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Strike!
Battle for the Pilbara

Emily Muagututia and Joel Spiteri

Workers at the world's largest bulk iron ore export operation are taking protected industrial action; the first of its kind in nearly three decades.

The Pilbara is the heart of Western Australian economic power and has been a recurring battle ground in the struggle for the rights of the Australian working class. Despite its strong union history, the WA mining sector has largely managed to evade unionisation since the late 1990s. In recent years, unionism in the Pilbara has been on the rise.

BAD FAITH

Three unions, the Electrical Trades Union (ETU), the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) and the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) have been bargaining for an agreement for BHP workers since October last year. The unions have accused BHP of failing to negotiate in good faith by proposing a 'minimum rates agreement.'

Minimum rates would only provide for the basics of work. It seems to be an effort to maintain individual employment contracts.

On 16 July 2026, around 200 workers at BHP's Port Hedland operation shut down operations for eight hours after six months of enterprise agreement negotiations reached a stalemate. The strike is a call to arms for the working class, standing tall in the face of the industry's fear tactics, union-busting culture, and the propaganda of the anti-worker Murdoch and Stokes media conglomerates.

The industrial action was overwhelmingly voted up by 100% of ETU members, 90% of AMWU members, and 97% of AWU members. Rallies in solidarity with the striking workers have taken place outside BHP offices in Victoria and Queensland.

SOLIDARITY

While the action on 16 July was only an eight-hour tools down and was not designed to shut down or halt production entirely, it is a bold step in the right direction. After years of corporate anti-union measures, low recruitment, and a lack of working-class solidarity, workers in the Pilbara are starting to come together to stand together as one and backing each other against parasitic multinationals.

An iron ore train loading at the Brockman 4 mine, Pilbara. Photo: Calistemon – wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Western Australia's Pilbara was once known for its militant unionism, forged through the harsh conditions of the 1960s and 1970s. Workers in the Pilbara faced dismal safety conditions, low pay, and company abuse of power as they had control over most of the lives of the workers due to arrangement of 'company towns.'

In the 1970s and 1980s, Pilbara workers gained significant control over the iron ore industry following worker-led organising and strikes. This period saw a model of rank-and-file militancy. Workers frequently struck first and negotiated later, often against the wishes of their own union officials in Perth. The Pilbara became a stronghold of union power.

Through militant, grassroots-led strikes, and the establishment of strong shop steward networks and combined union committees, unions won significant improvements to working conditions that the Pilbara workers of today still enjoy. They did this by exercising their hard-won industrial power. Throughout the 1970s, workers struck for an average of twelve days a year.

These included higher wages, better conditions, influence over hiring and safety, and a powerful voice in both the workplace and their broader communities. Workers made the decisions on recruitment, discipline and staffing and safety standards.

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Got an opinion? Be afraid

A lot of Australians have left uni and put it behind them. Even more people never went. A lot of people don't watch the ABC or SBS. Why should they be fussed about threats to these institutions and the people who study at uni?

Here's why. It won't stop there.

Australia is having a Royal Commission into the murderous attack at Bondi. 16 people were killed and 41 people were injured. Countless others will be affected for the rest of their lives. The government set up a Royal Commission into the attack.

You'd hope the Royal Commission would take the attack seriously, but it's gone way off course, allowing Australia's Zionist 'Anti-semitism Envoy' to go on at length about her favourite topic, suppression of anti-Israel protest. She's going after universities and the country's public broadcasters. Never mind that the alleged attackers were inspired by Islamic State ideology and have no known connection to any protests at universities. Never mind that there's no record of them being radicalised by watching reporting of Israel's assault on Palestine on the ABC or SBS.

Segal, by the way, couldn't cite any instances of ABC coverage being anti-semitic. She just muttered that it was well-known around the Jewish community, by which she means the segment of the Jewish community she's comfortable with. Evidence isn't Segal's strong point.

Segal and her fellow Zionists want the ABC and SBS muzzled and fearful on the topic of Israel. They want universities to adopt a definition of antisemitism, the IHRA definition, which includes criticism of Israel among examples of anti-Jewish hatred. The definition allows for 'reasonable criticism' of Israel, but really one-eyed Israel supporters like Segal get to decide that's reasonable and what's antisemitic.

So they're trying to make life hard for any uni students who protest an ongoing genocide, one in which the Australian taxpayer is implicated. If you're not at uni, why should you care?

You should care because Segal's crusade to outlaw protest won't stop there, and Australian governments are in the mood to help her. We should all care because Australia is implicated in the genocide, through generous contracts with Israeli military companies, and through our involvement in the weapons chains that produce the weapons Israel uses.

Already, Australia's 450,000 registered nurses and midwives have to be careful what they say and where they say it. That's because the licensing authority that certifies them has adopted the contentious IHRA definition. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) is already hard stretched to do its job, but it's about to face a wave of complaints from Australian Zionists who make it their business to get people sacked for opposing Israel's genocidal assault on Palestinians.

These groups don't particularly care who they attack – writers' festivals, journalists, an Australian of the Year – anyone who stands with Palestine is fair game. It's not really about antisemitism. Segal had nothing to say about a demonstration by neo-nazis in NSW. They even held up a big sign about Jews. The antisemitism Envoy sounded embarrassed when asked about it later.

What Segal's mates *do* care about is power. They want to make Australians afraid to speak up.

Segal isn't about really stopping antisemitism or 'hatred.' It's about suppressing protest in the interests of Israeli Zionism.

Certainly, it's not stopping with universities.

Strike! Battle for the Pilbara

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ATTACKS

Union power in the Pilbara persisted despite attacks from the Court government. In 1976, Court made it illegal to convene a public meeting of more than three people without securing a written permit from the Police Commissioner, who could also place conditions on the approval and whose decision was not subject to appeal.

The law was supposed to ensure public order by regulating public demonstrations. It was widely seen as a political attack on the union movement and a suppression of civil rights. Premier Court called political and social activists "society's most dangerous enemies."

In June 1979, during a 10-week strike at Hamersley Iron in the Pilbara approximately 200 striking workers and union officials held an open-air meeting in Karratha. The police enforced Section 54B for the first time. Three union leaders, Laurie Carmichael, Jack Marks, and Don Bartlem, were arrested. Their arrests were deliberately dramatic, occurring at Perth airport upon their return, which was unusual for minor charges.

Instead of intimidating the workers, the arrests galvanised the union movement. The Transport Workers' Union held a snap strike, and the state and national union bodies called for a day of protest. This resulted in a massive national strike on 21 June 1979, with around 890,000 workers walking off the job in solidarity. The WA government found itself isolated and facing a nationwide stoppage. The pressure ultimately forced the government to relent. The charges against the unionists were adjourned, and section 54B was amended.

CLASS COLLABORATION

The industrial power that the workers had routinely exercised in the Pilbara was systematically undone by the mining companies from the 1980s onwards by taking advantage of the class-collaborationist Prices and Incomes Accord. This began with the defeat of the unions in Robe River dispute of 1986-1987, where the mining companies launched a new assault on unions.

They sacked hundreds, abolished formal and informal union agreements, ignored the Industrial Commission's orders by changing previously set rosters and job roles, and used the resulting confusion to slash more jobs. The ACTU then stepped in to override the last-minute rank and file strikes of the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Union, signing 'peace packages,' and leading the unions down a path of lobbying, resolutions brokering and, in the end, crushing defeat.

HUGE PROFITS

Since the de-unionsation of the Pilbara, the wages of the workers have stagnated. In 2019 only around 12 jobs paid higher wages than in 2011. The few trades positions that were listed as being higher paid had marginal increases of under $5,000 over a decade. The mining industry marketed these minor increases for a handful of roles as a "win" for workers.

Most mining companies had returned to profitability by 2016 after the downturn that began in late 2013. Mineworkers' wages have failed to keep up with cost-of-living pressures. Wages in the Perth area are starting to catch up, so there is less incentive for workers to take roles so far from their families.

Western Australia's mining sector currently accounts for five per cent of Australia's entire Gross Domestic Product, and nearly 50 per cent of Western Australia's Gross State Product. BHP has bragged about its increase in production and its position as "the world's lowest cost major iron ore producer."

This 'low cost' production comes at the cost of the workers. BHP keeps production costs low by refusing to pay workers their fair share. The workers are entitled to fight for a greater share of the profits that are only made through their labour.

BHP's Chief Executive Officer, Brandon Craig, has a base salary of AU$2.7 million, plus bonuses.

FEARMONGERING

Workers shouldn't be fooled by the fearmongering from the mining industry and its news media cronies about the 'bad old days' and 'going back to the 1970s' or how mineworkers are "overpaid." Workers from all industries must stand with BHP workers in fighting for a rightful share of the record profits these multinational tax-dodging giants are reaping from their labour as well the extraction of WA's finite resources.

It cannot be understated how important this current action is. Western Australia relies on its resources sector. The unions have an enormous fight ahead of them. Mining companies have a lot of tactics they can use to shut out unions with the help of their lobbying groups and local news media.

Guardian seen at

A Canberra protest against the blockade of Cuba.

In defence of dissent

MB

More than 40 civil society groups are calling on Australian universities to protect the right to peaceful protest, freedom of expression and academic freedom on campus, declaring this moment a crisis for the protection of political expression within Australian universities.

The statement, signed by the Human Rights Law Centre, the Australian Democracy Network, the National Tertiary Education Union, Amnesty International Australia, and others, expresses grave concern at the increasing restriction on protest and political speech on campuses across the country.

Over the past three years, universities across Australia have cracked down to stifle peaceful assembly and expression using a range of restrictions including:

- Banning certain forms of protest on campus under vague guidelines;
- Imposing onerous notification requirements;
- Surveillance of students, staff and community members who attend protests; and
- Numerous threats of disciplinary action against students and staff who attend protests.

These measures have had a chilling effect on dissent. They undermine the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, and erode academic freedom. Universities are cornerstones of our democracy, where people should be able to express ideas, gather peacefully and have difficult conversations.

The statement calls for universities to adopt 10 principles to protect protest and political expression including; permitting peaceful protest; ensuring anti-racism measures are non-discriminatory and consistent with human rights; no undue surveillance or disciplinary action for participating in legitimate protest; and that staff and students are consulted when developing rules governing protests.

Dr Alison Barnes, National President of the National Tertiary Education Union says: "Universities should be places where staff and students can speak freely and organise without fear of surveillance, discrimination or other adverse consequences.

"NTEU members' work involves engaging critically with the world around them. When that's restricted, it undermines academic freedom – a cornerstone of healthy universities."

A peaceful protest at Melbourne University. Photo: John Englart – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

universities have cracked down to stifle peaceful assembly and expression

NSW unions urge labour hire crackdown

A new McKell Institute report outlines how dozens of labour hire operators banned in other states have been drawn to NSW which has no licensing scheme, prompting calls to clean up the state's notorious labour hire sector.

Labour hire firms supply workers to other businesses, often for short-term or seasonal work, sourcing and managing the labour on a host employer's behalf. Most operate legitimately, though the structure of the sector makes it easy for unscrupulous operators to underpay workers and evade the law.

McKell's analysis identified 63 operators stripped of a licence in Queensland and Victoria who are trading in NSW, equal to 5 per cent of all businesses whose licences were cancelled across the two states. McKell says that is likely an undercount.

The report, *Exploitation Magnet*, finds NSW is the largest state economy with no labour hire licensing scheme, and the only one of its neighbours without one. Queensland and Victoria have licensed operators since 2018 and 2019, South Australia extended its scheme to every industry in January, and the ACT has licensed since 2021. With no register to screen operators and no licence for them to lose, NSW stands out among the states on its borders.

The national Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Chris Evans, has told a NSW parliamentary inquiry that operators refused a licence in Queensland and Victoria are relocating across the border into NSW. The report identifies the Coffs Coast and the Riverina as long-standing hotspots for exploitation.

