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NO WAR ON IRAN!

Marcus Browning

When the United States and Israel began bombing Iran in an unprovoked act of war, they opened the way for conflict to escalate in the region and the wider world. The Albanese government has pledged its unstinting support for this breach of international law. Both the US and Israel have nuclear arsenals. No state possesses weapons it will not use.

US President Donald Trump announced the start of "major combat operations" and called for regime change in the country, having now killed Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, urging Iranians to "rise up" in collaboration with their attackers.

A huge US armada has been built up in the Middle East in recent weeks, larger than that assembled in the Caribbean before the US bombed Venezuela and kidnapped its president last month. Talks had been ongoing in Geneva over US insistence that Iran abandon uranium enrichment for its civil nuclear power program, as Washington claims Iran is seeking a nuclear weapon, something Iran has always denied.

Trump unilaterally tore up the previous agreement on Iranian nuclear power (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, signed in 2015) in 2018, and broke up negotiations on the issue last year by joining an unprovoked Israeli bombing spree.

This year's talks were undertaken in bad faith by the United States, with an Israeli official briefing Reuters that the attacks had been planned for months and the launch date decided weeks ago.

This is the behaviour of rogue states – and they have jeopardised the safety of humankind around the world with this catastrophic act of aggression.

AUSTRALIA'S ROLE

Australia must withdraw from the AUKUS war-making alliance, including closing US spy bases, beginning with Pine Gap, and urgently pursue a foreign policy based on justice, sovereignty and peace. In its utter subservience to its US master, the Albanese government has committed Australia to the central US goal of control of the planet, power to install governments subservient to its demands, power to privatise and deregulate the economies of every nation.

The US has militarised the Asia Pacific region. Apart from its bases, training and other facilities in Australia, the US has troops in:

- South Korea – more than 27,000 troops and plans for a missile defence system
- Japan – more than 48,000 troops
- Philippines – more troops and weapons
- Guam – the small island has more than 6,000 military personnel
- Western Pacific – US Pacific Fleet which include six core battle groups and eight destroyer squadrons
- Singapore – naval base, key logistics and maintenance hub for Navy and Air Force
- South China Sea – flights and ships provocatively ignoring China's warnings
- Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean also plays an important strategic role.

CPA Congress shows fight against war.

Military domination serves three key purposes.

The first is to feed the corrupt and bloated military industrial complex and its insatiable appetite for super profits which can only be made from wars.

The second is to maintain US economic domination, where this cannot be achieved by other means. The focus is on the Asia-Pacific region where the target – China – has extended its influence and will continue to do so into the future.

The third is to halt and stifle the development of progressive political alternatives and other independent, sovereign forces that reject its imperialist domination. This is the reason for the attempt to suppress pro-Palestinian solidarity action against Israel's genocidal crimes in Gaza.

In other words, the US is not prepared to countenance any power that challenges its global economic, political or military hegemony. It is prepared to go to any lengths to ensure that position, including nuclear war. The Albanese government is serving its US master toward that end.

The grab for massive profits by arms producers has resulted in monopolisation of the killing industry. The likes of Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems, Boeing, Northrop Grunman, General Dynamics, Raytheon and BAE Systems strut the corridors of the Pentagon and defence departments and ministerial offices. It's an industry notorious for its corruption and profit-gouging.

These are the same companies that the Australian government has committed to spending hundreds of billions of dollars on to fight the US's next wars. Australia's plans for $1 trillion in military spending over the next 20 years will only increase insecurity and heighten tensions in the region, the South China seas in particular. It also serves to escalate the arms build-up generating even more bloated profits for the military industrial complex.

this is the behaviour of rogue states

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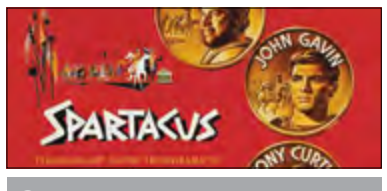
11 

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Mind the gap

According to polls, Pauline Hanson's One Nation (PHON) party is doing well. We'll see what happens at the South Australian election, but the polls say PHON is set to demolish the Liberal and National parties in that state.

What's going on? Is there something in the water? Are South Australians mysteriously becoming more racist and climate-change denialist?

While those factors are always present to some degree, it's just too simple to assume there's something wrong with voters. We need to look at the whole situation, not just PHON and their polling numbers at the moment.

Let's look at the alternatives. Australia is a democracy, with lots of choice, right? Wrong! Australia has elections and political parties, but there's a raft of issues on which Aussies don't get any real choice at all. When it comes to AUKUS, the insanely expensive submarine program which is already binding Australia closer to the US military, there's no choice. Both our 'parties of government' have identical policies towards the 'alliance' with the US.

Privatisation? The ALP and the Liberal/National Coalition are on a unity ticket, with Labor saying that contracting out and selling off assets is needed. Both parties shed crocodile tears over homelessness and have no intention of changing our housing system, with Anthony 'mum lived in public housing' Albanese saying he's comfortable with house prices rising.

You don't have to be a racist climate change denier to find the 'parties of government' unappealing.

When it comes to wages, both major parties accept the line that wages can cause inflation. Labor also keeps pressure on wages by keeping unemployment benefits way below the poverty line.

Compare with the USA. There are many reasons why Donald Trump is in his second term as US President, but one reason is that a Democrat party that just stands for the neoliberal status quo has a hard time inspiring workers. Trump at least talked about living conditions and (although it seems like a sick joke now) ending the USA's 'forever wars.'

Major parties can't see this – it's not in their pro-capitalist DNA. What they do instead is look at the success of PHON in the polls and try to compete on racism (if they're the Liberal Party, that's not a huge stretch). Albanese tinkers with housing policies and tries to sound as though he cares, but he's not going to change a system that makes housing unaffordable for many Australians.

Albanese won't be caught denying the facts of climate change, and he's not going to bring a lump of coal into parliament and wave it around the way the last Liberal PM did, but his party waves through coal mine and gas project extensions during bushfire and flood seasons at a rate Scott Morrison would approve of.

When it comes to farmers, they're not abandoning the National Party. The National Party left farmers and rural people behind a long time ago to become the party of mining corporations.

There's a large gap between what working people in this country want and need, and what the major parties are offering. It's no wonder people look elsewhere.

The solution to the rise of PHON, if that's what it is, is not to write off the people who are telling pollsters they want something drastically different to what the Labor-Coalition parties are offering. The solution is working class unity and real action on what really matters to working people. That's what the Communist Party is working for.

NO WAR ON IRAN!

MUA condemns ongoing attacks on Iran by USA and Israel

Statement from the Maritime Union of Australia

The Maritime Union of Australia condemns the ongoing attacks on Iran by the United States and Israel as reckless, illegal acts of aggression that drag the world closer to a wider war and nuclear catastrophe.

These strikes are a gross breach of international law, an assault on Iranian sovereignty and a direct undermining of the already fragile framework of multilateral diplomacy.

Workers in Australia know that war is not an accident; it is the brutal expression of an imperialist system that puts corporate profit, arms dealers and Great Power rivalry ahead of human need.

From Palestine to the Gulf, it is ordinary workers, their families and communities who are killed, displaced and silenced, while the war industries, their shareholders and their political agents cash in. For maritime workers in particular, every billion dollars poured into missiles, submarines and bases is a billion dollars denied to building a sustainable, job-rich maritime future. Instead of feeding the war machine, Australia should be funding a publicly owned fleet of Australian crewed coastal trading vessels, rebuilding our shipbuilding capacity, and guaranteeing secure, union jobs on the waterfront.

The choice is stark: jobs in war, or jobs in moving the goods our communities need, strengthening our coastal shipping, and decarbonising transport. Military expenditure deepens insecurity; investment in coastal trade, tankers for the vital protection of our fuel security, ports and training – all build real security for workers and their families.

The US, as the biggest and most aggressive military power in history, is once again asserting a unilateral "right" to strike wherever it chooses, using the same lies and manufactured threats that justified the invasion of Iraq and countless other interventions. Israel, armed, financed and protected by Washington, is acting as a regional attack dog, escalating conflict and attempting to redraw the map of the Middle East through force, assassination and collective punishment.

These actions are not self-defence. They are offensive operations designed to secure US domination of the region and to crush any state that resists that agenda.

Australia must not be complicit in this program of permanent war. Successive governments have tied our foreign policy, our military infrastructure and now hundreds of billions of dollars under AUKUS to US war fighting strategies, turning our country into a southern base for operations that threaten peace both globally and within our own region.

That is a direct attack on the living standards and safety of Australian workers, robbing health, housing, climate, and maritime infrastructure budgets to feed the war machine, while employers push waterfront automation and AI to destroy secure jobs.

We call on the Australian government to condemn this war. We demand an immediate end to all US and Israeli attacks on Iran; the withdrawal of Australian political, military and logistical support; the removal of US bases from our soil; and a decisive turn to diplomacy, disarmament and respect for international law.

Peace is union business, and the union movement has both the responsibility and the power to mobilise against this drive to war.

Maritime Union of Australia

Congress Appeal: Many thanks

From 27 February to 1 March 2026, elected delegates from all over Australia gathered in Naarm/Melbourne for the Communist Party of Australia's 15th National Congress. The Congress was a massive success and comrades have returned to their Branches energised and ready for the work to come (see pages 14 and 16).

We thank everyone who donated to the Congress Appeal. A more detailed tally will be published soon.

There is no more Congress Appeal, but readers who want to support the Party keep up its vital work can always donate to the Press Fund which helps keep the *Guardian, the Workers' Weekly* going.

CPA General Secretary Andrew Irving addressing the Congress.

www.cpa.org.au

Congress greetings

For the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of Australia, the Party received more than 27 greetings from fraternal parties around the world as well as from organisations in Australia. The Party is committed to proletarian internationalism, and regularly exchanges greetings on special occasions as well as meeting fraternal parties at international forums, such as the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. The Congress received greetings from China, Vietnam, Cuba, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Ukraine, Greece, Germany, Ireland, the USA, Cyprus and elsewhere. We are pleased to publish a selection of these greetings here.

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine

Comrades of the Communist Party of Australia,
Delegates of the 15th National Congress,
Revolutionary greetings from occupied Palestine,
On behalf of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, we extend to you our warmest fraternal greetings on the occasion of your 15th National Congress, and we express our sincere wishes for its success in advancing the struggles of the Australian working class and progressive forces.

