in Ukraine where they received training with AK-47 assault rifles and pistols in August this year.

INDONESIA: It's often said that the AUKUS will make relations between Australia and neighbouring countries less trusting. Indonesia wants Australia to give advance notice of all exercises to ensure transparency,according to First Admiral Salim of the Indonesian Navy. He was referring to nuclear submarines which Australia is planning to acquire. Australia is supposed to receive three US-made Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarines, with an option to buy two more under the AUKUS partnership with the United States and the UK. Deliveries are supposed to begin in the early 2030s.

IRAN: Iran will not hesitate to hit US military bases in European countries if planes take off from them to attack Iranian territory, said Mohsen Resaei, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of the Islamic Republic. "We can strike at some islands, which they think our missiles can't reach. We may even strike some American military bases in European countries. If American planes take off from them and bomb Iran, we will strike at these bases. Iran's defensive and offensive capabilities are much greater now than they were on the first day of the war," he said.

PORTUGAL: Thousands of people across Portugal have protested against surging rental prices, demanding the government take action to end the housing crisis. Organised by the *Casa Para Viver* (A Home to Live In) platform, demonstrations took place under the slogan "They will not steal our right to a home." Protesters called for caps to be placed on rent increases, greater legal protection for tenants against eviction, and more affordable housing.

SWITZERLAND: Hundreds of men led a demonstration to denounce misogyny and violence against women, saying men need to take a more effective role in fighting both. The "Men Against Violence Against Women" group rallied outside the parliament following persistent concerns that misogyny is too prevalent online among teenage boys and young men and that older men need to build a stronger counter-narrative. The misogynistic views are pushed by the right-wing "manosphere" – a loose network of online forums and influencers that promotes male supremacy and hostility to feminism. Since Donald Trump's election, such influencers have been emboldened to justify and amplify misogynistic derision and threats online.

COLUMBIA: Columbia recorded 45 assassinations of social leaders and human rights defenders, eight homicides of signatories of the peace agreement, and 25 massacres during the first hundred days of the presidency of the right-wing Abelardo de la Espriella, according to a report published by the NGO Institute of Studies for Development and Peace (Indepaz).

France: France has imposed an immediate nationwide ban on the sale and use of pyrotechnic products and recreational fireworks traditionally used for Bastille Day amid ongoing protests and clashes with police.

War looms in Western Sahara

Luke Rotello

After a dramatic confrontation between US and Russian ambassadors over the future of international mediation in Western Sahara, the UN Security Council reached an impasse on 30 October and failed to renew the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

Since 1 November, UN personnel have been withdrawing from the region, ending the 35-year pursuit of a referendum on self-determination for the Sahrawi people.

With support from Moroccan diplomats, US representatives had circulated a proposal among Security Council members intended to legitimise the Moroccan occupation of the territory under the UN's banner. While the US-Moroccan proposal also intended to shut down MINURSO, its implementation would have first required the Security Council to agree to Morocco's annexation plan – and with it, the Trump administration's absurd, hypocritical interpretation of international law and "humanitarian needs."

A set of superficial amendments to the draft proposal did not sway Russian or Chinese delegates, who allegedly signalled their opposition in negotiations on 28 October. In the moments before the Security Council's deliberations, Russian delegates publicised a short counter-proposal to renew the UN mandate for another year without modification, which they described as "the last opportunity to extend the life of MINURSO."

The US proposal received 11 votes in favour, including the United Kingdom and France as permanent Security Council members. China, Pakistan, and Somalia abstained, while Russia used its veto. The vote was inverted for the Russian document, as 11 delegations abstained while the US vetoed. With neither resolution passing the Security Council, MINURSO's mandate lapsed the following day.

As MINURSO representatives withdraw, the Moroccan military has amassed its forces along the berm which acts as a de facto border with the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). In response, Polisario issued a call for the emergency mobilisation of the Sahrawi people and armed forces on 10 November.

While Sahrawi and Moroccan forces have engaged in intermittent, low-level armed conflict since 2020, the collapse of MINURSO – a cornerstone of the 1991 ceasefire – has rapidly escalated tensions. Though Polisario's National Secretariat hailed the defeat of the US-led Security Council resolution as a major political victory, its call for general mobilisation emphasised the dangers of the Moroccan military presence in the occupied territory.

Brahim Ghali, secretary-general of Polisario and president of the SADR, urged all Sahrawi people to remain "fully prepared to confront any threats" to the SADR's territory and sovereignty. Polisario leaders have further noted that the threat of Moroccan military aggression is inconsistent with its stated commitment to continuing the ceasefire.

