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GOVT WHITE-ANTS SUPER YET AGAIN

Anna Pha

On 17th June, the government rushed through both Houses legislation on superannuation. As can be expected from a Coalition government, the bills are designed to hurt workers and further line the pockets of the rich and coffers of the banks.

Since its introduction in 1992 by the Hawke Labor government, the Coalition has consistently opposed and white-anted the compulsory superannuation guarantee (CSG). Successive Coalition governments have targeted the not-for-profit industry funds, which have equal representation of trade union and employer representatives on their boards. The industry funds have consistently outperformed the retail (for-profit, bank-run) superannuation funds.

The industry funds do not pay commissions to financial advisers or pay dividends to shareholders. Industry funds have lower fees than retail funds.

The government is doing the bidding of the big banks and insurance companies. Prior to the banking royal commission, the Commonwealth Bank's rate of return on its equity for its fund investment division was an incredible sixty-six per cent! That says it all.

The centrepiece of this latest offensive against industry funds is the *Your Future, Your Super* bill.

When the government was forced into a royal commission into banking, it added superannuation to the terms of reference hoping the industry superannuation funds would take a hit. Its hopes were dashed, as criticism of hefty fees and other rorting was sheeted home to the retail funds.

"STAPLING" WORKERS

In future, workers entering the labour market will be "stapled" to the fund they join in their first job! At present, when workers gain employment in different industries, they are usually signed up in different super funds. This, as the government correctly points out, results in duplication of insurance and costs more in fees.

"This is a bill designed to funnel more working people into bank-owned, for-profit funds which deliver smaller returns and ultimately a less secure retirement for working people," the ACTU warned. It will leave "roughly three million people who are currently in under-performing funds up to $500,000 worse off by retirement," the ACTU said.

For many workers, their first job is in retail or hospitality. They might pick up part-time work as a shop assistant or in a café while still at school or as a TAFE or university student.

This default position of being "stapled" to the same fund means a lot of workers will not change funds unless a particular employer or trade union steps in to facilitate a change. It could hurt industry superannuation funds covering occupations that workers take up later, where unions have negotiated an agreement for a particular industry fund.

"Stapling" creates problems that the bill fails to address. For example, a worker who starts working in the hospitality industry where the insurance policy that accompanies their superannuation fund is based on it being a low-risk job. Say they move into building and construction where insurance companies assess risk as higher. Then the insurance cover they are "stapled" to may not provide adequate cover. This is a serious issue which the bill fails to address. An industry fund such as CBUS provides the appropriate insurance for workers in building and construction.

GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE

The *Your Future, Your Super* bill contained a provision that would have given the Treasurer of the day a "directions power" to cancel any investments they did not like! The government was forced to withdraw this section of the bill. Otherwise, the bill would have been blocked by the House of Representatives.

But the bill does permit the government to make regulations that prohibit certain types of payments and investments being made by trustees. This is outright interference in superannuation funds.

The government will also have the regulatory power to provide for additional obligations on trustees. Just what it has in mind is not stated.

"BEST FINANCIAL INTERESTS"

The Howard government attempted to undermine industry funds by introducing the concept of "choice," in the hope that workers would move to retail funds. They didn't. The industry funds ran an advertising campaign pointing to their superior results, resulting in a flow of workers in the opposite direction! The industry super sector still runs its "We're all in this together" ads.

The bill stipulates that spending by super funds must be in the "best financial interests" of members. At present, it should be in the best interests of members, which could include investments in renewable energy, that improve quality of life, etc. This provision has several aims.

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UBER WILL PAY ANYTHING TO NOT PAY LIVEABLE WAGE!

Last year, Amita Gupta, a food delivery driver with Uber, took the company to the Federal Court for being "sacked after she was 10 minutes late with a food delivery," according to the Transport Workers' Union (TWU).

In mounting their defence, Uber's lawyer attempted to highlight how there was "no relationship of employment" between the two parties. Instead, Uber claimed there was a "quadrilateral relationship" between four parties: Uber Eats, the restaurant, the delivery driver, and the customer.

In doing so, Uber wanted to restrict the case merely to the arguments, stressing that the court did not need to make a "positive finding as to what that relationship was or is." Needless to say, the judges presiding over the case were not impressed with Justice Richard White responding: "We actually operate in the real world here [...]. This is not a debating club. We've not just got a theoretic construct to ask ourselves about."

In December, Uber reached an out-of-court settlement with Gupta. However, the settlement was made confidential – until now. Earlier this month, during a Senate inquiry on job security, the TWU used its parliamentary privilege to reveal the details of the confidential settlement. The amount? $400,000. According to the *Financial Review*, "the settlement, [was] some twenty-six times more than what Ms Gupta was likely to receive under the law."

"The most telling feature of this settlement was the extent of the settlement," TWU national secretary Michael Kaine said to the inquiry, further stating that, "I think it's very clear that UberEats wanted to ensure that there were no risks that its exploitative system would be overturned by the full court and they were willing to pay an incredible amount of money, a life-changing amount of money, to the Guptas to make sure that moment in time did not occur."

Kaine is right. The settlement's size indicates how far Uber is willing to go to not establish a precedent and, in turn, have to pay even the legal liveable wage to workers. In order to put the settlement in perspective, Kaine stated that under unfair dismissal laws, Gupta would have likely received a maximum of $15,000 compensation for six months' work.

It is no secret that work in the gig economy is dangerous. In its document, *Working together to improve Food Delivery Rider safety* the NSW government reported that in 2019 and 2020 five deaths and fifty injuries occurred.

This toll is rising. Delivery drivers are overworked and underpaid. Even more, is that most of these workers are migrants or visa workers who are attempting to make money for their families here and overseas. They also are often unaware of their rights. As a result, they make the perfect victim for these companies to exploit. But this exploitation needs to end. We need laws and regulations that not only define the relationship between these companies and workers as that of an employer and employee, resulting in a liveable wage, but we need better working conditions too.

GOVT WHITE-ANTS SUPER YET AGAIN

Continued from page 1

First the government is attempting to eradicate advertising campaigns that draw attention to the superiority of industry funds. Bank-run and other for-profit funds pay financial advisers hefty fees and in addition pocket large profits, at the expense of members' returns. Will the government consider such fees and profits as not being in the "best financial interests" of members? Hardly!

The government is also seeking to protect the interests of its largest political donors – such as the fossil fuel sector, arms manufacturers, and the uranium mining industry. This is an outright attack on ethical investments. It comes at a time when major investors are moving their capital out of fossil fuels. Workers should have the right to choose whether they want their savings invested ethically or not.

The bill goes a step further by making trustees of super funds personally liable for decisions not deemed to be in the "best financial interests" of members. It seeks to intimidate boards, as it provides for the possibility of civil liability with the suing of trustees.

For example, some funds, such as CBUS invest in their own industry. CBUS invests in construction projects. Last year its default product made a return of 17.5 per cent on workers' savings and 24 per cent on its high-risk product. The default product is a relatively low risk one that members are allocated to if they do not specify a preferred product.

The onus of proof is reversed. Trustees will be obliged to prove any investment that is challenged is in the best financial interests of members. It applies to every individual investment, no matter how small or large. The amount of additional paperwork could be a nightmare for fund managers and costly to members! So would any challenges.

Employers, especially those with union agreements specifying an industry fund, instead of making contributions to one fund, will have the administrative hassle of making payments to multiple funds.

"This bill also offers up a more sinister possibility. Don't put it past the banks to contrive a way to sign up children, potentially twelve-year-olds, to their first superannuation account just so they can be stapled to a bank owned fund for life. This bill could usher in Dollarmites for super," Greens Senator Nick McKim said in his Second Reading speech.

This provision contradicts the Royal Commission's recommendation, which found the existing provisions should not be changed.

RANKING OF FUNDS

The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) will conduct an annual performance assessment of default products based on the previous eight years. (APRA is a statutory body responsible for supervising banks, insurance companies, and superannuation funds.) The government will be able to add by regulation other types of products.

The index used for ranking will be determined by private, global investment firms. Any fund that fails the test will be required to notify the relevant members in writing. If a product fails two consecutive years in a row, then it will be closed to new members.

Funds are managed with the long-term in mind, over the working life of a member, not eight years.

WAGE THEFT

After being frozen since 2014 by the Abbott government, the CSG is set to rise from 9.5 to 10 per cent on the 1st of July. All employers are required to pay the increase by law. But some have plans to use a legal loophole to cut workers' wages by 0.5 per cent to fund the increase.

They are doing this where workers have income packages that include superannuation. The ANZ is one such employer. The Finance Sector Union (FSU) is running a "Don't Steal our Super" campaign with one in four employees affected. The ANZ is fighting back with threats of legal action against the union.

STILL TO COME

During the pandemic last year, the government set a precedent, allowing working people to draw two tranches of their retirement savings of up to $10,000 each from their super accounts if they were experiencing financial difficulties. Almost three million withdrew retirement savings to the tune of $36.4 billion, with many young workers completely draining their savings at great cost to their retirement income.

This set a precedent. For some time now, there have been suggestions that younger people should be able to draw on their retirements to pay a deposit on a house. The idea of making the whole superannuation system voluntary has also been floated. At present, superannuation contributions are compulsory.

CHANGE NEEDED

Many workers are not even aware of what fund or funds they belong to. The issues raised do expose the complexity of the present system and the need for change.

Initially the compulsory superannuation guarantee had three main aims:

- Provide workers with a retirement income so that the age pension could be wound back
- Provide a large pool of investment capital for the private sector
- Provide private investment managers with a large pool of workers' savings to manage and profit from.

