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Israel's illegal attack on Iran

Destroyed buildings during Israeli attack in Tehran. Photo: Tasnim News Agency (CC BY 4.0)

Vijay Prashad

Israel's consistent attacks on Iran since 2023 have all been illegal, violations of the United Nations Charter (1945). Iran is a member state of the United Nations and is therefore a sovereign state in the international order. If Israel had a problem with Iran, there are many mechanisms mandated by international law that permit Israel to bring complaints.

So far Israel has avoided these international forums because it is clear that it has no case against Iran. Allegations that Iran is building a nuclear weapon, which are constantly raised by the United States, the European Union, and Israel, have been fully investigated by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and found to be unfounded. It is certainly true that Iran has a nuclear energy programme that is within the rules in place through the IAEA. It is also true that Iran's clerical establishment has a *fatwa* (religious edict) in place against the production of nuclear weapons. Despite the IAEA findings and the existence of this *fatwa*, the West – egged on by Israel – has accepted the irrational idea that Iran is building a nuclear weapon and that Iran is therefore a threat to the international order. Indeed, by its punctual and illegal attacks on Iran, it is Israel that is a threat to the international order.

Over the past decades, Iran has called for the establishment of a Middle East Nuclear Free Zone, a strange idea coming from a country accused of wanting to build a nuclear weapon. The call has been rejected by the West, largely to protect Israel, which has an illegal nuclear weapons programme. Israel is the only country in the Middle East with nuclear weapons, although it has never tested them openly nor acknowledged their existence. If Israel was so keen on eliminating any nuclear threat, it should have quickly taken up Iran's offer of a nuclear-free zone.

Neither the Europeans, who so often posture as defenders of international law, nor the United Nations leadership have publicly pushed Israel to adopt this idea because both recognise that this would require Israel, not Iran, to denuclearise. That this is an improbable situation has meant that there has been no movement from the West or from the international institutions to take this idea forward and build an international consensus to develop a nuclear-free Middle East.

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Israel is the only country in the Middle East with nuclear weapons

UN votes for immediate Gaza ceasefire

Members of the United Nations have voted overwhelmingly to demand an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all hostages held by Hamas, and unrestricted access for the delivery of desperately needed food to two million Palestinians.

The vote in the 193-member general assembly was 149-12 with 19 abstentions. It was adopted with a burst of applause. The United States and Israel opposed the resolution, along with Argentina, Hungary, Paraguay, Papua New Guinea, and six Pacific island nations.

The resolution, drafted by Spain, "strongly condemns any use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare."

Israel's UN Ambassador Danny Danon denied that Israel was using starvation as a weapon of war, calling the accusation a "blood libel," and insisted that aid was being delivered.

Experts say hunger is widespread in Gaza and some two million Palestinians are at risk of famine if Israel does not fully lift its blockade and halt its military campaign, which it renewed in March after breaching a ceasefire with Hamas.

Before the vote, Palestinian UN ambassador Riyad Mansour said: "The actions you take today to stop the killing, displacement and the famine will determine how many more Palestinian children die a horrible death."

General assembly President Philemon Yang said the UN was being called on to address "the unacceptable and catastrophic situation in Gaza" because the security council is paralysed and unable to fulfil its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

Meanwhile Egyptian authorities detained additional activists planning to march to Gaza to protest restrictions on aid reaching the territory, while security forces in eastern Libya blocked a convoy of activists en route to meet them.

Demonstrators from 80 countries planned to march to Egypt's border with Gaza to spotlight the deepening humanitarian crises facing Palestinians.

The detentions come after hundreds arriving in Cairo were earlier detained and deported to their home countries.

Alexis Deswaef, a Belgian human rights lawyer, said he woke up to dozens of security vehicles packed with uniformed officers surrounding Talat Harb Square, where he and other activists had found hotels.

"I am so surprised to see the Egyptians doing the dirty work of Israel," he said from the pyramids. He hoped there would be too many activists at the new meeting point outside Cairo for Egyptian authorities to arrest en masse.

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Breaking: High Court fails workers in CFMEU case. Full analysis next issue.

Guardian

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Trump, USA with the mask off

US President Donald Trump is always in the news. There are a lot of reasons to think he's an especially horrible person. He's very corrupt and corruptible, accepting a US$400 million plane from a foreign power. He's tacky, selling a Trump Bible and a Trump phone, as well as his own dodgy crypto-currency. He's hypocritical, just saying whatever seems to work at the time of speaking. Trump has lied so many times it's almost impossible to keep count. He's also spiteful and petty, descending to childish levels of personal abuse in a way normally seen in primary school playgrounds rather than from international leaders. Usually people who run countries at least pretend to be responsible adults. Trump doesn't.

Given Trump's behaviour and character, it's tempting to see him as an aberration, as someone uniquely wrong in charge of the world's most powerful nation. If only that nice Kamala Harris had won, people think. If only Biden were still US president, or even better, Obama.

In fact, Trump is a continuity candidate. He's the mixture as before, but with the mask off.

If you don't believe this, ask Cuba. Obama received praise for dropping in on Cuba but didn't change much. Biden, after promising to undo sanctions Trump had placed on Cuba, did nothing until the last week of his presidency. For this small, persecuted Socialist country, the US remains much the same. Cubans will probably be glad when Trump finally goes, but they don't have much to look forward to under his successors.

Ask Iraq. Under supposedly 'liberal' US President Clinton, sanctions on Iraq led to the deaths of half a million Iraqi children. Clinton's Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, praised for being the first woman in that position, didn't hesitate to say "the price is worth it." Trump has no monopoly on cruelty.

You could ask China. US Presidents have long had the priority of 'containing' China, not because the People's Republic threatens the US militarily (it doesn't). China has to be 'contained' because it is 'assertive,' a large important country that stands up for itself. The US has long had an attitude of 'exceptionalism' – believing that it's the only country on earth that can have interests outside its borders. When it comes to China, Trump might as well be Biden, Obama, Bush, or Clinton.

If you still think Trump is unique, you could have a look at how US workers are travelling. No matter who's in charge, the US puts the interests of capital ahead of workers, giving them a system in which health care is run for insurance companies, unionism is actively discouraged, and wages are low. The US has higher mortality rates and worse work conditions than a lot of less wealthy countries.

Trump isn't any decent person's idea of a great leader, but whoever is in charge of the USA, that country is a poster child for capitalism and the imperialism that follows from it. The positive alternative to Trump isn't just a better-behaved US president. The good alternative to capitalism is socialism. That's what the Communist Party of Australia is working for.

Israel's illegal attack on Iran

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Israel does not want to build a nuclear-free zone in the region. What Israel wants is to be the sole nuclear power in the region, and therefore to be exactly what it is – namely, the largest United States military base in the world that happens to be home to a large civilian population. Iran has no ambition to be a nuclear power. What it has is an ambition to be a sovereign state that remains committed to justice for the Palestinians. Israel has a problem with any state in the region that commits itself to Palestinian emancipation. If Iran normalised relations with Israel and ceased its opposition to US domination in the region, then it is likely that Israel would end its opposition to Iran.

PAVING THE WAY

In January 2020, the United States conducted an illegal assassination at Iraq's Baghdad Airport to kill General Qassem Soleimani, the leader of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). Soleimani, through the Quds Force, had produced for Iran an insurance policy against further Israeli attacks on the country. The Quds Force is responsible for Iranian military operations outside the boundaries of the country, including building what is called the "Axis of Resistance" that includes the various pro-Iranian governments and non-governmental military forces. These included: Hezbollah in Lebanon, various IRGC groups in Syria that worked with Syrian militia groups, the government of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, several Palestinian factions in Occupied Palestine, and the Ansar Allah government in Yemen. Without its own nuclear deterrent, Iran required some way to balance the military superiority of Israel and the United States. This deterrence was created by the "Axis of Resistance," an insurance policy that allowed Iran to let Israel know that if Israel fired at Iran, these groups would retaliate.

The assassination of Soleimani began a determined new political and military campaign by the United States, Israel, and their European allies to weaken Iran. Israel and the United States began to punctually strike Iranian logistical bases in Syria and Iraq to weaken Iran's forward posture and to demoralise the Syrian and Iraqi militia groups that operated against Israeli interests. Israel began to assassinate IRGC military officers in Syria, Iran, and Iraq, a campaign of murder that began to have an impact on the IRGC and the Quds Force.

Taking advantage of its genocidal war against the Palestinians in Gaza, Israel, with full support from the United States and Europe, began to damage the "Axis of Resistance," Iran's insurance policy. Israel took its war into Lebanon, with a ruthless bombing campaign that included the assassination of the Hezbollah leader Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah on 27 September 2024. This campaign, while it has not totally demolished Hezbollah, has certainly weakened it. Meanwhile, Israel began a regular bombing campaign against the Syrian military positions around Damascus and along the road to Idlib in the north. This bombing campaign, coordinated with the US military and with the US intelligence services, was designed to open the roadway for the entry of the former al-Qaeda fighters into Damascus and to overthrow the government of al-Assad on 8 December 2024. The fall of the al-Assad government dented Iran's strength across the Levant (from the Turkish border to the Occupied Palestinian Territory) as well as along the plains from southern Syria to the Iranian border. The consistent campaign by the United States to bomb Yemeni positions further resulted in the loss of Ansar Allah's heavy equipment (including long-range missiles) that fundamentally threatened Israel.

By early 2025, the Iranian insurance policy against Israel had collapsed. Israel began its march to war, suggesting an attack on Iran was imminent. Such an attack, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu knows, would help him in a domestic political fight with the ultra-orthodox parties over the question of a military exemption for their communities; this will prevent his government from falling. Cynical Netanyahu is using genocide and the possibility of a horrendous war with Iran for narrow political ends. But that is not what is motivating this attack. What is motivating this attack is that Israel smells an opportunity to try to overthrow the Iranian government by force.

Iran returned to the negotiations brokered by the IAEA to prevent such an attack. Its leadership knew full well that nothing would stop a scofflaw such as Israel from bombing Iran. Nothing did. Not even the fact that Iran is still at the negotiation table. Israel has taken advantage of Iran's momentary weakness to strike.

People's Dispatch

Support the *Guardian* by donating to Press Fund

Vale Dr Hannah Middleton

1942 - 2025

Dr Hannah Middleton served as President of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) 1993-2009, and in 2009, after the death of the long-time General Secretary, Peter Symon, was elected as the Party's first female General Secretary.

Hannah was born in Preston, England in 1942, and grew up in the very austere surroundings of London after World War II, which developed her early, strong socio-political acumen. As a child of 8 or 9 she accompanied her mother collecting signatures for the Stockholm Peace Appeal, and aged 16 was arrested during the 'Committee of 100' civil disobedience campaigns as well as participating in the Aldermaston peace marches.