During the 1975-91 period, known as the Western Sahara War, Moroccan forces committed numerous crimes against humanity, including targeting civilians with white phosphorus and napalm. In 2015, Spanish courts found sufficient evidence to charge 11 former Moroccan officials with genocide.

As with the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the US arms industry is responsible for a majority of weapons used by the Moroccan military in Western Sahara. Recent agreements between the US, Israeli, and Moroccan governments include joint military activities and expanding Morocco's access to the US-Israeli arms trade.

US weapons manufacturers and agricultural monopolies, two leading forces of the MAGA movement, seek to profit from the escalation of war and to corner the world's supply of phosphate rock. The Security Council vote follows the Trump administration's unprecedented abuse of UN proceedings to establish a pretext for a military invasion of Cuba and further expands the theatre of MAGA's imperialist aggression.

People's World (edited for space)

targeting civilians with white phosphorus

MAGA swept aside in Arizona

Joe Bernick

Arizona has made the big flip. State Rep. Oscar De Los Santos was chosen by the Democratic caucus to serve as House Speaker following an Arizona Democratic tsunami in the recent midterm election.

It's been 60 years since the Arizona House of Representatives had a Democratic speaker. De Los Santos will have a comfortable Democratic majority of 37 to 23. The party did even better in the State Senate, winning 20 of the 30 members, a two-thirds majority. Most of the newly elected members are women and quite multiracial.

Leading the ticket were incumbents, Gov. Katy Hobbs, Attorney General Kris Mayes, and Secretary of State Adrian Fontes, all three winning with double-digit margins.

Democratic candidates also flipped all the other five statewide offices on the ballot. Especially sweet was the victory of Dr Teresa Leyba Ruiz, who will be the new Superintendent of Public Education.

MAGA Republican legislators have been on a rampage to destroy public education in the state. They have saddled Arizona with a legacy of laws that make it difficult to restore funding to schools.

Education advocates are already studying creative ways to get around these obstacles. It will take a push from below, from teachers, parents, and students. Working people have learned that politicians need pressure from the community to put their campaign promises into play.

Arizona Democrats also flipped two US Congressional seats. Democrat JoAnna Mendoza defeated incumbent GOP Rep. Juan Ciscomani by 8% in a district that includes part of Metro Tucson and much of southeastern rural Arizona.

Former Democratic legislator Amish Shah flipped an open House seat in Phoenix's eastern suburbs. Former Navajo Nation Chairman Jonathan Nez has apparently failed, however, to unseat Rep. Ely Crane, one of Congress' most extreme right-wingers.

The three incumbent Democratic US Representatives breezed to re-election, while far-right Republicans survived in three Congressional districts. Two of these were very close, though, in districts where Republicans had previously won by large margins. Arizona's two Democratic US Senators were not up for re-election.

Although small, Arizona's labour movement played a very active role in the campaigns, with union and community supporters canvassing and phoning. Labour is hoping that Arizona's working class will not only be safe from the constant attacks by the MAGA legislature but that working people can make some gains.

Fred Yamashita, Executive Secretary of the Arizona AFL-CIO, remarked during a discussion at Tucson's Salt of the Earth Labour College that labour leaders are already meeting and listing the issues important to working people and their unions. He added that it's time to start thinking about taking on Arizona's right to work (for less) law. Yamashita also stressed the importance of labour working with community allies.

People's World (edited for space)

General strike brings Spain to a standstill

Millions of Spanish workers have shut down businesses and snarled transport in a massive protest over housing costs.

The walkout, under the slogan "Salaries. Housing. Prices," is the first general strike in Spain in 14 years. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez called snap elections for later in November after parliament failed to approve his plan for housing reform.

In Barcelona, most storefronts on a main shopping boulevard were boarded up in anticipation of protests later in the day. Some retail chains were open to business while public transport was at a standstill or facing long delays.

Carlos Ferrer, a customer service worker who was trying to get back home to Alicante by train from Barcelona, said sometimes only "radical measures, such as a general strike" can force a change of course.

"Authorities need to feel pressure from the citizens so they can do something," he said.

Strikers marched down the main streets of Madrid, blocking off Gran Via, the city's main thoroughfare.

Protests also took place in more than 50 cities and towns across the country.

Manuel Gomez, a student in Madrid, said: "In Spain, we have a serious problem, which is that when we don't like something, we never go out to protest."

Unai Sordo, secretary general of CCOO (Comisiones Obreras or Workers' Commissions), one of the two unions calling the action, called the strike "a success in terms of turnout," and added that it had exceeded expectations.

Earlier, the two unions, the CCOO and UGT (General Workers' Union), reported significant work stoppages in strategic sectors such as the automotive and port sectors, the meat industry, waste collection, and the energy sector.