Today, $3.1 trillion is invested in super savings, a sum which continues to grow. $30 billion a year is wasted on fees.

A NATIONAL SCHEME

The government could solve many of the issues referred to above by setting up a national superannuation fund that workers could opt into on a voluntary basis and transfer their savings. This fund would be administered democratically by representatives of trade unions and other community organisations.

The fund would be invested in projects such as renewable energy research and development, public services including housing, schools, TAFE colleges, transport, and other projects of benefit to working people and retirees.

One of the areas where the current super scheme fails is that it perpetuates working life inequalities in retirement with women, other low paid and vulnerable workers bearing the brunt.

The rich rort the super system to the tune of $40 billion per annum through generous tax concessions on investment income and employer contributions. If these rorts were halted, then the $40bil could be directed to top up the age pension, which costs around $52 billion. That additional income would be more than enough to enable pensioners to live in comfort and with dignity.

It could also provide for a universal age pension, which used to be government policy, and would overcome so many bureaucratic inefficiencies and administrative expenses. There would not be all the problems associated with multiple funds, means and assets testing. CentreLink staff could be redirected to services such as JobSeeker.

As Australian Council of Trade Unions Assistant Secretary Scott Connolly said, "workers' capital should be used to improve the lives of those working while generating returns for those who are retired." ✪

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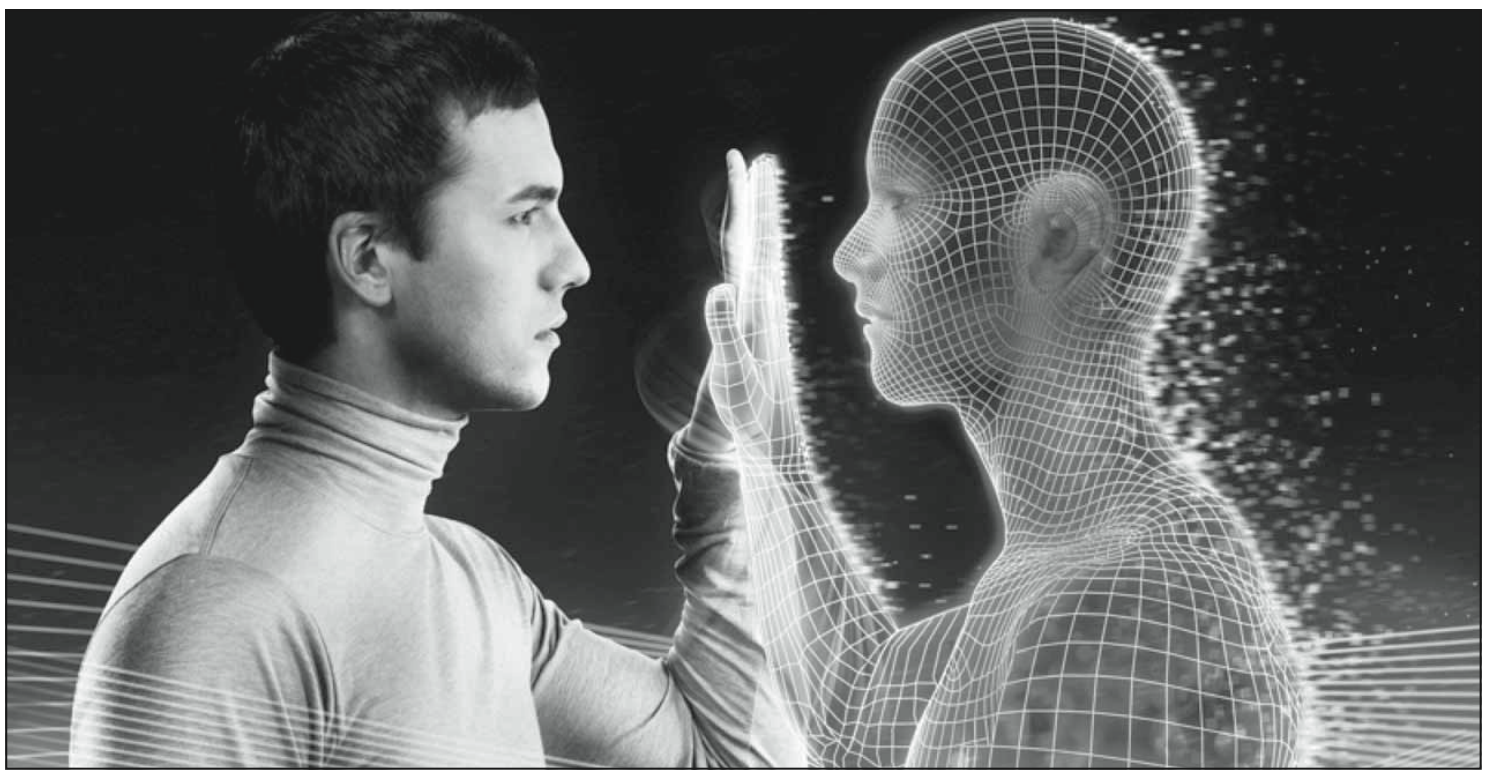
"NOTHING TO HIDE, NOTHING TO FEAR": WA POLICE ACCESS COVID APP

Valentin Cartillier



The WA government has butted heads with their police force over the police's ability to access data from the state's contact-tracing app, SafeWA. The government was forced to introduce legislation to block the police after they refused to stop accessing it.

The police had accessed the check-in data collected by the app to locate witnesses during an investigation into the high-profile murder of former Rebels bikie boss Nick Martin. The police had legally accessed the data from the Health Department on two occasions, once over the amurder and another over an unrelated stabbing. This meant that the police got access to all of the check-ins at the requested businesses, not just those of the suspects.

Labor Premier Mark McGowan, with the support of Attorney-General John Quigley, rightfully said that this was a misuse of the data, and that the app should only be used for contact tracing purposes. McGowan had known since April that the police had accessed the data once but did not act on it at the time.

Even though the police were able to access the data legally, doing so undermines public trust in not only the police, but in the security of their data. The ease with which the police are legally allowed to access people's location data through the SafeWA app may undermine compliance with contact tracing check-ins. This defeats the purpose of having a contact tracing app in the first place and only poses a further risk to public health and safety.

While WA has remained particularly vigilant in containing its COVID cases, it does raise questions for the rest of the country. This distrust may seep over the borders if residents in other states and territories begin to suspect that police have been accessing their contact tracing apps.

WA Police Commissioner Chris Dawson defended the police's actions, saying "they were exceptional circumstances" and that he didn't believe that the actions of his officers constituted a breach of the public's trust. However, no information was offered as to what those "exceptional circumstances" were. You would think the police would already have a system in place to locate witnesses. This was confirmed by Quigley, who stated that the police "have at their resources, far more sophisticated methods of locating someone's whereabouts." So why use the app?

This case raises broad questions about data, surveillance, and more specifically, how government agencies are able to access and use the data of the population. There's a common saying, "if you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear." This is a position we must thoroughly reject. A government surveilling its populace is nothing new. In fact, one of the people who popularised the phrase was Upton Sinclair, an American award-winning novelist/journalist whose exposés into labour violations and political corruption were very influential in improving the lot of the working class. He even ran for Congress for the Socialist Party and then later for the Democratic party. A government official had said the phrase to him after he went in to complain that not only his mail, but the mail of all his friends and relatives, had been opened and inspected.

So why should we reject this seemingly common-sense idea of "if you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear"? Sinclair provides a very interesting response to this in *The Profits of Religion*:

> "He [the government official] is quite willing to take real evidence if he can find it; but if not, he has familiarised himself with the affairs of his victim, and can make evidence which will be convincing."

Sinclair is pointing out a distinction that remains with us to this day: our privacy vs the law. By rifling through our data for evidence, or Sinclair's mail in the example, government agencies obtain a lot more information about us than is necessary for the limited purpose of criminal investigation. This information about our lives does not have to be overtly illegal for it to be potentially used against us.

Location data can easily be used to locate protestors at rallies, union strikers at pickets, etc. Once one person is located, it does not take a lot of effort to find out who else they've been in contact with. Given ASIO's recent, and vague, redefinition of "extreme" left-wing and right-wing political activities under the umbrella term "ideologically motivated violent extremism" there is a potential expanded scope for ASIO to build profiles on activists (see *Guardian* "ASIO obscures political ideologies" #1955). Despite the assurance that the location data would be kept safe and secure for a single public health-oriented purpose, the fact that the WA police were legally able to request that information from the Health Department demonstrates that there are always loopholes.

While data harvesting has undoubtedly massively increased the surveillance capacities of the state, it also has a decisively economic factor. Data is an incredibly profitable source of income for corporations, particularly social media platforms. The interactions between users allow corporations to create what are deceptively named "digital doubles" which are effectively profiles of users that they can then sell to advertising agencies to target ads at them. The social media platforms themselves create similar profiles based on user interactions with the site to create algorithms which tailor the content the user sees. While none of this is particularly new to anyone, it masks a decisively Marxist analysis.

Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram (owned by Facebook), Twitter etc do not produce any of their own content, the users do. All of the wealth of these companies comes from the labour of the users in the form of data. Once we tear off the mask of the "digital double" we discover that the user's labour is being used to create what is effectively a digital commodity that gets sold for profit. What is initially presented to us as a simple social media platform that's used to socialise and stay in contact with our friends is actually the free extraction of labour power. Everything from simply "liking" things on a social media platform to sharing articles, to using it to create content such as videos, is a source of wealth for these corporations. Understanding social media platforms in this way lends an actual substantive Marxist analysis to the phrase "if something is free, you are the product."