The Fair Work Ombudsman's most recent horticulture inspections recorded non-compliance of 72 per cent in the Riverina and 61 per cent around Coffs Harbour and Grafton, among the worst rates in the country. Labour hire providers received 91 per cent of the infringement notices issued under the strategy. Earlier investigations documented backpackers and migrant workers on NSW farms paid as little as $3 an hour, and job ads offering piece rates as low as $1.86 an hour.

The report estimates around 300,000 temporary migrant workers in NSW, many of them in the labour hire arrangements where exploitation is most concentrated.

Unions NSW Assistant Secretary, Thomas Costa, said the findings demonstrated the need for reform. "Sixty-three operators thrown out of Queensland and Victoria are still trading in New South Wales, because we have left the door wide open.

"Workers here are being paid as little as three dollars an hour while the government waits for a national scheme that has been stalled for years. A licensing scheme would pay for its own running costs and put a cop back on the beat."

McKell Institute executive director, Ed Cavanough said the evidence supported calls for reform. "The 63 cancelled labour hire operators we found operating in New South Wales is almost certainly an undercount.

"NSW has become the destination of choice for operators who cannot get a licence anywhere else. The fix is well understood, every neighbouring state has done it, and Victoria's scheme shows it can pay for itself."

Photo: rawpixel.com

NSW unions want NSW Labor to commit to a standalone licensing scheme, with legislation this parliamentary term and the scheme operating by 1 July 2027. The report recommends a scheme covering all industries, screening operators through a fit and proper person test and a financial viability requirement, run by an independent authority funded by licence fees.

Unions NSW

Vic unions welcome surveillance laws upgrade

Peter Marino

"Police cannot covertly surveil someone without a court order, the same rules should apply to your boss."

So says Luke Hilikari, Victorian Trades Hall Council Secretary, welcoming new laws controlling workplace surveillance in the state. Hilikari pointed out that the old laws on employers monitoring and surveilling their staff at work had not been updated since 2006, before the iPhone was released.

Hilikari said that there is no legitimate use for the sheer volume of data that some employers are harvesting about their workforce through workplace surveillance.

Workers have complained of surveillance being used to monitor toilet breaks and conversations with coworkers.

Hilikari said that every worker should have a right to know how they are being monitored at work, what happens to that data, how it is being used and stored, and if it is being sold to a third party.

At the moment, employers in Victoria don't have to notify workers if they are being monitored.

Now employers are still able to monitor workers, but will have to notify workers first. The monitoring needs to be necessary for the business' operations, not just because the employer feels like it.

The legislation hasn't been tested so far, and it's quite likely unions will have to be very active about enforcing the standards. It's worth noting that the standards have been introduced after a 5 year campaign by unions.

Union urges ATO to bring work in-house

Millions of Australians are filing their tax returns right now blissfully unaware that the call centre workers patiently helping them don't actually work for the Tax Office and are earning up to 40% less than the ATO workers doing exactly the same job.

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) has filed reply submissions in the Fair Work Commission in a case that highlights the ATO's failure to meet its responsibilities as a government agency by continuing to spend taxpayers' money outsourcing public sector work.

This action in the Fair Work Commission will determine whether labour hire companies in white-collar industries will be able to continue to undermine workers' rights. If successful, the case will lift the pay of labour hire workers to match ATO workers under the 'same job, same pay' laws.

The CPSU has rejected claims by labour hire companies that they were exempt from the 'same job, same pay' laws because they provided a specialised service, and secondly that the enormous contracts they hold provide value for money to the ATO.

The union argues that because outsourced call centre workers answer the same calls as ATO employees, use ATO systems and equipment, and follow the ATO's workplace policies and procedures, they should be given access to the same pay and employment conditions.

The CPSU has made its submissions in support of a former ATO call centre worker who took his case to the Fair Work Commission, claiming that as a labour hire employee he was forced to work for less pay, and under worse conditions than the ATO's directly employed staff.

The union says the outsourcing of core ATO work is a blatant rejection of the Albanese government's Strategic Commissioning Framework, which is meant to force government agencies and departments to bring outsourced work back within the public service. Labour hire companies hold contracts worth more than $630 million.

The CPSU says the ATO must stop spending taxpayer dollars on labour hire and start investing in public sector jobs, and urges the government to bring outsourced work back into the public service.

CPSU National Secretary Melissa Donnelly says that the labour hire companies say they provide a specialist service but "there's nothing specialised about answering ATO calls, using ATO systems, following ATO procedures and doing work directed by the ATO."

Community and Public Sector Union

Doubts over Albo's AI jobs boom

Peter Farmer

Prime Minister Albanese has made a major speech about AI. The speech has been welcomed by the lobby group Data Centres Australia, but Albo's fine words have been criticised for a lack of evidence.

Albanese said that AI was helping small business owners "cut the time they spend on paperwork," but didn't say if that alleged time saving would translate to higher profits for small businesses or higher wages for their employees.

Without saying how, Albanese said that AI was an urgent priority for the Defence Force and security agencies. As one critic said, he's probably talking about the need to counter AI-driven security threats. AI is obviously not urgent and critical enough to allow us to do without the AUKUS submarines, if those ever show up.

The Prime Minister also claimed that AI was driving productivity and discovery. Again no evidence or even examples were forthcoming.

As for the down side, Albanese has said that the next generation of large-scale data centres will be legally obliged to underwrite "now power supply." He didn't say what kind of power supply.

The Climate Council thinks data centres in Victoria and NSW alone would need as much energy as nine Loy Yang A coal-fired power stations. If the data centre industry could provide that much more renewable power, that would be great, but it seems unlikely that they'll do it without being forced.

3CR RADICAL RADIO

The *Guardian* encourages readers to donate to the 3CR Radiothon. 3CR is a Melbourne Community Radio station, but anyone can hear its programs via podcast. If you donate, please nominate 'Alternative News' as the show you support.

Australia has pledged a policy of "No New Extinctions" and committed to international biodiversity targets. Yet one of the world's most unique species may be disappearing in real time.

The Maugean skate, an ancient ray species found nowhere else on Earth, survives only in Tasmania's Macquarie Harbour. Scientists have warned the population has declined dramatically, with estimates suggesting only around 1,000 individuals remain. If the species disappears, it could become the first shark or ray species extinction linked to industrial aquaculture.

The question at the centre of the story is simple: If Australia knows a species is at risk and has committed to preventing extinctions, what happens when that species continues toward extinction anyway?

This question drives the new documentary *Love Letter to the Unseen*, premiering at the Melbourne Documentary Film Festival on 18 July 2026.

The film follows youth conservationist Spencer Hitchen as he investigates the skate's decline and explores a larger question about responsibility, leadership, and the future young Australians will inherit.

Unlike many environmental stories, *Love Letter to the Unseen* is not driven by doom – it is driven by hope.

At the centre is Spencer Hitchen, a young conservationist who has become an emerging voice for biodiversity protection across Australia. Spencer represents a generation increasingly asking whether governments, industries, and communities are prepared to leave a living planet behind for those who come next.

The film asks audiences to imagine a future where species recovery – not extinction – is the legacy we choose.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is fossil fuels polluter Woodside. Greenpeace Australia Pacific has condemned Woodside's legal pursuit of concerned community members for their 2023 climate protest, calling it an attempt to silence and intimidate growing opposition to plans to drill for oil and gas at Scott Reef.

Woodside has revived litigation against Western Australian community members in the Supreme Court of Western Australia relating to a three-year-old protest to bring attention to the harmful effects of Woodside's gas expansion on climate and cultural heritage.

It comes as public opposition to Woodside's plans to drill over 50 gas wells at Scott Reef continues to mount.

David Ritter, CEO at Greenpeace Australia Pacific, said: "In the face of growing opposition to Woodside's plans to drill over 50 gas wells at Scott Reef, this smacks of Woodside trying to intimidate and bully everyday Australians into submission.

"But the community won't be silenced on this. Woodside's plan to drill for gas at the pristine, magnificent Scott Reef, risking precious marine wildlife like turtles and whales, oceans, and the climate, is a disaster waiting to happen.

"This SLAPP* suit is part of an alarming global trend of corporate bullies using bad-faith legal tactics to intimidate and silence people exercising their democratic right to protest. Companies like Woodside should not be allowed to use the courts to suppress public participation.

"WA has a proud history of civil protest to establish many of the rights, freedoms, and benefits that we now celebrate. The whales that West Australians now love so much would not have been saved without protest. This kind of action by Woodside is intended to silence such protest. A healthy democracy depends on everyday people being free to speak out without fear of corporate intimidation."

* SLAPP stands for 'Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation'. It is a legal tactic used by powerful corporations, particularly within the fossil fuel industry, to censor, intimidate, and silence critics by burdening them with the high costs of a legal defence until they abandon their environmental advocacy or protests.

NSW starts youth fraction

Arthur Martin

On the 11 July, the inaugural meeting of the NSW Youth Fraction of the Communist Party of Australia was held, formalising the establishment of a fraction with the purpose of coordinating the work of Party members across branches within the state on issues specific to youth.

The youth members currently represent a variety of backgrounds and demographics. Some of the areas of Party work that the fraction will take on include youth-dominated industries, such as retail and hospitality, conducting political activities on university and TAFE campuses, and housing and renters rights, among other issues that have a particular significance for today's youth.

The need for a youth fraction has been steadily growing over the past couple of years. Young people, defined in this case as being 25 and under, are increasingly polarised in their politics. The Lowy Institute reported in 2025, ahead of the federal election, that there was increasing sympathy for both far-left and far-right ideologies in Australia and elsewhere among millennial and Gen Z voters.

Many youth of today have fundamentally recognised that the liberal institutions they have been taught to believe in are not, in fact, working for them and their interests.

It is a common sentiment that the social contract is broken and there is little point in committing to the traditional milestones of life. The perspective may well be that if the system does not reward hard work, then what is the point of working hard, and indeed, if the system doesn't work for us, why should we support it?

Mortgages are increasingly out-of-reach, renter's rights remain poor with high costs, short-term leases, inspections and the ever-looming threat of eviction, jobs are harder to get and require more qualifications than ever, while wages have stagnated and mostly gone backwards when accounting for inflation.

Meanwhile, youth are getting used to a world where they constantly see their own governments openly complicit in genocide, supporting and justifying imperialist wars, and expanding police powers while cracking down on peaceful protesters.

In this context, it is no surprise that there is a political shift occurring. The problems can be traced back to capitalism, and the antidote is systemic change through socialism.

As more youth have joined the Party in NSW, an organic demand for a fraction has grown. Many of these young members are keen to carry out political activity that is specifically suited for young people. They will carry this work out with oversight from the NSW State Committee, an exciting development that will strengthen our Party and help us to continue growing and developing.

Editor's note: 'fraction' is a CPA term for a group of members at the Branch, State, or National level with a common interest

Increased voter support for South Australia's Voice

Ron Hall, Secretary, Aboriginal Advancement League SA

South Australia's First Nations Voice is a representative, legislatively created elected body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the state.

Commenting on the 2026 state election, the South Australian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Kyam Maher noted a "significant jump" of around 25% in votes. Of the 30,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the state eligible to vote in the Voice elections, 3,308 votes were cast, representing about 10% increase overall.

The minister explained, "We know there are some challenges. It's a voluntary vote and we know that there are a lot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who don't vote at the same rate as the broader population." He added that having the Voice election on at the same time as the general election meant that Voice may not have been foremost in the mind of some voters along with reported problems at polling booths which are being inquired into.

According to Maher, the Voice has virtually paid for itself. One recommendation from the Voice for specialised bail accommodation saved the government $1.6 million as opposed to an annual operating cost for the Voice of $1.5 million.

"The idea to build that 30-man bail hostel came from the Voice at a cost of $1.37 million a year, compared to a cost of having these men in jail on remand at $3.01 million a year."

Kyam Maher is deputy premier, and South Australia's Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Attorney General. Although his Indigenous background was Tasmanian, he grew up in Mount Gambier, South Australia, amongst the Boandik and Ngarrindjeri First Nations people.

The Voice operates at two levels, with six Local First Nations Voices and a State Voice. Through the Voice, First Nations people can have their say at the highest levels of decision-making in South Australia on matters, policies, and laws that affect them. The First Nations Voice Secretariat, located within the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation division of the Attorney-General's Department, supports the First Nations Voice to Parliament.