Sandra Mora, spokesperson for the Tenants Union, told national radio, RNE: "It's extremely important to remind people that we, the workers – who are also renters or who also pay mortgages — are the ones with the power to halt production and bring the economy to a standstill."

Morning Star



Adverse weather conditions have not prevented thousands of people from mobilising to demand housing and living wages. Photo: CCOO

we, the workers, are the ones with power

A new Islamic defence axis?

Türkiye, Qatar, Pakistan, and Indonesia signed the 'Badr' defense cooperation accord in the Qatari capital, Doha, on 21 October. It is intended to deepen their defence industry cooperation, reflecting a broader effort by countries in the region to widen their network of security partners amid the prolonged US-Israel war on Iran.

The accord derives its name directly from the Battle of Badr (624 CE), the most consequential and spiritually significant early military engagement in Islamic history. In Islamic tradition, the Battle of Badr represents a foundational victory where a small, under-equipped group of early Muslims defeated a much larger, well-armed Meccan Quraysh army through steadfast faith and divine intervention.

The four countries are planning to build on existing military projects through joint production, technology transfers, and more closely integrated supply chains. The initiative is a result of the failure of the US and Iran to reach a concrete peace agreement, which pushes countries in the region to diversify their defence partnerships and look beyond over-reliance on Washington for their security.

The four countries clarified, however, that closer cooperation does not mean abandoning long-standing alliances. Instead, the ambition is to gain greater control over their own security while strengthening pre-existing partnerships.

The implications could extend well beyond the four participants. It will impact both the Gulf Region and South East Asia. India, for instance, has been watching the Mecca Accord which earlier brought Türkiye, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia together. Now, Badr brings in Indonesia, a country with the largest Muslim population, and with which New Delhi is involved in practical cooperation, including in the defence sector.

The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement (also known as the Mecca Pact), is a trilateral security pact concluded in August by Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan and covering collective defence, military and intelligence cooperation, defense-industrial development, logistical support, and institutional coordination. The Mutual Defence Clause in the document is modelled similarly to NATO's Article 5, stipulating that an armed attack against any one of the three member states is regarded as an attack against them all.

The Mecca Pact builds directly upon the bilateral Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement (SMDA) signed between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in September 2025. Now, the trilateral alliance combines Saudi capital and energy influence, Turkish defence and drone technology, and Pakistani military manpower and strategic (nuclear) capabilities.

Pakistan approved the pact, and the Turkish government officially submitted the 16-article text of the pact to the Turkish Parliament for ratification. Senior foreign and defence officials from all three nations have held committee meetings (including sessions in Istanbul and Riyadh) to coordinate implementation timelines, intelligence-sharing frameworks, and rapid-deployment logistics amid ongoing regional security tensions.

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Battle (raging)

Spare a tear for the weekly columnist who has to pump out a column every week no matter how little they have to say. One way to solve this heartbreaking problem is to use stirring action words to describe the odd morsel of online chat.

Professional right-wing contrarian Parnell Palme McGuiness' latest effort is headed "A battle is raging between those who make and those who mooch."

What she means is that in the social media circles McGuiness looks at, there is some whinging about unemployment benefits going on. It sounds like some duffers are recycling Joe Hockey's slogan about "lifters and leaners." People are arguing on social media all the time, but calling some chatter "a battle" which is "raging" makes it sound stirring.

The realities

This word is one of many weasel words that work hard to make opinions seem like facts. For the *Australian Financial Review*, aka the *AFR*, aka the bosses paper, "the realities of the global energy system" have "diminished international appetite for stronger climate action."

What realities? The Israel-US war on Iran, and Iran's defensive reactions to that war have made fossil fuels more expensive. For the *AFR*, this shows that we depend on fossil fuels and therefore 'realism' dictates governments must "prioritise economics over environmentalism" by slowing down the energy transition.

We don't need a fuel crisis to know that our economy depends on fossil fuels now, but it's a leap of logic to conclude that a fuel crisis means we should slow the move to alternatives. Leaving aside the *AFR*'s underlying assumption that an economy can somehow exist outside the environment, we would have thought soaring fossil fuel prices would make it more, not less, important to move off. "The realities" of a climate crisis are telling us to get a move on with the energy transition, but the *AFR* can't break the habit of fretting about the cost to big business.

Bootcamp

More of a weasel concept, 'bootcamp' is a bad idea which won't go away. The idea is simple; misbehaving youth are saved from a life of crime by being given brutal military-style discipline. Bootcamps were introduced by Queensland Premier Campbell Newman. They were found not to work and cost a fortune (see *Guardian* #2209, 5 October this year for more).