This brings us back to the relationship between government surveillance and social media platforms. The police are able to request information from these platforms if they suspect they can find evidence of a crime. While there are some safeguards and limitations to what they can access, to return to Sinclair's point, this potentially grants them access to the adjacent personal information of you and the people you interact with. Increased surveillance further entrenches the power imbalance between the citizenry and the state, as citizens do not have the same access to their own data. Under capitalism, this power imbalance translates to greater inequality as the government and police, as arms of the capitalist state, have far greater access to data on the working class than it does on them.

While it is undoubtedly beneficial to have contact tracing apps as a public health measure, the ease with which the WA police were able to access that location data is an abuse of power which has the potential to further entrench that imbalance. By accessing the contact tracing data of the SafeWA app, the WA police have not only undermined faith in the security of people's data in WA but cast broader doubts on contact tracing apps nationally. The lack of transparency effectively creates a one-way mirror that becomes harder and harder to break as time goes on. ✪

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COLONIALISM AND MARX

Seamus Carey

> "Wakefield discovered that in the Colonies, property in money, means of subsistence, machines, and other means of production, does not as yet stamp a man as a capitalist if there be wanting the correlative – the wage-worker, the other man who is compelled to sell himself of his own free will. He discovered that capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons, established by the instrumentality of things. Mr Peel, he moans, took with him from England to Swan River, West Australia, means of subsistence and of production to the amount of £50,000. Mr Peel had the foresight to bring with him, besides, 300 persons of the working class, men, women, and children. Once arrived at his destination, 'Mr Peel was left without a servant to make his bed or fetch him water from the river.' Unhappy Mr Peel who provided for everything except the export of English modes of production to Swan River!"
>
> Karl Marx in *Capital, Vol. I*

Western Australia has a claim to fame in the Marxist canon, in this passage in Marx's great work, *Capital*.

While the purpose of this passage is a case in point of the truth of Marx's materialist political-economic analysis, to elaborate on the context presents a further opportunity to reflect on the evils of colonialism.

The Wakefield of this passage is Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a wealthy British colonialist who played a major role in the foundation of the South Australia and New Zealand colonies. His "discovery," as Marx sardonically describes it, that it was necessary to bourgeois interests that a poor working class be created in the colonies, had a significant impact on British colonial policy.

Also of note (although apparently not to his future colleagues) is that earlier in his life, at age thirty, he kidnapped and forcibly married a 15-year-old girl from another wealthy family, in part motivated by a desire to augment his already considerable wealth with his victim's inheritance. He was found guilty of the crime and spent three years in prison. Two years after release, he was elected a Member of Parliament in England. He went on to have his abovementioned "illustrious" career as a colonial ideologist and politician.

The Mr Peel mentioned in the passage is Thomas Peel, namesake of Western Australia's Peel region. Peel was one of the group of colonists, also including James Stirling and John Septimus Roe, who carried out the sickening Pinjarra Massacre, the 28th of October, 1834, against a group of Bindjareb Noongar people. They killed dozens of Bindjareb people, including children. Stirling openly used this incident to threaten further genocide to the Aboriginal peoples of Western Australia, should they continue to resist the invasion and theft of their lands and their racist subjugation.

Today the names of these vile murderers Peel, Stirling, and Roe are still plastered all over Perth and surrounds. A recent motion to rename the City of Stirling failed to pass. The crimes of these colonial invaders continue to be whitewashed, and there has been no justice for the Bindjareb and other Aboriginal peoples.

The history of the development of capitalism is inextricable from the history and legacy of brutal invasion and subjugation of the world by Europe. Let's fight to put an end to both, fight for justice and peace for all peoples of the world! ✪

Peel region community members congregated on the banks of the Murray River on Sunday 28 October 2018 for the Back to Pinjarra Day event, to commemorate the 184-year anniversary of the Pinjarra Massacre and pay respects to ancestors who have fallen. (Photo: Josh Cowling)

JOURNALISM, JUVENILE PRANKS, OR DOMESTIC TERRORISM?

Jan Dieles

YouTube-based comedian and political commentator Jordan Shanks, known as "friendlyjordies," posted a video on 14th June titled "arrested." The video describes how ten days earlier, Shanks' producer Kristo Langker was arrested by the NSW Police's "Fixated Persons" unit at his family home and taken in an unmarked police car. The video opens:

"For legal reasons, I have to keep this video as strait-laced as I possibly can. My name is Jordan Shanks, and I'm being sued by John Barilaro, the Deputy Premier of New South Wales. Up until recently, I've treated this legal problem with the levity it deserves; but in all honestly, every move I've made, no matter how ridiculous it appeared, has been both legal and considered. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the Deputy Premier, who has impulsively, maliciously escalated the situation at every turn, and in doing so, out-clowned the clown."

Barilaro was already in the process of suing Shanks for defamation over several earlier videos accusing Barilaro of corruption. Then, according to Shanks, Barilaro did not initially serve the lawsuit papers to him, but first released them to the media. Subsequent videos by Shanks depict various efforts by him and his employee Langker to obtain the papers, and later to return the papers due to alleged errors found within them. These efforts included perhaps over-the-top stunts for comedic purposes.

After a brief 4th June street encounter between Barilaro and Langker, filmed by Langker and included in "arrested," the 21-year-old Langker was arrested at his home later that day on two charges of "Stalk or intimidate intending to cause fear of physical or mental harm."

The arrest was carried out by the Fixated Persons Investigations Unit (FPIU), established in 2017 via counterterrorism legislation passed in response to the 2014 Lindt Café attack.

Langker's bail conditions were described by the pair's legal team, Xenophon Davis, as a gag order. A 21st June article by former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd states: "While he awaits court, Langker's bail conditions prevent him even commenting on Barilaro's appearance or behaviour. He's not even allowed to possess a photograph of him. He is effectively gagged." On 24th June, Xenophon Davis reported on Twitter that some of the bail conditions had been lifted following the proceedings of Langker's first court appearance.

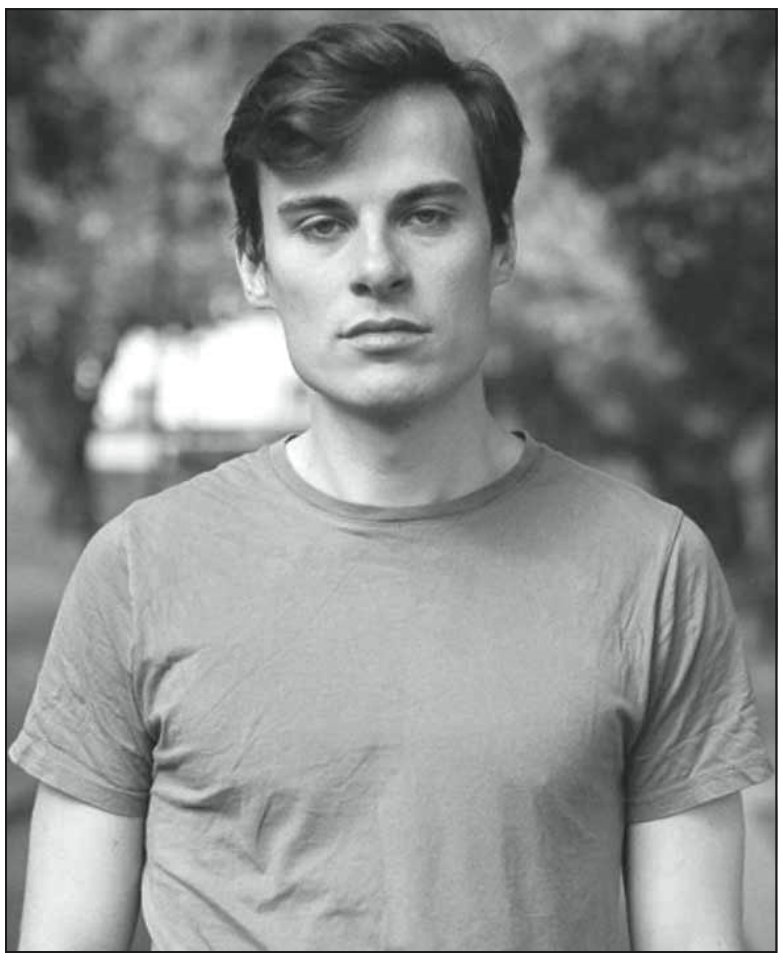
Reporting on the case online and in mainstream media has been mixed. Some writers have focussed criticism on Shanks and Langker for the often immature or inappropriate style of their videos and stunts, the financial incentive they have due to revenue from video views, Shank's political loyalty to the ALP, and have criticised Shank's claim that he and Langker are acting in the capacity of journalists.

But the fact that a police unit established for the purposes of "counterterrorism" was deployed to carry out this arrest is disturbing, especially when it occurs in the context of a legal battle over allegations of corruption.

Rudd further commented: "these events raise broader questions about what the future holds for the media, for powerful individuals, for the police, and for the public."

Many further questions could be asked – if this "counterterrorist" unit had not been established, would Langker instead have been arrested by regular police officers? If so, why did FPIU officers need to be sent in at all – in what way were regular police officers insufficient?

In Shanks' view: "Australia does have its own secret police, and they get sent in very quickly." ✪



Jordan Shanks.