We highly value your principled positions in solidarity with the Palestinian people and your clear stance against Zionist colonialism and genocide. At a time when our people in Gaza, the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the refugee camps are subjected to systematic extermination, displacement, and starvation, your voice stands as a living proof that internationalism is not a slogan, but a commitment rooted in struggle and conscience.

The Palestinian people today are confronting one of the most brutal phases of colonial aggression, supported politically, militarily, and economically by imperialist powers led by the United States. The Zionist occupation continues its war of annihilation in Gaza, its apartheid policies in the West Bank, and its attempts to liquidate the Palestinian cause by force and coercion. Yet, despite all this, our people remain steadfast, resisting with determination and holding firmly to their inalienable national rights:

- the right to self-determination,
- the right to an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital,
- and the right of return for refugees in accordance with UN Resolution 194.

We salute your party's opposition to militarism, imperialist alliances, and war policies, including your struggle against AUKUS and foreign military bases. These positions reflect a shared understanding that the same system which exploits workers and plunders nations is the system that arms Israel and protects its crimes. Our struggle for liberation in Palestine is inseparable from the global struggle against imperialism, racism, and capitalist exploitation.

Comrades,

your Congress convenes at a moment of historic responsibility. The growing international solidarity with Palestine, the exposure of Zionist crimes, and the rising resistance of oppressed peoples confirm that justice cannot be buried under bombs, and that truth cannot be silenced by censorship or intimidation.

We reaffirm our belief that the liberation of Palestine and the victory of the working class and oppressed peoples worldwide are part of one common battlefront. We look forward to strengthening relations between our movements on the basis of anti-imperialism, internationalism, and solidarity among peoples.

We wish your Congress every success in achieving its political and organizational goals, and we assure you that the Palestinian people will never forget those who stood with them in their darkest hours.

With revolutionary greetings,
With loyalty to the martyrs,
With commitment to freedom,

Department of Foreign Affairs
DFLP

中共中央对外联络部
International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

6 February 2026, Beijing
Re: Message of Congratulations
Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia,
On the occasion of the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of Australia, we wish to extend our warm congratulations to all the comrades of your party.

Last October, the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China convened its fourth plenary session which deliberated over and adopted the recommendations for the 15th Five-Year Plan, formulating a top-level design and strategic plan for China's economic and social development over the next five years. This will create new opportunities for mutually-beneficial cooperation between China and the rest of the world, Australia included.

Under the new circumstances, the Communist Party of China is ready to deepen exchange of ideas with the Communist Party of Australia and enhance our camaraderie in the spirit of seeking common ground while reserving differences and enhancing mutual respect and mutual learning, so that together we make positive contributions to the friendship between our two peoples and the global cause of peace, development and progress.

We wish the National Congress a great success!

International Department
Central Committee
Communist Party of China

Communist Party of Cuba

Havana, 26 February, 2026
Vinnie Molina
President
Communist Party of Australia (CPA)
Comrade Vinnie:
On behalf of the Communist Party of Cuba, I extend special congratulations and best wishes for success on the occasion of the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of Australia.

I would also like to take this opportunity to convey to you and your comrades in the CPA our sincere gratitude for your ongoing solidarity with the Cuban people, while reiterating our willingness to continue strengthening the historic ties that unite our two communist parties.

Please, accept the assurance of my highest consideration and esteem.

Fraternally,

Emilio Lozada García

Head of the Department of International Relations

Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba

Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

The Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in Australia presents its compliments to the Communist Party of Australia and has the honour to convey herewith the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam's message of congratulations on the occasion of the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of Australia, to be held from 27 February to 01 March 2026 in Melbourne, Australia.

The Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in Australia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Communist Party of Australia the assurances of its highest consideration.

Canberra, 20 February 2026

Members First meets for UWU democracy

JE

I'm a United Workers' Union (UWU) member and attended the launch party of the NSW Members First faction on Sunday, the 22 February. It was an event to promote and gauge the support of UWU members for the Members First faction.

The main aim of the faction is to establish workers democracy within the United Workers Union, to involve members in the union and to establish independence from the ALP. We don't want the union to be a front for the ALP.

The MF faction wants to pose a challenge to United For You which dominates UWU as it is and is an active party in betraying the rank-and-file and aligning themselves with the ALP as a union bureaucracy detached from the mass base of the union itself.

The event itself is significant because it reflects a burgeoning dissatisfaction with the UWU within its own membership and an active effort being made to reform the union internally. Members First is a positive development towards the union growing sovereign from ALP domination and becoming more worker-focussed.

The launch began with a Filipino cultural association musical performance, playing songs such as *We shall not be moved* and *Say no to war*. As the evening got underway the goals of the Faction were explained.

First and foremost is to establish a workers democracy within the UWU. As one member said, "How can we expect workers to have power in their workplace when they don't even have power in their union?"

Other goals are to increase site and industry coverage, to establish a strike fund and to establish workers' militancy.

Union movement welcomes work from home start date

Victorian Trades Hall Council has welcomed the announcement that the Allan government will legislate the right to work from home with a start date of 1 September this year.

Hundreds of thousands of Victorian workers already enjoy the time and cost savings afforded by working from home. Unions say it's now time to extend that right to every Victorian who is able to.

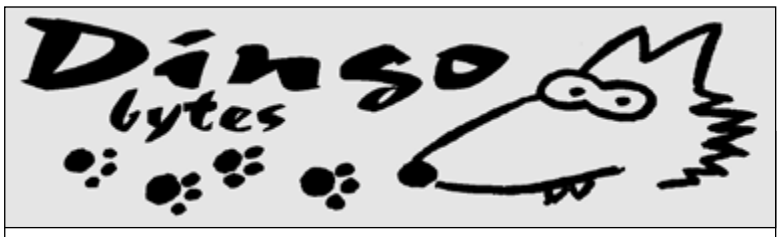
Protecting the right to work from home is a simple change that means the world to thousands of Victorians and their families. It means less time stuck in traffic, more time with family and friends, and the flexibility many Victorians need to juggle work, family commitments and being an active member of their community.

Luke Hilakari, Secretary Victorian Trades Hall Council said, "Victorian workers have made it clear that the right to work from home is extremely important, and we won't stand by and watch it slowly slip away from us. I'm glad the Allan government has listened to Victorian workers, and is taking decisive action to protect the right to work from home in law."

Hilikari added that while work from home suits some Victorians, it benefits all Victorians. At time of writing, it's unclear if the Victorian Liberals will support the legislation, or follow previous Federal Liberal leader Peter Dutton's disastrous decision to publicly oppose work from home.

Victorian Trades Hall Council

Photo: Teona Swift – pexels.com (CC0)



Beyond Barbarism

"Barbarism is not potent enough to describe this depravity," said Jason Hickel, an eco-socialist activist and commentator. Hickel was referring to the brutal murder by Israeli soldiers of a 14-year-old Palestinian boy in a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank. The incident happened last November but was only just reported by the BBC.

The boy was shot multiple times, then prevented from receiving medical help. "They didn't just stand around and watch him bleed to death," Hickel wrote. "They actively prevented two ambulances from reaching him."

Now it is the turn of the children of Iran after Israel and the US launched their brutal and illegal attack on Iran. Israel has officially killed at least 50,000 Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip since it embarked on its genocide there beginning on 8 October 2023, along with continued killings in the occupied West Bank. The real number is likely far higher given the challenges of finding and counting bodies, many of whom are still buried under rubble or were incinerated beyond identification.

The only country in the region that does have nuclear weapons, the West's ally, the hyper-aggressor, is Israel. Israel occupies a unique position of "nuclear ambiguity" inside the UN. It is not obliged to confirm nor deny whether it possesses nuclear weapons. This is despite the fact that the UN general assembly passes a resolution every year calling on Israel to disarm.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: what passes for leadership at Australian universities. A landmark study into racism at Australian universities has exposed appalling levels of discrimination in university workplaces, with the vast majority of staff who complained about racism dissatisfied with how universities handled their concerns.

The Australian Human Rights Commission's Respect at Uni study – the first comprehensive national investigation of its kind – found that one in five academic staff experienced direct racism at their workplace, with racism most commonly occurring in work meetings and shared staff spaces. National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) President Dr Alison Barnes said the findings were deeply disturbing for staff and students. "This report shines a harsh light on the racism that staff experience every single day in Australian universities," Dr Barnes said.

When one in five academic staff report experiencing direct racism, and university leadership is implicated in nearly half of those cases, we're seeing a systemic workplace crisis. Almost half of all staff who experienced racism reported negative impacts on their careers, with a quarter of academic staff and 22% of professional staff denied promotions they felt they deserved. More than two in three staff experienced negative mental health impacts.

"Our colleagues' careers are being derailed, their mental health is suffering, and they're being driven out of the sector because of racism," Dr Barnes said.

The report exposed a catastrophic failure of university complaints systems, with only 15% of academic staff who experienced racism making a formal complaint – primarily due to fears of consequences and lack of trust in the process. Of those who complained, 80% of academic staff were dissatisfied with how universities handled their concerns.

"The complaints system is fundamentally broken with shocking consequences for students and staff," Dr Barnes said. "When 80% of staff who complain are dissatisfied, and a third say complaining actually harmed their career, universities are failing in their most basic duty of care to their most valuable asset."

Dr Barnes praised the important work of NTEU Victorian Division Assistant Secretary Professor Joo-Cheong Tham, who represented the union on the study's advisory committee. "Professor Tham's expertise and commitment helped ensure this study captured the full extent of racism in our workplaces," Dr Barnes said. "His contribution has been invaluable in giving voice to the experiences of staff across the sector."

The NTEU is calling for immediate action on the report's recommendations, particularly establishing the Racism@Uni Working Group within six months.

Victoria: 24-hour statewide educator stopwork

After 20 months of negotiating and still without an acceptable offer on the table from the Allan Labor government, kindergarten teachers and educators have been forced to escalate industrial action by stopping work again for 24 hours.

This is the second 24-hour statewide stopwork in five months, with kindergarten teachers and educators taking action – including a mass meeting of union members and a march to Parliament – because they are undervalued when it comes to pay and have excessive and unmanageable workloads, leading to almost one day of unpaid overtime per week on average.

President of the Australian Education Union (AEU) Victorian Branch, Justin Mullaly said these issues and the absence of an acceptable response from the Allan government leave kindergarten teachers and educators with little choice but to take action, which is not done lightly.

"It has taken far too long for the state government to properly address AEU members' claims. This is deeply disrespectful. The state government needs to value kindergarten teachers and educators properly as the current situation is having serious consequences," Mullaly said.