So naturally the Victorian Liberal Party is going to solve all crime by introducing bootcamps if it forms government in the coming election.

Talking regularly

One of many weasel words designed to fob people off, telling the press/parliament that you talk regularly with someone reassures people that whatever the problem is, you're doing your very best to solve it but don't want to go into details. In a "crackdown" on backpackers that doesn't seem to have pleased anyone, the government has decided there's a problem with too many British backpackers in the country (now they know how Aboriginal people feel).

While they're trying to simultaneously please people who want less migrants and people who want more, there's also a free trade agreement with the UK that means their backpackers don't have work obligations. Are we at risk of annoying the British? Does this matter? Burke has assured a press conference that his department is talking regularly with the Brits. No, he didn't say what about.

Imperfect

US Vice President JD Vance has lied about migrants, falsely accusing Haitian migrants to the US of eating pets. Confronted about this at a public event, Vance apologised for his "imperfect" rhetoric. The word is true as far as it goes – we don't know many people who think JD Vance is perfect, but it's weaselly through minimisation. The intention is to make Vance sound humble, and only human, although in reminding everyone of his blatant racist lie, it's a fail.

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Guardian

Editorial Office
299 Enmore Road
Marrickville 2204
Ph: 02 9699 8844
Email: guardian@cpa.org.au

Acting Editor:
Tom Pearson

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Asia-Pacific Communist youth unite for Cuba

AC and LE, for the
International Department of the
Communist Party of Australia

On 22 October, on behalf of the CPA's International Department, comrades attended a convocation spearheaded by the UJC (the Communist Youth League of Cuba) and WFDY, the World Federation of Democratic Youth for the Asia and Pacific, under the banner "Anti-imperialist youth of Europe and North America against the genocidal blockade."

Comrades from around the Asia-Pacific and South Asia attended the meeting to share perspectives on how to fight the criminal Blockade leading up to the UN vote in late October, and how to ratchet up the fight with the help of the international Communist and progressive youth organisations.

WFDY is an extremely important organisation of our time. Never before has it been more necessary for the world's youth, especially in Asia, to unite against the latest US and Western imperialist offensive and propose a socialist future for humankind.

Ivan Barreto Lopez and Soneil Sosa Cordero from the International Relations Department of the UJC, and Mahela Amarasooriya, the WFDY Vice President, hosted the meeting.

In Ivan's contribution he noted the formation of a new Community Youth Network, an initiative of Cuban youth to support the Revolution at the grassroots. Youth are vital for the Cuban Revolution. The Network is early in its formation and serves several purposes; in the direct fight for sovereignty in the event of a physical invasion or US state terrorism, helping vulnerable people most urgently affected by the Blockade, and increasing productivity.

Thousands of children are losing their lives due to starvation or power outages as a result of the Blockade, which is genocidal to the core.

Comrade Mahela noted the importance of rallying Asia-Pacific youth behind Cuba, as a crucial piece in the puzzle of anti-imperialism worldwide.

The CPA offered full solidarity and outlined upcoming initiatives from the Australia-Cuba Friendship Societies (ACFS), from ongoing appeals for the Australian government to reject the US and Israel and affirm Cuba at the UN, to the Southern Cross Brigade at the end of the year.

Raising the issue of AUKUS, we drew similarities between the anti-imperialist struggle in Latin America and Asia. Ivan noted that the *Yo Si Puedo*, "Yes I Can" campaign for Aboriginal literacy is part of Cuba's long-term commitment to internationalism – to giving not what's left over, as charity, but what they have; full solidarity.

Ivan, who has spent time in Australia, also



Southern Cross Brigade 2024/2025.

emphasised the need to "connect the dots" between First Nations liberation from settler colonialism, the Palestine movement, the environmental movement and the anti-imperialist movement especially on the back of AUKUS, which further cements the Western alliance structure in preparation for a war with socialist China.

Contributions from the Bangladeshi Youth Union of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, given by Zahidul Islam Sazib, their International Affairs Secretary, exposed the reality of US control in their region.

It is likely that the next International Meeting of Communist and Worker's Parties (IMCWP) will be held in South Asia. The Communist movement in this region is becoming increasingly important. Not only does it have history, but it also has momentum, and we here, in Australia, we are in close proximity to the region. We can and must join hands with the working-class and anti-imperialist movements in South Asia.

Comrades in the Party and the Australia-Cuba Friendship Societies across the country are preparing to make this next Southern Cross Brigade, the 42nd Brigade, a big one. Those who are interested in being part of the Brigade between 27 December 2026 and 12 January 2027 can still register: visit www.cubabrigade.org for more info.