Despite the clear benefits of the Voice to South Australia, narrow-minded conservatives have vowed to legislate to remove it.

With the consolidation of the Voice taking place now in South Australia, the state is able to proceed towards the truth-telling and treaty making phases requested in the 2017 *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. These processes, which will present community-wide challenges, represent necessary steps towards achieving true and necessary reconciliation.

Victorian teachers vote for 24-hour statewide stopwork action

Australian Education Union (AEU) Victorian Branch members have voted to reject the Allan Labor government's latest public school pay and conditions offer.

The results of the online vote of members was 48.82% to 51.18% in favour of rejecting the offer. More than 50,677 members took part in the vote, representing 90.2% of AEU members eligible to vote.

President Justin Mullaly said the outcome of the vote sends an undeniable message to the Premier and the Education Minister, that they must fully fund public schools.

"AEU members have been telling the Victorian Labor government for years that the under-resourcing of public schools in Victoria is making their work untenable.

"When just 3 in 10 public school teachers plan to stay working in public schools in Victoria, it is obvious there is a problem.

"Victorian public school teachers, principals and education support staff are demanding the Allan Labor government acts in line with what they say Victoria is.

"This government says this is the education state. But this can't be the case when this government has deliberately ripped $2.4 billion out of our public schools.

"AEU members are asking the Premier and Education Minister to explain; how can you call Victoria the education state when our public schools are the lowest funded in the country?

"Why are teachers, school leaders and education support staff working an average 12 hours unpaid overtime every week if this is truly the education state?

"If Victoria was actually the education state, public school staff would have access to the funding and resources they need to deliver the education their students deserve.

"This is the message we will deliver directly to the government on Thursday when AEU members will stop work for 24 hours and march to Parliament.

"Premier Allan and Education Minister Ben Carroll, fix your public school funding mess and put a pay and conditions offer on the table that properly respects the work of AEU members," Mullaly said.

Members of the AEU across the state will proceed with a 24-hour stopwork action, as well as a rally and march on Victorian Parliament House.

Australian Education Union

Solidarity with the Convergence on Pine Gap in Sydney

A solidarity demonstration in support of the Close Pine Gap rally in Alice Springs, held on July 19 outside of the US consulate in Sydney.

Organise and win

The Australian Services Union has condemned Liberal Leader, Angus Taylor in the strongest terms for his retrograde remarks to the Sydney Institute which he repeated again on ABC's *7.30* program, attacking Australia's care economy.

On the ABC, Taylor singled out the country's lowest-paid essential workers as a drain on the nation, remarks which he made earlier in the week when, at the Sydney Institute, he complained that the "care economy" workforce had "exploded."

Responding to these remarks, ASU National Secretary Emeline Gaske argued that only an incredibly privileged, out of touch misogynist, who had not interacted with the care system could make such ignorant remarks.

"The workers Mr Taylor is describing are early childhood educators, disability support workers, family violence specialists, child protection workers and community carers. They are overwhelmingly women.

"What Taylor sees as 'hefty' pay, pales in comparison to his outsized pay packet.

"The only reason he, and his far-right backers, could consider the wages of these average income earners in Australia to be 'hefty,' is because they have no idea what these workers make or what their hard work is actually worth.

"Instead of chasing One-Nation's far-right voter base, Mr Taylor should actually have a chat to some of the workers we deal with every day.

"When I speak with those so-called well-paid workers, what I hear is from a workforce where nearly one in three has borrowed money from family or friends just to cover the basics, and more than one in ten has skipped meals to make ends meet

"Mr Taylor has clearly fallen upwards into this role.

"This week, he stood up in front of the Sydney Institute, looked at the women who hold this country together, and decided they were the problem. Not the cost of housing. Not the price of groceries. Women earning low wages to care for people with disability and to shelter families fleeing violence," said Gaske.

She said the timing was telling. Taylor's speech lands just as the One Nation vote is beginning to recede in the polls despite members of the Liberals actively seeking to build a coalition with the far-right party.

"Let's be clear about what he is proposing. When Angus Taylor says government has grown too big and it all has to be cut, this is what he means by 'cut.' He means the wages of a domestic violence worker. He means the pay packet of someone supporting a person with disability to live a decent life. That is the frontline of his war on "big government."

"Angus Taylor is a man who has fallen upwards into this role. He fancies himself an economic manager. Any economic manager who looks at a sector with turnover running at five times the national average and concludes the answer is to pay people less should hand the calculator back."

The ASU last month filed a historic work value claim in the Fair Work Commission seeking pay increases of up to 35 per cent for 300,000 community and disability workers, following a decade in which the complexity and demand of the work has grown while pay has stalled.

Taylor's remarks spoke about the fact that, according to him, these workers are "disproportionately unionised" and have been awarded "hefty pay increases."

"Notice what he flagged as the real offence. Not that these workers are paid too little, but that they are, in his words, 'disproportionately unionised.' There it is. The problem, according to the Opposition Leader, is that low-paid women had the audacity to organise and win.

"We will not let this go through to the keeper. If Angus Taylor wants to campaign on cutting the wages of the women who care for the most vulnerable in this country, he can explain that to every one of them, and to every family who relies on them. If he wants to attack union members, let him, it's those same union members who will be waiting to show him just how wrong he is."

Australian Services Union

Angus Taylor. Photo: Bidgee – wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 3.0 AU)

Taylor looked at women who hold the country together and decided they were the problem

Comic: Graham Drew

cpa.org.au

Tasmanian press freedom breach

The Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA), the union representing journalists in Australia, is concerned about conduct on a post published on Tasmanian Minister Felix Ellis's Facebook page on Tuesday 14 June 2026.

The video showed the Minister criticising a question posed by a local journalist at a press conference regarding the recent violent attack of a member of the public. While the Minister may have misunderstood or disagreed with the framing of the question, it was a relevant and fair question, given the details of the incident and the clear public interest in gun safety in Tasmania.

The post attracted dozens of comments that called for the journalist's identity to be shared and used homophobic and violent language to bully and harass the journalist. Some abusive comments remained visible for more than 13 hours and were removed only after a colleague of the journalist contacted Minister Ellis's office – Felix Ellison is Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management.

Journalists are workers who are entitled to do their jobs without facing abuse, threats or harassment. Further, they play a vital role in the democratic functions of Tasmania, and it is essential that they are free to ask questions of those who hold public office without fear of doxxing, harassment, or intimidation.

This represents not only a breach of press freedom and workplace health and safety principles, it may also breach the Code of Conduct for Ministers Section Respect for Persons: *"Ministers are committed to ensuring and enabling for both women and men a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and bullying ..."*

MEAA is seeking an apology to the journalist affected from Minister Ellis and Premier Jeremy Rockliff. The union is also demanding that the Tasmanian government outline steps that will be taken to ensure media workers are not harassed or bullied on any ministerial or government forums, including online.

Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance

Northern Tasmania arcs up on data centres

Peter Farmer

North Ireland-based energy giant Firmus is proposing to build three data centres in northern Tasmania, in St Leonards in Launceston, Bell Bay's George Town, and Wesley Vale.

The St Leonards data centre is under construction now, and the other two are under review.

There's significant community backlash, which may be why the other two are under review.

Data centres use colossal amounts of electricity and some locals argue that the state doesn't have capacity to supply the three centres from the power grid.

In response to the backlash, Firmus has made statements about its commitment to sustainable energy and water use as well as to community engagement. However, it has not given firm undertakings. The company's CEOs have told the ABC that they will oblige energy suppliers to generate new renewable electricity to help offset the company's usage.

That commitment still leaves the door open to the company making substantial demands on the energy grid and does not rule out the use of fossil fuel-based power. Fimus' total ask for the three sites would make it the largest power user in the state. The company has said that each megawatt hour it consumed will be matched by a "government-recognised renewable energy certificate."

Red carpet for ‘energy vampires’

Greenpeace Australia Pacific has called for an urgent pause on data centre approvals, after Anthony Albanese revealed the government’s AI legislation won’t be introduced until 2027.

The PM outlined plans for “greater clarity and speed for approvals” for data centre proponents, but, despite acknowledging the severe strain these facilities place on Australia’s land, water, and clean energy resources, will not bring legislation to Parliament until early next year.

This June, Greenpeace called on the federal government to urgently implement a moratorium on the construction and approval of new data centres until appropriate regulations and safeguards are in place to protect the climate and communities.

Joe Rafalowicz, Head of Climate and Energy at Greenpeace Australia Pacific, said:

“The PM’s speech today shows that this government is kicking the can down the road, while Australians right around the country are calling for urgent regulations on AI data centres that are already being built in their backyard. We shouldn’t be talking about ‘faster decision making’ when there are no laws in place to protect our communities from this dangerous industry.

“We urgently need a moratorium on AI data centre approvals until there are binding rules in place to protect our communities, our climate and our environment. The Prime Minister is rolling out the red carpet for these water-guzzling energy vampires, with no plans to regulate them until at least 2027 — that is a betrayal of Australian communities and our national interest.

“Big tech companies are looking to make Australia their second home, but in the US, AI data centres are wreaking havoc on people’s health, drinking water and air by running their data centres on gas. They’ve set their own house on fire, and we shouldn’t be opening the door to let them do that here.

“No new data centres should be approved until there are clearly defined, enforceable regulations in place, including requiring 100% additional renewable energy, that protect people, our climate and our environment – and absolutely no new fossil fuels like gas.”

Greenpeace Australia

PEACE NOTES

Peace work – right next door to you

It’s easy to look at missiles going off in the Middle East on your TV or the internet and conclude that if anyone’s going to make peace, it’ll be the people in charge of those missiles. At the moment that would be US President Donald Trump and his advisers. In Europe the cast of characters includes Volodymyr Zelensky, Vladimir Putin, as well as the NATO countries that are fuelling the Ukraine conflict (so Trump gets a look-in there too). As the Israeli genocide continues, the US is involved, backing Israel to the hilt with money and weapons.

All very remote from you, right? Wrong!

Australia is involved in pretty much all of the above, and there are things you can do. While it’s true that this country can’t wave a magic wand and end any of the wars going on, it could at least stop making things worse and could help end wars sooner rather than later.

Take the US war with Iran. Australia is involved in several ways.

The Pine Gap military surveillance base has four satellites that cover half the Earth’s surface. Intelligence sourced there is used by the US to strike targets across the planet. Intelligence is also passed on by the US to Israel, making a mockery of any Australian claims to neutrality or non-involvement in US and Israeli aggression in the Middle East.

Still feeling like you can’t take action? A large group of brave Australians are doing just that at time of writing, at the Close Pine Gap Convergence. This paper has run interviews with veteran activists (see *Guardian* #2176 and #2196 for more). We’ll report back.

As one activist, Nathalie Farah said of the Convergence “whether it works or not, the alternative is for us to sit back and just see these catastrophes unfolding ... the alternative is not to do anything, and in all honesty that is not really an option.”

If you couldn’t make it to the Convergence – many people couldn’t – there are definitely local options. Naarm/Melbourne’s heavy metal community recently turned out for a ‘Metal Against War’ event, proudly sponsored by this newspaper. As well as getting into some top class heavy metal, the event raised much needed funds for PANZMA, a charity that assists with medical workers and training in Gaza.

War is not remote, it’s right here and now. For working people it’s a disaster. As a speaker at Metal Against War pointed out, we aren’t the ones profiting from the rise in military shares. We’re the ones watching fuel prices skyrocket and the cost of living go up while our taxes are used to pay the likes of Raytheon and Elbit.

War is with us now, but so is peace work. If you’re not taking action, check out what organisations like IPAN (Independent and Peaceful Australia Network) and the CICD (Congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament) are up to. They could use a hand. 6 and 9 August are Hiroshima Day and Nagasaki Day respectively – keep an eye out for commemorative events near you.

Of course, keep reading this paper. Peace is a priority for the Communist Party of Australia. We’re working for a peaceful and independent Australia.