MURUGAPPAN FAMILY REUNITED, BUT STILL A LONG WAY TO GO

Bree Booth

On Tuesday, 15th June, the Murugappan family were reunited in Perth, pending a government decision on whether they will be allowed to stay in Australia permanently. Tharnicaa, aged 4, was released from Perth Children's Hospital the previous Saturday, where she had been receiving medical treatment since the 25th of May.

This is a small victory, but it must be kept in perspective. The Murugappans will not be allowed to return home to Biloela. The Minister was keen to emphasise that the decision "does not create a pathway to a visa." In a media release on the 15th of June, he stated:

"In making this determination I am balancing the government's ongoing commitment to strong border protection policies with appropriate compassion in circumstances involving children in held detention [...]. The Government's position on border protection has not changed. Anyone who arrives in Australia illegally by boat will not be resettled permanently. Anyone who is found not to be owed protection will be expected to leave Australia."

Apparently, "appropriate compassion" means leaving the family in limbo in community detention. While they're being held in Perth, the girls will be able to go to school again, but Priya and Nades will not be able to work and will have to live on welfare payments from the government. Judging by what the government pays its own citizens, it is a safe guess that this will be insufficient. The family will also have no access to medicare.

While community detention is clearly a step up from offshore detention facilities like Christmas Island, where the family were detained for almost three years, it can have long term impacts on families. People living in a constant state of limbo in community detention suffer from poor mental health due to their inability to do meaningful work and their uncertainty about what the future holds.

These stressors have been known to delay development in children in what a 2019 report by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) called "a domino effect" which spreads from parents to children. The Murugappans are feeling this stress too. In a media release via change.org, Priya Murugappan said:

"Please, we want to go back to Bilo. We are safe in Bilo. My husband can work. My daughters have friends. Bilo is home."

Her pleas continue to fall of deaf ears as the government remains steadfast in its determination that the Murugappans will not be allowed to remain in Australia. On Friday, 18th June, supporters held rallies and vigils in cities across the country calling on the government to let the Murugappans return to Biloela and be permanently resettled in Australia. The family have also been reunited with some friends and supporters from Biloela, who are concerned for their wellbeing as they attempt to adjust to yet another form of detention.

Jana Favero, ASRC Director of Advocacy says that far from being a compassionate option, "[c]ommunity detention is just another form of cruelty." A form of cruelty which our government is currently putting almost 450 people through with no end in sight. There is no deadline for the Minister to make a decision about the Murugappans, but he could decide at any time to grant them a visa using his discretionary powers under the *Migration Act*. Keeping them in detention is a political choice, a choice which has the potential to destroy lives.

Indefinite detention, whether onshore or offshore, is a form of cruelty. As was argued in *Guardian* #1966 "Biloela family is test case for broader refugee rights movement," there is no good reason not to allow the family back home to Biloela. Priya and Nades are beloved members of their community. Both of their daughters are Australian born. They do not pose a threat to Australia. Attempts to sow doubt about the danger they face in Sri Lanka are insidious and dangerous. We must not allow our government to continue to torture refugees in this way. Let them stay. ✪

UK FREE TRADE DEAL SELLS OUT AUSSIE WORKERS

Electrical Trades Union statement

Scott Morrison's proposed UK free trade deal with Boris Johnson cuts the legs out from under Australian workers, removing key labour market protections and giving British firms a fifteen year head start through lower tariffs.

UK government promotional material outlines how the deal benefits British workers at the expense of Aussies. Key boasts include:

"Aussie firms will no longer have to prioritise hiring Australians nationals first" when discussing temporary "high skilled professionals" suggesting Labour market testing has been removed and critical safety precautions such as mandatory skills assessments will be abolished.

On Government procurement the UK government states "this is the the most substantial level of access Australia has ever granted."

The ETU is also concerned that tariffs for UK businesses to export to Australia are reduced overnight while tariffs for Australian businesses to export to the UK will only be gradually reduced over nearly 15 years.

"The Prime Minister has some serious explaining to do," said ETU assistant National Secretary, Michael Wright. "On the face of it, this deal looks like a disgrace.

"Scott Morrison has sold us out like sponge cake. The requirement to offer jobs to unemployed Australians first will clearly be watered down. And British business will get a 15 year headstart over their Aussie competitors.

"The Nationals and some elements of the Liberal Party love to wrap themselves in the flag when it suits their political interest. Now is the time to show that they're fair dinkum. They should demand the Government table this document in parliament before it is signed. No one should be afraid of scrutiny, especially when the stakes are so high.

"Our Union has seen the consequences of dud trade deals before, especially with China and Indonesia. It's not too late to fix this and get it right. Hopefully there are some in the Liberal and National parties who put the national interest first."

Next stages for the proposed FTA include further negotiation of around 30 chapters of the agreement over the next few months. The government will do this behind closed doors, locking the Australian public out of that process. If it is signed then it will go to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) for review and inquiry.

We will be fighting against this agreement in its current state, so stay tuned for more news over the coming months. ✪

JOYCE, MORRISON, AND THE BAT

Franc Stregone

On 21st July, the National Party of Australia replaced their leader Michael McCormack with former leader Barnaby Joyce. There were several reasons as to why the Nationals brought back Joyce, with the *Sydney Morning Herald* citing that McCormack "slipped and stumbled in recent times and resentment grew among a group of former ministers on the backbench". However, one policy issue has seemingly been at the heart of the leadership spill – the Coalition's position on net zero emissions by 2050. At his press conference, Joyce was asked: "Do you believe Scott Morrison should be going to the Glasgow climate summit with a net zero by 2050 policy?" Here's how Joyce responded:

> "I will be guided by my party room. [...] If the Nationals party room believes that the best deal for regional Australia is that we secure their jobs, is to make sure we secure their industries, is to clearly understand the dynamics of the Australian economy as opposed to a Danish one or a German one. If that's the view of the National party room, that's the view I'll be supporting."

The answer is as revealing as it is unsurprising. Under the thin veil of "protecting Aussie jobs," the Nationals are positioning themselves to fight their Coalition partner – the Liberal Party of Australia – every step of the way on the mildest of climate policies. By talking about Denmark and Germany, the Nationals are attempting to delineate climate policy as something cosmopolitan that only those in the "big cities" care about at the expense of everyday Australians.

Furthermore, it is not just the Nationals coming after this benign policy. The talking heads over at Sky News, and other media outlets, are gunning for the Liberals to drop the policy too. So what is all the fuss?

WHAT DOES NET ZERO EMISSIONS MEAN?

According to the Climate Council, net zero emissions "refers to achieving an overall balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions taken out of the atmosphere". Thus, the process simply involves removing **existing** emissions to allow for **new** emissions, so further damage is not done. This is why it is called net zero, rather than zero, as the latter would require halting emissions altogether. What does this look like in practice? While emissions are still produced, we could, for example, plant new forests that would offset the existing emissions in our atmosphere. This removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere is known as sequestration.

WHAT IS THE LIBERAL PARTY'S PLAN?

So how does the Liberal party plan to achieve net zero emissions by 2050? The answer is: we don't really know. Earlier this year, the Coalition injected funds via the budget for hydrogen and carbon capture and storage projects. However, as we have previously highlighted, these projects are marketing ploys that offer no serious commitment to reducing the use fossil fuels (see *Guardian* #1959 "Morrison's hydrogen scheme another marketing ploy"). And this seems to be the main framework for net zero emissions. Just before US President Joe Biden's virtual greenhouse gas summit, Morrison admitted that "Australia's energy mix needs to change over the next [thirty] years 'on the road to net zero emissions'" (ABC). Environment Minister Sussan Ley has stated that "net zero will happen as soon as possible and the prime minister has made that very clear." But Morrison hasn't made it clear, which is why the conjecture exists and questions about attaining the target remain.

However, what is clear is that the Liberal party understands how much of an ideological powder-keg the issue remains. In an attempt to downplay the differences between her party and its coalition partner, Foreign Affairs Minister Marise Payne stated that net zero emissions by 2050 is "the broad position of the Australian government." However, Resources Minister Keith Pitt has already been on record saying that such a policy would "absolutely cause damage in regional communities." Furthermore, it is not just a battle confronting the federal Liberal Party; NSW Liberals also seemingly understand the ideological struggle. In April, NSW Liberals issued a statement that former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull would not be chair of the Net Zero Emissions and Clean Economy Board, that the decision was about focusing on "outcomes" rather than "personality." It is evident that the NSW Liberals see Turnbull, a so-called, longtime "advocate" for climate action, as a lightning rod among their base. Thus, at the Federal and state levels, the Liberal Party, after years of demonising climate action, are trying to find the path of least resistance on the issue.

But are the concerns of the Nationals legitimate? Is such a target going to affect the jobs of regional Australians? Or is this just another scare tactic?

ARE JOBS UNDER ATTACK?

The same day that Joyce was re-elected into the Nationals leadership position, Andrew Bolt had on his show, *The Bolt Report*, Daniel Wild, the Director of Research at the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA), a conservative think tank. Wild estimated "that up to 650,000 jobs would be put at direct risk from a net zero emission target and that those jobs would be concentrated in regional areas and industries such as mining, manufacturing, and agriculture." This figure came from a report that the IPA did earlier this year called *Zero Jobs: An Analysis of the Employment Impacts of a Net Zero Emissions Target in Australia*.