Cuba and China boost economic cooperation

Cuba and China are making progress in expanding their economic and commercial cooperation, with the Cuba-China Forum serving as a platform to promote business, investment, and technological exchange between the two nations. The event brought together Cuban officials, diplomats, and business representatives from both countries.

The meeting aimed to enhance business opportunities between Cuba and China and to showcase the island's economic opening, driven by 176 economic reforms implemented by the Cuban government. Participants included Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez – serving as a special envoy for the Communist Party and the government of Cuba – and Oscar Pérez-Oliva Fraga, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment.

Rodríguez explained that these economic reforms are taking place amidst an accelerated energy transition. He also denounced the impact of the US blockade, financial persecution, and the energy-related restrictions imposed on Cuba.

Ren Hongbin, Chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, highlighted the potential for bilateral economic cooperation and the readiness of Chinese companies to strengthen their ties with Cuba. He noted that China has become the island's primary trading partner.

The text produced by the meeting reads, "The Cuba-China Biotechnology Cooperation Opportunities Forum confirmed the significant potential of this sector, which serves as a benchmark for bilateral cooperation. Óscar Pérez-Olivas Fraga, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of MINCEX Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment), inaugurated the Cuba-China Biotechnology Cooperation Opportunities Forum alongside Chinese and Cuban business leaders and scientists. The potential of the sector – a key example of bilateral cooperation – was reaffirmed."

Progress was highlighted regarding Chinese exports of electromechanical products to Cuba, as well as the presence of Cuban goods – such as rum, honey, and seafood – in the Chinese market.

According to Rodríguez, the Chinese economy grew by 4.6 per cent during the first three quarters of the year – a result that, he stated, creates favourable conditions for expanding cooperation with its trading partners.

Hongbin invited Cuba to participate in the fifth China International Supply Chain Expo, scheduled for next June in Beijing. The objective is to foster industrial collaboration and technological exchange between the two countries.

The head of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade expressed the institution's readiness to offer new platforms and services that facilitate connections between businesspeople and contribute to enhancing bilateral economic cooperation.

"Beijing and Havana maintain a multisectoral cooperation characterised by mutual support on issues of core interest to each side, a high level of bilateral political trust, and a commitment to building a China-Cuba community with a shared future," Hongbin noted.

The Cuba-China Forum reaffirms both governments' intention to deepen bilateral trade, foreign investment, and industrial collaboration. Cuban authorities presented 176 economic measures as part of a process aimed at further opening up the country and facilitating the participation of foreign capital.

Telesur

Cuba holds defence preparation day

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel said recently that Cuba is preparing for possible US military aggression amid a sharp escalation of Washington's sanctions and of violent rhetoric on the island.

The remarks were carried by state television during National Defence Day, a military preparation program held across the country.

Díaz-Canel, who chairs the National Defence Council, said the government rejects any foreign military aggression and argued that the defence preparation system is strengthening the defensive capabilities.

He stressed Cuba does not threaten or attack any nation and described it as a peaceful country that provides solidarity even under complex conditions, posing no threat to any nation's national security.

Earlier, US President Donald Trump, interviewed by Salem News Channel, was asked about the possibility of military intervention in Cuba. Trump replied that he would consider it. He also said he wanted the issue settled before leaving the White House in 2029, in an allusion to the pressure Washington has applied to push political and economic changes on the island. Trump described Cuba as essentially a failed state.

Telesur

Communist Party of Australia

www.cpa.org.au cpa@cpa.org.au

Head Office (Sydney)
PO Box 75
Enmore NSW 2042
phone: 02 9699 8844
email: info@cpa.org.au

General Secretary
Andrew Irving
andrew@cpa.org.au

Party President
Vinnie Molina
president@cpa.org.au

Media guardian@cpa.org.au
amr@cpa.org.au

Canberra act@cpa.org.au PO Box 35 Dickson ACT 2602
Darwin Vinnie Molina darwin@cpa.org.au 0419 812 872
Melbourne Andrew Irving cpavic@cpa.org.au
Box 3 Trades Hall Lygon Street Carlton Sth Vic 3053
NSW State Comm Christian Goopy nsw@cpa.org.au 02 9699 8844
PO Box 75 Enmore NSW 2042
Perth Elly Hulm perth@cpa.org.au 0421 113 343
PO Box 98 North Perth WA 6906
Qld State Comm 0499 476 540 qld@cpa.org.au
SA State Comm sa@cpa.org.au 0411 805 356 PO Box 56 Royal Park SA 5014
Tasmania Andrew Irving tas@cpa.org.au 03 9639 1550