Adelaide University – a troubled merger

An engineering student writes

This year, the University of Adelaide and University of South Australia have merged together to become Adelaide University. The new university has completed its first semester and already has had a whole host of problems associated with it that have students confused, teachers overworked, and capital thriving.

The merger of the two universities was officially announced in 2023 and since then the two universities have been preparing for it. Despite the lead time, the merger has been significantly rushed. The workload for combining the two institutions was squeezed into the second half of 2025, where a majority of the staff's workload was done during the 2025/26 summer break.

In practice, this has meant that the university staff have been extremely overwhelmed with responsibilities during the break, on top of all the usual stress that comes from regular teaching duties. Staff consistently complain about lack of workplace democracy from the administration.

Course content has been merged between the universities. That's understandable, but the last minute way it was done has caused last minute deletion of course material, making life difficult for students trying to prepare for upcoming classes.

The military-industrial complex has existed in universities for some time now and still has a large presence after the merger. Companies involved include Lockheed Martin, Israel's Elbit Systems, BAE Systems, and Boeing. Military companies are using the campus to get into contact with many of the STEM students as early as first year.

With Adelaide being a significant site for AUKUS spending, and few engineering opportunities in SA outside of that, some students of specific engineering disciplines may have no choice but to work for defence. My physics tutor put it well: "your job opportunities with a STEM (Science Technology Engineering or Mathematics) degree are inversely proportional to your moral compass"

In one of my classes, we were visited by two professional engineers: one had worked on the Gawler train line electrification, and the other was a defence contractor. A neat shapshot of the engineering profession under capitalism.

The university has a hypocritical relationship with the local Kaurna people. As part of its founding, the new university adopted the Kaurna language name of 'Tirkangkaku,' which according to the university means "place of learning." However, Kaurna language groups and linguistics scholars have claimed that this name is grammatically incorrect, and likely stems from a literal translation from English to Kaurna. This decision was also made with a lack of significant consultation with the Kaurna community.

Elders have raised the issue of a history of cruel and inhumane experimentation conducted by the member universities against Aboriginal people. They've demanded that the university acknowledge that history if it wants to work with the Kaurna community. Across Australian universities generally, minority nationality students still face racism at extremely high rates, and First Nations students are among those affected.

Additional Adelaide University hypocrisy is visible when considering the military company connections and attitude towards First Nations students. On the one hand, the administration pretends to care about Australian First Nations communities through hollow gestures without consultation; on the other hand, they are financially invested in the military industrial complex that murders indigenous children abroad in the bloodbath of imperialism.

Photo: Adelaide University facebook

military companies are using the campus to get in contact with STEM students

A Marxist reading of 'Digital Fordism'

Graham Holton

'Fordism' refers to the assembly lines developed by Ford, in which each worker performed just one simple task over and over again. Factory and warehouse workers are now required to wear sensors on arms and torso for AI to determine each movement as they manufacture a product or move it in a warehouse.

This is ostensibly to reduce time waste and inefficiency and thereby improve productivity. These AI systems also track heart rate, temperature, physical strain and worker fatigue. It also means the collected information can train robots or AI systems to replace these workers.

This detailed motion data created by 'Digital Fordism' is used to simulate production processes by building datasets of human skills to train robots and automated systems to optimise output. It is an AI version of F.W. Taylor's 1900s time-and-motion scientific management, which broke down work performed into measurable units. These AI systems are being tried in India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia, China, Japan, Germany, and the United States.

Labour is continuously optimised, squeezing more surplus value from each hour worked, adjusting output targets ever upwards. The algorithms calculate optimal work speeds in real time, eliminating 'idle time.' The supervisor's judgement is replaced, now embedded in the software.

Digital Fordism is arguably the full realisation of production relying on accumulated human knowledge, now encoded in software, AI, and logistics systems. This knowledge is privatised and owned by the corporation. While the workers produce the knowledge, corporations capture the benefits. Workers are excluded from the value of their collective intelligence.

A Marxist reading of Digital Fordism is that it is a new phase in how capital extracts value from labour. Karl Marx's concept of surplus value, the gap between what workers are paid and the value they produce, is now more precise, data-driven, and globally integrated. It is an enhancement of capitalism, an efficient extraction of surplus value.

Under Digital Fordism, work is fragmented across supply chains and subcontractors. Workers are monitored individually, competition is intensified between workers through performance metrics and rankings. This weakens class consciousness; what Marx calls a shift from a 'class in itself' to a less organised, more divided workforce.

Marx distinguished between formal and real 'subsumption' – the process whereby social relations are brought under the control of capitalism. Digital Fordism represents an advanced stage, with workers' skills and knowledge transferred to systems through AI and workflows giving greater control over labour.

This impersonal system deepens alienation as workers lack ownership of their work and products. Human skill is replaced by machine logic. Decision-making becomes opaque, relying on algorithms. The worker is an appendage to data systems.

Digital Fordism extends global inequality, with production distributed to low-wage countries like Bangladesh or Vietnam. High-value functions, such as design, finance, and platform ownership, remain in the countries where the headquarters is based.

This aligns with Lenin's theory of imperialism, in which the core economies extract value from the periphery, which now includes data as well as labour. In *Grundrisse* Marx describes the 'general intellect' of collective social knowledge, now embodied in the machines.

Digital Fordism contains internal contradictions. Rising productivity vs. stagnant wages limits consumer demand. Automation vs. employment creates a 'reserve army of labour.' Global integration vs. local instability creates supply chain fragility. These contradictions are fertile ground for unions and areas of potential resistance by the workers.

Photo: rawpixel.com

These tensions lead to economic, social, and political crises, and contradictions create openings of resistance. Data transparency can expose exploitation, such as tracking unpaid overtime. Digitally connected workers can organise across borders. Demands may shift toward control over algorithms, not just wages. The struggle is evolving from control over factories to control over information platforms and collected data.

Understanding CPC, China's governing party

Wang Yu
Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Sydney

Different from Australia's two-party system, China practices the system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Under this system, the CPC, as the governing party, together with 8 other democratic parties, enjoy long-term cooperation and mutual oversight.

With the deep trust and wholehearted support of the Chinese people, the CPC has grown from a small party with just over 50 members into the largest governing party in the world, with more than 100 million members and over 5 million primary-level Party organisations in a country of more than 1.4 billion people. Under the leadership of the CPC, China has grown from an impoverished nation where people struggled to meet basic living needs into the world's second-largest economy, emerging from poverty and weakness, blazing a path of Chinese modernisation, and creating the two miracles of rapid economic development and long-term social stability.

To truly understand China, one need to understand the CPC and its governance philosophy and cultural genes. On 1 July, we celebrated the 105th founding anniversary of the CPC. From a cultural perspective, let me walk you through CPC's philosophy and genes.

First, advocating benevolence and stressing people-centred development. Benevolence in traditional Chinese culture was mainly represented by Confucianism, which advocates benevolence, kindness, filial piety, loyalty, tolerance. Confucius held that being benevolent meant loving others, and Mencius believed that benevolent governance meant loving the people.

Traditional people-centred development thought can be traced to *Shangshu*, China's first written historical record completed in the 5th century. BCE, which held that the people are the base of a state. The same philosophy is expressed in the *Book of Mencius* which says that "the people are the most important, the power the less important and the monarch the least important." This idea has run through Chinese history.

The CPC has inherited and carried forward these traditional values. Since the very day of its founding, the Party has made seeking happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation its aspiration and mission, putting the people above everything else, and making tremendous sacrifices for the well-being of the people.

From 1921 to 1949, more than 3.7 million CPC martyrs whose names could be verified gave their lives for liberation. Over 1,800 CPC members sacrificed their lives during the poverty alleviation fight, fulfilling with their precious lives the original aspiration and oath of Communists to "stand ready at all times to sacrifice everything for the Party and the people."

Second, keeping the faith and upholding justice. Faith has always played an important role in China's interpersonal communication, internal affairs and diplomacy. The *Analects of Confucius* urge "being true in word and resolute in deed," "to see what is right and not do it is cowardice" and say that "a monarch does not worry about scarcity but wealth disparity." China's diplomacy always values reciprocity and courtesy, upholding sincerity and good faith. China consistently advocates and dedicates itself to fairness and justice.

Today, unilateralism, hegemonism, bullying, and coercive practices are severely undermining our world. The more turbulent and complex the international situation becomes, the more we must uphold and defend the authority of the UN and firmly uphold the UN-centred international system, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms of international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

China always decides its position and policy on issues based on their own merits, stands for respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, practices true multilateralism, resolutely resists all forms of hegemonism and power politics, and steadily promotes an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalisation.

Third, upholding harmony and seeking great harmony. Peace, concord and harmony are ideas the Chinese nation has always carried forward. The *HeHe* (harmony) ideal, which emphasises the Chinese philosophical idea of the unity of man with heaven and the pursuit of harmony by seeking common ground while reserving differences, is the essence of the traditional Chinese culture.

The CPC is dedicated to promoting human progress and world harmony, and the noble goal of China's diplomacy is to build a community with a shared future for humanity, which is a direct reflection of the *datong society*, a dream cherished by the Chinese nation for thousands of years.

Having experienced bitter sufferings in the past, the CPC and Chinese people know the value of peace and development. China remains firm in pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace, adheres to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in pursuing friendship and cooperation with other countries. Now, the global deficits in peace, development, security and governance continue to widen unabated.

To address these deficits, China has proposed to build a community with a shared future for humanity and put forward the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilisation Initiative, and the Global Governance Initiative as a way forward to steer the reform of the global governance system toward greater fairness and justice.

Today, transformations unseen in a century unfold at a faster pace. Humanity has once again come to a crossroads. There is a pressing need more than ever for countries around the world to enhance solidarity and cooperation, and embrace a broad vision to rise above estrangement and conflict.

The CPC remains true to its original aspiration, maintains a global vision, and stands ready to work with Australia and all other partners, in the spirit of openness, inclusiveness, solidarity and cooperation, to appreciate the beauty of each civilisation, bridge differences, and jointly create a brighter future for our planet.

The world prefers China

For decades, Washington has been able to console itself with the notion that, whatever the world thought of its never-ending criminal wars, it could always rely on its vast apparatus of cultural hegemony to win hearts and minds around the world. At some level, it has always remained the land of the free and the home of the brave. But nothing lasts forever.

According to a new Pew Research Center survey of 42,151 people across 36 countries, China is now viewed more positively than the United States in most of the countries surveyed – and more people worldwide express confidence in Xi Jinping than in Donald Trump.

Even Canadians view China more favourably. In 2023, 57 per cent of Canadians had a positive view of the US and just 14 per cent viewed China positively; today China leads by 44 per cent to 33.

In 17 middle-income countries, a median of 75 per cent say the US interferes in the affairs of other countries, against 45 per cent for China. In South Africa, 72 per cent call China a reliable partner, compared with 46 per cent for the US; in Pakistan the figures are 84 and 36.

Even on "personal freedoms" – over which the West considers itself to have a monopoly – the share saying the US government respects the freedoms of its own people has collapsed, falling in Sweden from 61 per cent in 2021 to 27 per cent today, with drops of 25 points or more in Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

GAZA: THE MASK DROPPED

There are several factors undermining global confidence in the West, but the most important is the war on Gaza. A generation has watched a genocide unfold on its phones, in real time, for more than two years: the flattened hospitals, the famine as policy, the mass graves, the torture of prisoners, the deaths of tens of thousands of children. And it has watched the governments of North America and Western Europe arm, finance and provide diplomatic cover for this genocide – vetoing ceasefire resolutions, keeping the weapons flowing, and shielding Israel from accountability at every international forum, all while lecturing humanity about the "rules-based international order."

China, by contrast, called for a ceasefire and Israeli withdrawal from the first days of the onslaught. It brought 14 Palestinian factions to Beijing to work for reconciliation, and affirmed at the International Court of Justice the Palestinian people's right under international law to resist occupation. China stood with the UN Charter and the most fundamental principles of justice; Washington stood with mass murder, ethnic cleansing and apartheid. The world noticed.