When her mother became Mayor of Greenwich in 1960, Hannah acted as Mayoress. While completing her studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, she joined the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1962, and worked in the Party's international section. As part of her course, she spent three months in northern Nigeria, practising the Hausa language and studying the impact of colonialism on the language. After graduating in African Studies (BA Hons) in 1964, one of her jobs was with the African Section of the British Broadcasting Corporation. She also organised fundraising concerts for medical aid to Vietnam. Later she moved to the German Democratic Republic (GDR), working there for three years to 1968 as a lecturer in English language whilst studying as a postgraduate in social anthropology at the Humboldt University, Berlin.

Between 1970 and 1971, Hannah carried out fieldwork in Australia, living for eleven months with the Gurindji people of the Northern Territory, and in 1972 presented her doctoral thesis, *The Land Rights and Civil Rights Campaign of the Gurindji at Wattie Creek*: emigrating to Australia permanently two years later. She joined the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) in 1974, and worked as a lecturer (later senior lecturer) in Sociology and Social Anthropology, in the School of Sociology at the University of New South Wales until 1980.

Hannah left the university to become an active member of the CPA that year, when asked to become a full-time journalist on its newspaper, *Guardian, The Workers' Weekly*. She was *Guardian* editor from 1985 - 1988. During this time she served as Party Education Officer. She was a founding member of the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition in 1986 and its national spokesperson from 1988 onwards. The AABCC is a national coalition of Australian organisations researching and producing information and campaigning against the foreign military installations (primarily the 30 United States bases) on Australian soil.

A protest at the US military facility at Nurrungar in South Australia in 1991 saw her arrested for breach of the peace. She faced the same charge when arrested during the 1991 Stop AIDEX campaign against Australian involvement in the arms trade. Her work with the AABCC sought to develop relations between peace groups across the Asia-Pacific region, working with groups in Fiji, the Philippines, South Korea, Japan and Kanaky. Hannah was active in the formation (2007) of the International Network against Foreign Military Bases, embracing 40 countries.

Hannah was also involved in the 'Bring the Frigates Home' coalition in 1991 as a founder member and full-time worker, campaigning against the Gulf War. She worked tirelessly on the campaign against US sanctions on Iraq and, during the actual invasion, was active in the leadership of the 'Walk against the War' coalition, becoming co-Convenor of the Sydney Peace and Justice Coalition.

Hannah was again arrested in 1996 for occupying Prime Minister Keating's office in an East Timor protest. In 2007 she organised for activists from Hawaii to come to Australia for the Talisman Sabre war games protests. In 2008 she was awarded the Quakers' Donald Groom Fellowship for her submission to bring two indigenous Chamoru from Guam to Australia for a speaking tour.

Hannah worked as campaign manager for the Asbestos Diseases Foundation and was campaign officer for the Australian Lawyers Alliance for a number of years before becoming Executive Officer of the University of Sydney's Sydney Peace Foundation from 2006 to 2012, when she retired from paid employment – but not political activity. The Foundation awards the Sydney Peace Prize, Australia's only international prize for peace.

Hannah's concern for the working class never abated and saw many articles and books written over the years. Her books *But now we want the land back*, *Fighting for the Future*, and *Daguragu Pretty* are in the Party bookshop now. She wrote a bi-monthly newsletter distributed in Sydney's inner west, in support and defence of public housing. Especially relevant is her article 'Racism in Australia', written for the *Australian Marxist Review* (Issue 37) in April 1997, epitomising her attitude towards the racism and inequality perpetuated in Australia up to the present day:

> "Racism makes it possible for capitalism to sustain and continue its exploitation of the multi-national working class in Australia and its original theft of the main means of production, the land, from its Aboriginal owners. The appeal of the corporate rich to the public to accept greater sacrifices is accompanied by a sharp increase in the use of racism as a weapon to divide and rule."

Hannah had an unerring finger on the political pulse of this country for half a century and in her own words, believed:

> It is not sufficient to state the aim of establishing a socialist Australia. It will not just fall into our laps – it will have to be argued for, popularised, and fought for.

Hannah worked tirelessly in the suburb of Glebe and in the inner-city area of Sydney as an advocate of community action for a better urban environment and against overdevelopment. She was active in the fight to save public housing from demolition and gentrification. She was a foundation member of the community group 'Hands off Glebe' and 'Action for Public Housing' which sought to combine community groups across the inner city of Sydney.

Rest in power, comrade Hannah.

Hannah at the CPA 10th Congress, 2005.

Hannah at a Hiroshima peace rally, Sydney, 2004.

Half of Australian workers live pay to pay

FK

Despite employment reaching a record high in 2024, half of Australian workers (50%) are living payday to payday, according to ADP Research's People at Work 2025 report. The study, which surveyed nearly 38,000 workers across 34 markets, uncovers stark regional disparities and generational divides in the global workforce's financial resilience.

The findings reveal a complex financial picture, both locally and internationally: taking on extra work doesn't necessarily close the pay gap, as nearly six in 10 (57%) workers surveyed globally are still struggling to make ends meet, even working multiple jobs.

In Australia, over half (52%) of workers with two jobs and nearly six in 10 (58%) of those with three or more jobs report holding multiple roles to cover necessary expenses.

Globally, more than half (54%) of single-job holders, 59% of workers with two jobs, and 61% of workers with three or more jobs are struggling to make ends meet.

A significant portion of Australians are turning to multiple jobs to cope with financial demands.

- Two jobs: 58% say they do it to afford extra costs, and 35% to build life savings and prepare for retirement.
- Three or more jobs: 58% do it to build savings and prepare for retirement, and 46% to cover extra costs.

Employer groups love to talk about the benefits of 'flexibility' and 'freedom' when it comes to job security. The mainstream media support this with a string of articles about 'side hustles', but the survey shows that for most of the working class who do it, multiple jobs are a grim necessity, not a fun hobby.

The Communist Party of Australia supports job security for all working people.

Hands off Iran, sanction Israel

The Communist Party of Australia condemns in the strongest possible terms the Zionist pre-emptive strikes against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The attacks on military and civilian targets have already left hundreds of dead and injured people.

The Israeli attacks on Iran were unprovoked with the usual rhetoric and lies used as excuses for the military action. Israel has the full support of the United States; Israeli wars are not possible without them.

Zionism has been pursuing a Greater Israel policy in the Middle East. Gaza and the West Bank have been under a war on its people with the aim of expelling them from their land, which amounts to genocide.

Equally, Israel has launched military attacks on other countries in the region, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and now Iran. No one is safe in the area with the Netanyahu government's geopolitical ambitions.

Close to two years of demonstrations across Australia and the world have demanded a ceasefire and an independent Palestinian state. We have put pressure on the Albanese government to respond ethically. Instead, it continues to trade with Israel and uphold political and economic ties with the Zionists, endorsing the genocide on the people of Gaza.

Australia has a very weak government that hasn't done anything meaningful to stop Israel's warmongering against the people in the Middle East.

The CPA calls on the Australian government to impose sanctions and cut all military and diplomatic ties with the genocidal government of Israel.

Hands off the Middle East, sanction Israel!

Communist Party of Australia, CPA International Department

16th June 2025

Robodebt: lessons not learned

Peter Farmer

Robodebt was a huge scandal for the Morrison government. On Morrison's watch as Social Security Minister and continuing during his other jobs, Centrelink hounded innocent people, driving some to suicide. The whole exercise was aimed at saving money, but it cost the government a fortune. At the time, it fulfilled an unspoken priority, which was to make the then government, especially Morrison, look good through performative cruelty towards unemployed people.

The idea was straightforward: find out who was being 'robodebt' unemployment or disability allowance, and get the money back using computers to make the whole exercise cost-effective. Nothing could be simpler.

What was wrong with it was simple too. The computers took all the earnings a person had made over a period of time and averaged them out over a year, then pinged people for overpayments on the assumption that they'd been paid the same amount every fortnight. So if someone had worked a lot from March to May, but had no work in the rest of the year, they would be entitled to unemployment benefits for the months in which they hadn't worked, but the computer programs would average their earnings out over the whole year and report an overpayment for the other months. That method produced a lot of false notices.

The error was compounded, and made more dangerous by sending out automated debt letters and demanding that people prove their innocence of these debts over a period of seven years, adding a warning that the debt could be sold on to debt collectors and that legal action could be taken. *That's* what caused the suicides. This paper has reported on the scandal (see *Guardian* #2124, November 2024). There has been a Royal Commission, and a book (*Mean Streak*, by Rick Morton).

Now, according to a major academic study published by the Journal of Euripean Public Policy and reported by Australian website *The Mandarin*, both Defence and Home Affairs failed to communicate with their staff about any lessons learned from Robodebt. Even though the Defence Department Secretary, Greg Moriarty called robodebt "a very fundamental crisis in the public service." Departments talked about robodebt, but delegated actually doing something about it to individual departments and agencies. The study says that this "enabled moments of policy inaction."

The study found that when robodebt was talked about at a high level, they didn't go into detail about what had gone wrong, and always added the excuse that "it's important to remember ... many good people were trying to do the right thing."

Robodebt cost a lot of people a lot of grief, and some people their lives. It's not good enough to brush it away with "there were failures of leadership and judgement" and leave it at that.

a very fundamental crisis in the public service

The Mining and Energy Union is deeply concerned about safety in Victoria's aging coal plants, following a significant safety incident at Yallourn.

Earlier this month a large air duct collapsed onto the floor of the coal fired power station in an area frequently serviced by the plant's operators. It was sheer luck that no one was injured, and the incident has raised questions about the maintenance and safety standards at the state's coal stations as they reach their end-of-life.

Mining and Energy Union Victorian District President Andy Smith said the incident should serve as a wake-up call to improve safety at our power stations:

"Luck should never be factored into safety, but luck is the only reason that no one was injured or killed at Yallourn over the weekend.

"Workers have had very serious worries about the safety of the plant and equipment at Yallourn for quite some time. Following this weekend, those fears have unfortunately been justified.

"For as long as coal plays a role in underpinning Victoria's energy security, private operators must be required to undertake necessary upkeep to ensure worker safety.

"It is unconscionable that the plant has reached the stage where it's literally collapsing around workers while they perform their duties. The owners of our power stations must make necessary investments into maintenance and upkeep, regardless of if the plant is reaching its end-of-life."

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is Macquarie University management, which plans to scrap a raft of key courses as part of a brutal restructure that will axe more than 75 jobs and drastically cut options for students.

Bachelor degrees in archaeology, music, ancient languages will be scrapped, while sociology and ancient history will be decimated. Bachelor of Arts students will no longer be able to study politics, gender studies, criminology, and psychological studies as majors.

Masters degrees in electronics engineering, ancient history and two IT fields will also be discontinued. The Faculty of Arts faces 42 job losses along with 33 in the Faculty of Science and Engineering.