The AEU Victorian Branch's recent State of Our Kinders survey shows around half of kindergarten teachers and educators always or often think about leaving the early childhood profession.

"It is totally unacceptable for the Allan government to call Victoria the 'Education State,' when kindergarten teachers and educators are undervalued, with half of them thinking about leaving the profession.

"This is driven by poor opportunities to progress salaries, excessive requirements related to compliance, and insufficient planning time."

AEU Early Childhood Vice President Cara Nightingale said, "The failure of the Allan Labor government to put a fair and reasonable offer on the table also puts at risk their free kinder promise to Victorian parents with three and four-year-old children."

The government has promised 15 hours of free kindergarten for three-year-olds and 30 hours for four-year-olds. To deliver this, Victoria needs 11,000 more kindergarten teachers and educators.

"Attracting the next generation of kindergarten teachers and educators requires competitive pay and for their work to be valued," Nightingale said.

"In addition, the Allan government must put in place measures that enable the retention of current kindergarten teachers and educators."

"The state government needs to be much better at valuing kindergarten teachers and educators, if half of them regularly think about leaving the profession."

Photo: Australian Education Union Victoria facebook

In September last year, for the first time since 2014, kindergarten teachers and educators were forced to take industrial action as the Allan government had failed to come forward with a pay offer. More than five months later, real progress has still not been made.

"If the Allan government appreciated and respected the work of kindergarten teachers and educators, they would have come to the table with a fair and decent offer 20 months ago," Mullaly said.

"Instead, kindergarten teachers and educators have had to campaign for improved pay and conditions that are needed to keep existing kindergarten staff and recruit the future workforce."

Australian Education Union

Union holds mine dust lung disease conference

The Mining and Energy Union Queensland District has hosted over 100 trade unionists and mine safety experts from across the globe at an intensive week-long conference on the dangers of mine dust lung diseases. This year marks ten years since Black Lung was re-detected in the Queensland coalfields.

Union officials met with leading mine safety experts from around the world, as well as doctors, researchers and lawmakers to share experiences and build a framework of best practices that can be applied to mines across jurisdictions.

The union celebrated the significant progress made in the prevention and screening of mine dust lung diseases, having secured lower dust limits for our mines, and mandatory screening across Queensland. These reforms have ensured that mineworkers are exposed to less risk while at work, and in cases where black lung has developed, are made aware early to ensure that the disease is prevented from worsening.

The conference took an international perspective to the fight against mine dust lung diseases because of the risk it poses to all mineworkers regardless of country of origin. The conference heard from representatives from the US, India, Poland, Mongolia, and across Africa, with the hope that they will take the best standards we've developed and apply them to their own industries.

Attendees were impressed to learn of the massive improvements in other countries, such as South Africa, which has applied the lessons shared at previous conferences to their own fight against dust diseases. South Africa now has protections comparable to Queensland. Australian unionists congratulated the National Union of Mineworkers in their success in improving standards.

While prevention remains at the forefront, this year's conference featured a renewed focus on the treatment and care of workers affected by dust diseases. Once Black Lung has developed it is a life sentence, so treatment is a priority.

The conference also heard from United States medical experts on the improvements made to screening technology, as well as programs developed to improve the lifespan and quality of life of those suffering from Black Lung and other dust diseases.

Unfortunately, the American experts also shared how devastating the Trump administration has been to mine health and safety standards in the USA, with the administration's DOGE cuts gutting the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, or NIOSH, the world-leading research centre for occupational diseases. These cuts had real tangible effects on the ground, with dozens of respiratory testing centres shutting down and ceasing service without government subsidy. This is a terrifying backslide, and demonstrates the importance of fighting for health and safety in the political sphere.

The conference resolved to assess any rehabilitation programs in place for effected workers and lobby for their improvement as well as to assist international affiliates with developing and improving their own standards around dust safety.

Mining and Engineering Union

Labor-Liberal duopoly makes secret committee

Rodrigo Johnson

The Australian Greens say that the Liberal and Labor parties have joined together to create a new secret Defence committee that will hold closed-door hearings that will deliberately exclude any critical voices from the Greens and other crossbenchers.

The Defence Amendment (Parliamentary Joint Committee on Defence) Bill 2025, establishes a new committee that gives the Prime Minister an effective veto over who sits on it, and will only allocate spots for the Liberal and Labor parties.

This new committee will be based on the Parliamentary Joint Committee for Intelligence and Security (PJCIS), which only has the two parties on it and which never challenges government policy.

Senator David Shoebridge, Greens spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Defence, said:

"This Bill has been in the works for years, but if you want a better example of why Australia's defence and foreign policy should not be made behind closed doors between the war parties, look at Albanese backing in the US and Israeli illegal war on Iran. The decision to follow Donald Trump into the next US forever war will be decided in this committee full of only the war parties."

"We know this Bill was a backroom deal between Liberals and Labor who are scared of the blow torch being turned on the dangerous AUKUS deal. This is business as usual from these pro-war parties that have united on spending hundreds of billions on US nuclear submarines and following Trump into every war he wants.

"This committee will be filled with Liberal and Labor insiders furiously agreeing on tying ourselves to the US and reinforcing their groupthink. It's not good for public accountability, transparency or Australia's independence.

Shoebridge made the obvious point that committees should reflect the makeup of Parliament and the community.

He said, "over the next decade, three-quarters of a trillion dollars in public funds will be poured into Defence. The major parties want that to be a black box, so you cannot see where that money is going, that's what this secret committee is all about."

Victoria: good news for Aboriginal families

Reforms make culture and community a priority

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) has welcomed the passage of the Children, Youth & Families (Stability) Bill 2025 (Stability Bill). VALS calls the legislation positive and long awaited first step toward addressing a longstanding injustice of Victoria's child protection system, which has resulted in the permanent separation of Aboriginal children from their families, communities, and Culture.

This new legislation removes harmful and arbitrary time frames around family reunification, which meant that parents were given only 12 (or at most 24) months to navigate the complexity of the child protection system and receive the supports necessary to have their children returned home.

The strict timeframes imposed upon parents also meant that courts could not consider the significant barriers families face in accessing basic services, including lengthy waitlists for housing, mental health, and alcohol and other drug supports; with a lack of culturally safe parenting support provided and specialist family violence programs. Under these punitive measures, Aboriginal families were set up to fail. Many parents were punished with the permanent removal of their children, for circumstances beyond their control. Victoria has the country's highest rate of Aboriginal children being removed from their families. The Bringing them Home Report was tabled almost 30 years ago, but rates of removal in Victoria are significantly higher than they were during the Stolen Generations,

Reflecting a key recommendation of the Yoorrook for Justice report, the passage of the Stability Bill means that the courts will once again have discretion in deciding whether allowing more time for reunification is in a child's best interests and will have to directly consider circumstances which might have impeded reunification.

The Children's Court must now consider an expanded notion of the best interest principle, which recognises the need for cultural stability alongside physical and relational stability. These reforms bring the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 into closer alignment with the Statement of Recognition principles.

Restrictions around reunifying Aboriginal children with their families were based on a racist and flawed understanding of 'best interest,' which viewed the protection and promotion of Aboriginal children's connection to Culture, family, and community as optional, or secondary.

While VALS strongly supports the passage of these measures, it says that further work will be needed to ensure that they achieve their intent of ensuring that Aboriginal children grow up within their families and connected to their Culture and community. Investment in culturally safe prevention and early intervention supports, including access to legal assistance, is necessary to help keep our families together.

Nerita Waight, CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service called the bill a "long awaited, and much needed reform." She said that while the bill doesn't meet the full intention of the Yoorrook Justice Commission, it will make a positive impact on the lives of Aboriginal children, young people and families by building in greater accountability and responsibility in cases where the state seeks to permanently separate Aboriginal children from their families.

Waight said, "There is still significant work to be done to redress racist and discriminatory child protection laws and practices. Removing Aboriginal children from the care of their parent should be a last resort and uphold the principle of being in their best interests. This government must invest in culturally safe, therapeutic and holistic prevention and early intervention supports, including access to legal assistance to support families to stay together and to prioritise reunification where the child must be removed."

Victoria Aboriginal Legal Service

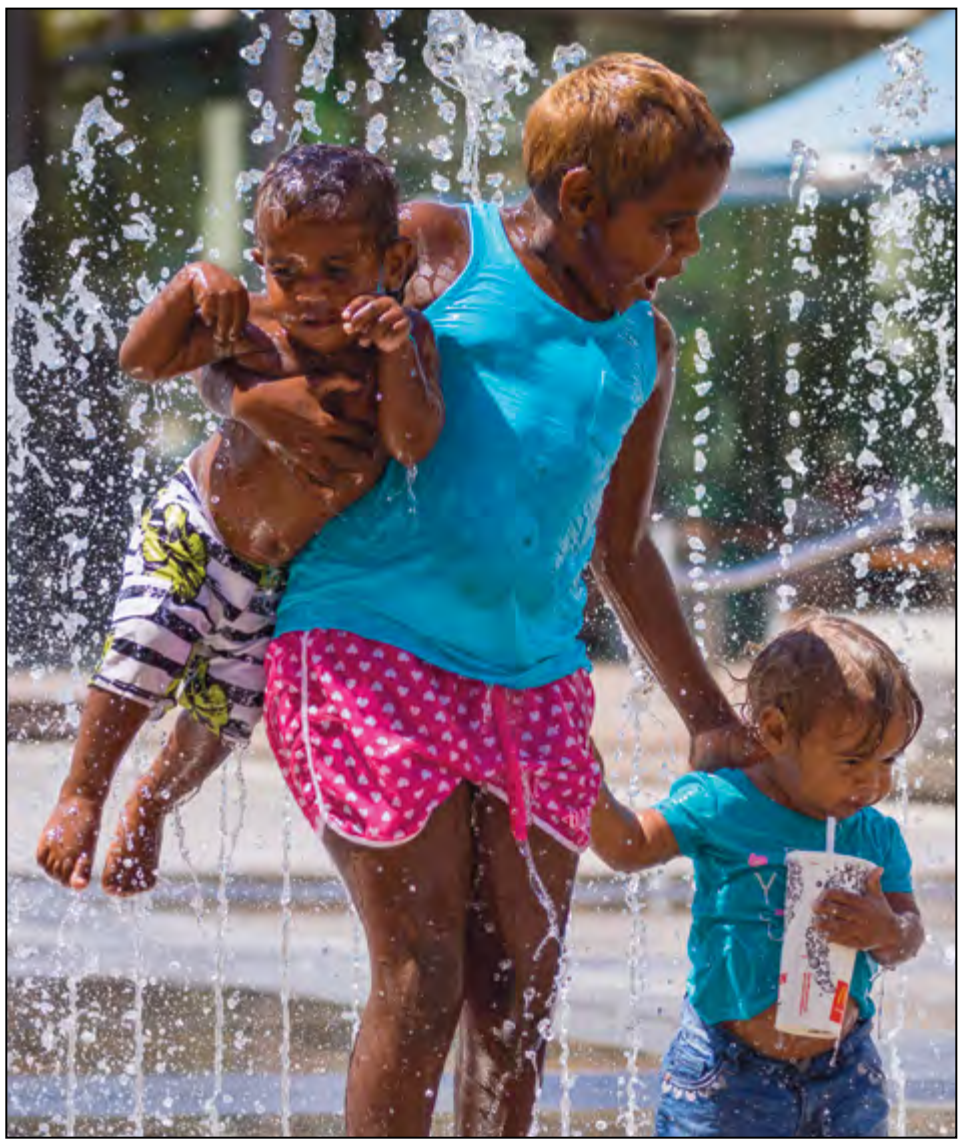


Photo: Tiomax80 – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

Unions to go for extra leave

Unions will pursue an increase in annual leave entitlements from 4 to 5 weeks per year and from 5 to 6 weeks for regular shift workers, in what would be the first increase in the minimum standard since the mid-1970s.