Friends of Socialist China

Xi speaks on AI development

Chinese President Xi Jinping has presented four observations on artificial intelligence (AI) development and governance while addressing the opening ceremony of the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance.

First, adhering to the principle of openness and win-win cooperation while boosting innovation-driven development. Xi highlighted the importance of encouraging open-source, openness, collaboration and sharing to facilitate technological innovation, industrial development, and scenario-based application of AI.

Second, strengthening risk awareness and ensuring that AI is secure and controllable. Stressing the need to ensure that AI is always under human control, Xi urged all sides to jointly oppose overstretching the national security concept in the field of AI or placing one country's security over that of others.

Third, encouraging inclusiveness and promoting mutual learning among civilisations. AI development and its application should not erode or undermine the diversity of world civilisations or the uniqueness of cultures of different countries, according to Xi.

Fourth, advocating solidarity and improving global governance. The important role of the United Nations should be recognised, Xi said, calling for further alignment and coordination on AI development strategies, governance rules and technical standards.

"We must carry out extensive international cooperation and help Global South countries with capacity building to bridge the AI and digital divides, promote sustainable development and prevent creating new historical injustice in AI," he said.

Xinhua

Letters to the Editor
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Australia must send more aid to Venezuela

The Australian government has pledged $2 million in humanitarian assistance to Venezuela following the devastating earthquakes of 24 June 2026.

It includes emergency food, shelter, clean water and sanitation, transport, storage, and coordination for first responders. As part of the package, it will send psychosocial care and medical assistance.

This pales in comparison to India's Operation Amistad, which within 48 hours had deployed a 41-member Indian Army medical team to strengthen Venezuela's overwhelmed healthcare system.

India's right-wing nationalist government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has shown more support to Interim President Delcy Rodríguez, and the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), than Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. India and Australia are the same distance from Venezuela, plus Australia has a noted reputation for international aid. Why has Australia offered so little?

India has demonstrated it has the capacity to cover relief operations in response to major international disasters and has pledged to provide future assistance. India has expressed solidarity with Venezuela, and reinforced bilateral ties. Where is Australia's expression of solidarity?

Two Indian Air Force C-17 aircraft delivered 66 tonnes of cargo, including 35 tonnes of humanitarian relief, such as portable hospital facilities, medicines, trauma supplies, and specialist equipment as well as tents, surgical kits, trauma-care supplies, diagnostic equipment, emergency shelter materials, and food. India helped establish a field hospital to treat trauma injuries, perform emergency surgery, and provide intensive care to earthquake victims. The Indian field hospital team works on trauma cases alongside Venezuelan authorities. The team has already dug out survivors.

Venezuela is seeing who it can count on in its time of need. Australia has shown too little support when Venezuela needs it the most. Shameful.

Graham Holton

Something to say?

Write to the Editor!

editor@cpa.org.au

Book Review:

Latin America Political Cinema

by Jorge Majfud

Reviewer: Graham Holton

In this book, Jorge Majfud analyses eighteen influential Latin American films through the lens of anti-imperialism, social justice, class conflict, military repression, Indigenous identity, and collective memory within the tradition of the 'Third Cinema.'

The politically driven, anti-colonial film movement of the 1960s–70s rejected Hollywood's commercial 'First Cinema.' It also rejected the 'Second Cinema,' the French 'Auteur Theory' which asserts that the director is the author of the film. Instead, 'Third Cinema' favours collective, socially engaged filmmaking aimed at political liberation and activism.

Latin American Political Cinema analyses films from Cuba, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico. It includes *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968), *Strawberry and Chocolate* (1993), *The Motorcycle Diaries* (2004) and *Rafters* (or *Balseros*, 2002).

Majfud's introduction argues that cinema can be an instrument of historical memory and political resistance, analysing films by connecting them to their political realities. He argues that cinema should challenge dominant power structures rather than merely entertain.

For Majfud, Latin America's best films are inseparable from the political struggles against dictatorship, colonialism, neoliberalism, and social inequality. His book examines each film in its historical and political setting.

Take Majfud's essay on *Balseros* (*Cuban Rafters*), an acclaimed documentary about migration, exile, and the gap between political ideals and lived experience. Directed by Carles Bosch and Josep Maria Domènech, the film follows seven Cubans leaving Cuba during the 1994 economic crisis. It is a seven-year study of people taking extraordinary risks. The film looks at the emotional cost of separation from families, the loneliness and social isolation experienced, and their uneven outcomes in the United States.

Majfud asks if the film is a documentary or fiction, and answers that it is something intermediate, as the 'text' is manipulated: constructed. The protagonists are 'economic' refugees with dreams of making it in America. Some protagonists build stable lives, while others struggle with unemployment, addiction, broken relationships and homesickness.

The 'American Dream' proves illusive. The rafters are treated as pawns, with each person constructing a narrative to justify their actions and outcomes, while each is "conditioned by the scissors of the producers." The film is unsettling for the viewer, who has to think about political realities and the people who live through them.

Latin American Political Cinema will appeal to readers wanting a thoughtful look at films dealing with historical, political, and social movements, as well as with Marxist cultural criticism.

The book could use more in-depth historical background for some of the films discussed. Majfud is not the only person to look at the politics of Latin American film, and it would be good to have some other voices.

Balseros is available in Spanish on YouTube, or with English subtitles on Prime and Apple TV. ✪

Book Review:

Solidarity in Action:

Trade Unions and the Palestinian Cause

by Sam Cowlishaw

Reviewer: Graham Holton

***Solidarity in Action: Trade Unions and the Palestinian Cause* is a brief history of the British trade union movement's support of the Palestinian cause. Cowlishaw outlines how trade unions, shop stewards, rank-and-file activists, and national union leaders campaigned for and supported Palestine from the 1970s. He explores how international solidarity became a part of British labour politics and how it influenced debates over foreign policy and workers' internationalism.**

The central themes of *Solidarity in Action* are international working-class solidarity and the relationship between domestic labour politics and foreign policy. The moral responsibilities of trade unions, beyond workplace issues, was through the use of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) debates. The book highlights the role of local branches and workplace organisers in influencing union policy, providing a strong 'history from below' perspective.

Cowlishaw demonstrates that British trade union support for Palestine developed through conference resolutions, workplace campaigns, educational initiatives, and importantly, cooperation with Palestinian trade unions. Union solidarity evolved alongside the wider anti-colonial, anti-apartheid, and anti-war movements.

Combining archival research with political analysis, this book provides a well-researched account of how these campaigns developed within Britain's labour movement. Cowlishaw documents how British unions increasingly viewed Palestine as part of the broader struggle against colonialism, occupation, and violations of international law, while illustrating the controversies this position generated.

Solidarity in Action is an important contribution to British labour history and the study of international solidarity. The book will appeal to those interested in trade union history, social movements, Middle Eastern politics, and the relationship between labour organisations and international justice campaigns.

Trade union historians and labour activists will find the book a valuable reference work covering the most significant international campaigns undertaken by the British labour movement in support of Palestine.

There's a glossary and further reading list, so this book would suit the historian as well as union activists interested in international solidarity for the long haul.

4.5 out of 5 red stars ✪

Solutions to Crossword

***Guardian* 13 July 2026, #2198**

Across

2 Who had a funeral in three countries? **KHAMENEI**

6 JD Vance says his faith makes him oppose "low wage." **FOREIGNERS**

8 Who beat the Vixens? **THUNDERBIRDS**

11 Now ruled by the child of a disgaced ex-president. **PERU**

13 What Trump thinks communists are? **MENACE**

14 Who did a *The Australian* editorial accuse of not speaking English? **BABIES**

Down

1 Victoria desperately short of **SNOW**

2 Company whose staff peeked at Albo's bank account. **KPMG**

3 Minister Conroy described Robert Menzies as a Nazi **APPEASER**

4 Raises more tax money than tax on gas extraction. **BEER**

5 Tasmanian media superstar, Neil the **SEAL**

7 Mountain NSW Labor needs to climb to stay in power, says Chris Minns. **EVEREST**

9 Comedian upset about CGT. **HUGHES**

10 Who Trump thinks are communists. **DEMOCRATS**

12 Australian industry linked to deforestation in West Papua. **SUGAR**

15 Ford rehired engineers after being let down by **AI**

Video games and capitalism

HF

Recently, Sony announced that starting from January 2028, PlayStation games will no longer be available in physical form. Instead, games will be only purchasable through online stores. Games sold through physical retailers will only be through digital access.

Their official press release claims that this is to adapt to consumer trends. That is not the full truth. It's true that physical game sales are on the way down. It's also true that less physical games are being made and sold. The real cause of the announcement is actually the capitalist profit incentive.

Digital-only games are simply cheaper for game publishers. Instead of splitting a $90 game price between the manufacturing, brick and mortar stores, publishers, and developers, digital-only at the same price means more money for the publisher. Games have also been sharply increasing in price over the past 10 years to the point where the hobby is becoming increasingly unaffordable given the deteriorating conditions of capitalism.

Consumers still buy physical games, but digital has been promoted heavily over the last decade. This isn't even the first time game console manufacturers have tried to do digital-only games. Sony experimented with digital-only consoles with the 2004 PSP, and the PS5 originally launched with a discounted digital only console version. This move has been on the agenda for some time.

Before you write this off as inevitable, consider this. If a consumer doesn't possess a physical commodity, they do not meaningfully own a product. When you buy a game from a digital store, you effectively have a license to use that product, and that license is in the hands of big capital.

If Sony decides that it doesn't suit them for you to own the product you've paid for, they can take it from you. Sony's online movie purchasing service has had scandals where people who bought films no longer have access to what they bought because of licences expiring. There's a real precedent for this happening to video games as well.

Digital-only also limits what you can do with a copy of a game. With a physical game, you could lend it to a friend to play on their console, keep it on a shelf, and otherwise use it in whatever way you like. The move to digital effectively eliminates this aspect of owning physical media. If your friend wants to use the game you bought, publishers get another transaction.

Then there's the issue of piracy. The gaming community praises Gabe Newell and his digital distribution platform Steam for understanding how piracy actually works. Newell argues that piracy is not an issue of individual malice, but a service problem. If game publishers do not release games on terms that are favourable to the consumer, or not publish a game at all in certain regions, rates of piracy will naturally increase.

The solution to piracy is not making software harder to pirate. The solution is to give the consumer no incentive to pirate. Steam has become one of the most successful online video game distributors because it distributes games on a pro-consumer basis.

The gaming community celebrates this but misses one important part of the analysis:

Photo: JESHOOTS.com – pexels.com (CC0 1.0)

Newell's piracy mitigation goes against the capitalist profit incentive. Capitalism is driven by the need to accumulate profits. It has no greater priority. The video game industry is not exempt from this incentive, and many anti-consumer practices are a reflection of profit seeking.

Game publishers are not conspiring to make more money because of individual greed. They simply have to keep finding new ways to accumulate capital through the production and distribution of video games.

People enjoy using Steam because to some extent it operates against capitalist incentives. Even if those people aren't particularly political, Steam just feels nicer.

Nothing is sacred in the eyes of capital, and even art is distorted to make a quick buck. Most video game fans don't realise how the capitalist system is perverting one of their sources of fun and entertainment, but the popularity of Steam shows they know something's wrong.

Worth Streaming: *King of the Hill*, season 15

Chauncey K Robinson

If you didn't know much about the *King of the Hill* series, you might view it as a comedic cartoon that simply follows a conservative Texan who just wants to sell propane while dealing with his wacky family and friends.

Yet, the series – both its original 1997-2009 run, and its current revival that began in August 2025 – has always been a showcase of witty (and at times biting) social commentary wrapped in a humorous yet wholesome package.

The series uses its central, somewhat conservative character to draw attention to relevant social issues of the day. New adventures explore topics including grief, technological change, menopause, and reality television. It's a show that has messaging but doesn't clobber the audience over the head with it, bringing these tales to life through the everyman that is the iconic Hank Hill.

In the original run, Hank worked for a propane company in Texas, but in the revival, he has recently returned from a stint in Saudi Arabia. The new seasons follow Hank and Peggy as they go back to Texas and encounter a world that's changed, at both the macro and micro levels.