Macquarie University's annual report showed profit and operating cashflow improved substantially in 2024, while teaching and research revenue grew by almost double the rate of academic salaries.

The Macquarie cuts bring total job losses at NSW universities to more than 1,000 in the past year after similar announcements at UTS, University of Wollongong and Western Sydney University.

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU)'s Dr Nicholas Harrigan said: "I and so many other staff at Macquarie had an absolutely sick feeling in our stomachs when these cuts were announced. My heart just sank.

"These cuts are particularly cruel because in many cases individual staff members are being specifically targeted. This raises concerns that these cuts are really about targeting individuals management dislike, not actual business needs.

"We have been stuck in an atmosphere of crisis since August last year when they attempted to sack 700 casuals. The months of agonising uncertainty have taken a severe mental and physical toll on staff.

"The clear targeting of humanities and social sciences is an attack on the fundamental inherited legacy of human knowledge that charts over 2,000 years. To see that being sacrilegiously burned by managers is despicable."

NTEU Division Secretary Vince Caughley said: "Right now, across NSW, we're fighting job cuts at four universities. Four. That's not a coincidence – that's a crisis. A crisis of governance, a crisis of priorities, and a crisis of values.

"Every job cut means lost expertise, broken teams, lives upended – for both staff and students. And it sends a message: that those who build knowledge and support students every day are disposable."

Op-Ed: Minimum wage increase and need for unity

Marcus Browning

A minimum wage increase of 3.5 per cent is not just a blow for low paid workers. It creates an environment of wage restraint. Unions will find it more difficult arguing for higher wages in enterprise bargaining, unable to seek an increase in line with the minimum rate.

The decision also means that the unemployed are even less likely to get an increase in unemployment benefits. Over the past two to three decades of economic rationalist policies, successive governments have deliberately sought to widen the gap between unemployment benefits and the minimum wage.

The aim is to keep unemployment benefits as far as possible below the poverty line, to force the jobless in sheer desperation to accept any work, regardless of how appalling the working conditions and wages are. Time and again capitalist economists claim the minimum wage is too high. Freezing it in dollar terms means inflation reduces its real value.

For people dealing with the imposition of this austerity program, unity is paramount, for only the widest possible range of social forces united in action can beat back the anti-democratic onslaught. Unity cannot remain on a to-do list of the left, of the organised working class – which is under unprecedented attack – and of the broader, democratic forces which would make up a people's unity.

Re-uniting the left is a vital element in uniting the democratic forces. Personal impatience, opportunism and subjectivity have all played a part in the divisions which have occurred as have differences over questions of tactics, ideology, and strategy.

Rebuilding the left can best start with agreement on issues and joint actions in support of policies held in common. Where agreement is not reached on an issue, that issue must be put aside with each organisation free to express its view on the question. Ideological differences should not stand in the way of co-operation on issues held in common.

Left political parties have a responsibility to strengthen their cooperation, develop effective programs which reflect the interests of the working people and propose strategy and tactics to achieve such a program.

Left unity does not stand on its own, isolated from other forms of unity. Wage and salary earners make up the great majority of all those who take part in production and provide community services. This is an enormous social base for the development of working class unity.

A united working class means the establishment of unity in action by all sections of the working class in support of their economic and political interests.

Building a united front of workers means advocating policies and demands which workers will take up because they reflect and advance their interests. It means seeking the widest support and involvement of workers. It means being prepared to work with other political organisations and individuals willing to advance the cause of working people.

Workers are not alone in attempting to achieve a better society. All progressive and democratic sections of society take up campaigns against the effects of capitalism's social and economic crisis, the drive to war, the betrayal of Australia's independence and sovereignty.

Photo: martinhoward – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

A range of progressive movements exist which involve workers, intellectuals, farmers, professionals and others. They provide a realistic basis on which to build a broad and active people's unity in support of progressive issues and to defend democratic rights.

Workers and working-class organisations play a part in many mass movements. However, their participation is often limited and does not fulfil the need for the working class to play the leading role which their size, experience and organisation calls for. Working class unity is the basis for the development and success of the broader people's unity.

Left unity, the unity in action of the working class, and the unity in common struggle of the working class and the other progressive and democratic social forces in society are interdependent processes.

Unity and co-operation between the different progressive social forces is a powerful force for change. Unity at all levels is the key to repelling the offensive of capital against the rights, and indeed the lives, of Australia's working people.

The people united can never be defeated. ✪

Why we hold vigils

Australia-Cuba Solidarity is an alliance of activists and organisations who call on the USA to lift its long-standing sanctions on Cuba and to stop other activities aimed at collapsing Cuba's economy and bringing about regime change, with great harm to its people.

Australia-Cuba Solidarity regularly holds vigils outside the US consulate, currently in North Sydney, to bring US actions to public attention and to join worldwide calls for the USA to lift its back-breaking sanctions on Cuba's people and their governing state.

We also seek:

to point out that this action by USA against Cuba – a Caribbean nation whose people threw out the US mafia in 1959 and started on a path of revolutionary national self-determination, based on socialist, humanist principles – is just one of a host of illegal, criminal assaults by the US on countries and societies around the world, to collapse their economies, starve their people and topple their governments.

Especially in the last 30 years of its 'unipolar moment', the US has endlessly manoeuvred to retain its self-declared status as the 'world's "first, last & only truly global empire"

to point out that Australia – which has barely outgrown its own origins as a settler colony of the British empire – is now getting sucked into the USA's corporate and political hegemony, becoming a tool to prosecute dangerous US war aims in the Indo-Pacific;

to encourage solidarity, independence, emancipation and liberation movements in Australia and elsewhere to see US consulates, embassies, bases and arms industry locations as focal points to express their opposition and resistance to the way USA behaves on the world stage and how its addiction to war threatens all humanity with catastrophe.

We feel a need to demonstrate our solidarity with Cubans and others around the world who are under the US thumb, or trapped in a genocide, carried out under US patronage, as the US Middle East proxy state, apartheid Israel, is doing right now in occupied Palestine.

We also advocate for a truly independent Australia!

We say: "Let the US state and its ruling elites know that we, the people of Australia and all around the world, are on to their criminal, gangsterish sowing of barbarity, inequity and strife all round the world in recent decades, in their determination to maintain and extend USA's global hegemony.

We call for:

- End of Us Sanctions on Cuba!
- End to Genocide in Palestine!
- Stop the Slide to WWIII!
- a Path to Peace, Progress & Sustainability, Not a Road to War, Catastrophe & Extinction!
- a Global Green New Deal!
- An 'Ecological' Civilisation!

For more information about the vigils, call Amador on 0418 270 885 ✪

Communist Party of Australia members attended the People's Liberation Front of Sri Lanka (JVP) in Borloo/Perth on 14 June. Elly Hulm represented the CPA and congratulated the JVP on their 60th anniversary. She also congratulated the JVP for leading more than 20 organisations to form the New People's front, who won the presidential and parliamentary elections with an overwhelming majority. Other speakers included the Philipines Gabriela group and the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society.

Wanting activism?

Feeling international?

Want to support a socialist country that's been on the receiving end of a US blockade for more than 60 years?

Join your local Australia-Cuba Friendship Society!

Sydney: sydneyacfs@gmail.com

Adelaide ACFS: acfsadelaide.blogspot.com.au

Brisbane ACFS: www.acfs-brisbane.org.au

Canberra ACFS: acfscanberra-amigosdecubacanberra.blogspot.com.au

Melbourne ACFS: www.melbourneacfs.org

Perth ACFS: acfs-perth.blogspot.com.au

New Zealand Friendship Society: cubasolidarity.blogspot.com.au

ABC cuts condemned

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) has condemned the latest cuts to secure jobs and diverse voices at the ABC. MEAA Chief Executive Erin Madeley said mismanagement and cuts to staff and public interest reporting and programming was undermining the ABC's mandate.

"The ABC is one of Australia's most important institutions. It needs to be well funded and accessible to all Australians," said Madeley.

"Management is driving instability through a flawed commercial model which simply doesn't fit with the public interest test. Staff are being told they may lose their jobs because they don't live and work in Sydney, where the majority of ABC's staff are already based.

"Decreasing the voice of Australians who live outside of Sydney, and moving staff around like chess pieces is doing a disservice to the public."

Madeley said the MEAA would continue to campaign for a fully funded national broadcaster, and also for the quality jobs that quality journalism demands.

"The ABC needs fully restored funding and to provide secure, sustainable careers to the workers who tell our stories. Mismanagement of the ABC and its budget has led to cuts to jobs, public interest reporting and programming with workers wearing the risk and pain.

"*Q and A* is the latest victim of these cuts, despite playing a critical and unique role in our democracy, whereby the public can speak to politicians on a national stage.

"We are seeing an ongoing drive towards insecure jobs at the ABC, which also impacts staff retention and the ABC's ability to function the way the public needs."

ABC staff are encouraged to get more involved in MEAA's campaign for a sustainable future and MEAA is providing support to staff affected by the fresh round of cuts.

FEDERAL COURT

Earlier this month the MEAA initiated Federal Court proceedings against the ABC, accusing management of forcing staff into successive fixed-term contracts in breach of the Fair Work Act.

The case, which MEAA is pursuing on behalf of a member employed on a long-running television program, is seeking to confirm that the making of a third contract resulted in a contravention of the Fair Work Act and obtain orders to remove the fixed termination date from that contract.

MEAA is also seeking financial penalties.

The court action is the result of failed attempts to resolve the issue between the union, on behalf of the member, and ABC management.

"The unfair use of short-term contracts has been growing at the ABC, seemingly as a means for management to push the budgetary risk of funding cuts onto the staff," said a spokesperson from the ABC MEAA House Committee.

"ABC staff employed under insecure arrangements cannot be expected to perform their roles without fear or favour, build sustainable careers, or stand up for their rights in the workplace without concerns over potential reprisal.

"Women and staff from diverse backgrounds are particularly impacted by the risks of insecure jobs, which we fear worsens issues like pay gaps, and bullying issues in our workplace.

"Staff who have worked hard for the ABC over multiple years or projects have a right to secure ongoing employment that affords them the security to do their jobs well for the public they serve."

According to MEAA, the member had been employed under three successive annual fixed-term contracts, which under the operative Enterprise Agreement, are classified as "Specified Task, Run of Show" contracts.

MEAA will claim that, against the background of previous 2023 and 2024 contracts, the current 2025 contract offends new limitations imposed by s 333E(1) of the Fair Work Act.

Erin Madeley said unstable and insecure work in the media and creative industries represented a choice by producers and employers to shift risk onto the backs of workers.

"Of all employers, the ABC as the nation's publicly funded broadcaster should recognise the need to respect workers and model appropriate employment standards.