Unions will argue that annual leave should be increased to counter rising work pressures and the long hours of unpaid work that Australians regularly perform.

Australian workers carry out an extra 4.5 weeks' work every year on average, for free as unpaid overtime. Younger workers aged 18-24 perform the most unpaid overtime at 6.4 weeks per year, on average, according to the Centre for Future Work.

By increasing annual leave by a week, Australians would get back at least one week of their unpaid work through annual leave to reclaim time away from work.

While Australians work longer hours, the gap between productivity and real wages has widened. Real wages would need to increase by an additional 10 per cent to catch up to increases in productivity since 2000 and close the gap that has opened up over the last two and a half decades, based on analysis by the Centre for Future Work. Allowing workers an extra week of leave would help with closing that gap.

Increasing annual leave by one week would add an extra 2 per cent to employment costs that would be offset by a reduction in employee turnover and time lost to injury and stress.

Most European countries now provide more annual leave for their citizens than Australia does, including Austria, Germany, France, Spain, and Portugal, as well as Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

Unions will press for changes to the National Employment Standards (NES) to bring in the extra week's annual leave, as part of a House of Representatives Inquiry into the NES that is about to get underway.

ACTU Secretary, Sally McManus has said that Australians work relatively long hours, pointing out that Australians work harder and perform more unpaid overtime than they did 50 years ago when the four-week annual leave standard was set.

She said that Australia should increase annual leave to a minimum of five weeks for full-time workers.

McManus said,"extra leave will decrease stress and burnout. Australian workers already do an extra four and a half weeks of unpaid work on average every year. Getting back one of these weeks is fair and reasonable. It will mean a better rested and happier workforce.

"Younger workers – from 18 to 24 years old – most urgently need to see this burden start to lift. They are the ones doing the most unpaid work – an average of 6.4 weeks of free work for their employers each year.

"The majority of European countries have already moved beyond four weeks. Countries like Austria, France, and Spain have already recognised the importance of rested, healthier employees and have higher rates of annual leave than Australia does. They are some of the most productive and competitive economies in the OECD."

ACTU

'Those who can pay more, should'

Peter Farmer

The heads of the Commonwealth Bank and BHP have surprised nobody by calling for lower, or as they say "more competitive" taxes for business. They've also argued that the NDIS should be scaled back.

At a business summit held by the *Australian Financial Review*, Commonwealth Bank of Australia chief executive Matt Comyn has argued for "tapering off" what he calls "benefits," such as the NDIS. With no sense of irony, Comyn summed up his call for less social spending as "those who can pay more, should."

Unless of course those who can pay more are businesses. For them, Comyn and his fellow corporate leaders are calling for lower taxes and wages. Former National Australia Bank executive, and current BHP chair Ross McEwan complained that in Australia energy costs, corporate tax rates and labour costs are too high.

Michelle Jablko, chief executive of Transurban, who operate road tolls around the country, repeated the old neoliberal maxim that Australia needs to "grow the pie rather than redistribute the pie."

Unfortunately for Jablko, who really needs new material, working people worked out years ago that just 'growing the pie' means a larger pie for the likes of Jablko and other CEOs to eat while the rest of us struggle.

Indigenous activist to sail with Global Sumud Flotilla

Alexandra Giorgianni

Gomeroi and Ngiyampaa activist Jayden Kitchener-Waters has announced plans to set sail with the Global Sumud Flotilla in March, in solidarity with Palestinians as the Flotilla delivers life-saving humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The Flotilla is set to be the largest coordinated civilian mobilisation to Gaza to date, with more than 3,000 participants and over 100 boats.

Those aboard will consist of activists, humanitarians, legal observers, and global community members "that are getting sick and tired of seeing governments let this genocide continue," Kitchener-Waters said.

Kitchener-Waters said the shared experiences of First Nations people and Palestinians underpin his decision to embark on the flotilla.

"It's very easy to see that what's happening to Palestinians is exactly the same thing that happened to our people ... our old people, our ancestors were also displaced from their land, had their land stolen from them, were actively killed while white fellas tried to ethnically cleanse us," he said.

"I think it's really important that history must always remember the Aboriginal people who stood side by side with our brothers and sisters in Palestine, and history must always remember us as fierce allies and close comrades in this war against injustice, oppression and apartheid."

Kitchener-Waters said the legacy of justice and activism carried by First Nations people has further motivated his decision to join the Flotilla.

"We come from such a staunch line of activists and warriors. I'm talking about Uncle Eddie Mabo, Uncle Gary Foley, the Charlie Perkins ... I would not even be thinking about going on the boat if it weren't for those staunch activists who fought for what was right back in the day," he said.

Sailing to Gaza doesn't come without risks. All flotilla movements to Gaza have been intercepted by Israeli forces, most recently the 2025 Global Sumud Flotilla last October.

Speaking on the past flotilla interceptions, Kitchener-Waters argued these actions demonstrate Israel's deliberate attempt to conceal the reality of Gaza.

"They're scared of the world knowing what's actually happening on the shores of Gaza. They're scared of the world knowing the truth, and the truth is that Palestinians are treated awfully," he said.

"There's a genocide that's still happening. The Gaza Strip has been absolutely destroyed and dismantled by Israel, and Israel doesn't want the world to see that."

Beyond the dangers of joining the Flotilla, Kitchener-Waters is also grappling with the personal weight of his decision.

"To be honest, it wasn't an easy decision to make to jump on the flotilla, and the reason for it being such a mentally tough decision is my family," Kitchener-Waters said.

"With the importance I place on family, seeing my family struggle with the decision has been disheartening and has made me sad. But on the different side of the same coin, they have been unbelievably supportive."

But he remains resolute, reflecting on the plight of Palestinian children and their need for aid.

"I've just thought immediately about the children of Palestine, absolutely struggling while living under an oppressive colonial regime, but have continued to be so incredibly resilient, so that's what keeps me motivated and keeps my mentality in a better spot," he said.

"Whatever happens to me is not nearly as bad as what the children of Palestine are going through."

Kitchener-Waters' announcement comes as the Israel-Gaza conflict draws renewed attention.

"The Australian political climate in terms of Islam, Muslims, and people from the Middle East is awful at the moment," Kitchener-Waters said.

Speaking on the Australian government's role in the conversation, Kitchener-Waters said: "In a nutshell, they have failed."

"They have failed their role as politicians for Australia and in looking after Australians. They have failed in their role in the global community, and they have failed the young people who are going to lead the country one day," he said.

"When they are out of power and dead and gone, they'll be nothing but a forgotten shadow in the night, and any conversation about them will always be attached to their disgusting, vile, horrible treatment of Palestinian people, because they are and continue to be complicit in this genocide."

National Indigenous Times (edited for space)

Rally for Palestine, Boorloo/Perth, 2023. Photo: Vinnie Molina

PEACE NOTES

How many US Bases do we have?

Recently there has been some internal discussion about the number of US Bases in Australia. The peace movement says it's 50. Others argue it's a lot less. In understanding this question, it is essential to understand the definition of what a base is. The definition put forward by David Vine the author of 'Base Nation' generally uses 'base' to mean any place, facility, or installation used regularly for military purposes of any kind.

The bases come in various sizes and shapes, from massive sites employing over 1,000 people like Pine Gap, to small electronic facilities in Toowoomba Qld. The bases include electronic bases, training bases, live firing bases, prepositioning of materiel for a conflict with China, and Australian Defence Force bases which also serve as US facilities. Counting US bases in Australia according to these criteria significantly increases the number of US bases in Australia.

There is no doubt that there is a significant intrusion of the US military into Australia. The government for a long time has insisted that there are no US bases in Australia, just 'joint facilities.' It's a sensitive topic for a supposedly sovereign government. In 2013, then-Defence Minister Stephen Smith said the government had "full knowledge and concurrence" in relation to the activities of Pine Gap. If that's really true, sometime in the future there may be a court somewhere in the world where Australian government ministers are hauled up for human rights or war crimes abuses because of their complicity in the US and Israeli illegal wars.

US Studies Centre University of Sydney

The US Studies Centre at the University of Sydney has stepped into the AUKUS field with a brief prepared by a Professor Dean which claims that Australian Universities are not putting enough effort into creating R&D for pillar 2 of AUKUS. The brief asserts: "four years following the announcement of AUKUS, the Australian university sector's contribution to R&D in support of Pillar II has been exceptionally modest.

"It is against this backdrop that this brief makes the case for greater university involvement in driving and cultivating the Innovation, Science and Technology (IS&T) ecosystem needed to realise AUKUS Pillar II objectives."

Why would the US studies centre be advocating for more spending by Australia on US military equipment instead of being a centre for understanding the USA? In advocating for an increase in war-based R&D, it is arguing for even less resources for the university sector.