How does the report come to the conclusion that over half a million jobs are at "direct" risk from the policy? The report calculates how many jobs are in industries that produce above-average levels of emissions (0.22 kt of CO_2 per job), adds them up, and asserts that, therefore, these jobs "are deemed at risk." Yes – that's it. As stated above, net zero emissions do not imply the forgoing of jobs but rather the removal of existing greenhouse gas emissions to even out the production of new ones. Thus, to imply that climate targets are automatically linked to a loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs is fallacious. Furthermore, why is the average level of the emissions produced per job used to calculate this number? Who knows!

It may seem ludicrous (and it is) that this is how the IPA arrived at the number of "at risk" jobs – but how else could they arrive at it? There is **nothing** to draw from outside of a vague commitment from the Morrison government. Furthermore, the "report," claims that "'Green' jobs have not offset destruction of manufacturing jobs." What "research" does the IPA do to back-up this claim? It references the *Clean Jobs Plan* by the Climate Council, the Greens' *Jobs Plan*, and Beyond Zero Emissions' *The Million Jobs Plan*, which claim to create 76,000, 179,770, and 207,100 jobs, respectively. Obviously, these numbers do not match the number of "at risk" jobs. However, does Wild and co. expect us to believe that **every single job** in agriculture, air and space transport, and Primary Metal and Metal Product Manufacturing (three of the five affected industries), among others, are simply going to evaporate if net zero emissions is aimed at? Apparently so!

The IPA also makes another preposterous claim:

> "many of the estimates of jobs created under a net zero emissions target would be created directly through government policy and taxpayer support. [...] By contrast, the industries placed at risk by a net zero emissions target tend to have very high levels of private sector employment, suggesting that these workers are vital contributors to the taxation pool which funds the public sector. For example, 99.6 per cent of jobs in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry are in the private sector, 100 per cent of mining jobs are in the private sector, and 99.7 per cent of manufacturing jobs are in the private sector."

Here, the IPA is attempting to make it appear as if renewable jobs **primarily** come "through government policy and taxpayer support." But this is not the case. For starters, the documents referred to above are from a political party, non-profit organisation, and think tank – all of which attempt to make interventions into parliament; so why wouldn't they attempt to create jobs "through government policy and taxpayer support"? However, the IPA has to present their narrative in this underhanded way because the reality is starkly different. According to the Reserve Bank of Australia's *Renewable Energy Investment in Australia*:

> "Investment in large-scale renewable energy projects increased significantly between 2016 and 2019. It is estimated to have accounted for nearly five per cent of non-mining business investment at its recent peak in 2018. This investment was completed almost entirely by the private sector, with

large-scale renewable projects driving much of the strong growth in private sector electricity-related investment during this period [...]."

The IPA could claim that the renewable energy sector receives incentives at the taxpayers' expense, but I suggest they don't make that argument. Adani and other mines have received **billions** in subsidies. In the case of Adani, it would be "unbankable and unviable," without the subsidies, according to a 2019 report from the Institute of Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (so much for the Coalition being "good economic managers"). Of course, the IPA is well acquainted with the mining industry. According to New South Wales Supreme Court documents, in 2016 and 2017 it received $2.3mil and

Under the thin veil of "protecting Aussie jobs," the Nationals are positioning themselves to fight their Coalition partner – the Liberal Party of Australia – every step of the way on the mildest of climate policies.

TTLE OVER NET ZERO EMISSIONS

$2.2mil respectively from none other than Hancock Prospecting – Gina Rinehart's company. For her efforts, she was made a life member of the IPA.

However, as we move to a net zero (and hopefully near zero) emissions, industries like mining of fossil fuels and, therefore, those mining jobs will no longer exist, but workers won't necessarily be left out behind. With a real commitment to a "just transition," Australia can retrain workers from diminishing industries into new trades. The Institute for Sustainable Future found in their *Renewable Energy Jobs in Australia: Stage One* report that "Renewable energy can play a meaningful role in transition for coal regions" and that "around seventy-five per cent of renewable energy job opportunities to 2035 could be distributed across regional and rural Australia." Among these jobs, there is much diversity from labourers to trades and technicians to managers. However, "depending on policy decisions taken now, the renewable energy industry could create 20,000 new jobs in the next five years or lose 11,000 jobs by 2022."

Thus, it would appear as though jobs aren't under attack – they're just changing.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Whether or not Morrison supports a net zero emissions target by 2050 non-fossil fuels industries and the finance section are moving in that direction. Ideologues within the Coalition want to use the issue to pretend that they care about their constituents when the reality is that they care about their big donors in the mining sector.

Given that climate change concerns our very existence, you would think it would be a nonpartisan issue. However, those with profit motives (i.e. the capitalist class) have framed the discussion between "Left" v. "Right" to distract from the fact that they are earning hundreds of millions of dollars as the planet burns. This is even evident in the IPA report, where they dedicate a section to which electorates would be "placed [most] at risk by a net zero emissions target."According to their "research," seventeen of the twenty electorates are Coalition seats. This raises two concerns. First, what purpose does this serve other than to agitate in a report about "green" jobs? Second, the Morrison government has been plagued with scandals, such as the Sports Rorts affair, where it was uncovered that grants were used in marginal seats to favour the Coalition in the 2019 federal election. Does the IPA really think that such an opportunist government would chase after an emissions target if it in any way materially affected its electoral success in an upcoming election?

If Morrison does adopt a 2050 target, it'll be the first step in the right direction. However, Australia and the rest of the world can't rely on gradual reforms. Climate action needs to be revolutionary and decisive. Without it, our planet will continue to suffer.

If Morrison does adopt a 2050 target, it'll be the first step in the right direction.

CLIMATE COOPERATION CANCELLED WITH LARGEST TRADING PARTNER OVER BASELESS NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS

Casey Davidson

A cooperative research partnership between Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and China's Qingdao National Laboratory for Marine Science and Technology (QNLM) has been cancelled following fear mongering presuming Australian submarines would be more easy to target. This move is another clear example of Australia's shameless foreign policy to interfere with genuine scientific cooperation on climate change with China under the guise of national security. The ongoing tactics to decouple from China are frightening for the Australian working class as continued attacks on Chinese cooperation create more instability in several industries.

Previous to the cancellation, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), Director-General of Security, Mike Burgess admitted that although the research is "great" for understanding climate understanding and climate modelling, "it's also great if you're a submariner." The concerns were built on fears of China being able to pinpoint submarines at depths up to 500 metres, presuming China would have military advantage over Australia at some point in the future. This also presumes China is a military threat to Australia, which is only somewhat apparent in the minds of those concerned about the US losing world hegemony.

China is responsible for eighty per cent of the one billion people globally that no longer suffer from extreme poverty over the past fifty years, and also has a policy – with a proven track record – of non-interference in other nations' affairs. Through its partnerships with over 170 countries, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is investing in infrastructure and cooperative projects worldwide, improving conditions and creating more opportunities for sustainable development. Comparatively, the US has over 800 overseas military bases worldwide, while China has just one. Australia's national security policy is in lock-step with US policy, with irrational strategies to contain China, while falling in line with US warmongering campaigns. It is not rational for Australians to view China as an enemy.

This poor strategising is not lost on other Western nations. As pointed out in Geoff Raby's *Financial Review* article on 21st June, which highlighted how if the Australian and Italian leaders set up a meeting at the G7 summit, "would [Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrson] have warned [Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi] about the dangers of the BRI and urged him to tear up Italy's agreement as [Morrison] tore up Victoria's memorandum of understanding (MOU)?"

This non-legally binding MOU was centred on finding new opportunities for China and the state of Victoria to cooperate in developing infrastructure and to create the ability for businesses and organisations on both sides to more easily make partnerships and investments. A framework agreement that was also cancelled delved deeper into specific needs for Victoria, including boosting trade in agriculture, food, and cosmetics, therefore creating job opportunities. China would have assisted in building Victorian infrastructure and cooperated over ongoing shared interests such as high-end manufacturing, biotechnology, agricultural technology, innovation, training, and how to deal with an ageing population.

Italy and Germany already have successful cooperative projects with China, either under the BRI or through alternative investment memorandums, as does the broader European Union. And although they are G7 members, they are not putting all their eggs in the one basket by destroying productive relationships with China at the behest of the US. Instead, the Australian government hopes to boost trade with the United Kingdom, negotiating a new free trade agreement to "deliver more Australian jobs and business opportunities for exporters." The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website clearly states Australia and UK's shared "rules-based global trading system" is one of the main reasons for this agreement, alluding to China as an inferior system and trading partner.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Following Brexit, the UK has lost major trade partners and agreements and is on the hunt for new agreements. Morrison's delusions of a paternal England coming to rescue Australia ignore the reality of the UK's desperation. While the trade deals could see some industries pick up again after ongoing trade disputes with China, the real concern is losing iron ore exports, which make up almost a quarter of Australia's entire exports – and of which over 80 per cent is exported to China. The outcomes for Australia losing this market would be devastating, and frustratingly, the Australian working class will be the first to pay for it in this irrational ideological battle.

The Australian media's paranoia has stretched so far as to slander a chief research scientist at the CSIRO, Dr Wenju Cai, simply for engaging in collaborative work with China's QNLM. Would his research into global climate variability suggest he is somehow spying for the Chinese government, as an article in *The Australian* implies? And although the CSIRO have responded to this insinuation by explaining that QNLM does not pay Cai, the more appropriate response would have been to call out *The Australian* for its racist lies in suggesting a senior climate scientist who graduated at Australia's Flinders University in 1993 is committing espionage, simply for having Chinese heritage.