"Unfortunately, the abuse of fixed-term contracting is an issue across creative industries and the economy more broadly. Australia needs a thriving cultural sector in which workers can have sustainable jobs.

"We are drawing a line and standing up for secure jobs across our industries."

ABC Building, Ultimo, Sydney. Photo: J Bar – wikimedia.org (CC BY 3.0)

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Standing together

Narrabri Underground coal miners in north west NSW have successfully defended their preferred mid-week/weekend roster pattern in their newly approved enterprise agreement, defeating an attempt by employer Whitehaven to impose 7/7 rosters.

The new EA, which also includes a strong pay increase and improved entitlements, is a big win for the majority-local workforce, many of whom live in Narrabri and Gunnedah.

Narrabri Underground Lodge President Ben Manchee said local Whitehaven management had done the right thing by hiring locally, but there was a long-term push from the board to introduce the longer roster pattern in line with other operations.

"We're a local pit," said Ben. "Our guys live here, play footy here, raise families here. A 7/7 roster just doesn't work for our community."

The pushback against the proposed 7/7 roster was overwhelming. In a decisive vote, 125 out of 130 employees voted "no" to Whitehaven's first offer proposing the change, with just three in favour. "That was a really good result for us," Manchee said. "It showed the company just how united we were."

Negotiations for the new enterprise agreement were led by Manchee alongside Lodge Vice Presidents Matt Launders and James Belcher, with the support of District Vice President Chad Hanson.

The united position of the workforce backed up by strong union density at the site of around 95% meant the workforce could not only reject the roster change but also secure a clause in the agreement that prohibits the company from implementing such a roster.

Beyond roster protections, the new agreement includes key wins for workers including:

- Annual increases of 5, 4 and 4% in the 3-year deal.
- Shift loadings increased from 15% to 20% for the rotating afternoon/night shift.
- Maximum retention bonus increased from $10,000 to $15,000, at $1000 for every year of service.
- Attendance bonus of up to $5,000.
- Workers compensation provisions improved.
- Backpay to December 2024, covering 21 weeks.

The agreement also secured a three-year term, despite the company's preference for four, and maintained the maximum 10.5-hour shift length established since the mine's early days in 2010.

Ben, who has lived in Narrabri for 25 years and is deeply involved in the local junior rugby league, said the camaraderie of working underground and community ties among workers were key to the union's strength. "We've always had strong density – 90 to 95%. A lot of the guys come from rural backgrounds so they aren't always familiar with unions when they start. But we've had some good delegates who have shown the value and importance of standing together."

Reflecting on the process, Ben said the early engagement with members and transparent communication were crucial. "We got onto it early, had conversations really early. The guys were bought into the process. That made all the difference."

The final vote on the agreement saw 103 in favour and 32 against – a stark contrast to a narrow result for the 2022 EA that was voted up with a majority of just four votes. "It's a good deal after a period of not making a lot of progress in bargaining," said Ben. "The majority understood that."

Gaza and peace education – Australian Education Union speaks out

As a matter of urgency, the AEU Federal Executive has unanimously adopted the following statement on peace education.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said, "The ongoing genocide has brought unspeakable trauma to the children, families, and teachers of Gaza. The AEU stands in solidarity with the teachers, students, and education unions of Palestine."

"We join global calls for an immediate ceasefire and full humanitarian access to rebuild lives, communities and in particular, to rebuild schools."

Haythorpe said this conflict is also being felt in Australia's classrooms, staff rooms, and communities, which brings a layer of complexity for the profession in how to manage issues which may arise.

"Teachers are reporting increased tension and distress among students. Our members are supporting students from Palestinian, Jewish, and other backgrounds, including refugees, who are grieving, angry, confused or afraid," Haythorpe said.

The AEU urgently calls upon all Ministers of Education and Departments of Education across the country to provide clear, consistent guidance for teachers about how to discuss global conflicts, particularly the situation in Gaza to support students, and ensure that schools remain safe, inclusive and respectful places for all.

"Right now, teachers are having to help students make sense of complex, confronting global events, often without the resources or professional guidance needed. They are trying to teach empathy, critical thinking, and civic understanding in a deeply polarised climate, where even raising these issues can attract scrutiny or backlash, from the public, from parents and from education departments," Haythorpe said.

"It is the right of teachers to educate for peace through the curriculum without fear of reprisal or employer disciplinary action. They need reassurance that they will be backed when they engage students thoughtfully in discussions about war, justice, and peace."

Today, the AEU calls on all governments to ensure that:

- Teachers have the resources, guidance and support they need to educate for peace and to engage in respectful discussions with students and colleagues, without fear of hate and discrimination.
- Teachers have a right to engage appropriately and respectfully with their colleagues about community issues, including all global conflicts and in particular, the current conflict in Gaza, and
- Teachers and other educators and all those who are enrolled in public education who are impacted by the conflict are provided with the support they need.

"Australian teachers must be given the professional trust, support, and protection they need to teach with courage, care and conscience," Haythorpe said.

Further, the AEU Federal Executive has determined that:

- The AEU condemns the Israeli Government's acts of genocide towards Palestinians in Gaza.
- The AEU supports the ACTU 23rd May 2025 statement on Gaza.
- A permanent ceasefire and the withdrawal of the Israeli Government's military operations in Gaza remains paramount. In such an outcome, the AEU calls on all governments and international aid agencies to urgently work together with Palestinians to restore and rebuild the necessary public infrastructure, schooling, health, housing and sustenance provisions.

Australian Education Union

TSU secures wage increase with Noosa Council

Graham Holton

After a long and challenging collective bargaining process, the Services Union (TSU) has secured an in-principle agreement with the Noosa Shire Council.

On 6 June 2025, the TSU had a significant breakthrough with Commissioner Caddie on the outstanding issue of wage increases. On 10 June Noosa Council CEO, Larry Sengstock, said: "This latest agreement, if approved in a staff wide vote, will see our staff receive a pay rise well above inflation and help Council remain financially sound into the future."

The wage offer includes a 14.5 per cent increase over three years from February 2025 at 6.5 per cent, backdated to the nominal expiry date. Then in February 2026 there is a 4.0 per cent increase followed in February 2027 at 4.0% or CPI if higher.

All unions involved have agreed to suspend Protected Industrial Action, and the Council will suspend any further lockouts. Once the review is completed, TSU will confirm with Council that the proposed Certified Agreement can proceed to ballot.

The union has extended "a heartfelt thank you to every member who stood strong, united, and determined in pursuit of a fair and reasonable pay rise – one that recognises your hard work and helps close the gap with neighbouring Councils." The TSU will continue to build upon the collective strength of workers.

Something to say?
Write to the Editor!
editor@cpa.org.au

GREEN NOTES

Brazil's COP30 – Is it ready?

Graham Holton

The COP30 United Nations Climate Change Conference is to be held in Belém, Brazil from 10 to 21 November 2025. Brazil's president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, said at the COP27 Conference in Egypt: "Nobody on the planet today can discuss the climate issue without taking into account the existence of our country." Is Brazil living up to expectations in meeting its goals?

Brazil ranks 28th in the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) of the 63 countries which account for over 90 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. In comparison Australia ranks 52nd. President Lula has been implementing Brazil's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 2035 targets and its Climate Plan. Brazil's policies include strong measures to substantially reduce the rate of Amazon deforestation, and steps to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to 1.1 billion tonnes of CO2. Lula has also been closing hydropower projects which were so badly designed and built by Brazilian dictatorships that they are have a negative effect on carbon emissions.

Brazil promotes green finance, including an Emissions Trading System (ETS), green bonds, green financial regulation, and is conducting green research and development. It aims to reduce methane emissions by promoting biogas and biomethane in agriculture and livestock. Brazil is actively involved in international climate initiatives, including the Paris Agreement, and collaborating with the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) to reduce short-lived climate pollutants. However, it is retaining natural gas production.

Letícia Klein writes in *Mongabay* that global warming has accelerated over the past decade, resulting in an increase of 460 per cent in climate-related disasters per year in Brazil. An analysis carried out by the Brazilian Ocean Literacy Alliance found that between 1991 to 2023, each 0.1°C increase in the average global air temperature has led to climate disasters (droughts, floods, and storms) costing Brazil US$970 million. According to climatologist Carlos Nobre: "The study provides a very accurate assessment of the risk brought by global warming." In 2023 El Niño increased the average global temperature by 1.5°C, far more than expected. Nobre said that if we only achieve zero emissions by the middle of the 21st century, the planet will reach an average increase of at least 2.5°C in global temperature, drastically impacting all biodiversity to the point of ecological collapse.

While Lula's policies are admirable, the reality is that the resources allocated to prevent climate change fell in Brazil by an average of AU$53 million per annum between 2012 and 2023. This spending needs to increase. Janaína Bumbeer, a co-author of the study and project coordinator at the Boticário Group Foundation, says: "It is important that we increase investment and have strong environmental policies so that we can have a stronger economy." A new four-lane highway is being built through the Amazon rainforest to Belém, aiming to ease traffic congestion ahead of the conference. Sabrina Agius, CEO of GSE Technologies said: "While touted as 'sustainable' this project is destroying critical ecosystems, displacing local communities, and undermining the very purpose of a climate summit."

Catherine Abreu, Director of the International Climate Politics Hub at the European Climate Foundation, said that current trends suggest many nations attending COP30 have fallen short of their targets to reduce global warming.

HANDS OFF
THE MIDDLE EAST
SANCTION ISRAEL!

COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

Book Review

A world ruled by adversaries

The Adversary by Michael Crummey

Reviewer: Jenny Farrell

Michael Crummey's *The Adversary*, winner of the 2025 Dublin Literary Award, is a dark, atmospheric novel that probes the brutal complexities of early colonial Newfoundland through themes of power, class, and survival. Set in a remote coastal community marked by hardship and hierarchy, the narrative interrogates the moral and human costs of empire, patriarchy, and capitalist extraction.

Set in the early 19th century, Newfoundland is portrayed as a frontier colony defined by British imperial rule, the Church of England, and struggling settler communities. References to the King's army and Hanoverian military root the story in an era of imperial expansion. Fears of "American marauders" and sentinels on watch reflect historical tensions – borderland anxieties and the spectre of US aggression.

At the novel's core is a scathing critique of the colonial capitalist class, embodied by Abe Strapp and his cunning rival sister, the Widow Caines – a twisted echo of Cain and Abel. Both represent elites who extract wealth through the exploitation of land, labour, and the dispossessed. Crummey explores how economic power is sustained through social violence and dependency, mirroring broader patterns of imperial inequality. The unforgiving Newfoundland landscape – its storms, sea, and plagues – reflects the social order's cruelty and relentless demands. The cold is not only environmental but internalised, creating a sense of inevitable entrapment.