ICAN forum

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) has held a round table in Sydney. Similar meetings are held around Australia. Globally, the danger of nuclear weapons being used is higher than it has been for more than half a century. Despite this, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) remains a beacon of hope and progress toward global nuclear disarmament. It establishes a framework for eliminating existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons, and addressing the harm caused by their use and testing, while working to complement existing treaties addressing rising nuclear weapons risks. The treaty has now been signed by 95 nations, including 74 states parties. New polling confirms that two thirds of the Australian public support Australia joining the TPNW. The meeting discussed strategies to persuade the ALP to join the TPNW in line with Labor's commitment prior to its election.

NO MORE WAR!

COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

NO MORE BLOOD FOR OIL!

Iran has just been **bombed** by **Israel and the USA.** This is **not** to **spread democracy** but to **seize** Iran's natural resources, for their own **profit**. Currently, American armaments destroy homes, schools and hospitals, all while **indiscriminately killing** innocent civilians. The **CPA opposes** this imperialist aggression, we call for **peace**, and for **our government** to **condemn** this aggression. No war but class war!

JOIN THE FIGHT
JOIN THE CPA!

https://cpa.org.au/join-cpa/

Letters to the Editor
The Guardian
74 Buckingham Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

email: editor@cpa.org.au

Spineless war criminals

Paul Keating once famously described then Opposition leader John Hewson as "a shiver waiting for a spine to run up." He also, in relation to Hewson, said debating with him is like being flogged by a warm lettuce.

Every attempt the Opposition makes to wedge Labor, the Albanese response is to lurch to the right attempting to match or outdo them in racist, pro-US imperialism.

Labor pretends to take climate change seriously but is outdoing the Morrison government on expansion of gas projects.

It has handed the US and the UK a blank cheque on funding their respective modernisations of their military industrial complexes. Even worse our military has been embedded in that of the US, under US command.

Australia's sovereignty has been jettisoned. We are all but in name the 51st state of the US.

When Israel and the US launched an all-out attack on Iran and also Lebanon, Albanese and the other two members of Labor's war cabinet – Richard Marles and Penny Wong – couldn't leap quickly enough to endorse their unprovoked, unendorsed by the UN, illegal assault.

Even the conservative, pro-genocide in Palestine, British PM drew a line in the sand. But our spineless PM did not stop to think, did not consult with Parliament, to seek the views of our elected representatives.

The US says it will not stop until its aims have been achieved. Its aims which the mass media avoid mentioning are to seize Iran's oil and facilitate Israel's expansionist plans in the Middle East.

Albanese, for the sake of humanity and economic prosperity you must withdraw your support, cancel AUKUS, and grow a spine to protect the interests of the Australian people, humanity in general and address climate change.

J J Ross

Worth Streaming?

Fun, vibes and police violence

Over the last year, we have seen increasing state violence and violation of the right to protest in Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and other places. We are now presented with two TV series that are perky and gleeful about those violations. The American series *High Potential* and the Australian series *Blue Murder Motel* feature ordinary citizens, in the first a housewife/office cleaner and in the second two owners of a motel, trampling the rights of the accused all in a cutesy, light atmosphere where the hilarity never stops, that is, unless you're the victim of the characters in either of these series.

High Potential, which is a hit on (the US) ABC and was renewed for a second season, follows the fun escapades of Morgan, an overnight cleaner at the Los Angeles Police Department, the LAPD, with an IQ of 160 and three kids. The series, a combination of more standard ABC/Disney family melodrama and CBS police procedural, begins with a series of role reversals. Instead of being an immigrant stuck in a low-paying job, Morgan is a caucasian consigned to being a cleaner, but, between dusting, she puts the police on the right track toward solving a murder. The upper echelons of the LAPD, the detectives, in this fantasy, are Black American and Latino, and their sensitivity contrasts with two white goon cops on the street who accost Morgan.

She bullies her way onto the staff and, in solving crimes, is distinguished by her utter disregard for 75 years of court protections of police suspects. She paws through a biologist's office in an illegal search as the official police detective is talking to the scientist. She then more brazenly steals a letter from the same office by posing as a cleaner and breaking and entering a safe because she figures out the combination. Finally, in an interrogation, she wants to play the bad cop, coming down more violently on the citizen being grilled.

This is *Desperate Housewives* meets *CSI*, even employing the *CSI* flashbacks of suspects as Morgan tells their story, but not as murderers, but as the suspect couple enjoying a fun water world ride. Morgan describes her flaunting of citizens' rights as her "rebelliousness," and in the end, we all have a laugh at her walking all over the US Constitution.

Blue Murder Motel, an Australian series, is about a couple of former police detectives from New South Wales who retire and buy a run-down motel in New Zealand. The gimmick, alluded to in the title, is that every week there is a murder at their motel, which the couple solves. The way Peter and Vanessa Coleman solve these crimes is, as by using their status as civilians to spy on and trample the rights of their guests at the motel.

In this combination of romantic comedy and detective series, Vanessa is especially more aggressive, grabbing hold of a guest's arm and twisting it to stop a verbal confrontation that even Peter thinks is too much on her part. She later breaks into the room of a suspect couple and steals the woman's lipstick to be used later as evidence against her. Peter, standing guard, calls to warn her that the other couple is outside, putting us in the position of sympathising with her breaking and entering, hoping she gets away with it.

Later, Peter, in unclogging the suspect couple's drain, finds the missing piece of evidence that seals their guilt. He suggests they simply install cameras in the rooms to spy on all their guests, which Vanessa resists because "it will kill the fun vibe." The pilot ends with the two dancing under a disco ball, highlighting their romance, which is enhanced by their combined flaunting of the law. In our modern police state, this is called a romantic interlude.

It's not often that a TV series spills directly into the headlines, but the New South Wales police force, from where Peter and Vanessa retired, is in the news for the brutality with which the police assaulted demonstrators during a rally to protest the red carpet treatment of the Australian government gave the visiting president of Israel, Isaac Herzog.

The violence was too blatant for Australian mainstream media to ignore. Mass media outlets described the protestors as being "punched, pushed and arrested," and questioned whether this was excessive use of force. Some still tried to blame the protesters.

It's interesting to note that the ABC, the Australian Broadcasting Company, which was there on the ground, ran with the story questioning the police, while the BBC, the British Broadcasting Company, in their story, defended the police, drawing attention instead to what they termed "protest violence." We also have the Los Angeles Police Department accused of violent treatment of ICE protestors, with a woman recently shot in the face by police.

These two series are making light of ongoing violence as protestors ramp up dissent against governments that are becoming increasingly hostile and belligerent. They do it in a way that makes police flaunting of rights fun, after all, to demand the police honour the rights of protestors might kill the New South Wales Police "vibe."

Adapted from 'Your TV is handcuffing you' by Dennis Broe, *People's World*.

Photo: tvnz.co.nz

the violence was too blatant for Australian mainstream media to ignore

Something to say?

Write to the Editor!

editor@cpa.org.au

Solutions to Crossword

***Guardian* 23 February 2026, #2180**

Across

1 Scheme for employing, exploiting Pacific Islanders – **PALM**

4 Bringing Israel's president here was supposed to improve this – **COHESION**

5 Fearless rapporteur/craven – **PM ALBANESE**

6 Famous ship, resembles Liberal Party – **TITANIC**

7 Australian currency became this 60 years ago – **DECIMAL**

9 Israel wants to bring this back – **DEATH PENALTY**

11 Fish, complaining – **CARP**

Down

2 Most bombed country on earth – **LAOS**

3 Mine that started a civil war – **BOUGAINVILLE**

8 Liberals love to talk about them, don't have good ones – **VALUES**

9 Direction Coles prices are *not* heading in – **DOWN**

10 Chinese new year animal – **HORSE**

Spartacus: Sword, sandals and ... anti-McCarthyism?

Graham Holton

Although made in 1960, *Spartacus* is seen as a classic, a cut above the 'men in togas' movies of the sword-and-sandals boom of the '50s and '60s.

The film uses political symbolism to reflect Cold War anxieties, McCarthyism, class struggle, and the fragility of republican institutions. In 1950, in a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, Senator Joe McCarthy claimed he had "a list of 205" communists working in the US State Department. Although the claim was later shown to be nonsense, it began the purge of members of the Communist Party, left-wing writers and actors from Hollywood. Those placed on the blacklist were unable to get work in Hollywood for decades.

The connection between *Spartacus* and McCarthyism is a powerful example of how history is reframed through the political lens of the time. The film is deeply resonant of the United States in 1960, with its fears of authoritarianism and the collapse of the state through corruption, oligarchy, and the manipulation of crises. The ancient slave rebellion becomes a potent allegory for the anti-communist witch hunts of the 1950s.

The film is a cinematic rejection of McCarthy-era fear politics. Although the director, Stanley Kubrick, was not blacklisted it directly affected the production of *Spartacus*. Lead actor Kirk Douglas insisting on openly crediting blacklisted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo. Trumbo was one of the Hollywood Ten, who had been blacklisted in 1947 during the HUAC (House Unamerican Activities Committee) hearings. Individuals were pressured to name others to save themselves. In a key moment, *Spartacus* reverses this with everyone standing up to protect the protagonist. The cries of "I am Spartacus" becomes a metaphor for refusing to inform on others; a collective resistance against political persecution, with the weak standing in solidarity against state intimidation.

The film critiques economic systems that depend on the dehumanisation of labour. Rome is a slave-based economy with aristocratic decadence funded by the exploitation of slaves, the permanent underclass. They revolt under extreme inequality, turning their economic exploitation into political resistance. The slave revolt represents the class struggle and the rebellion symbolises labour rising up against entrenched wealth. The mass crucifixions along the Appian Way is political repression as public theatre. State terror is designed to prevent future uprisings and dissent. Authoritarianism relies on visible brutality making the crucified a warning and an indictment.

The film's core warning is timeless. The symbolic power of *Spartacus* continues to invoke modern contexts to resistance against injustice. In 2023, the Australian journalist John Pilger wrote in his essay "We Are Spartacus," that the film's message can be used for contemporary figures, such as WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and Australian whistleblower David McBride, who stood up against state power and oppression. The slaves cry of "I am Spartacus" is a timeless symbol of solidarity and resistance against "a homegrown fascism in America" and other political persecutions.

Spartacus serves as a reminder that the messages of the past are deeply intertwined with our present-day struggles. *Spartacus* continues as a rallying cry for resistance by the downtrodden. Rome does not fall by a coup, but shifts gradually towards centralised power under the pretext of a crisis, the slave revolt.

Today the Trump administration can be compared to the tactics of the McCarthy era, targeting political opposition and specific demographic groups, making it explicitly authoritarian. Trump uses highly publicised investigations, aggressive rhetoric towards the media and institutions, and polarising "law and order" to reframe modern politics, building political legitimacy and to solidify his identity. We wait for the slave revolt.