The strongest aspect of King of the Hill is its cast of characters. Through Hank, Peggy, Bobby, and their neighbors and friends, the show has created a world that allows for a wide breadth of themes to be explored that never feel out of place or ill-timed.

Hank may be the central character, and often episodes that focus on him are the funniest, but all the characters come together to showcase the variety of blue-collar life (from the conspiracy theory-obsessed Dale to the clinically depressed Bill).

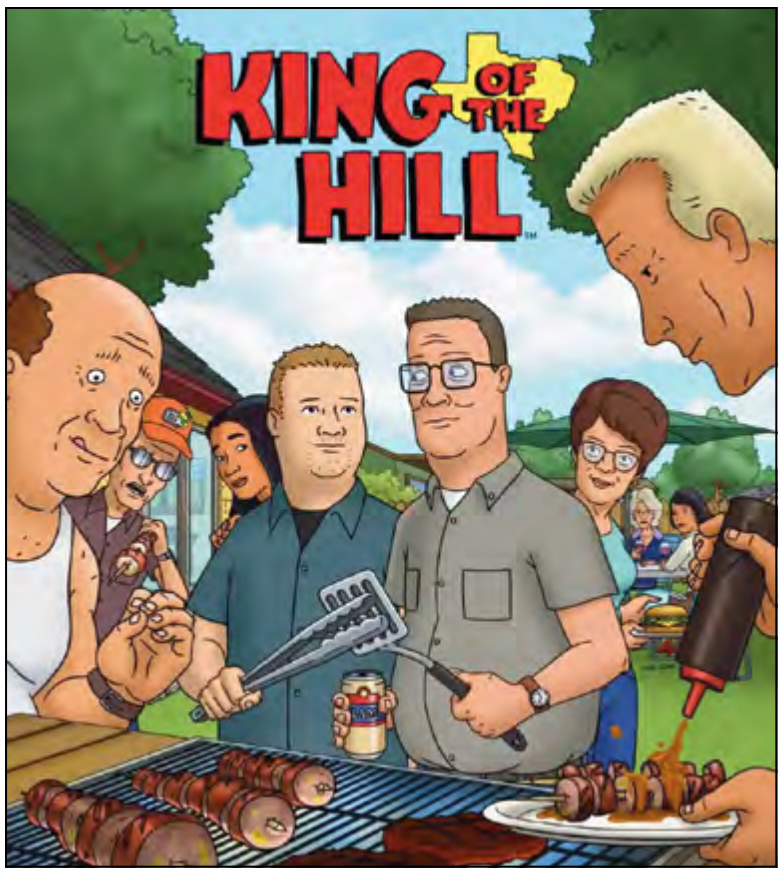
Viewers are in for a treat, as the show explores a number of hot-button social topics this season in ingenious ways. Artificial intelligence, gender conformity, media exploitation, and the misogynistic "manosphere" of the internet all make appearances in unexpected, poignant, yet hilarious ways.

King of the Hill exemplifies the idea that it's possible to have a show address real-world issues in a way that doesn't sacrifice the humour but rather incorporates it masterfully.

The series also does this without punching down on any demographic, even as it still portrays the shortcomings (or downright backwardness) of certain ways of thinking.

People's World (edited for space)

King of the Hill is available on Hulu and Disney+



Sport: Soccer

Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) president Aleksander Ceferin stayed away from the World Cup final in protest, with the Folarin Balogun affair understood to be just one aspect of his organisation's discontent with the Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA)'s handling of the cup.

The Times reported that the Slovenian had stayed away, with the relationship between European soccer's governing body and the game's global federation under severe strain.

It was reported that Ceferin chose not to attend the match in New Jersey over the UEFA president's anger of FIFA handling of the World Cup. The European football body was publicly critical of the decision by FIFA's disciplinary committee to suspend a one-match ban for United States striker Balogun, calling it "unprecedented, incomprehensible and unjustifiable" and saying it had "crossed a red line."

The suspension of the ban followed a call from US President Donald Trump to FIFA president Gianni Infantino asking for a "review" of Balogun's red card, raising questions of political influence in FIFA decision-making.

That influence certainly did not appear to be reciprocal, with FIFA powerless to prevent the US authorities sending home Somali referee Omar Artan before the tournament had even started. UEFA subsequently appointed Artan to officiate next month's UEFA Super Cup final.

FIFA also failed to ensure equitable treatment for Iran compared to the other 47 nations, with the Asian nation subject to strict conditions on their entry to and exit from the US. Their coach, Amir Ghalenoei, said his team were the "most oppressed" at the World Cup, while US Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin said he "danced a happy dance" when the team were eliminated.

There is also discontent at UEFA over FIFA apparent willingness to bend or break soccer's laws at the tournament – with "hydration breaks" effectively splitting matches into four-quarters and allowing broadcasters to cut to advertisements, and the 27-minute half-time interval at the World Cup final well in excess of the maximum 15 minutes permitted.

Ceferin has also been publicly critical of FIFA ticket pricing strategy for the tournament, with UEFA having revealed that 40 per cent of tickets for Euro 2028 will be in the most affordable categories and priced at around AU$60 to $115. The European body has also pledged not to adopt dynamic pricing.

USA: Unions and states block Paramount-Warner merger

Not even Paramount's announcement of the return of horror icon Freddy Krueger from the popular *Nightmare on Elm Street* film franchise could eclipse the news that unions and over a dozen states are suing to block the studio's monster of a merger with Warner Bros.

On 13 July, California led a coalition of states to court to stop what they consider a disastrous move for workers in the entertainment industry and consumers. They were joined a day later by the Writers Guild of America West and the Writers Guild of America East, alleging the merger violates federal antitrust law and would cause specific harm to writers.

Since late 2025, the public has watched closely to see what would be the fate of Warner Bros., a company that had become one of the "Big 5" remaining major film studios, which include Walt Disney Studios, Universal Filmed Entertainment Group, Sony Pictures, and Paramount Skydance Studios.

Last December, it seemed as though the streaming media giant Netflix would acquire Warner Bros. Discovery (WBD), as they had entered into a definitive agreement. Yet, months later, this deal would fall through as the David Ellison-led Paramount won out with a hostile $110 billion bid, which, if it goes through, will create one of the largest media conglomerates in corporate history.

Since the bidding wars over Warner Bros. began, unions were outspoken against any type of megamerger.

The Writers Guild of America asserted that it wasn't about who bought Warner Bros. but rather that "the problem is the acquisition and pending consolidation of two media giants," and that "these companies should be focused on investing in their own businesses, rather than wasting tens of billions to buy up the competition."

The Block The Merger coalition, which includes hundreds of culture workers and their allies and is led by longtime political activist and movie star Jane Fonda, issued a public anti-deal letter condemning the Paramount-Warner Bros. merger.

They noted that "media consolidation has accelerated the disappearance of the mid-budget film, the erosion of independent distribution, the collapse of the international sales market, the elimination of meaningful profit participation, and the weakening of screen credit integrity." Signatories to the letter said they were "deeply concerned by indications of support for this merger that prioritise the interests of a small group of powerful stakeholders over the broader public good."

Photo: Loren Javier – flickr.com (CC BY-ND 2.0)

These outcries of concern seemingly fell on deaf ears, as the US Department of Justice's Antitrust Division greenlit the transaction in mid-June, claiming that it found the merger unlikely to harm competition. This swift approval has also come under scrutiny, as critics note the close relationship between President Donald Trump and the father-son duo of Larry and David Ellison.

Under Ellison, the once-revered news broadcast *60 Minutes* has been accused by viewers and former employees of bowing to Trump and his administration. *60 Minutes*, which is under CBS and thus owned by Paramount, is seen by many as a telltale sign of what the fate of CNN (which is owned by Warner Bros.) would be if the Ellison family were put in charge.

Trump's head of the Department of War, Pete Hegeseth, hinted as much when mentioning the news channel in a press conference, stating, "the sooner David Ellison takes over that network [CNN], the better."

Yet, in the face of this consolidation of media power into even fewer wealthy hands, a dozen attorneys general from across the country are stepping up, saying "no deal."

The coalition of states filed a lawsuit asking the court to block the proposed merger, arguing that it would substantially lessen competition in violation of federal antitrust law. California Attorney General Rob Bonta filed an emergency motion in the US District Court for the Northern District of California seeking a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction to immediately block the merger from closing. The lawsuit asserts that the Paramount-Warner Bros. pair-up violates Section 7 of the Clayton Act, which prohibits mergers that may substantially lessen competition or tend to create a monopoly.

Caught in the middle of this merger are the culture workers who may face fewer opportunities to practice their craft and be paid for it. On 14 July, the Writers Guild of America West and the Writers Guild of America East filed their complaint in the US District Court for the Northern District of California, asserting that the proposed merger "threatens the economic and creative health of the American entertainment industry."

The suit notes that less competition would result in lower compensation to writers, "reshape what gets made, and silence underrepresented voices." The unions warn that the merger would "forge a cultural monolith and shrink the marketplace of ideas through corporate concentration."

Many have come out praising the lawsuits, noting the need to challenge the seemingly unstoppable merger.

"This illegal merger would mean layoffs for artists and workers, higher prices for consumers, and the death of Hollywood," said Matt Stoller, research director of the American Economic Liberties Project.

People's World (edited for space)

'Blockade for Blockade' Yemen imposes maritime ban on Saudi Arabia

Yemen's Armed Forces have announced an immediate ban on maritime navigation to Saudi Arabia.

Sanaa said the measure responds to nearly 12 years of Saudi-led blockade and attacks.

Yemeni officials warned that any further Saudi escalation would trigger a broader response.

Mohammed Abdulsalam said Riyadh had ignored repeated opportunities to lift the blockade.

The announcement follows mass demonstrations supporting the "blockade for blockade" policy.

Yemen's Armed Forces say the measure is a direct response to Riyadh's continued blockade of Yemen and warning that any further escalation would be met with an even stronger military response.

The announcement marks a significant escalation in the confrontation between Sanaa and Saudi Arabia, following recent attacks on airports and growing tensions across the region.

Military spokesperson Brigadier General Yahya Saree said the decision was taken after nearly 12 years of Saudi Arabia's land, sea, and air blockade against Yemen.

He accused Riyadh of restricting Yemeni ports and airports, including the prolonged closure and repeated targeting of Sanaa International Airport.

"The Yemeni Armed Forces announce a ban on maritime navigation by the criminal Saudi enemy under the equation of blockade for blockade. This decision shall take effect immediately upon the issuance of this statement," Saree said.

He added that Yemen would continue to uphold the principle of "blockade for blockade" and "comprehensive escalation for comprehensive escalation."

Saree said Yemen's Armed Forces are fully prepared for all possible scenarios and warned Saudi Arabia against taking additional military action.

"The Yemeni Armed Forces affirm their full readiness for all options," he said, adding that any "comprehensive escalation" by Saudi Arabia would be met with "a comprehensive and severe escalation."

He also called on Yemenis to maintain nationwide mobilisation and reinforce military frontlines, praising the large public demonstrations held across the country under the slogan "Warning and Mobilisation Friday."

Mohammed Abdulsalam, head of Sanaa's negotiating delegation, said Yemen had been compelled to impose the maritime ban after giving Saudi Arabia ample time to fulfill its obligations and lift the blockade.

He accused Riyadh of delaying negotiations and attempting to distance itself from responsibility for the continued closure of Sanaa International Airport and the maritime siege imposed on Yemen.

"A blockade in response to a blockade is the natural, legal, and moral response to Saudi intransigence," Abdulsalam said.

He warned that Saudi Arabia would bear full responsibility for any further escalation and said the new measures are intended to pressure Riyadh into ending the blockade.

The announcement follows massive demonstrations held across Yemenunder the banner 'Warning and Mobilisation Friday,' with hundreds of thousands gathering in Sanaa and other provinces.

Senior Yemeni officials said the rallies demonstrated broad public support for stronger measures against the Saudi-led blockade.