Among the novel's most compelling elements is its attention to female perspective, particularly through the Widow Caines. A figure of resilience and manipulation, she supports the poor selectively but ultimately serves her own capitalist ambitions. Though nominally a Quaker, she corrupts that community's egalitarian values for personal gain. Her betrayal of Solemn, motivated by a private vendetta, reveals how class overrides gender. Other women – healer Mary Oram, teacher Relief Picco, and servant Bride Lambe – see through her ambitions and embody moral clarity.

Crummey also gestures toward Indigenous presence and colonial racism, with references to the Inuit ("Esquimaux"), Beothuk ("Red Indians"), and the Haitian former slave, Dominic Laferrière. While most characters reflect the period's racism, Captain Truss's lack of prejudice and respect for Indigenous people offers a counterpoint. Though subtle here, this reclamation of dignity aligns with Crummey's broader project of challenging historical erasure.

Crummey's use of 19th-century English and regional Newfoundland expressions immerses readers in the time and place. This textured language reinforces the novel's central concern: the rot at the heart of colonial power, embodied in the ruling class's excesses and depravity. One such scene unfolds in Abe Strapp's mansion, the Big House, transformed into a brothel-casino-salon and exemplifies the complete moral degradation of the colonial masters, combining drunkenness, gambling, sexual exploitation, and nationalist posturing.

The scene of Inez Barter's humiliation – a moment best left unspoiled – exposes the complicity of bystanders and the normalisation of cruelty. The scene evokes the work of Chingis Aitmatov, where degradation and inhumanity are mirrored in people's treatment of animals and the weak. Equally disturbing is the "mumble a sparrow" contest – a grotesque, bird-biting competition that serves as a microcosm of colonial violence and social degradation. Here, violence becomes entertainment, a perverse test of masculinity, exacting a deep moral cost on both participants and spectators.

These vignettes strip away the veneer of civility, revealing a culture of cruelty and consumption. Women are commodified, innocence debased, and pleasure extracted from pain. Crummey's bitter satire lays bare the violence at the core of empire and capitalism, where power depends on degradation and the erosion of ethics.

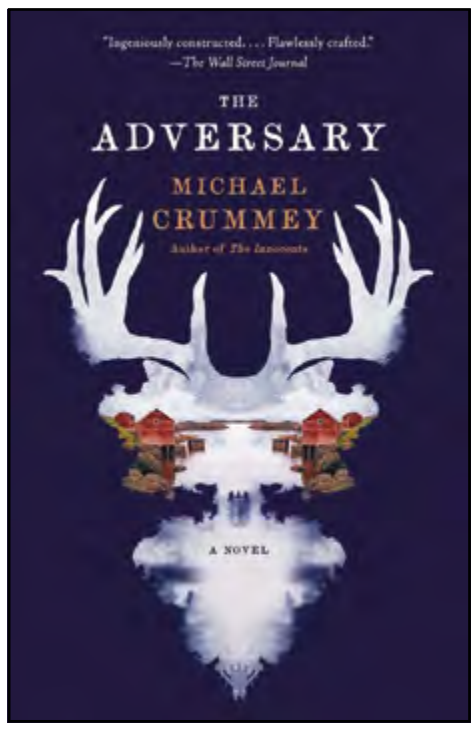
However, resistance, too, is present in *The Adversary* – largely subdued and perilous, often met with harsh, public punishments designed to crush dissent and instil fear. One brutal whipping towards the end of the book, meant to enforce obedience through terror, marks a turning point. The local community, previously passive onlookers, are now outraged by the injustice and cruelty, transforming the scene into a catalyst for collective defiance. This eruption of resistance reveals a common yearning for justice and dignity, even in a society where defiance is dangerous and often devastating. Through this episode, Crummey underscores how resistance, however quiet or fleeting, persists beneath the surface of oppression, offering hope amid relentless brutality.

The novel's title is deliberately ambiguous. It stands as a symbol of capitalist colonialist class interests and the myriad agents who serve them, crushing human nature, empathy, and goodness in their wake. Crummey centres the story on the Widow Caine, Abe Strapp, and those caught in their orbit, offering a nuanced, often female-focused exploration of exploitation, complicity, and resistance.

Crummey acknowledges the novel's darkness, admitting the world he portrays is "probably a lot darker than the reality of the time." He justifies this by pointing to contemporary parallels: "What I decided I was going to do was take the worst of the world as we have made it and compress it all down and have it play out in this tiny community in Newfoundland 200 years ago." His horror at rising authoritarianism – particularly in the United States – informs the novel's urgency.

The Adversary is thus more than historical fiction. It is also a modern parable, challenging readers to confront the legacies of empire, the dangers of capitalist power, and the possibilities of resistance. It warns that the adversaries of justice – greed, violence, and apathy – are not confined to the past, and that reckoning with history is also a reckoning with the present.

Socialist Voice



the violence at the core of empire and capitalism

Worth reading? Worth writing in!

Writers wanted!

Our 'Worth Reading' section needs short reviews. All we need is the name of the book and author and a couple of sentences on why you like it. Reviews are invited on the following themes:

- Crime/suspense
- Science fiction
- Politics

All entries published will receive a book voucher

Solutions to Stonewall Riots Crossword

Guardian 16 June 2025 #2149

Down

1 **Mattachine** – Name of American underground support network/ society for gay men before Stonewall

2 **Hirschfeld** – Surname of Berlin-based queer socialist sexologist, persecuted by the Nazis

4 **SylviaRivera** – Trans activist and co-founder of STAR [Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries]

6 **Bilitis** – "Daughters of ___" was the first lesbian civil and political right group in the West

7 **Compton** – City in California where a riot broke out at a cafeteria due to police brutality towards drag queens and trans people

Across

3 **Turquoise** – One of the colours of Gilbert Bakers original pride flag, removed when the flag was redesigned

5 **Lance Gowland** – Trade unionist, Communist Party member, one of the first organisers of Sydney's Mardi Gras

8 **IDAHOBIT** – Global day of remembrance for LGBTQ+ victims of violence

9 **Inn** – Another word for small bar/club, associated with Stonewall

10 **Front** – One of the first organisations to emerge after the riots: Gay Liberation ____

Book Review

Marx's Ethical Vision

By Vanessa Christina Wills

Reviewer: Graham Drew

The sheer pleasure for me of reading Vanessa Christina Wills' *Marx's Ethical Vision* could have only been enhanced if the book had been entitled "In Praise of Communism."

Vanessa Wills tips her hat to Angela Davis when attributing purpose to her book and argues in her Preface that "another world is possible ... [and] we ought to take up the struggle against all conditions that demean us, that turn us against one another, and that squander our precious creative human potential" (p.xi). When concluding her book she adds that we do want "a world ... in which human solidarity is 'a fact of life.'"

In tackling the complexity of the question implicit in the title of her book Wills weaves Marx's exposition of alienation, especially under capitalism, to expose the fact that actual humanity is available in a non-alienated society; that is communism realised. As Marx pointed out this would be "a new type of society in which human beings would develop as 'rich individuals' who realise themselves in the external world through their conscious activity." Needless to say bourgeois notions of freedom, rights, justice and the question of morality are dealt with in the context of the continuing struggle to rescue humanity from the 'vampire-like' destructiveness of capitalism.

With refreshing candour suited to non-academic readers of philosophy Wills deals with Kantianism, Utilitarianism and Malthusianism and devotes chapters to the notions of morality, individualism, freedom, rights and justice.

When it comes to the question "Does god exist?" Wills argues that Marx "is far more concerned with demonstrating that the question itself is incoherent."

In less detail, and without belabouring old arguments Wills also informs the reader about how many other thinkers have responded to Marx. Her cogent use of references to Marx serve not only to show the consistency of his thinking but also bring clarity to her concluding proposition that "as Marx famously put it, 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.' But the rub is that we cannot do one except by also doing the other."

Marx's Ethical Vision, Oxford University Press, 2024

Czech Republic to ban Communist Party

Graham Holton

Leader of the KSČM Kateřina Konečná addressing a protest gathering in Prague. Photo via KSČM

The Czech Republic's Chamber of Deputies, the country's legislature, approved amendments to the Criminal Code on 30 May 2025 to punish "support and promotion of the communist movement" with sentences of up to ten years in prison. This includes organising, publishing, teaching, showing communist symbols, and agitating and expressing solidarity with communism's challenge to capitalism. The amendment now has to be approved by the Senate and signed into law by the president, before coming into effect in early 2026.

Milan Krajča, vice-chair of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM), said "This new law clearly targets the party," and he called for international solidarity. The KSČM strongly rejects the amendment, saying in the statement, "Communists will never be silenced," that the Czech Parliament "is silencing its opponents by restriction of constitutional laws and freedoms" by amending the Criminal Code to make "a criminal offence of all the forms of support and promotion of the communist movement."

Founded in 1989, the KSČM is the successor of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia which led the country's reconstruction after World War II, rebuilding the industrial and social infrastructure that the Czech and Slovak people still rely on today. Since the counterrevolution of 1989, the party has been attacked, marginalised, and now may be banned for advocating for the working class.

Liberal democracies in Europe, claiming to support the rights of assembly, speech, and ideological pluralism, are now challenging the Left. Amiad Horowitz in *People's World* calls it "the political logic of capitalist crisis. When neoliberalism fails to deliver even the minimum of stability – when workers can no longer afford food, healthcare, to heat their homes, or to even have homes – the state scrambles to preserve the system by any means necessary" and warns that "when fascism becomes useful, liberalism becomes its willing accomplice."

This recent move by the Czech Republic has been widely condemned. The Communist Party of India (CPI) strongly condemns this criminalisation of Communism and "stands in full solidarity with the comrades of the KSČM in their firm and courageous resistance to this discriminatory legislation. As rightly stated by the KSČM, no repressive law can silence the truth or suppress the values that communists uphold." The CPI views this move as part of the neofascist resurgence and "anti-communist hysteria" promoted by imperialist forces and reactionary regimes. "Such measures are aimed at criminalising dissent and protecting the interests of the ruling elite by silencing progressive and revolutionary voices." Czech communists have a "legacy of resistance and commitment to democratic values" which will "overcome these challenges."

The Press Office of the CC of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) wrote: "We express our solidarity with the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, and with the communists in the Czech Republic in opposition to this unacceptable development that criminalises political life in the country. We reiterate our opposition to the idea of outlawing the Communist Party in the Czech Republic."

The Communist Party of Australia, condemns laws that aim to ban communist parties. The CPA has twice been declared illegal in Australia, endangering the lives of members and sympathisers.

CPA President Vinnie Molina says the CPA stands in solidarity with the Czech party and its members. Workers and people of all countries must unite against the resurgence of Nazism and fascism.