Other scientists at the CSIRO have expressed their outrage at the cancellation of the partnership named The Centre for Southern Hemisphere Oceans Research (CSHOR). Many have asserted that the decision was made abruptly and that the move was ill-informed. "The Chinese also understand that CSIRO's decision is because of pressure from the right-wing media ... stoking anti-China populism," one researcher vented. Another researcher objected that the presumed defence risks were "just a joke" and would only hurt Australia's ability to predict and adapt to significant threats from climate change.

Axel Timmerman, Director of the IBS Centre for Climate Physics stated that the work was cutting-edge fundamental climate change work. CSHOR has important projects based around ocean dynamic processes, marine life processes and bio-resources, sea-floor processes and oil-gas resources, deep-remote oceans and polar extreme environments and strategic resources, evolution and protection of marine ecological environments, and ocean technology and equipment. Although concerns focus on QNLM's connections with the Chinese military, the research is clearly focused on climate research which would only strengthen attention put towards environmental concerns for Australians. And regardless of whether the institution has military ties or not, the assumption that China would be engaging in cooperative scientific research for military advantage is absurd.

The Australian government has instead controversially invested in an outrageous $89 billion+ project to construct twelve Attack Class submarines. The defence-funded anti-China organisation, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), supports this move due to Australia having no closely geographically located allies. Perhaps if Australia sought to improve diplomatic ties in its own region, this would not be perceived as a necessary strategy and funds could be put towards important failing services such as health and education.

In response to the cancellation, Chief research fellow at the research centre for Pacific Island countries at Liaocheng University Yu Lei warned that "politicising scientific and technological cooperation will seriously hinder progress when it comes to advancing the human race ... Compared with China, Australia's technology is not advanced, and this latest action will only set Australia back." Yu also commented on the hypocrisy of Morrison's ambition to restart a dialogue with China when the government continues to use trade and technical cooperation for political attacks.

Australians who take climate action seriously should be concerned about this foolish boycott. The national security concerns are unfounded, and the political and economic outcomes could be disastrous. Even more disastrous could be the climate change outcomes for Australians, when funding for pivotal research projects is interrupted in order to serve US hegemony. Australians deserve better future prospects – economically and environmentally – and a people's government that truly cares for its citizens and the planet. ✪

PUTIN-BIDEN SUMMIT

July Valentine

On 16th June, an event advertised as at least noteworthy occurred in Geneva: the Putin-Biden summit. It was in large part driven by the United States' need to declare its world domination by stating "America is back" while trying to diminish the growing power of China in world politics. Nonetheless, the summit proved to be substantial in establishing future negotiations between Russia and the US, as well as avoiding open military conflict – beyond what already exists – for some time.

In an interview for NBC News before the summit, Vladimir Putin remarked that "we have developed a strategic partnership relationship between Russia and China that previously had not been achieved in the history of our nations, a high level of trust and cooperation in all areas: in politics, in the economy, in the area of technology." As it currently stands geopolitically and economically, Russia's alliance with China is mutually beneficial, despite ideological differences. It would be naïve to imagine that the US had any hopes of interfering with this by the means of a summit, especially taking into consideration its sanctions and accusations directed at both countries.

Preparations for the event were messy. The summit was announced a mere three weeks prior to the date, leaving little time for proper planning. This reflected especially poorly on Biden, who amused all with a not-so-competent 30-minute scripted press conference restricted to American journalists, that resulted in him snapping at a CNN reporter. During this, he also demonstrated the wonders of the American education system and propaganda that seemingly influences working-class people and presidents alike, by stating: "Russia had an opportunity, that brief shining moment ... to actually generate a democratic government" and "it failed." This was presumably referring to the Russia of the 1990s, the darkest time of modern Russian history in which the illegal means of a government coup, with the enthusiastic support of US "advisers," was used to overthrow the first socialist state. Perhaps he meant "brief shining moment of the US," which it most certainly was. However what Biden describes as a failure is a government cast from the US mould, capitalist ruling class "democracy."

In another curious part of the speech, Biden asks rhetorically: "How would it be if the United States were viewed by the rest of the world as interfering with the elections directly of other countries and everybody knew it? What would it be like if we engaged in activities that he engaged in? It diminishes the standing of a country." It seems that Biden does not recall the recent activity in Ukraine and Serbia, in which he was directly involved, and the colourful (indeed!) US history of colour-revolutions, election interference, coups, and military interventions.

Nevertheless, Putin optimistically noted that the two sides "differ in many respects" but "showed a willingness to understand each other and seek ways to bring the positions closer," and the discussion with Biden proved to be "quite constructive." However, the summit included an exchange of criticism on the topics of policy "predictability," human rights, and cyber-security, with promises of closure in the near future on some issues.

PREDICTABILITY

Biden initially characterised Russia as "unpredictable" in its policies, which is somewhat ironic when, as Putin mentions, the United States boldly withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and the Open Skies Agreement. For good measure, he added that there was nothing stable about orchestrating a coup in Ukraine either.

HUMAN RIGHTS

After calling Putin "a killer" for cheap media attention, it is not surprising that Biden raised a number of "human rights" concerns. Therefore, he brings up Navalny, a Russian reactionary public figure promoted by Western media propaganda, known for his flexible world-views and empty political statements. As Putin justifiably puts it: "The organisation in question, publicly, has called for riots and public disorder. It has openly instructed people in how to make Molotov cocktails so to use them against law enforcement. It called for the participation of underaged persons in riots."

Objectively analysing Navalny's actions, this is accurate. In addition, Putin rightfully counters Biden's attempt at criticism by mentioning the Black Lives Matter movement, 400 people facing terms of 20-25 years in jail for their political demands during the US Congress, attacks in Afghanistan, and the existence of the Guantánamo Bay prison. This list was not nearly as extensive as it could have been, but it was enough argument to amuse even US journalists at Biden's failed attempt to address the concerns.

CYBERSECURITY

US imperialism, represented in Biden's figure, continues to target attacks at Russia (as well as China) on the basis of democracy and the freedom of the private sector. Judging from the US' "best practice," cybersecurity is an efficient tool for such accusations, as it seems that little evidence is needed to start pointing fingers. The US has publicly announced Russia responsible for two dissatisfactory election results, and for the recent mass-scale SolarWinds attack, without any factual material to support this. The latter seems to be an attempt to excuse the harsh reality of large organisations underfunding the cybersecurity sphere, and subsequently being unprepared for sophisticated cyber intrusion strategies of hackers that cannot be traced. If they cannot be traced, why not blame the Russians? According to Putin, 45 requests to the United States regarding cyber-attacks on Russian sites in 2020 were filed, and 35 in 2019; yet no response followed, despite strict procedures in place to do so.

In conclusion, both agreed to engage experts to resolve the existing and future cybersecurity issues.

STRATEGIC WEAPONS STABILITY DIALOGUE

The "two biggest nuclear powers" proposed a "strategic weapons stability dialogue," a series of discussions aiming to reduce the risk of war between Russia and the US. This is likely an elaboration on the New START treaty that had recently been extended until 2026, putting a limit on long-range nuclear weapons.

FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign relations with third parties did not seem to be the main focus of the summit; however, some key issues were brought to the table. Putin and Biden agreed on further proceeding with "diplomacy" in Ukraine in accordance with the Minsk Agreements, although hostility was undoubtedly present, which is understandable in the circumstances of the US stubbornly pushing forward its interest in securing strategic weaponised positions on the Russian border.

Biden announced that Putin offered to help the US in the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan to avoid the resurgence of terrorism there. However, we are yet to see how the US retreat plays out for Afghanistan in reality, and by what means the Biden administration will advance its influence in Central Asia. Biden also said that the United States is ready to provide "economic and physical security" to people in Syria and Libya. What this promised humanitarian mission will entail is ... intriguing.

Representatives of both countries expressed the need to cooperate in the Arctic region, and Putin even put forward the joint work under the auspices of the Arctic Council, currently chaired by Russia. This will need further negotiation; however, it is a strong diplomatic notion against conflict in the area where the two countries share borders.

The agreement that both Russian and US ambassadors would return to their respective embassies was reached during the meeting. To the surprise of those who believed in the stabilisation of the Russia-US relations after the summit, on the same day, Biden's National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan told CNN that the US was preparing new sanctions against Russia. Since then, Western media headlines portray Putin as a James Bond villain, masterfully manoeuvering out of uncomfortable questions, and Russian media makes a mockery of Biden.

Perhaps, this is the desired outcome for both sides, a source of nourishment from the propaganda departments of both countries. Nonetheless, it was an essential event to commence further negotiations of importance to global peace and stability. One thing remains certain – the US is failing to destabilise the alliance of China and Russia, which poses a threat to its economic dominance. ✪

Special Appeal **Reds go Green**

The *Guardian* is running a special appeal with the aim of raising $10,000 for solar panels. The panels will not only make substantial savings in electricity bills but also put into practice our commitment to a sustainable future.

They involve a substantial cash outlay, but we believe that every measure we can take to reduce carbon emissions is important. It is not enough to preach "green." We must act "green"!

We are looking to *Guardian* readers and CPA members and supporters to assist us with this important project. Every contribution is appreciated, no matter how small or large.

Send your contribution today.

Name .....

Amount $ .....

You may /may not publish my name

Send your contribution to 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010, email info@cpa.org.au or pay by PayPal on cpa.org.au

CPA GREETING TO THE CENTENARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA

CPA Statement

On the historic occasion of the centenary of the founding of your esteemed Party, the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) sends its fraternal greetings and congratulations.