Forum on multipolarity and Chinese modernisation

Graham Holton

On 21 February David Matters led a forum on *Multipolarity and Chinese Modernisation: A synopsis of nation state and class*. These distinct concepts are inextricably intertwined. The big banks in Europe and the USA had financed colonial empires, spreading capitalism amongst the colonised peoples. The Russian Revolution of 1917 opened up a new era, with the proletarian revolution finding allies in the landless peasants and oppressed nationalities. The Soviet Union was the first nation in which national minorities came together voluntarily to build a new world order that challenged the colonial empires.

During the Cold War the Non-Aligned Movement was a response by the developing countries to the 'bi-polarised' world – a world with two superpowers, with US imperialism and its allies attacking the socialist world. In response multipolarity asserted national independence as a counter to the USA and its imperialist allies, engaging with China. The development of the world economy increased global interdependence. Today China attempts to break the US monopoly over advanced technologies.

US imperialism attempted to halt independence movements shaped by conflicts. Former colonial powers waged wars to regain control of their former colonies. The US State Department and the CIA financed and took part in dozens of coups and military interventions in the developing world. This led to the creation of neocolonialism which held countries such as Namibia, Mozambique, and Angola in bondage to the former colonial powers. Australia did the same in Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and other island states.

China is undergoing a cultural renaissance as a result of growing material wealth. China has the largest urbanisation in human history, with its proletariat no longer a small minority. The city and country are being united and rural isolation bought to an end. The imperialist governments are trying to "decouple" China from the world economy, making extra efforts to engage India as an alternative to China.

At present governments in Europe, Canada, Australia, Japan, and Taiwan are spending billions to rearm. This is while imperialism is unable to solve the problems of climate extremes, increasing wars, social degradation and cultural loss amongst peasant and Indigenous peoples. As socialism develops, the productive forces released move the socially necessary labour time towards absolute zero.

The talk was opened up to discussions on banks and finance, multipolarity, African GDP and new designs by imperialist powers. Green energy is progressing in developing countries. More research is needed from a Marxist perspective.

Shanghai, China. Photo: Denys Nevozhai/unsplash.com (CC0)

Israeli bombing leaves 52 dead, 54 wounded

Israeli warplanes carried out a new series of airstrikes on 2 March, against the southern suburbs of Beirut, amid the escalating regional conflict. The Lebanese government's Emergency Center confirmed that the death toll had risen to 52, with 154 wounded as a result of the Israeli military offensive.

According to the Lebanese National News Agency, the raids impacted the vicinity of the Jnah area, causing widespread shock among the civilian population residing in the outskirts of the capital. Preliminary reports indicate that more than 10 airstrikes were recorded, generating dense plumes of smoke visible from various strategic points in the Lebanese city centre.

Following the bombings, the Israeli army claimed to have attacked a supposed strategic target in the city, without revealing details about the facility or the people affected. The Lebanese government seeks to strengthen state control over weaponry north of the Litani River, while denouncing systematic violations of national sovereignty.

The escalation in Lebanon is unfolding in parallel with the military offensive launched by Israel and the United States against Iran, a scenario that has broadened the conflict and heightened tensions on several fronts in West Asia.

The Lebanese Foreign Ministry reiterated that these bombings constitute a flagrant violation of international law and UN Security Council resolutions, demanding an immediate cessation of hostilities.

Telesur

Sanctions are strangling Cuba, not socialism

LB Jones

A fuel tanker called the *Sea Horse* is crossing the ocean toward Havana. It is carrying about 200,000 barrels of diesel fuel. It is expected to arrive in early March.

That ship matters for one simple reason. In Cuba today, fuel is not about comfort. It is about whether the lights stay on. It is about whether families can cook. It is about whether hospitals work, trash gets picked up, buses run, and the dead are buried with dignity.

People are watching this ship because pressure is closing in. And that pressure hits ordinary families first.

The *Sea Horse* is coming from Russia, a longtime ally of Cuba. Its voyage carries political weight. Many are watching to see whether the shipment will reach Havana without interference and whether Moscow will stand by the delivery despite US pressure.

For decades, the United States has enforced an embargo on Cuba and added layer after layer of sanctions. In recent weeks, pressure around fuel has grown even stronger.

On 29 January 2026, the White House issued an executive order declaring a national emergency related to Cuba. The order allows the US to punish countries that provide oil to the island, even indirectly. In simple terms, not only Cuba can be targeted. Any country that helps Cuba buy or ship fuel can face penalties.

The impact was immediate. Mexico, a key supplier after Venezuelan shipments slowed, said it has stopped sending oil to Cuba while it weighs the risk of retaliation.

Reuters has described this as an oil chokehold. Fewer deliveries from longtime partners, combined with tighter sanctions, have deepened shortages and blackouts.

Washington says this pressure is meant to bring political change. But when you squeeze a country's fuel supply, you do not squeeze leaders first. You squeeze everyone.

I have been in contact with residents in Havana and other provinces who asked not to be named. Their accounts match what international news outlets have reported.

They describe blackouts that last most of the day in some areas. People get only short windows to charge a phone or cook a meal. Power plants are old. The grid cannot get the fuel or parts it needs.

Businesses close early. Workers lose hours. An eight-hour day cannot run without electricity.

When diesel runs short, garbage trucks stop. Trash piles up. Mosquitoes spread. Sanitation declines.

When fuel and electricity fail, health care suffers. Hospitals face outages. Ambulances struggle to refuel. Flights bringing medical supplies face limits.

Shortages also change behaviour. Informal markets grow. Corruption pressure rises. Families search for medicines that used to be easier to find. Low wages and thin supply strain workers inside already stressed institutions.

Even in death, shortages show. Funeral services are limited. Transport is scarce. Materials are poor. These are not abstract numbers. They are daily life when a nation's energy supply is squeezed.

This does not mean Cuba's government has done everything right. It means something simpler. When outside pressure targets fuel, banking, and shipping, every weakness inside the country becomes harder to fix.

Australia-Cuba Friendship Society action in Boorloo/Perth.

Cuba is not a failed state. It is a strangled one.

Today's crisis lands on a country that has lived under US economic limits for more than sixty years. In 1962, President John F Kennedy formalised a trade embargo between the United States and Cuba.

Over time, that embargo grew into a wider system of financial rules and penalties. Laws such as the Helms-Burton Act allow lawsuits against foreign companies that invest in certain Cuban property. Even when food or medicine is allowed on paper, banks often refuse to process payments because they fear fines. Companies step back entirely to avoid risk.

Each year, the United Nations General Assembly votes by a wide margin to condemn the embargo. The votes are not binding, but they show how many countries believe broad economic punishment hurts ordinary people more than it changes governments.

The debate about reform inside Cuba is real. People raise concerns about efficiency, corruption, and planning.

But reform requires trade, spare parts, financing, and stable energy. Fixing a national power grid requires contracts and reliable shipping. When those channels are blocked or threatened, reform becomes harder, not easier.

Sanctions do not stand alone. They make internal problems worse and shrink the space for change.

There is a larger question that rarely gets asked.

Critics argue that socialism cannot sustain itself without external pressure. If that were true, why would such extensive sanctions be necessary?

Economic systems grow under real-world conditions. When allowed to trade and invest in a stable setting, some socialist-oriented countries have adapted to their national needs and grown, as seen in China and Vietnam.

You do not have to agree with every decision made by Cuba's leaders to see what is happening.

But you should not confuse an economy under siege with a failed state.

A failed state stops trying to serve its people. Cuba is still trying through clinics, schools, and rationing meant to protect basic services. What is failing is the ability to secure fuel, parts, financing, and normal trade under an expanding blockade.

Cuba is not a failed state. It is a strangled one.

Two hundred thousand barrels of diesel is more than eight million gallons of fuel. That shipment could keep power plants running for days. It could slow the blackouts. It could move buses and ambulances. It could keep hospital machines working and water systems pumping.

It buys time.

It gives families a brief moment of relief.

But it does not break the grip around the island.

One ship cannot undo decades of policy.

The *Sea Horse* is not a solution. It is a symbol.

It shows how daily life in Cuba now depends on whether a tanker appears on the horizon. It shows what happens when energy becomes a tool of pressure.

A nation should not have to wait for a ship to survive.

People's World

Maduro accuses US of sabotaging his defence

Venezuela's kidnapped President Nicolas Maduro has sought to have all the charges brought against him by the United States dropped.

President Maduro, who was kidnapped along with his wife Cilia Flores during an illegal US raid on 3 January, also accused the Trump administration of sabotaging his ability to defend himself.

President Maduro's legal team said the case should be thrown out because the US government has blocked the Venezuelan government from paying the legal fees for both him and Flores.

In a filing to a Manhattan federal judge, President Maduro's lawyer, Barry Pollack, said that by blocking the funds from Venezuela, the Trump administration was "interfering with Mr Maduro's ability to retain counsel and, therefore, his right under the Sixth Amendment to counsel of his choice."

Pollack explained that any interference under the Sixth Amendment to the US Constitution requires the dismissal of all charges.

President Maduro and Flores have been detained in New York without bail since their kidnapping by US forces in a bloody military operation that killed 100 people.

The US alleges that President Maduro and Ms Flores were co-conspirators in drug trafficking.

President Maduro and Ms Flores deny the allegations and claim the prosecution is a manoeuvre to bring about regime change in Venezuela.

Both have maintained their innocence.

Importance of Native American parades in defiance of ICE

A member of the Apache tribe from New Mexico. Photo: Marvin Lynchard/Department of Defense – flickr.com (PDM 1.0)

Graham Holton

Native American parades across the United States in January and February have celebrated education and community strength, in a cultural affirmation that honours Native peoples' ancestors, sharing their living traditions, and asserting their place in the public story of the present. They serve as living reminders that Indigenous cultures are vibrant, continuing traditions, and not relics of the past. They included the Plains tribes, Lakota and Dakota, the Apache, the Navajo, Iroquois, and many others.

These parades help build community solidarity, wellness, and mutual support within and across tribal nations. Organisers highlight the importance of coming together to reinforce social bonds, celebrate achievements, and uplift collective identity, which contributes to a stronger sense of belonging and cultural continuity. These Native American parades, and related Indigenous celebrations, in January are significant, culturally and politically, especially in the context of ICE arresting Native Americans as non-American. Holding a parade signals "We are still here. We govern ourselves."