Canada: Ford 'solves' housing crisis by criminalising poverty

Under the guise of addressing homelessness and public safety, Ontario's Conservative government has passed Bill 6, The Safer Municipalities Act which gives municipalities and police sweeping new authority to issue trespass notices and forcibly remove unhoused individuals from public spaces.

The legislation is, in fact, a direct attack on people experiencing homelessness and a dangerous expansion of the state's power to criminalise poverty.

The government is targeting people who have already been abandoned by the system. The Communist Party of Canada (Ontario) strongly condemned the bill's passage and called for its repeal.

"This legislation does not make anyone safer. It does not create housing, improve shelter conditions or provide necessary mental health support. What it does do is allow governments to conceal the visible consequences of capitalism under the pretense of public safety. It punishes the poor, while leaving the economic structures that produce homelessness completely untouched.

"This is what capitalism looks like: a system where housing is treated as a commodity, not a right; where developers and landlords profit while thousands live rough; where public land is sold off, social housing is neglected, and working-class people are squeezed out of their own communities. Bill 6 is a weapon in this system – used not to solve homelessness, but to hide it from sight.

"The homelessness crisis in Ontario is not accidental. It is the predictable result of decades of austerity, privatisation and deregulation that have gutted public housing, slashed social services and handed our cities and towns over to corporate developers. The Ford government's refusal to invest in affordable, publicly owned housing or universal mental healthcare is a political choice that protects profit over people."

The Communist Party calls for a fundamentally different approach which recognises housing as a human right and treats it as a public utility to be provided according to need.

Such an approach includes building at least 200,000 units of publicly owned, rent-geared-to-income social housing; implementing rent rollbacks to ensure no one has to pay more than 20 per cent of income on housing; and expanding rent control to include all units. It also involves raising social assistance to livable levels and fully funding mental health and addiction services.

"Even with expanded rent control, housing costs are still a massive assault on working people's living standards. That means we need to legislate. It means taking housing out of the hands of speculators and introducing a comprehensive provincial social housing program that treats housing as a public utility and delivers it according to need."

The Party has called on the government to repeal Bill 6 immediately.

"Bill 6 is not about safety. It is about upholding a capitalist system that thrives on inequality and discards those it cannot exploit.

"We stand with the unhoused, with housing advocates and with all working-class people fighting for dignity, justice and a future where the right to housing is realised."

People's Voice

McCarthyism is back – Hawley style

Peter Farmer

US Senator Josh Hawley, was briefly famous for raising a fist of encouragement to the 6 January mob that attacked the US Capitol building seeking to overturn the results of the 2020 Presidential election. That mob left 174 people injured, five dead, and more than $2.7 million in damage.

Times change. Now Hawley is the chair of the US Senate's Subcommittee on Crime and Counterterrorism, and it turns out he's against "lawless mob actions."

That's what he's calling protests in Los Angeles, adding that the protests have obstructed federal law enforcement, endangered public safety, and disrupted the rule of law. Nobody knew that Hawley disapproved of those things, but when it comes to protests to do with immigration law crackdowns, he's a stickler.

"This lawlessness" says Hawley "is unacceptable. It must end."

The people he is saying this to are not the 6 January protesters Hawley encouraged, who were punished by his lord and master Donald Trump. He's writing to a US left party that supports the (mostly peaceful) protests.

Hawley has demanded that the party hand over lists of donors, all internal communications relating to protest planning, and any grant applications or funding proposals that relate to immigration enforcement. He's threatening the party with potential referral for criminal investigation.

CPA greeting to the 24th Congress of AKEL

Stefanos Stefanou
General Secretary
Progressive Party of Working People, AKEL
E: interbureau@akel.org.cy

Dear comrade,

The Communist Party of Australia conveys its warmest greetings to the members and leadership of AKEL on the celebration of the 24th Congress to be held in Nicosia on 20-22 June 2025.

This Congress bears particular importance as it will take place on the threshold of the 100th anniversary of the founding congress of the Communist Party of Cyprus-AKEL and will serve as a springboard for the future, for a new century of life and action of the Cypriot Left.

We appreciate the role of AKEL in the struggle of the Cypriot people for self-determination through solidarity and active participation. It is clear that AKEL is the only alternative for the future of Cyprus.

AKEL, like the CPA, stands in solidarity with Palestine as the world witnesses the televised genocide of the 21st Century. We must push our respective governments to recognise Palestine as an independent state and condemn the Zionist government of Israel.

While we are wishing you every success in the deliberations of your 24th Congress, we extend our wholehearted solidarity with delegates, leadership, members and supporters on this special occasion. We look forward to hearing about your congress resolutions as we strengthen the fraternal relations between the Communist Party of Australia and AKEL on the basis of international solidarity and the struggle for socialism and peace.

In comradeship,

Communist Party of Australia, CPA
International Department
15th June 2025

CPA greeting to the 8th Congress of the Kurdistan Communist Party

Kawa Mahmood
Secretary General
Kurdistan Communist Party
E: info_KCP@yahoo.com

Dear comrade,

The Communist Party of Australia conveys its warmest greetings to the members and leadership of the Kurdistan Communist Party-Iraq on the celebration of the 8th Congress to be held in the Iraqi Kurdistan region on 18-21 June 2025.

We are confident that this highly important event in the history of your party will contribute to further strengthening the KCP-Iraq and consolidate its role in the Iraqi Kurdish region.

We appreciate your pioneering role in defending the interests of the Kurdish workers and peasants through your solidarity and active participation in the recent workers and peasants' struggles.

While we are wishing every success in the deliberations of your 8th Congress, we extend our wholehearted solidarity to the delegates, leadership, members and supporters on this special event. We look forward to hearing about your congress resolutions as we strengthen the fraternal relations between the Communist Party of Australia and the Kurdistan Communist Party-Iraq on the basis of international solidarity and the struggle for socialism and peace.

In working class solidarity,

Communist Party of Australia, CPA
International Department
15th June 2025

CPA greeting to the 26th Congress of the German Communist Party

We fight for heating, bread, and peace!

Patrik Köbele
Chairman of the DKP
E: inter@dkp.de

Dear comrade,

The Communist Party of Australia conveys its warmest greeting to the members and leadership of the German Communist Party on the celebration of its 26th Congress to be held in Frankfurt on 20-22 of June 2025.

The CPA takes this opportunity to congratulate the DKP on its long struggle for the rights of the working class and marginalised people in Germany.

Your Congress held under the slogan 'Ready for war – without us. We fight for heating, bread and peace. We strengthen the DKP!' takes place at a crucial time for a broad Left Front mobilising the working-class movement and people generally against the drums of fascism, war in Europe and elsewhere.

We are confident that your 26th Congress will contribute to strengthening the German Communist Party and its role in the ongoing struggle against neo fascism, for Socialism, and for Peace.

National Congresses offer an opportunity for our parties to involve the membership in party wide discussion and review of party documents to plan for the period ahead. We look forward to hearing about your congress resolutions as we strengthen the fraternal relations between the Communist Party of Australia and the German Communist Party on the basis of international solidarity and the struggle for socialism and peace.

In socialism,

Communist Party of Australia, CPA
International Department
15th June 2025

Who's afraid of Chinese EVs?

Illustration: Chen Xia/GT

Chinese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer BYD is set to launch its "Dolphin Surf" in the UK this week, with a projected starting price of just 18,000 pounds (about AU$37000). In reporting this news, a BBC article initially acknowledges the fact that "China's electric cars are becoming slicker and cheaper," only to pivot back to the old tune of hyping up "hacking concerns." Classic BBC.

The BBC and some other media outlets are rolling out a predictable set of suspicions: Will Chinese EVs leak data back to Beijing? Will Europe's industry be crushed by cheap imports? To some in the West, the rise of Chinese EVs is no longer seen as a mark of progress, but as a kind of "invasion." Beneath this shift lies a psychological unease - the discomfort of falling behind as a technological frontrunner, and an unwillingness to face the new reality of global competition.

The development of Chinese EVs should be a boon for the global green transition. Yet not only the BBC, but many Western media outlets have framed it as a "security threat," "economic threat," or even a "political tool." They persistently cast doubt and spread pessimism - but the results speak for themselves: their warnings have proven to be hollow. Even the BBC had to concede: "For consumers, it should be good news."

Apparently, if a technological breakthrough doesn't come from the West, it's not seen as progress. If a green innovation originates in China, it's rebranded as "infiltration." This is geopolitics in disguise.

Jason RB Smith, host of YouTube channel The Bridge to China, did not hold back on social media. He directly called out a recent CNBC article titled "China's EV Race to the Bottom Leaves a Few Possible Winners." He wrote that "Does CNBC train its 'journalists' to smear China, or do they just exclusively hire China-haters. China is the reason solar energy and EVs are finally affordable."

What is more eye-catching is that Smith's words attracted support from netizens on social media. One wrote, "Obviously, this lot have their conclusions written first, then work their way back up to the reasoning, every single time." This reflects growing public awareness and criticism of the Cold War-style ideological narratives pushed by Western media.

So, what exactly are these media outlets doing?

"There is no doubt that Chinese efforts in building modern, affordable, high-quality EVs have been represented in a negative way by Western media," Smith told the Global Times.

"It is deplorable," he added. After the overwhelmingly positive response to Western companies, like Tesla, which had received ovations from the media before China's entrance into the market, suddenly, writers and journalists went from praising anything EV to asking, "but is there a deeper cost?" Smith contrasted the West's double standards in its approach.

This shift in tone is revealing. The "cost" is nothing more than the discomfort of an old system resisting the rules of a new game. What truly worries them isn't "cybersecurity," but the erosion of their dominance over the global market narrative.

The rise of Chinese EVs didn't happen overnight. It is the result of long-term policy guidance and relentless R&D by companies like BYD. The company has invested billions over the years, achieving breakthroughs in battery technology, smart manufacturing and energy efficiency. BYD had already amassed over 35,000 R&D employees by 2020, with over 32,000 global patent filings recorded by April 2021. What Western media describe as "dumping" is in fact the natural outcome of relentless innovation, not reckless subsidies or artificial price wars.

In essence, the reason China can offer high-quality EVs at affordable prices is because of genuine technological progress. These are the fruits of green development. If even this kind of progress must be viewed through a lens of suspicion, how are we supposed to tackle climate change together? If geopolitical thinking continues to override global cooperation, how can the green transition ever truly succeed?

As Smith said, "Humanity owes China a debt of gratitude for saving the Earth." At the end of his interview, he said, "China's new model is the most dynamic for building the future for which we all have hoped."

Chinese EVs will continue to enter more international markets. Their popularity, especially in the Global South, is the clearest and strongest rebuttal to the Western smear campaign.