The CPA appreciates its growing fraternal relations with the Communist Party of China, and the deepening relations amongst the international Communist movement generally. The experience of the CPC in carrying out revolution and socialist construction, as well as the adaptation of Marxism to the complex circumstances of China, is a vast library of knowledge studied throughout the world.

Since the tragic counter-revolutions in the USSR and Eastern Europe, it has been widely commented that the international Communist movement has been at a low ebb. The unipolar world with US hegemony has been a disaster for the people of the world. But world events are moving in a new direction. China's growing prestige amongst the developing world is revealing new opportunities for human development, independence, peace, and happiness for the people.

International solidarity is growing between the world's progressive people striving for independence, peace, and socialism. While the socialist camp took a serious hit towards the end of the 20th century, the growing solidarity and cooperation between China, Vietnam, Lao PDR, DPR Korea, and Cuba, as well as the revolutionary processes in Venezuela and elsewhere, inspires confidence in the future of international socialism and the long march towards Communism.

The United States spreads vicious lies and manipulations, and applies grossly unfair means such as murderous sanctions and interventions, in its desperate attempts to maintain dominance. But the emerging new standard of international relations, exemplified by China's commitment to multilateralism, equality, and respect, reveals the unacceptability of hegemony-seeking in the modern world, and its incompatibility with the interests of humanity.

The new model of building a community with shared future for humankind shows the way towards a peaceful model of international development and relations.

The Communist Party of China's achievements in poverty reduction show what is possible with a scientific, materialist outlook on development and governance. The difference between the capitalist and socialist systems is here brought into clearest focus: under capitalism the interests of the working and poor people are only considered where they are relevant to the interests of the wealthy; under socialism, the interests of the wealthy are only considered where they are relevant to the interests of the working and poor people. The class nature of the state and government impress themselves on the whole society.

The CPC's ambitious goals towards the People's Republic of China's centenary in 2049 will surely be met, transforming China into a powerful modern socialist country and an undeniable model for the world.

"The Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true" – these immortal words of Comrade Lenin remain as valid as ever. And as Comrade Mao Zedong said: "Armed with Marxist-Leninist theory and ideology, the Communist Party of China has brought a new style of work to the Chinese people, a style of work which essentially entails integrating theory with practice, forging close links with the masses and practising self-criticism." This style of work continues to be carried on by the CPC, guiding the successive victories of the Chinese people.

Long live the Communist Party of China!
Long live proletarian internationalism!
Long live socialism!

International Department
Communist Party of Australia

THE WORLD REACTS TO CUBA'S DEMAND: 184 NATIONS AGAINST THE US BLOCKADE!

Yisell Rodríguez Milán

The UN General Assembly overwhelmingly approves the resolution "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

With a vote as impressive as all those on other historic occasions, the Cuban resolution demanding an end to the blockade was approved on 23rd June in the United Nations General Assembly by 184 votes in favour, two against and three abstentions.

Colombia, Ukraine and Brazil abstained; while the United States and Israel opposed Cuba's demand.

After the result of the vote was announced, Communist Party of Cuba First Secretary and President of the Republic Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, tweeted: "184 votes in favour, two against and three abstentions. This is how the world reacts to Cuba's demand. It's now been twenty-eight years of worldwide rejection of the blockade. The blockaders have run out of arguments. Those in solidarity strengthen support. Eliminate the blockade."

Party Political Bureau member and Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla likewise posted, "184 countries against the blockade! Once again, from the United Nations. A great victory for the Cuban people, for justice and truth."

During his remarks before the General Assembly, Rodríguez denounced the United States government's decision to use the pandemic as an ally in its unconventional war against the Revolution, intensifying the blockade and causing the country losses of some US5bil dollars in just one year.

He noted that also remaining in full force are the more than 240 hostile measures adopted by the administration of Donald Trump, which interrupted the delivery of remittances to Cuban families, hurt the nation's self-employed, disrupted family reunification, and made their battle against COVID-19 more difficult.

A large majority of the US population, nonetheless, support the elimination of the blockade and normalisation of travel, he emphasised.

The human damage is incalculable, Rodríguez said, stressing that no Cuban family's life escapes the effects of this policy, while other states are victims of the extraterritorial impact of the blockade.

It is neither legal nor ethical that the government of a great power blockade a small nation in an attempt to impose a government of its design, he stated, adding, "It is not permissible, it is unacceptable."

Cuba's demand is to live in peace with no blockade, to end the persecution of its economic relations and the manipulation of its reality, and eliminate obstacles to its development.

Rodríguez also thanked the international community for its support of Cuba. "We are encouraged by the solidarity of thousands of people who have gathered around the world to demand an end to the US blockade," he said. "On behalf of my country, of our honourable and generous people, I submit for your consideration the draft resolution, 'The necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba.'"

Granma

CHILE: DANIEL JADUE INTRODUCES HIS PRESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

The government program of Chilean presidential candidate Daniel Jadue was introduced Monday. And a call was made "to discuss the program," calling for town meetings and meetings in different spaces of the people -territorial, sectorial- throughout the country.

"We already have a program proposal, and we invite you to get to know it. We begin this beautiful journey to transform Chile," said Jadue through social networks. Citizens were invited to access www.danieljaduepresidente.cl, go to "government program" to know the text, discuss it, and send proposals.

The team of the presidential candidate, mayor of Recoleta, and leader of the Communist Party, proposed a schedule of a "citizen and popular programmatic process" with self-convened spaces from June 16 to July 31, thematic approach on August 6, 7, and 8, regional discussion on August 13, 14 and 15, systematisation of proposals and approaches from August 16 to September 5, drafting of a final text between September 7 and 20, and presentation of the final program, already considering the participation of the people, on September 25.

It was explained that all this discussion would take place in meetings self-convened by the citizens to build the program. The exercise of a moderator and a recording secretary will take note of the agreements and fill out a form at www.danieljaduepresidente.cl regarding this process of government program.

MAIN CONTENTS AND MEASURES

The document is entitled "Government Program for a dignified, green and sovereign, plurinational and intercultural, feminist and with parity in Chile." It contains 209 pages where government proposals on taxation, labor, pensions, municipalities, native peoples, children and adolescents, sexual diversity and non-discrimination, health, education, transportation, overcoming patriarchy, sustainability and environment, re-foundation of the police, citizen security as human security, right to water, truth-memory and human rights, a new economy and new development model, establishment of a social and democratic State are addressed.

Among the contents and proposals is the end of the CAE (State Guaranteed Credit, which is a financing alternative for students who will start or continue an undergraduate career), the end of profit in education, the extension of free higher technical and professional education to 100 per cent, greater powers for municipalities, remuneration of domestic work, and an increase in the liveable wage to 576,000 pesos per month in four years.

The program has a total cost of 11.2 points of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Among the financing mechanisms is tax reform – which according to calculations, will generate a more significant collection of between eight and ten per cent of GDP – in addition to reallocation and savings, with a reform of the state to make resources more efficient. There is the idea of a modification of the upper-income tax brackets, mining royalty, the tax on the super-rich, elimination of exemptions, and greater control of evasion and avoidance, with which between 25 and 30 billion dollars could be collected, all for the benefit of social plans and support for the majority of Chilean families.

Daniel Jadue, when answering questions from the press, indicated that "one never starts from zero. These caricatures that are sometimes made of a clean slate, which are the way some people use to discredit their opponents, do not make sense because one never starts from zero." He pointed out that "what we have is a project of transformation and overcoming neoliberalism, placing the frontier in the responsibility of the State to ensure a decent life for all."

Some of the programmatic ideas point to the legalisation of abortion, 40-hour working weeks, legalisation of marijuana for medicinal use, reform of the Carabineros and access to water for the people, establishing a plurinational State, a zero corruption agenda, recall plebiscites, recognition of sexual diversities.

Jadue mentioned as one of the global objectives of his program that "taxes must be a contribution to improve the quality of life of citizens. Therefore, we must put an end to abuses and privileges of those who do not want to contribute to the country's development".

The programmatic proposal has five central points:

- Structural reforms.
- A country focusing on rights, inclusive and diverse.
- A new economy for an inclusive developed, and diversified Chile.
- Environmental reform.
- A new social and democratic State.

Daniel Jadue said that "it is the mobilised people of Chile who have put on the table the necessary overcoming of this model and we are at a propitious moment to give a strategic defeat to this model and move forward in the resolution of problems, pains, and anxieties that have accompanied our people for too long, during too many unfulfilled promises, of public policies that have never come to solve the core of our people's lives."

Daniel Jadue.

teleSUR ✪

IRANIAN COMMUNISTS CALL FOR WORKING-CLASS UNITY AGAINST ILLEGITIMATE THEOCRATIC REGIME

Iranian communists called for a united struggle of all progressive forces today after the election of the "bloodstained" candidate Ebrahim Raisi as the country's next president in a widely boycotted election.

The Tudeh Party of Iran (TPI) said in a statement that the turnout in the election, the lowest in the history of the Islamic republic, was a damning indictment that called into question the legitimacy of the theocratic regime.

It said that the low levels of participation were a vindication of its calls for a boycott.

TPI said that the "scandalous show of the election," in which hundreds of candidates were barred from standing, "marks a decisive turning point and an end once and for all to the theory that the Islamic regime in Iran can be reformed.

"The only way to rid the homeland of the devastation wrought by the socio-economic, cultural, and foreign policies of this regime is to establish the people's rule: a rule that relies on the democratic mandate of the people, the preservation of territorial integrity, and the protection of the national interests and rights of every citizen of Iran," it said.