By visibly centering Indigenous presence, communities challenge the treatment of Native peoples as political actors. Public events serve as a way to maintain that ICE must coordinate with tribal authorities, and demand the recognition of tribal ID documents.

There are over 570 federally recognised tribes in the United States and each tribe has its own unique language, history, traditions, and beliefs. Elders are honoured for their wisdom and experience, and children are taught to respect their elders and to contribute to their community. Yet ICE (United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement) has arrested dozens of tribal people, with some nearly deported to Mexico, based solely on racial appearance. ICE has continually ignored tribal cards carried by members, with agents going onto tribal land to make arrests.

The Oglala Sioux tribe have pointed out that their citizens being detained by ICE during the Minneapolis raids is a federal overreach and a violation of their tribal rights. The Native American Rights Fund (NARF) publicly condemned ICE's actions, citing racial profiling, illegal detentions of Native Americans, and violations of treaty and constitutional protections, and urged accountability and support for affected tribal citizens.

Indigenous parades are public displays of Native culture and history that function as powerful political statements, when communities are targeted by ICE agents. They act as Native cultural displays that shift the narrative by asking: Who is "illegal" on stolen land? Whose borders are being enforced? And who defines belonging?

Albanese family sues Trump administration

The family of United Nations human rights rapporteur Francesca Albanese has sued the administration of United States President Donald Trump over the sanctions it imposed upon her.

The lawsuit argues that the sanctions are an effort to punish Albanese for bringing attention to rights abuses Israel has perpetuated against Palestinians.

Since 2022, Albanese, a legal scholar, has served as the special rapporteur for the West Bank and Gaza, where she monitors human rights abuses against Palestinians. The UN Human Rights Council selected her for the position.

The Trump administration, however, sanctioned her last July, calling her "unfit" for her role and accusing her of "biased and malicious activities" against the US and its ally, Israel.

Sanctions generally freeze the US-based assets of an individual and prevent anyone else in the US from doing business with them.

Since returning for a second term, Trump has used sanctions as penalties for several critics of Israeli and US actions.

Last June, the Trump administration sanctioned four International Criminal Court judges for taking "illegitimate and baseless actions" against the US and Israel. In August, two more ICC judges, plus two prosecutors, were also slapped with sanctions.

Telesur (edited for space)

Global Briefs

LEBANON: Thousands of people are fleeing their homes following relentless bombings by Israel. Lebanon's Health Ministry reported that at least 52 people were killed and over a hundred were wounded in strikes on Beirut suburbs and the South. Doctors Without Borders said its teams witnessed "large waves of displacement" with people fleeing with few belongings.

GUATEMALA: Under pressure from the USA, Guatemala is ending its 30-year long partnership with Cuba which will see 412 medical workers, including 333 doctors, leaving the country. This decision will negatively impact under-resourced, rural Indigenous regions that relied heavily on these services. Guatemala is one of many countries that has benefited from Cuban medical missions. Over the past decades, Cuba has sent medical missions around the world, from Latin America to Africa and beyond. Cuban doctors are critical for Caribbean countries as they are filling a significant gap in medical care amid a lack of trained medical professionals. More than 24,000 Cuban doctors are working in 56 countries worldwide. This includes Latin American countries such as Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Mexico; Africa, including Angola, Mozambique, Algeria; and the Middle East, including Qatar. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Cuban doctors were invited to Italy to help overwhelmed hospitals in some regions.

ZIMBABWE: Zimbabwe has rejected a proposed $367 million US health funding agreement. The decision followed a thorough inter-ministerial review that concluded the arrangement did not meet fundamental partnership standards, including "mutual respect, transparency, and reciprocal benefit." Government spokesperson pointed out that "at its core, the proposal was asymmetrical" and that Zimbabwe could not accept "unequal" terms to "share its biological resources and data over an extended period, with no corresponding guarantees of access to any medical innovations." Zimbabwe's move comes amid mounting scrutiny of bilateral US health agreements in Africa. More than 50 civil society groups have warned the continent's leaders that the agreements could "undermine sovereignty" by granting the USA "expansive access" to national health data and pathogen information.

AFGHANISTAN: Russia, China, Iran and India, members of the BRICS block, expressed concern over the latest escalation of violence between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Tensions between the two countries rose after a series of cross-border attacks. The border dividing the two countries, known as the Durand Line, was established in 1893 by the British-Indian administration. After independence in 1947, Afghanistan refused to officially recognise the boundary, fuelling disputes for decades. After years of deteriorating ties, Pakistan recently declared it is in "open war" with the Taliban, accusing the government of harbouring militant groups.

IRAQ: Hundreds of Iraqis attempted to storm the American Embassy in Baghdad as millions of Shiite Muslims outside Iran mourn the assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as their spiritual leader. Violent clashes took place in Pakistan as well. In India-controlled Kashmir, thousands marched peacefully through the capital, chanting anti-US and anti-Israel slogans.

UKRAINE: The number of Ukrainians who left the country and have not returned has reached 5.6 million since 2022, according to a study by the Ukrainian Economic Strategy Center. Some 23% of Ukrainian refugees live in Germany with a further 19.5% in Poland.

OMAN: A crew member has been killed in an attack on an oil tanker off the coast of Oman. The vessel is the third to be targeted in the region since the US and Israel launched strikes on Iran. The Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker was attacked by an explosive-laden remotely operated boat while it was sailing over 95 km off the coast of Oman's Muscat Governorate. The attack resulted in a fire and explosion in the main engine room, with one fatality and the remaining 21 crew evacuated. Although Iran has said the Strait of Hormuz will stay open to tankers, shipping is mostly paused due to strike risks. The Strait handles one fifth of the world's oil and gas shipments.

Congress: A delegate's experience

The 15th Congress was my first in-person experience of Congress. I attended the 14th Congress which was online due to unpredictability of COVID-19 lockdowns. The in-person format was much more valuable due to reduced technical interference and wide interaction with other delegates.

Each day I tried to sit outside of my branch in a different position. I spoke to new comrades and comrades with decades of experience in our party and parties overseas. As comrades who have attended events with interstate comrades will attest, speaking with other delegates is valuable. Sharing experiences and gaining feedback is both educational and inspirational. Congress attendance builds morale.

The volunteers at Congress do a wealth of work and special mention of the volunteers in the kitchen is merited. Each day we were offered snacks and meals. Relatedly, the Congress Preparatory Committee had a huge amount of work to undertake and I commend their efforts.

A significant portion of our agenda was termed 'discussion' which was an opportunity to address Congress in a formal capacity. Delegates have a maximum speaking time of five minutes but could use the minutes of other speakers where offered. As one comrade put it, paraphrasing the late Jimmy Donovan, in: "These are your opinions for the next four years." And he was right.

It is very important for all delegates to pitch into the discussion. Contributing your minutes is comradely but if you give them all away it's a long wait for the next chance to speak. I used my minutes in two blocks. A comrade responded to my first block from the podium and after my second block comrades approached me informally for follow-up chats. This part of Congress was my favourite as it involved both interactions with comrades from elsewhere and lively discussion.

At Congress delegates are not representing their branches but themselves. It is our responsibility to make correct assessments of resolutions and vote accordingly. This is not an easy task. We are making choices at the highest level of party decision-making and have no prior notice of major decisions, only when these decisions will be taken. It is very important to remain engaged as fatigue builds over the sessions and days. Note that special resolutions are debated at the final session when fatigue is highest.

Our 15th Congress was a success and I look forward to building our collective efforts into a larger and stronger party for the 16th Congress.

Long live socialism! Long live the CPA!

RJ Harris

Communist Party USA

Dear comrades,
The Communist Party USA sends warm fraternal greetings to the Communist Party of Australia on the occasion of its 15th National Congress. Recognizing our shared struggle for peace in this urgent moment of intensifying imperialist violence, we reaffirm our deepest solidarity with the CPA.

Bilateral arrangements between the governments of the United States and Australia are critical to the geopolitical foundation of American imperialism, now leveraged by the Trump administration against sovereign peoples everywhere. The formation of the AUKUS alliance marked a significant development in the advance of American imperialist ambitions, and in shifting the balance and organisation of forces within the American-led international alignment. Likewise, the struggle against ICE domestically is informed by previous bilateral immigration agreements of Australian and American governments, which have incubated tactics of political repression now deployed against broader sections of American society. We further note the rapid advances of far-right organisation in Australia, mirroring similar developments in the United States and around the world.

Amid such dire circumstances, the CPUSA congratulates the CPA on the successful conclusion of its 15th National Congress. We salute the Party for its continued growth and the deepening of its presence in struggles for peace, democracy and socialism, and we look forward to continued fraternal collaboration. Long live the Communist Party of Australia! Long live proletarian internationalism!

International Department
Communist Party USA

Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB)

Brasília, February 11, 2026.
To the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia,

On behalf of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), we warmly greet the holding of your 15th National Congress, with the confidence that the event will represent a milestone in the history of struggles of the Communist Party of Australia.

We salute the coherence and courage of the CPA in the anti-imperialist struggle, especially in combating the AUKUS alliance and the growing militarisation of the region.

The active solidarity of Australian communists with the causes of Palestine, Cuba, and Venezuela inspires all of us who defend the sovereignty of peoples and world peace.

We follow with hope the growth of the CPA and its growing influence among the working class.

We wish that the 15th Congress achieves all its objectives, resulting in resolutions that further boost the socialist struggle in Australia.

Long live the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of Australia!

Long live internationalist solidarity!
With our fraternal greetings,

Ana Prestes Secretária de Relações Internacionais

الحزب الشيوعي الكوردستاني - العراق
المكتب السياسي

حزبی شیوعی کوردستان - عێراق
مەکتەبی سیاسی

Political Bureau of Kurdistan Communist party –Iraq (KCP-I)

To: The Communist Party of Australia (CPA)
Subject: Congratulatory Message

Dear Comrades,
On behalf of the Kurdistan Communist Party – Iraq, we extend our warmest fraternal and revolutionary greetings to the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) on the occasion of your 15th National Congress.

We follow with great interest your party's growth among the Australian working class and youth and our struggle against AUKUS, US militarisation.

We stand with you in the belief that Socialism is the only alternative to the destructive nature of global capitalism. We wish your Congress delegates great success in their deliberations, and we are confident that the outcomes of this Congress will further strengthen the CPA's role in the struggle for social change.

Long live international working-class solidarity!
Long live Socialism!