Global Times

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

communist.party.australia

www.instagram.com/communist.party.australia/

Global Briefs

Colombia: President Gustavo Petro has reaffirmed the need for his proposed referendum on labour and social reforms, emphasising that peace in Colombia cannot be achieved without fighting against economic inequality and social injustice. This determination comes shortly after Petro accused far-right elements and the United States of plotting a coup against his government (see page 14 for more). Petro's referendum will seek public feedback on key issues including labour rights, healthcare, pension reform, and education. The specific questions to be included in the referendum address proposals such as the eight-hour workday, penalty rates, time off for medical treatment and debilitating menstrual periods, employment of people with disability, labour rights for young workers, greater protections for gig economy workers, agricultural workers' rights, the end of labour outsourcing which violates workers' rights, and pension and social security reform for farmers and informal workers. The referendum comes as political tensions between Petro's government and Congress continue, especially following the attempted assassination of senator Uribe and violence in the country's south-west. Protests from unions, student organisations, and other groups and individuals in favour of the referendum have defied this political violence.

Venezuela: Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro has echoed Petro's condemnation of the alleged plan, urging for united resistance against imperialism.

West Bank: The city of Tulkarm, as well as nearby refugee camps including Nur Shams, have been facing military aggression from occupation forces for more than 100 consecutive days. Israel has continued to proceed with its demolition spree in these areas, destroying Palestinian homes in the city and in refugee camps. The Tulkarm refugee camp, one of the most densely populated in the West Bank, has faced destruction by Israeli bulldozers for more than a week as part of an Israeli campaign targeting over 100 buildings in the Tulkarm and Nur Shams camps. These structures include more than 250 residential units as well as commercial establishments. Occupation forces have maintained a siege in the camps and Tulkarm itself, preventing Palestinians from inspecting their destroyed homes or retrieving belongings under threat of gunfire. Buildings in Nur Shams have been destroyed under the pretext of widening roads and rearranging the refugee camp; Palestinians and human rights organisations have rejected these claims. Occupation forces in the city have also displaced Palestinians to convert their homes into military bases, which facilitate their campaign of frequent, surprise checkpoints designed to obstruct civilian movement.

USA: Trump and Health Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr have cut a quarter of a million dollars from HIV vaccine research. Health experts have warned this could result in increased deaths and potentially set back research by a decade. Some have turned to new medications such as Lencapavir, or treatments already available such as PrEP and Truvada. Access to these treatments is expensive leaving the poor and working class unable to afford them. Trump and Kennedy's war against funding means trials of a different HIV vaccine have been halted by Moderna. One of Trump's first executive orders cut off foreign aid funding which included HIV/AIDS programs, slashing access to PrEP for vulnerable populations.

KENYA: After the death of prominent blogger Albert Ojwang, deputy police chief Eliud Lagat has stepped aside, following pressure from human rights activists and the opposition. Lagat had filed a complaint accusing Ojwang of defaming him on social media. Ojwang's death was described as self-inflicted, but an autopsy found the death had been caused by assault, forcing police to retract their statement. Lagat has denied any wrongdoing and said that he offers condolences to Ojwang's family.

LA labour stands up for immigrants after Huerta arrest

Ellen von zur Muehlen

Los Angeles: On 9 June, labor unions, elected officials, advocacy groups, and community members rallied in Gloria Molina Grand Park in downtown Los Angeles to protest the arrest of David Huerta, president of Service Employees International Union California (SEIU).

As April Verrett, president of SEIU International, said in a statement condemning Huerta's arrest, "this struggle is about much more than just one man."

She emphasised the fact that "thousands of workers remain unjustly detained and separated from their families." Verrett demanded the release all of those unjustly detained and an end to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids.

Huerta was arrested on 6 June, when he joined hundreds of other Angelenos to protest and condemn the brutal ICE raids ripping through Los Angeles County. Huerta was acting as a community observer of immigration enforcement activity when federal agents knocked him down and arrested him. Huerta, who represents 750,000 in his role as SEIU California president, was injured and briefly hospitalised before agents took him into custody.

Hours after the protest, which drew a crowd of over 1,000, Huerta was released on $50,000 bail. The Justice Department has charged him with "conspiracy to impede an officer," and he could face prison time if convicted.

Numerous labour, community, and political leaders spoke at the rally, including Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers, a legendary labour leader and feminist activist. Dolores Huerta, who described David as her "son from another mother," emphasised the need to reach out to members of the community who may have voted for Trump and said, "We are in a war for the soul of our country, for our democracy."

"The only way we can win," Huerta continued, "is for us to go out there and organise, organise, organise."

Non-violence and the power of sustained, peaceful organising were major themes at the rally, which included calls to release all other unjustly detained individuals, provide humane treatment and access to legal counsel for detainees, and an end to the ICE raids devastating the community.

Yvonne Wheeler, president of the Los Angeles Federation of Labor, also spoke at the rally. Wheeler emphasised David Huerta's history of commitment standing up for justice: "David wasn't at the worksite 6 June for himself, he was there as he has been countless times before, to bear witness, to protect and demand justice for immigrant workers facing fear and uncertainty."

Wheeler also condemned not only his arrest but the unjust use of force against him and said, "You cannot detain justice, you cannot silence truth, and you cannot injure a movement that is rooted in love and dignity and an unshakable belief that everybody deserves to live and work free from fear."

Derrick Johnson, the president and CEO of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) , also spoke at the assembly. Johnson affirmed that "there is no difference between worker rights and civil rights" and urged that "we must always fight against tyranny, and what Trump is doing is tyranny."

He continued, stating that "the history of this country has always been people like us standing together fighting against those who seek to exploit us, to use us, or to distract from what's taking place."

Johnson pointed to the public dispute between Trump and Musk as another distraction intended to divert attention away from the administration's attempt to cut funding for healthcare and other social programs in the so-called "Big Beautiful Bill."

In addition to the community, labour, and religious leaders, California politicians have also stood up for Huerta. Gov. Gavin Newsom condemned his arrest in a statement, and US Senators Alex Padilla and Adam Schiff, along with Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, called on the Department of Homeland Security to review the arrest.

Huerta's arrest and charges are just one example of the Trump administration's war on working people and racist campaign against Latino and immigrant communities. The ICE raids in Los Angeles and the surrounding area have exhibited astonishing cruelty.

Federal agents have racially profiled and arbitrarily detained hundreds of community members, and viral videos circulating on social media show disturbing instances of police violence against protesters and bystanders. The rally is one of many protests that show Los Angeles is ready and willing to fight back.

People's World

Colombia: Petro denounces US-backed coup plot

On 11 June 2025, President Gustavo Petro addressed the people of Cali, Valle del Cauca, denouncing a conspiracy orchestrated by far-right Colombian factions in coordination with US Senator Marco Rubio and extremist elements. The plot aimed to destabilise his government and reverse social advances achieved under his leadership.

"I have shared recordings with the Attorney General exposing far-right leaders linked to drug trafficking and plotting a coup," Petro declared, demanding these be made public in US media to expose foreign interference undermining Colombia's sovereignty.

Petro urged Colombians to reject fascism and emphasised that the Popular Consultation is not an ally of assassins, but that social inequality is. "The consultation is not a friend of the assassins; social inequality is the friend of the assassins," he said, highlighting how entrenched inequality fuels violence and instability.

POPULAR CONSULTATION: DEMOCRATIC PATH TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PEACE

In the same speech, Petro reaffirmed the urgent need for a Popular Consultation on labor and social reforms, following legislative obstruction that has blocked the constitutional mandate to establish a comprehensive labor statute.

The text reads:

> Why the Popular Consultation? It is absolutely necessary because, first: it has counted on the support of the intellectual and political world; second: the International Labour Organization (ILO) has supported the pension reform, stating that it is fair, valid, and would represent progress for humanity; third, because the 1991 Constitution proposed a Social Rule of Law State. This is what President @PetroGustavo said from Cali.

"Since 1991, the Constitution has ordered the creation of a labor statute that still does not exist in law," Petro reminded, framing this as essential to building a social state under the rule of law and achieving true social justice.

"The peace of Colombia cannot be separated from social justice," he declared, stressing that Colombia cannot achieve peace while remaining the third most unequal country in the world. Petro emphasised that he was elected to bring peace and social justice, and that without addressing inequality, peace will remain elusive.

The Popular Consultation will allow citizens to directly express their will on key reforms such as establishing an eight-hour workday ending at 6 pm, guaranteeing dignified wages and pensions for all workers, and protecting the rights of young and informal workers.

LINKING SOCIAL JUSTICE TO LASTING PEACE AND NATIONAL STABILITY

Petro connected the dots between social inequality, violence, and political instability, arguing that cuts to education and social programs have contributed to youth violence and social unrest. He called for policies that enable families to thrive, stating that empowering mothers to raise their children with love is the best security policy for Colombia's cities.

He condemned those who have prevented the implementation of the constitutional labor statute and called on all Colombians to unite in defense of justice and dignity.

Telesur

Peru: Prosecutor seeks 35 Years for police involved in protester death

The Peruvian Prosecutor's Office has requested 35 years in prison for eight National Police officers for their alleged responsibility in the aggravated murder of two protesters.

The protesters died on 14 November 2020, in Lima, amid a wave of protests which erupted after the dismissal of former President Martín Vizcarra, as reported by the lawyer for the bereaved.

The prosecutor's accusation also includes serious and minor injuries against another 74 protesters and abuse of authority by Generals Jorge Lam, Jorge Cayas, and Carlos Villafuerte, Colonel Percy Tenorio, Commanders Luis Castañeda and Gulianno Arguedas, and Major José Solari.

Lawyer Ronald Gamarra, who represents the family of Bryan Pintado, one of the two young men killed in that protest, told the newspaper *La República* that, after two years of "objective and diligent" investigation by the Prosecutor's Office, "it has been concluded that there are more than enough reasons to formulate an accusatory request."

Gamarra explained that crimes committed in the context of disproportionate police repression were reported, including the arbitrary use of force with prohibited ammunition fired directly at the body of demonstrators. These actions resulted in the deaths of Inti and Bryan, as well as injuries to more than 70 people.

The judiciary has relayed the indictment to the accused police officers, the relatives of Inti and Bryan, and more than 70 citizens who were injured. The prosecution review hearing will be held on 12 August, as a step before the commencement of the oral trial. Inti's sister hopes that the charge will be accepted and that the sentence requested will be served for those responsible accused of manslaughter.

The 14 November 2020 protest march concentrated thousands of young people in the historical centre of Lima to reject the dismissal of former president Vizcarra on alleged corruption charges and the transitional government of Manuel Merino, who was forced to resign after the demonstrations.

The National Police were singled out, in various reports from the Ombudsman's Office and international human rights organisations, for having applied a disproportionate and lethal use of force that caused the death of Inti Sotelo and Bryan Pintado, in addition to dozens of injuries that day.