The maritime ban also follows recent Saudi attacks on Sanaa International Airport and a subsequent Yemeni military operation targeting Abha International Airport, amid repeated warnings by Ansarallah leader Sayyed Abdul-Malik al-Houthi that Yemen would implement the "blockade for blockade" and "airports for airports" equation if Saudi restrictions continued.

Palestine Chronicle

Russia and China: Brotherly support for Cuba

"The recent offers of support and assistance to Cuba received from Russia and China in the current context are genuine expressions of solidarity that the Cuban people will never forget."

This was the sentiment expressed by Carlos Miguel Pereira Hernández, Director General of Bilateral Affairs at the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Minrex), at the First Joint Seminar dedicated to the 77th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and the 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Strategic Partnership for Coordination between Russia and China, which took place in Havana.

The event, the Cuban diplomat affirmed, reaffirms the strategic value of cooperation and mutual support between the two sister nations of the Greater Antilles.

"Cuba will remain steadfast in defending its sovereignty and its Revolution, and we will act inspired by the example of Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, who on this day victoriously reaches his 95th birthday," he stated.

Pereira Hernández underscored the strength of the political dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation between Russia and China, nations that "have advocated supporting Cuba in its national development strategy based on respect and shared benefit," he emphasised.

Furthermore, he described the strategic partnership of coordination between Russia and China as an alternative model of integration and a positive example of sovereignty and resistance against Western hegemony. He also acknowledged the leadership of Presidents Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping in strengthening these ties.

In this regard, Hua Xin, ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Cuba, stressed that in the face of constant threats from the United States, the Cuban Party, government, and people "have united as one, firmly safeguarding sovereignty and national security, which has earned them the respect of the international community."

The Chinese ambassador explained three points that have strengthened the development of China-Russia relations: the high-level design for bilateral relations, pragmatic cooperation as the driving force for the stable development of ties, and the connection between the two peoples, which he described as the foundation of the two countries' generational friendship.

Both ambassadors extended their congratulations to Army General Raúl Castro Ruz on his 95th birthday.

Granma

Global Briefs

CHINA: Twenty-nine countries have signed an agreement in Shanghai on establishing the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organisation (WAICO). The organisation will be an independent international outfit with headquarters in Shanghai, China. The aim of WAICO is to promote international cooperation and global governance of AI, ensuring that AI is beneficial, safe and fair. The organisation will uphold the principles of the UN Charter, be committed to expensive consultations and adhere to a people-centred approach. Chinese President Xi Jinping officially announced the establishment of the World Artificial Intelligence Organisation on 17 July 2026. Among the 29 countries which signed the agreement are: China, Russia, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, Belarus, Serbia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, Pakistan, Kazakhstan.

BURKINA FASO: Defence ministers from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger met in Burkina Faso to discuss the legal framework governing the unified military forces of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES), in a move to advance plans for a joint army among the three countries. The ministers reviewed a draft legal statute that will govern the operations of the Confederation's unified forces and establish the legal basis for its future military activities. The meeting came days after Russia and the three Sahel States announced plans to deepen their military partnership amid an increase in attacks by armed groups across the region. The three countries aim to use the unified force to overcome the operational limitations imposed by national borders, enabling a coordinated response to armed groups that operate across frontier areas.

IRAN: Iran's national mathematics Olympiad team secured first place at the Fourth International Mathematics Competition. The team achieved the highest overall rating after an outstanding performance against competitors from 49 countries. The six-member Iranian team captured four gold medals and two silver medals, finishing ahead of Poland and Brazil to claim the championship title.

IRELAND: Addressing the Irish Parliament, Ireland's deputy premier Simon Harris stressed that the reunification debate should not be about the cost "but what a united Ireland could create." He also pointed out that there will be a referendum on unification in the future. Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Fein leader, thanked Harris for his "constructive" comments and said, "For me, the question isn't whether or not we can afford Irish unity. It's really a question: Can we afford partition any longer?"

INDIA: India's Director General of Maritime Administration (DGMA) has asked shipping companies and vessel operators to refrain from deploying Indian sailors in vessels transiting through the Strait of Hormuz. Indian seafarers are disproportionately impacted by the attacks on ships in various global conflict zones as the country has some 300,000 nationals working on ships, making it the third-largest supplier of maritime labour globally.

CHINA: A Chinese AI called Kimi K3 is about to be the first open-source AI model in its class. The Chinese AI start-up Moonshot has unveiled a massive new artificial intelligence model it says can rival top American firms. The company launched Kimi K3, containing 2.8 trillion parameters, which serves as a measure of an AI's scale and processing power. For reference, Anthropic's product Mythos, has 10 trillion parameters, while Chat GPT 4 had 1.8 trillion. The US has done its best to strangle the Chinese AI industry at birth by denying it access to high-powered chips, but Kimi K3 and other breakthroughs suggest Chinese developers are finding ways around these constraints.

US: More than 50,000 US military personnel are currently deployed across the Middle East. The US Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a characteristically bombastic statement, "More than 50,000 men and women in uniform are operating across the Middle East. They remain highly vigilant, focused, lethal and ready." US forces carried out a number of strikes on Iran. Iranian forces have responded with strikes on US bases in the Middle East (see p16 this issue).

Cuban delegate says ‘maintain faith’

A short interview with **Elizabeth Ribalta** from Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP).

Question: First, what is ICAP, for people who aren’t familiar?

Elizabeth: The Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples was founded in 1960, one year after the revolution. The US government started trying to isolate Cuba from the world, so our objective was to link people of other countries with Cuba.

From the beginning we defended just causes around the world – independence processes in Africa, Asia, Latin America. We received refugees from the dictatorship in Chile. We started receiving solidarity brigades who came to participate in building the new society.

Q: What’s actually happening on the ground?

E: This is a very well-designed manoeuvre of US policy. They describe Cuba as a “state sponsor of terrorism,” inventing excuses like Chinese military bases or phantom drone attacks – all not true. They say Cuba is a failed state needing humanitarian intervention. Then they suffocate every source of income, cutting all opportunity to trade, to buy equipment, medicines, food, technology.

Since we don’t receive oil, power cuts are up to 20 hours daily. Imagine waking up with no electricity, no breakfast, walking long distances to work or school. Eighty per cent of water pumping is paralysed. Hospitals operate on generators with minimal diesel. Surgical waiting lists exceed 100,000 patients – more than 11,000 are children. Infant mortality has risen to 9.9 [per 1,000 live births], when years ago it was just 4. This is something Cubans are suffering every day.

Q: Some leftists feel recent economic changes are a betrayal of the revolution. What do you say?

E: We know our friends sometimes idealise the revolution. They don’t see we are in a process of constructing a new society – you cannot cut yourself from the international system.

We are making mistakes. We go two steps forward and one step back. We are not China, we are not Vietnam – it is a very different scenario. People need to maintain faith with the Cuban revolution because its success is also the success of other peoples around the world.

Q: The European Parliament recently passed a resolution calling for sanctions on Cuba. What’s happening there?

E: Now we are in a very adverse scenario in the EU because the majority of parliamentarians are from the right wing. The left are the minority. That gives the counter-revolution spaces to give them all this misinformation about Cuba – just the point of view of mercenary people who go to the parliament to sabotage the dialogue between Cuba and the European Union.

It is very sad that European governments have pledged to US policy and what Trump says. These countries have their own self-determination and sovereignty, but it seems like they don’t have it.

Q: What should activists prioritise?

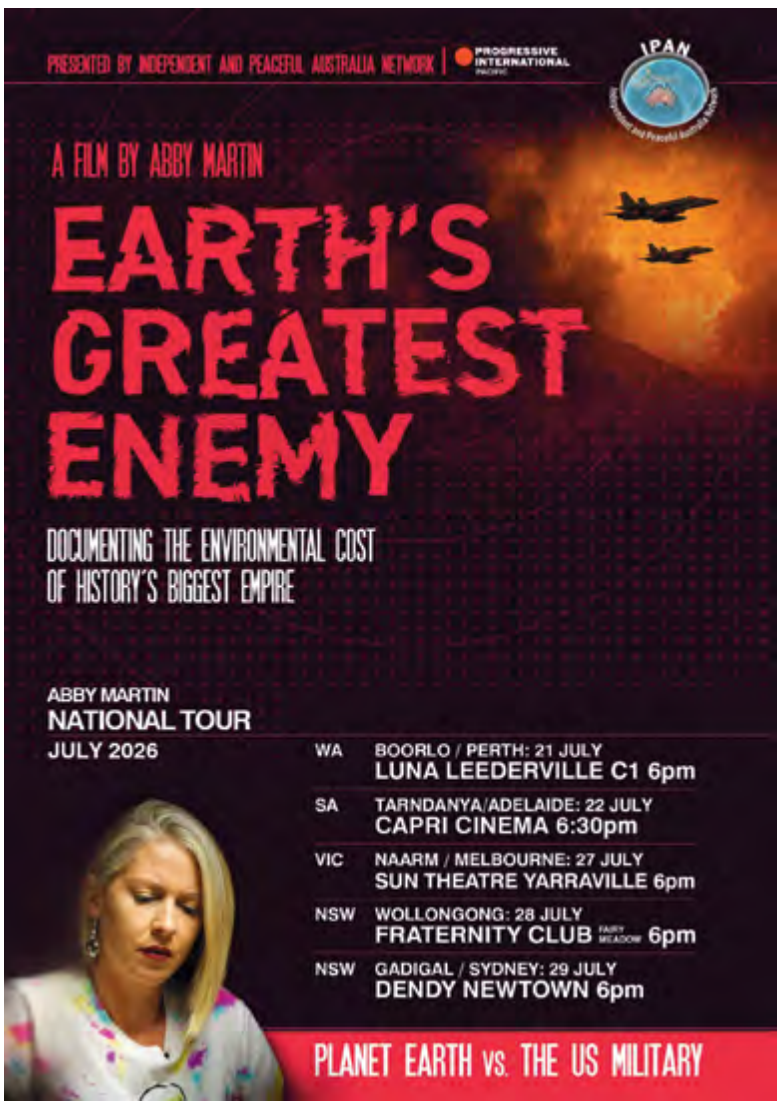
E: The call for solidarity is urgent – this is a genocide. They are not using bombs yet, but they could be. The solidarity movement must be more active than ever: visible public manifestations, motions, declarations, letters to MPs. We need you to keep denouncing this policy, because if it’s not visible, they will continue lying.

We really appreciate the aid – solar panels for polyclinics, maternity homes, schools. Food, powdered milk, beans, rice.

But also, go to Cuba. You need to see with your own eyes what is really happening, and this is a way to support Cuba economically. I know there are obstacles, but it is necessary to go.

Socialist Voice (edited for space)

Cuban Southern Cross Brigade, 2025.



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

communist.party.australia

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

African countries reject Trump aid

Peter Farmer

Bucking the Western stereotype of African countries being needy and desperate, some African countries have rejected foreign aid from the Trump administration due to the strings attached.

The US withdrew from the World Health Organisation in early 2026, complaining about the level of funding, and making spurious claims about mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, Trump’s government is trying to make bilateral deals with African governments. The ‘land of the free’ has made sure that nations that receive the aid promise to put US medial firms and pharmaceutical firms first for delivery of treatments.

They’re very up front about it. The US policy document calls foreign assistance “a strategic mechanism to further our bilateral interests.”

Zambia has spoken up, pointing out that its deal did not guarantee that vaccines or drugs developed from its deal with the US would be available to Zambian people. Zimbabwe rejected a deal because of concerns over US requests for medical data.

Ghana and Zimbabe both cited privacy, sovereignty and data as reasons for rejecting a deal. The executive director of Ghana’s Data Protection Commission told the BBC that “once the data left the Ghanaian borders, we had no control over what happens to it.”

In Kenya, a court has suspended the US deal after legal challenges which demanded that the government protect patient privacy.

More than 50 civil society groups signed an open letter warning that the US conditions were ignoring African interests, with South Africa’s Health Minister saying that “no nation on Earth that respects itself should accede (to the US requests).”