Political Bureau of Kurdistan Communist Party

Cuba repels attack, showcases weapons

Peter Farmer

Cuba's deputy foreign minister has said that the island's government is communicating with officials from the US following the fatal shooting of four armed assailants on a speedboat from the US in Cuban waters.

Carlos Fernandez de Cossio said the Cuban government is willing to exchange information with US officials, adding that Cuba plans to ask them for information on the suspects involved and what means they used to organise the trip.

The deputy minister added that the US government has shown willingness "to co-operate in clarifying the facts."

Cuba's Ministry of the Interior said that a Florida-registered speedboat carrying 10 armed Cubans from the US opened fire on soldiers off the island's north coast, and that troops responded, killing four suspects and injuring six others. One Cuban official was also injured, the government said.

A US source said that at least one US citizen was killed and another wounded in the incident.

The source said another member of the 10-person crew was in the US on a visa, and several others may have been green card holders.

The source said the owner of the boat has alleged that the speedboat was stolen by one of his employees.

The Monroe County Sheriff's Office in Florida Keys said the owner reported the boat stolen after receiving calls from reporters and said he had not seen his 24-foot boat docked at the property in more than a week.

Cuba's government has accused the people on the boat of planning to invade the island and unleash terrorism.

Cossio said authorities found assault and sniper rifles, pistols, night vision equipment, bayonets, camouflage clothing, combat rations, communication equipment "and a large number of insignia from counter-revolutionary terrorist organisations."

He added: "This information is still preliminary. More details will be provided in the coming days."

Cuba has since released photographs of the numerous weapons, ammunition, and tactical gear confiscated from the gunmen who recently attempted what it has called an "armed infiltration for terrorist purposes" off the island nation's coast.

The authorities seized a number of weapons, 134 magazines and a total of 12,846 rounds of ammunition of various calibres. They also allegedly captured a drone, a portable generator and ten communications devices.

Each of the gunmen also had a prepared individual kit, which included a rifle, pistol, knife, camouflage uniform, balaclava, helmet, medkit and "other attachments," Cuban news outlet Cubadebate reported.

Photographs of the seized equipment released by the Cuban Embassy in the US show a number of AR-15 rifles and other weapons, as well as Molotov cocktails. Some of the helmets appear to be equipped with night or thermal vision.

Deputy Foreign Minister de Cossío said that the incident was not isolated but was part of a 60-year pattern of "attacks and countless terrorist acts ... organised, financed, and carried out from the territory of the United States."

Sydney Vigil

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Half the Sky

Progress, what progress?

Bernadette Sneddon

Gender progress is at risk, according to a recent University of New South Wales article by Dr Yuvisthi Naidoo. Progress towards gender quality at work is stalling and going backwards in some cases. She cites the impact of AI, which will have a much greater impact on women workers. Their work is more vulnerable to 'disruption,' also known as the callous dumping of thousands of workers. Gendered violence is also a problem. "Gendered violence directly affects women's capacity to work, to stay healthy and to support their families," Dr Naidoo says

This is a good time to ask exactly what 'progress' means for women at work. We know progress means things getting better, but it's worth asking: what things? Getting better how? Progress for women in a capitalist society is often thought of in terms of simple targets. The number of women in work (although the jobs are often less well-paid). The numbers of women on company boards (always a minute fraction of the workforce, often in companies harming women through bad policies). The gendered pay gap is one measure that's pretty clear.

All these areas are worth making progress on, but work doesn't happen in a vacuum. In a capitalist society, work mostly works for capital – ie for the money. Work is a means of making higher returns on investment. The imperative to achieve higher returns is the main priority. 'Progress' is seen as an add-on. It's nice to have and a bit of progress makes companies look good. Progress is often justified in terms of helping achieve higher returns – diverse workplaces are more efficient. Gender equality is often argued in terms of costs – more gender diversity could make a company more money, not having enough could harm profits. You might think that women make up more than half the population and are entitled to equal treatment, but under capitalism they have to justify it.

The USA is instructive in this area. Large companies were committed to gender equality and celebrating the achievements of women, as well as other marginalised groups, such as people of colour and trans people. Once Trump became President, the calculation changed. The supposedly progressive big tech companies donated millions to Trump's inauguration. Trump went on an anti 'DEI' (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) drive. As Trump minions took down women's faces from achievement displays in the Pentagon, corporate USA just folded instantly. DEI programs were scrapped, renamed, or minimised. It was a wake-up call to any women who thought the corporate world was on their side. It was always all about the money.

So where is the real progress coming from? Well, the immediate gains are still worth working for. That gendered pay gap is a real thing and the people who work to abolish it are doing a very good thing. Unions, including the CFMEU, have made a lot of progress in measures that affect the daily lives of working women. As the example of Trump, and Dr Naidoo's report, show it's all too easy to reverse or slow the progress made in a capitalist society.

For real progress we need a changed society, one in which the workers control the economy. We need a society where the impact of changes on workers is the main priority, not just an optional extra.

CPA 15th Congress
Fight for jobs, the planet and socialism

The Communist Party of Australia's 15th Congress was held from 27 February to 1 March in Naarm/Melbourne. Delegates met against the backdrop of Israel's and the US's illegal and deadly attack on Iran, which saw the murder of its leader the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as well as the bombing of a hospital, a girls' school with the death of more than 160 children and a burgeoning number of civilian deaths.

More than 60 delegates participated along with a number of observers and volunteers who assisted throughout Congress. The discussion was rich, covering a large range of issues (see page 14 for a delegate's view).

Delegates elected a new Central Committee to lead the Party for the next four years. The leadership team of General Secretary Andrew Irving and President Vinnie Molina were reelected. The draft political resolution was adopted with a few minor amendments. The original draft had been discussed in branches around Australia throughout 2025, with the Central Committee receiving more than 400 amendments. These amendments resulted in a far stronger document.

The political resolution notably focuses on guiding action in the coming four years, as a working document to be used by all members and CPA organisations. It will be published on the Party website.

Congress unanimously passed special resolutions expressing solidarity with the people of Iran, Venezuela, and Cuba, nations targeted by US aggression. Solidarity with First Nations people and international solidarity, including with the Palestinian people were also raised. A press release was issued condemning the unprovoked attacks on Iran.

For many delegates it was their first Congress; almost 70% of delegates were under 40 years of age. The influx of so many younger members resulted in a new energy to go out and intensify the struggle.

There was rich discussion around a range of issues relating to the CPA itself, the political resolution, and the struggles members take part in.

Delegates talked about the difficult times we are living in. Humanity faces two key, interconnected existential threats – climate change and nuclear war. The latter was brought to the fore by the threat of nuclear war in the Middle East.

The Labor Party and other parties of capitalism cannot save humanity – profit-driven capitalism is the cause of these crises. Hence the urgency in building a stronger and larger Communist Party that is capable of facing the many tasks before us.

In relation to this aim, the recruitment of more women is vital. There was strong support for strengthening the work of the national women's collective.

Party education was another topic raised with calls for the Party's education subcommittee to develop more materials for nationwide use and training of tutors.

The questions of respect and combatting transphobia and misgendering were raised.

There was discussion around the question of whether a print edition of the *Guardian the Workers' Weekly* was still relevant in this day and age. It was decided that the print edition – which is distributed widely at protests and by trade unions and through subscriptions – is important alongside its modernisation and the further development and use of social media.

As one delegate said, "The *Guardian* needs to be relevant to young people, read in workplaces, trade union offices, on ships. Workers walk into common rooms. They need to know we exist, our values and that unionism is more than economic struggle."

Raising political and class consciousness is central to our work. Solidarity – international and domestic – is also an essential part of our campaigning.

The importance of solidarity with trade unions and community unionism was emphasised along with the strong expectation of workers that their unions will fight for their interests. The theft of the CFMEU from its members was condemned.

Peace and nuclear disarmament were high on the agenda with reports from delegates in peace and anti-AUKUS organisations seeking the defeat of AUKUS and the Defence Posture Agreement. The CPA remains committed to opposing nuclear-generated power in Australia.

Racism was condemned and points made about how it is used by the ruling class to split the working class. Immigrants and Muslims are not the cause of the multiple crises such as health, housing, and cost of living. Such racist attacks are aimed at diverting attention away from the real enemy: capitalism.

A Queensland teacher reported on the power of industrial action and wide support experienced when around 40,000 primary and secondary teachers marched on state Parliament in support of a wage demand, measures to boost retention of teachers, and to protect their safety.

Alongside fighting racism and islamophobia, incipient fascism in and outside parliaments must be fought against and defeated.

One of the highlights of Congress was the opening night. Greetings were received from a number of fraternal parties (See page 3). CC executive member Warren Smith gave a rip-roaring speech on behalf of the CPA which was received with a standing ovation.

"It was communists who played a central role in the great battles of the twentieth century: the fight against conscription and imperialist war, the struggle for shorter hours and improved conditions, the building of the peace movement, the anti-apartheid campaigns, support for national liberation movements, and the struggle for Aboriginal land rights and equal pay for women. Our party's fingerprints are on every serious gain the working class has made. Even when our name was not on the banner, our ideas, our organisers, our cadres were there, doing the hard, patient work of building unity and resistance," Smith said.

CC executive member Warren Smith addressing the Congress.

The parties of capital will not stop this slide to the right. They created the conditions for it.

"... without a communist party, the working class fights bravely but in fragments. With a communist party, the working class can develop strategy, organisation and consciousness – it can link the immediate fight for better wages, decent housing and public services to the long-term fight for power and socialism. No other party has ever shouldered this responsibility in Australia, and no other party is willing to.

"We must be absolutely clear: the parties of capital will not stop this slide to the right. They created the conditions for it. The Liberal–National forces champion privatisation, union-busting, climate vandalism and racism.

"We stand for a different kind of security: the security that comes from cooperation, from respect for sovereignty, from disarmament, from turning resources away from war and towards meeting human needs. We say: no to foreign bases, no to aggressive alliances, no to wars of intervention, yes to friendship and solidarity with peoples and nations struggling for independence and socialism.

"Comrades, the choice before humanity is becoming stark: socialism or barbarism. Either we move towards a society based on collective ownership, democratic planning and solidarity, or we sink deeper into inequality, environmental catastrophe, war and the rule of the far right. In Australia, as across the world, there is only one kind of party that can lead the way out of this crisis: a communist party."

Musical items by Breeze and a Adelaide comrade and poetry readings were greatly appreciated making political statements in their own right.

Delegates returned to their branches, invigorated, united and determined to work harder toward our goals. ✪

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