Telesur

UK sides with the aggressor, again

Sending more RAF jets to the Middle East underlines Britain's involvement in Israel's escalating aggression in the region.

Missile exchanges between Israel and Iran are intensifying. Chancellor Rachel Reeves insists Britain is not involved: they are sending planes as a "precaution" to protect their "assets" (regional military bases).

But why might these be under threat? Iran says it has evidence of US involvement in Israel's unprovoked attack on it. It has warned that US, British, and French bases involved in Israel's attacks could be deemed legitimate targets.

Reeves does not rule out direct engagement. On the side of the aggressor, of course: "We have, in the past, supported Israel when there have been missiles coming in. I'm not going to comment on what might happen in the future ... we're sending in assets to both protect ourselves and also potentially to support our allies."

Dubbing the nature of such support "defensive" because it might consist of helping shoot down Iranian missiles headed for Israel makes a mockery of the term. Israel has attacked Iran, and Britain has done nothing to try to intercept its barrage of missiles in the other direction, any more than it has used its "assets" in the region to stop Israel raining death on Gaza for 20 horrendous months.

Quite the opposite. Britain's Akrotiri base on Cyprus has been instrumental to the Gaza genocide. It has been a base for RAF surveillance flights that pass intelligence to the Israeli Defence Forces. It has been a staging post for US supplies.

Britain's claims not to be directly involved in the war against Palestine, and even to be in favour of a ceasefire, are transparently false. So why should Iran believe that Britain is not involved in the latest attacks? The UK's military works hand in glove with Tel Aviv's, and is even currently training Israeli soldiers, despite the overwhelming evidence of its war crimes.

As with Palestine, Reeves's admission that any British intervention would be to assist Israel underlines a crucial point for the labour movement here, divided as it is on Labour's plans to increase military spending.

Britain is not a benign power, using its armed forces to defend itself or victims of attacks by others.

It is an aggressor: one which has, since the end of the cold war, joined US-led coalitions to dismember Yugoslavia, invade and brutally occupy Afghanistan and Iraq, and destroy Libya as a functioning state – besides deploying its military in support roles for the murderous Saudi war on Yemen.

As Andrew Murray has argued Britain's role as Washington's lieutenant becomes still more sinister now the United States is ruled by a far-right demagogue, currently threatening to "slaughter" Iranians if their government does not submit to his wishes and whose global agenda is a confrontation with China that could ignite a new world war.

Everywhere we see the descent into militarism: from the unprecedented parade of tanks and troops through Washington for Donald Trump's birthday to Germany holding its first Veterans Day since the second world war, breaking an 80-year taboo on celebrating the army in the country responsible for the worst war crimes in history.

The Israel-Iran war could widen. Our urgent priority is to build a peace movement capable of changing Britain from an international warmonger to a force for conflict resolution, and one that recognises, in the words of Israeli communist Ofer Cassif – currently suspended from the Knesset for denouncing genocide: "There is no legitimacy for targeting civilians whatsoever. Not in Tehran nor in Tel Aviv, not in Gaza nor in Sderot.

"Enough with this madness! There is only one absolute victory for all peoples: peace. And peace will never be with occupation, genocide or ethnic cleansing. Embark on the path of peace immediately – it is necessary, and it is possible."

Morning Star

Sydney Vigil

STOP USA BLOCKADE ON CUBA

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Urgent

Anthony Albanese has told his party room they can only build for their future vision if they make people confident they can deliver on "urgent necessities." These include affordable housing for some people, small wage increases, but not a habitable planet – by okaying the North West Shelf Project extension, Albo has decided that Woodside's profits are more urgent than that. Last report we saw, Woodside was top of the list of fossil fuel companies donating to the ALP, which must add to the urgency.

Poorly chosen

Here we have a weaselly understatement. 'Poorly chosen' is how Alan Stockdale, former Victorian Treasurer and owner of the Liberal Party's (and possibly the world's) most prominent eyebrows, on his remark that women in that party were "sufficiently assertive." He means 'disastrous' or maybe 'offensive.'

Of course it was a joke, the sort of joke that's so funny you have to laboriously explain it after everyone gets angry for you. That's the sort of joke Stockdale has chosen (poorly).

Vilification

Used normally, vilification is what you've done when you really slag someone off with falsehoods. Coalition Senator James Paterson accused Victorian independent Zoe Daniels of participating in the "vilification" of Israel. His evidence? Daniel once signed an open letter which described Israel as waging "a brutal war against the besieged population of Gaza," written in response to Israel, umm waging a brutal war against the besieged population of Gaza. Someone needs to teach Paterson the difference between vilification and description.

Intention (not having)

Good thing about not having intentions is that you can publicly not have them regardless of what you're doing. Since nobody can read your mind, telling them you didn't have an intention is never really false, although it can sound pretty silly. If you're ever caught speeding, try telling the police you didn't have the intention of driving over the limit and see how you go. Israel's Ambassador to Australia Amir Maimon has said that Israel doesn't "have any intention to broaden the conflict" (you know, the one they just started. That conflict.). In the same interview Maimon also described Israel as "not war seekers." Fair enough, they're more like war starters.

Tranquility

US President Donald Trump has said he will prevent anyone who "undermines the domestic tranquility of the United States" from entering the country, making us wonder if he's looked around the country lately. If what's going on there now is tranquility, what would chaos look like?

Precaution

'Take precautions' used to be a popular euphemism for using contraceptives. It's also a weaselly way of describing aggression, the diplomatic equivalent of slipping a condom into a wallet or a purse and telling your worried parents you're going to be careful tonight. British Chancellor Rachel Reeves has said that the UK is sending jets to the Middle East as a 'precaution' "to both protect ourselves and also potentially to support our allies."

Support the UK's allies in what exactly, one might ask. Given what the UK's 'ally' Israel is doing to the Middle East, supported by its other 'ally' the US, contraceptives might well be in order!

AUKUS in trouble

FK

There have been conniptions in Canberra after the announcement by the US government that it plans to review AUKUS. The UK is reviewing it too.

CPA President Vinnie Molina speaks at an AUKUS protest in Boorloo/Perth.

WHATS IT FOR?

AUKUS, standing for Australia, UK and US, is a pact for the three countries to cooperate on building nuclear-powered submarines. It was announced by the Morrison Coalition government.

The rationale for AUKUS is as follows. Australia needs new submarines because the Collins-class submarines we have now are too old. Nuclear-powered submarines can travel further and deter potential attackers. What this means is that AUKUS would help protect Australia from China by deterring China from attacking us. China has shown no sign of wanting to attack Australia.

WHATS IT ABOUT?

Really, AUKUS started life as a dramatic announcement from the Liberal Party Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who hoped it would distract people from his government's failures. To join in the pact, Morrison broke an agreement with France for new, cheaper submarines. AUKUS also bound Australia into a pact with the USA. It involved a loss of Australian independence, but the Liberal and Labor parties have never had a problem with that.

HOW MUCH?

The numbers are eye-watering. Bear in mind that if you pay taxes, this is all your money.

Australia had already spent $2.4 billion on a deal to get submarines from France when Morrison decided to break the deal and join AUKUS. We spent $830 million to get out of the agreement with France. That's a lot of money to pay for no submarines.

The government is planning to spend 4.53 billion on US shipyards over the next five years, to encourage the USA to make submarines for us.

They're also going to pay $4.6 billion to the UK to help clear "bottlenecks" on the production line for AUKUS nuclear reactors.

The total estimated cost to Australia over the next ten years is $58 billion.

The total cost of AUKUS is estimated at $268-368 billion.

As a former commander of Australia's submarine program has pointed out, the US can walk away from the deal, "no penalties, no refunds."

Another financial issue is this: every dollar you spend on one thing is a dollar you can't spend on something else. Missing out on the something else is what economists and business people call 'opportunity cost.' Money spent on AUKUS is money we can't spend on other things. Hugh White is professor of strategic studies at the Australian National University. He says that every dollar taken from other priorities for defence makes us a less educated, less healthy, and less productive society.

SAFE OR DANGEROUS?

Dangerous for several reasons. Firstly military. The reason for having the AUKUS submarines would be for long-range work on threatening China. That country is a major trading partner with Australia and has shown no signs of military aggression towards us. White says that anyone who thinks the recent Chinese naval task force deployment near Australia is a military threat "does not understand what a military threat looks like." However, if this country gets involved in any kind of US military action against China, we can expect China to strike back. One thing both sides of US politics agree on is that when the AUKUS subs show up, Australia must agree to use them in a US war with China if it happens.

The second is environmental – nuclear-powered submarines produce nuclear waste. Australia would be responsible for storing that waste.

AUKUS also crowds out other forms of defence spending – White says the cost of the subs is "already crowding out investment in other capabilities." If you accept that Australia has to spend some money on defence, AUKUS is a risk to that too.

WILL WE GET THEM?

As this paper (and many others) have pointed out, there's a strong possibility that the US won't be able to make enough submarines to have any to spare for AUKUS. The pact requires the US to transfer five Virginia-class submarines to Australia. To do that, the US would have to build 2.3 subs per year. The program has never produced more than 2 subs a year. Last year, production was at less than 1.2. The US Navy is worried about the shortfall and is throwing money at it. $3 billion of that money is ours, but the prospects don't look good.

Both the US and the UK governments are reviewing the AUKUS agreement. Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles is insisting that all will be well, saying he looks forward to "continuing our close cooperation with the Trump administration on this historic project." Marles also says that it's perfectly normal to conduct a review, and that nobody should assume his pet project is in any danger.

That begs the question of why Marles hasn't done any kind of review himself. Approval for AUKUS was rushed in Australia, with the ALP agreeing to it within hours of Morrison's announcement. Winning government twice since then has had no effect on Marles and the Albanese government's commitment.

Nobody knows what the US and UK reviews will decide. Many are guessing that the US might wind up asking for more money. US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth has been noisily complaining that Australia doesn't spend enough on defence. For the US, that means spending money on being a working part of the USA's military.

WHAT ABOUT JOBS?

The government has claimed that AUKUS will create 20,000 jobs. Nice for the people who have the jobs, but bear in mind that the Australian economy has created 6 million jobs in the last 30 years. The AUKUS jobs would cost the government about $18 million per job.

WHAT NOW?

The review and the issues with AUKUS do show one thing: AUKUS is *not* a done deal. It's an expensive and dangerous disaster in the making, but it is possible to overturn it. The Communist Party of Australia joins with other peace loving organisations in calling for the AUKUS deal to be scrapped. As our Party has frequently argued, we need to give peace a budget!

The next anti-AUKUS demonstration near you needs people. Join in.

Now is a very good time to call or write to your MP and your Senators to let them know you oppose the waste and danger AUKUS involves. ✪

every dollar taken from other priorities for 'defence' makes us a less educated, less healthy, and less productive society

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