Clampdown on Indian Cockroach Party protesters

Supporters of India’s youth-led Cockroach movement have clashed with police as thousands of them tried to march to parliament to demand the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Police fired tear gas and charged at protesters with batons after demonstrators tried to breach security barricades surrounding the protest site in central New Delhi, marking one of the most serious confrontations yet in the movement’s campaign against far-right Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government.

The crowd at Jantar Mantar, a designated site for protests just a few miles from the parliament building, included students, professionals and families with young children.

The Cockroach Janta Party emerged in May after the Supreme Court chief justice compared some unemployed young people to “cockroaches” during an unrelated hearing.

Supporters embraced the remark, turning it into a satirical movement that has attracted millions of followers on social media.

It has gained momentum after repeated leaks of high-stakes entrance exam papers for medical colleges and government jobs sparked public anger. It drew wider attention after police forcibly moved hunger-striking activist Sonam Wangchuk to hospital.

Protesters calling themselves “cockroaches” have camped at Jantar Mantar for the past month, with members of several student groups joining Wangchuk’s hunger strike.

Delhi police said the march had not been authorised and that restrictions were needed to maintain law and order around parliament during the legislature’s monsoon session, which began today.

Cockroach Janta Party spokesman Saurav Das said he and another representative were meeting Health Minister JP Nadda. The government did not immediately confirm the meeting.

Yoga teacher Jyoti Rajput said she had joined the protests because “this rotten system refuses to take action,” adding: “It cannot see the pain of students and that’s why so many people have joined this movement.”

Morning Star

Starmer 'the symptom not the disease'

From a statement by
the Communist Party of Britain

Starmer claimed to have made Britain safer. The reality is that just as under the Tories, Starmer's government continued Britain's shameful complicity in and support for Israel's genocide in Palestine, war crimes in Lebanon and US imperialist wars in Syria, Yemen and Iran. Starmer's government deepened Britain's involvement in NATO's proxy wars, funding and perpetuating the slaughter in Ukraine.

Starmer will be judged on his record, but it would be wrong to view him in isolation from the crisis of the British political establishment of which he is a part. Since the popular vote to leave the European Union exactly ten years ago, Britain's ruling class has been paralysed and incapable of ruling in the old way.

Starmer's unpopularity is symbolic of the popular disdain for Britain's ruling class and their efforts to serve the interests of the City of London financial sector and ensure US imperialist domination around the world.

Dumping a deeply unlikeable prime minister won't in itself change these policies, reverse Labour's electoral decline, or halt the rise of Reform UK and far right racist riots. Starmer's resignation won't address the deep crisis of working-class representation at every level of politics in Britain. Only a mass movement for fundamental change can do so.

The Communist Party calls on the trade union movement, the left and campaigning, solidarity and community organisations across Britain to come together in a united front to fight for an end to austerity, privatisation and war, and win real change for the working class in this country and internationally.

Only a broad alliance of this type, founded on left policies – ending support for forever wars from Ukraine, to Palestine, Lebanon, Iran, and Yemen; investing in a much-needed green new deal and restoring full trade union rights – can address the social and economic crisis facing workers and shift the balance of power in our favour.

The ousting of Starmer offers the left and the trade union movement the opportunity to strike back and reverse the damage caused by 50 years of neoliberalism. The Communist Party will work with friends and allies to do so. We call on organised labour and the mass movements for peace and against war and austerity to seize this chance and build the united front against racism, austerity, and war.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer holds a press conference on the situation in the Middle East
Photo: Lauren Hurley / No 10 Downing Street – flickr.com (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

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Half the Sky

Sweden's mistreatment of its Indigenous Sámi women

GH

The Sámi are an indigenous population in northern Sweden, Finland and eastern Russia. Traditionally semi-nomadic, parts of the population still practice reindeer herding, forestry, hunting, fishing, and duodji (handicraft and art). Today the Sámi population work in a variety of professions. Despite Sweden's international reputation for fairness and progressive values, there is a long history of mistreatment of Sámi, especially women, by the Swedish government.

An estimated 20,000 to 40,000 Sámi live in Sweden. Although the Swedish government recognises them as an indigenous population, Sweden has refused to ratify the ILO Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. The UN has criticised Sweden for its mistreatment of the Sámi in issues of language, culture, and land rights.

Forced relocations and industrial exploitation through logging and mining have violated Sámi land rights, destroying their traditional livelihoods. They are often identified in land, taxation or population registers as 'Lapps,' a term considered offensive by the Sámi,

It was not until 2010 that the Sweden required schools to teach children about the Sámi population. Most Swedes today still have little knowledge of the history and culture of the Sámi.

The treatment of women in Sweden is complex, showing high levels of societal equality alongside alarming rates of gendered violence and specific historical injustices against minority groups. Sámi women have faced long-term mistreatment resulting from state-sanctioned colonisation, racism, and forced assimilation policies. This history of oppression has had a lasting impact on their safety, rights, and well-being.

Ongoing violence against Sámi women is linked to long-term institutional oppression, resulting in intergenerational trauma affecting mental health and vulnerability. Public systems today still lack cultural competence, especially in healthcare and support services.

Sweden's *Sámi Truth Commission* (2025) has documented histories of violence, forced relocation, and abuse. From the 17th to the 20th centuries the Swedish state and church implemented policies aimed at assimilating the Sámi. Subjected to racial profiling and eugenics studies, they were treated as an 'uncivilised' inferior people. The colonisation process disrupted traditional Sámi gender norms, which formerly contained elements of equality, and imposed more patriarchal structures.

There has been a recent increase in hate toward the Sámi hurts not only the individual members but the whole community. Like Australia, Sweden wrestles with its racist colonialist past, with some arguing for denialism. A recent opinion piece published in the conservative newspaper *Norrbottens-Kurirens*, the Sámi population was referred to as an "invasive species." The Sámi parliament in response noted "we have not gotten particular far from the 1930's Nazi and racist thoughts."

Sámi children, including girls, were forced into boarding schools where they were forbidden to speak their language and forced to adopt Swedish culture. These schools were often sites of abuse. Sámi women experience violence in a context that combines gender-based violence with structural, historical, and racialised discrimination. Men's intimate partner violence against Sámi women has historically been overlooked in Sweden. Sámi women report higher rates of family violence compared to Swedish women (16.4 per cent vs 9.2 per cent).

Recent studies show that the Sámi are more often exposed to violence from acquaintances or strangers compared to the general Swedish population. Although state policies have changed, many Sámi women continue to experience negative attitudes, discrimination, and harassment.

Protection racket: Trump bombs Iran again

The United States carried out its third consecutive night of airstrikes against Iran, as President Donald Trump moved to reimpose a naval blockade on Iranian ports.

He also announced (and then un-announced) a "protection" toll on shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, deepening a war that some US allies and international bodies say never should have been fought in the first place.

US Central Command said a five-hour mission struck military targets across Iran. The strikes followed a post by Trump on his Truth Social platform saying the US was "reimposing the blockade" on Iran and would act as "guardian" of the strait, collecting a 20% toll "on every shipment" passing through in exchange for security. Trump claimed the measure targeted only Iranian vessels and their "clients," while other nations would retain "free and fair use" of the waterway.

The United Nations' International Maritime Organization rejected Trump's protection racket outright. A spokesperson said the IMO's position "remains firm" against mandatory fees for passage through international straits, saying there is no legal basis for such a charge. Shipping industry officials also voiced concern the toll could violate international law, and a Gulf source said Washington had not consulted regional allies before announcing it.

Iran's armed forces have refused to cede any role to the US in the strait. Iran's Joint Military Command said the US "will have no role" in determining the waterway's future, and a spokesman, Col. Ebrahim Zolfaghari, said Iran would "under no circumstances" allow American intervention "now or in the future."

Iran's Revolutionary Guard said it disabled two "violating" supertankers in the strait after they ignored warnings and attempted to pass through a "mined route," accusing Washington of "inciting ships to use an illegal" path.

The fighting's toll has extended beyond Iran. The United Arab Emirates said one Indian sailor was killed and eight other crew members injured, four critically, after Iranian cruise missiles struck two UAE-flagged tankers, the Mombasa and Al-Bahia, in Omani territorial waters near the strait's southern passage. The UAE Defence Ministry called the strike a "flagrant attack" and a "serious violation of international law," and said it reserves the right to respond.

Trump has also threatened to widen the war dramatically. Days before the current round of strikes, he wrote on Truth Social that "orders have already been given" for the US military, ready for a full year, "extendible," to "completely destroy all of Iran."

He also threatened "a thousand missiles" against Iran, "followed immediately by thousands more," if Tehran acted on threats against his life.

Iran's chief negotiator, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, responded that "the era of unilateral agreements has ended," warning Washington to honour its commitments "or pay the price." Iranian media also reported that Mojtaba Khamenei, who has assumed the role of Iran's Supreme Leader following the death of his father, Ali Khamenei, has vowed to avenge his father's killing.

Criticism of the US escalation has come from close American partners as well as adversaries. Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi, writing in the French paper *Le Monde*, said the peoples of Oman and the Gulf are living through the consequences of a war "that never should have happened," and called for a permanent settlement guaranteeing freedom of navigation through the strait.

He said the moment requires abandoning nearly five decades of US-backed "containment" policy toward Iran, calling its premise "fundamentally wrong" and "an illusion." Al-Busaidi said the gravest threats to Gulf security originate not from within the region but from decisions made outside it, "particularly in Tel Aviv," and called the war itself a "catastrophe" launched without UN authorisation that failed to achieve the goals used to justify it.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was blunter in condemning Trump's toll plan, calling it "piracy." Speaking during a visit to the Mauá Institute of Technology in São Paulo, Lula said, "In the past, this was called piracy," adding that the US, long a self-styled opponent of piracy, should not become a pirate state itself.

He called the toll scheme "undemocratic and uncivilised" and said it was wrong to "exploit a tragedy for financial gain" at others' expense. Lula also linked the war to rising food prices across the Global South, saying "the cost of war reaches our basic crops, like beans, rice, and tomatoes."

Trump later told reporters he was backing away from the toll plan, claiming it would be replaced by another scheme to extract revenue from Gulf countries via "billions and billions of dollars" of supposed investment into the US White House flip-flopping from one day to the next leaves shipping companies and governments unsure of what actual US policy is or will be.

Regardless, the US military announced that attacks on Iran would continue and that the naval blockade was still on.

People's World, using material from *Al-Ittihad*, the Middle East's only daily Arabic socialist newspaper

Photo: Michael Vadon – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Trump's flip-flopping from one day to the next leaves shipping companies and governments unsure of what actual US policy is or will be

Gaza and the West Bank: Israeli violence continues

Peter Farmer

While the Royal Commission into Anti-Semitism continues to wander off reservation, berating universities for not being pro-Israel enough, the IDF continues its genocidal campaign in Gaza and the West Bank.

GAZA

Al Jazeera reports that in the 1,000 days since Israel began its latest onslaught, 90 per cent of the strip has been "destroyed," while 80 per cent has been seized by Israel. At least 73,066 Palestinians have been killed in the enclave. More than 21,500 of those killed in Gaza were children, including 1,022 babies, it added. A further 9,500 people are missing, many believed to be buried under rubble, while 173,514 have been wounded.

Approximately 223,000 tonnes of explosives have been dropped by Israel on Gaza during the war – 16 times more than what the United States dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945 with the atomic bomb.

Trump's 'Board of Peace' has failed to secure Israeli compliance, analysts said. Instead of a gradual withdrawal that the plan envisions, Israel has expanded its control of Gaza, and only a third of the aid trucks it committed to allow into the enclave daily are entering. The IDF has killed more than 1,000 Palestinians in Gaza since last October's "ceasefire."

WEST BANK

Israel's Security Cabinet has approved a plan to establish 13 new settlements in the central occupied West Bank, a move Palestinian officials say will further fragment the territory and isolate East Jerusalem from its surrounding Palestinian communities.

Israeli attacks on Palestinians continue. On 16 July Israeli settler attacks set farmlands ablaze in Masafer Yatta and burned vehicles near Tulkarem, as Palestinian villages across the occupied West Bank continue to face a growing wave of settler violence and land loss.

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