Mr Raisi was elected with sixty-two per cent of the vote in an election that critics insisted was rigged to ensure his victory.

The official turnout was forty-eight per cent, though some observers have put the real figure as low as thirty per cent, with information difficult to verify.

The head of the Iranian judiciary has a bloodstained history, having been a member of the so-called "death committee" that oversaw the 1988 mass execution of political prisoners following a fatwa by the founder of the republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Among these were tens of thousands of Tudeh members, who were jailed, tortured, and executed when the theocratic regime turned on its former supporters after having eliminated most of the Iranian left.

TPI International Secretary Navid Shomali told the Morning Star that the real barometer of opinion when analysing the elections was among the Iranian working class.

"The factory workers, the oil workers, metalworkers, teachers, nurses, women and youth, resolutely declined to attend the polling stations and stayed away.

"Communists, progressive left, progressive nationalists and eminent writers and poets, all boycotted the election," he said.

About 4.5mil people obliged to vote because of their employment spoiled their ballot papers, according to the official statistics, he said.

The TPI called on all progressive forces to unite against the Iranian Islamist regime.

Morning Star ✪

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YOUNG UYGURS LOOK TO SUE AUSTRALIAN THINK TANK OVER REPORT ON "FORCED LABOUR"

Nuradli Wublikas, a young Uygur man from Kashi of Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, is seeking to sue Australian think tank Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) for its report on the so-called forced labour in China's Xinjiang, as the ASPI report has hurt the image of the Uygur group and undermines their employment opportunities.

"We want them to stop slandering my hometown and to apologise for having defamed us," said Nuradli.

In April, led by the 26-year-old Nuradli, a group of young Uygur people living in Changsha, capital of Central China's Hunan Province, co-authored a joint letter and called on more Uygur people whose interests have been hurt by ASPI's report on the so-called forced labour in China to join their activities to sue the Australian think tank.

In February 2020, ASPI released a report claiming that the Chinese government "forced" the massive labour transfer of Uygur people from Xinjiang region to factories in other cities in China. The report was cited by many Western media outlets, which turned a blind eye to the fact that the report had been refuted by China for its loopholes and slander.

In November 2020, the US Commerce Department announced sanctions on Chinese companies over allegations of "forced labour."

"I noticed my hometown Xinjiang has long been slandered. After hearing the news on ASPI's report, I found it and read through it with the help of a translator," Nuradli told the *Global Times*.

Nuradli was filled with anger and indignation after reading the report. "The report is full of lies! I was born and grew up in Xinjiang and know so many Uygurs living and working in other cities across the country, and no one is 'forced' to work outside! It really made me angry that we Uygurs are portrayed by the Australian think tank report as lazy people who need to be 'forced' to work," the young man said.

"Those who wrote the report know little about Xinjiang's real situation [...]" said Nuradli, "There is a lot of surplus labour in villages and people are willing to work outside. A friend of mine worked in other cities outside Xinjiang for a year and earned enough money to build a new house. And after another year of working, he had the money to marry his girlfriend."

He noted that in sharp contrast to the ASPI report's allegations of "forced labour," people from Xinjiang who choose to work in other Chinese cities are making their own decisions as to where they go to work and what kind of jobs they do. Those who want to start their own businesses in other cities also enjoy many favourable policies.

"Take myself as an example. After graduating from Jishou University in 2018, I started my own e-commerce business named *Haobalang* selling Xinjiang food. Since I began trying to start my business when I was in university, my teachers, the university and local government of Zhangjiajie [where Jishou Univerisity is located in Central China's Hunan Province] have helped me a lot," Nuradli said.

Haobalang literally means "good boy" as "balang" is boy in the Uygur language.

In addition to damaging the Uygurs' image and dignity, the ASPI's slander also undermines Uygurs' rights, Nuradli pointed out

"One senior student who graduated from my university told me that he was sacked from a foreign trade corporation, as the US purchasing agent asked this company and other partners to look into the 'forced labour' of Uygurs. Although these companies hired Uygur employees in accordance with laws and regulations, they decided to sack them to avoid possible risks or sanctions from the US. We Uygurs' rights for development and employment have been undermined," said Nuradli.

Apart from ASPI, recently, some think tanks and individuals from the West and the US have actively joined the campaign to slander China over the so-called forced labour in its Xinjiang region, and have cited the untenable allegation to ban products, especially cotton, from the region.

In April, a court in Kashi Prefecture of Xinjiang accepted the lawsuit of a local yarning company named Xiongying to sue the infamous anti-China German "scholar" Adrian Zenz for his reports on the so-called forced labour, as Zenz's reports have severely damaged the company's reputation and caused economic losses.

The *Global Times* also learned from sources that more companies and individuals that have been affected by the "forced labour" hype and the ensuing sanctions, including labour services companies, are preparing to use the law to protect their interests.

WORKING TOGETHER

The irresponsible slander on "forced labour" has angered not only Nuradli but also other people from Xinjiang. In April, when having dinner with a friend from Kashi who also worked in Zhangjiajie, Nuradli talked about his dissatisfaction toward ASPI and Western media reports.

"I told him that I wanted to do something and he said the same. We talked for a long time. That night, I wrote a letter of nearly 2,000 words in both Chinese and Uygur language, calling for more people to join us to sue ASPI. After jointly polishing it for more than a week, we posted it on WeChat," said Nuradli.

The letter was soon reposted and shared by many people, with more than 1mil people having read it and many friends calling to ask if they could join them. Kudlik Kadir, who graduated from Jishou University two years before Nuradli, is one of them.

"After reading Nuradli's letter, I felt touched and excited and felt we Uygurs are obliged to stand up to voice our dissatisfaction with slander from the West. I want to do this with Nuradli," Kudlik told the *Global Times*.

In order to draw more attention, they also organised some offline activities in a restaurant – all the waiters and waitresses wore T-shirts with the words "Support China-made products and support Xinjiang region" printed on them and customers at the restaurant were sent gifts decorated with Xinjiang cotton.

Kudlik and Nuradli are now collecting facts and evidence on Uygurs who were subjected to damages brought by the ASPI report and seeking legal assistance.

"I learned that a company in Xinjiang and local residents are working to sue the infamous German individual Adrian Zenz, asking him to make an apology and compensate them for their losses. We also want to sue ASPI for having damaged the Uygurs' reputation," Kudlik said.

However, lawyers suggested that it will be hard to file the case since Nuradli and Kudlik are not directly affected by ASPI and the law cannot support a lawsuit against an infringement that has not yet happened. As for those who have lost their jobs due to the ASPI report, it is also hard to prove the link between their sacking and the impact of the report.

"Although we are facing many difficulties, we will not give up. We are encouraged that the local court in Kashi accepted the case against Adrian Zenz. We will do our best to make ASPI apologise for having hurt us!" Nuradli said.

On the 2nd of April, the Intermediate People's Court in Kashi of Xinjiang accepted the lawsuit brought by Xiongying Yarning Company against Adrian Zenz. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told a press conference on the 14th of April that it showed Chinese people's increasing awareness of using the law to protect their interests.

"We support this much-applauded move [...]. As the case progresses, we believe the Chinese people and the international community will get to know more about the contemptible moves by Zenz to concoct rumors, and the attempt of Zenz and the malicious anti-China forces behind him to disrupt Xinjiang's security and stability and impede China's development will fall apart even faster," Zhao said.

Global Times

CAMPAIGN AHEAD OF UN VOTE ON BLOCKADE

On June 23, the United Nations General Assembly will vote on a motion to again condemn the US blockade of Cuba. The UN has repeatedly voted in favour of similar motions, by very wide margins, but this year's vote is particularly important because of the recent tightening of the blockade and US President Joe Biden's decision to leave Cuba on the list of "state sponsors of terrorism."

In preparation for the UN vote, the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) has launched a petition campaign calling on the Canadian government to pressure the United States to end the blockade and aggression against Cuba. The CNC is also planning several actions and events during the week of June 23, including a 24-hour virtual picket.

The petition is being sponsored by Manitoba NDP MP Niki Ashton. The CNC is campaigning to get thousands of signatures as quickly as possible. Links to the online petition in French and English are available on the CNC website.

The text of the petition follows:

Whereas:

The government of the United States has imposed economic sanctions, amounting to an economic war, against Cuba for more than sixty years, constituting the principal obstacle to Cuba's social and economic development, having cost in excess of $100 billion;

The Government of the United States has pressured and coerced other countries to participate in its regime of economic sanctions against Cuba;

The United States economic sanctions and the campaign of subversion against Cuba are a violation of international law, the right of self-determination and the human rights of the people of Cuba; and

Since 1992, the international community, including Canada, has rejected United States economic sanctions against Cuba through overwhelming votes in the United Nations General Assembly.

We, the undersigned, citizens and residents of Canada, call upon the Government of Canada to:

Call on the Government of the United States to end all economic sanctions against Cuba;

Call on the Government of the United States to cease its campaign of subversion and policy of hostility and aggression against Cuba;

Call on the Government of the United States to remove Cuba from the United States Department of State's List of State Sponsors of Terror;

Take immediate steps and actions through the implementation and enforcement of, among others, the Foreign Extraterritorial Measures Act, in order to preserve Canadian sovereignty and ensure that Canadian companies and other entities do not participate in United States economic sanctions against Cuba; and

Ensure that its relations with Cuba be based on equality and the respect of sovereignty, independence and the right of self-determination.

People's Voice

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