



“PUT CHILDREN BEFORE PROFIT”

Anna Pha

Tens of thousands of early childhood educators walked off the job across the country to take part in rallies and marches on 7th September. More than 1,000 centres shut down. They were joined by many parents and other supporters. United Workers Union (UWU) early education director Helen Gibbons said the shutdown was “the largest action of early educators” that Australia has seen.

Their placards sent a strong message to government: “Value your children?: then value their educators!”, “I can’t pay my bills”, “Give us a reason to stay: it’s time for better pay”, “No more band-aids! We demand a living wage!”

Childcare centre director Jessica Grisell, speaking at the rally in Brisbane said, “If we’re not here, the workforce is halved – because one parent has to stay home with their children.”

“Ninety per cent of a person’s brain development happens in that first five years – I don’t understand how that is not important enough to be classed in the education sector.”

The early childhood education and care (ECEC) system is in crisis.

UWU members are demanding the federal government urgently outline a plan and timeline to deliver on three key priorities:

- Give them a reason to stay and pay them what they’re worth;
- Value early learning as part of the education system, just as important as schools; and
- Put children before profit.

CRISIS

Gibbons said the system was “not delivering for educators [...] not delivering for children [...] and not delivering for families. We need real reform. Pay us what we’re worth and give us a reason to stay in the sector.”

Educators are leaving in record numbers due to burn out, excessive workloads, and low pay. Centres have had to limit enrolments, cancel staff leave, and close rooms. There are thousands of staff vacancies and centres are turning away children because they do not have enough staff.

Gibbons said that ninety-eight per cent of staff say that staffing shortages are impacting the quality of care and education children receive. Ninety-nine per cent say that workload and staffing issues are making educators feel burnt out and undervalued.

The sector’s workforce is also highly feminised as well as low-paid, similar to



Big Steps Campaign – Early Childhood Educators Stop Work National Action – September 2022, Melbourne.

Photo: Matt Hrkac www.instagram.com/matt.hrkac/ – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

the situation in the disability and aged care sectors.

Many ECEC educators are paid the award rate of \$24.70 per hour which is totally unacceptable for educators who are playing such an important role. Those who are qualified with a TAFE diploma and look after a group, the award rate is \$27.89 and if not looking after a group, it is \$26.66 an hour. For those with a four-year degree it is just over \$32.

“In just the past few weeks it’s been revealed that there is huge inequality of access to early education depending on where you live, as private providers over-saturate lucrative metropolitan areas and abandon regional families,” said Gibbons. “We’ve seen children are going hungry because of cost-cutting to their food budgets, while private for-profit providers pocket millions in parents’ fees and federal funding.”

IMPORTANCE

Gibbons also called for society to place a higher value on early childhood education. “I feel like people are just considering us as babysitters. We deal with children from

zero to five years old, which are the very important stages in a child’s development and learning.”

This is when the foundations are being laid for social, language, physical, intellectual, emotional, and behavioural development.

ECEC not only prepares children for school but can also identify developmental delays which can be addressed early.

“UWU members’ vision is for a sector where educators’ vital work is valued with professional wages and working conditions, and where early education is recognised for its vital role in children’s development,” Gibbons said.

The federal government has the economic and regulatory power to ensure job quality, payment of workers in line with the high qualifications the job demands, and the responsible nature of their work. It should exercise those powers.

PRIVATISATION

ECEC is increasingly becoming privatised to the point where fifty per cent of centres are now private, and for-profit. Thirty-nine

per cent are not-for-profit and only eleven per cent public.

The federal government has the economic and regulatory power to ensure job quality, payment of workers in line with their qualifications and the responsible and important nature of their work. It should exercise those powers.

Analysing the data from the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (2021), it is evident that there are problems with quality in the private, for-profit sector.

Only sixteen per cent of for-profit centres exceeded the National Quality Standards. This is compared with thirty-six per cent per cent of not-for-profit centres (NFP) and more than forty per cent of government run centres.

The private for-profit sector accounted for almost ninety per cent of enforcement action for non-compliance with minimum standards under the law, despite making up fifty per cent of all centres. Quality has been sacrificed at the alter of private profit and the exploitation of educators.

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Guardian

Issue 2024

19th September, 2022

REMOVE ALAN JOYCE

Throughout the pandemic Qantas CEO Alan Joyce has consistently proven himself to be the walking embodiment of corporate greed.

Alan Joyce took in \$5,575,000 – an increase of \$287,000 from last year’s paycheque – despite the national carrier’s infamous issues with customer service, baggage, and flight schedules, and more.

According to Joyce, these issues are a result of labour shortages and COVID-19-related illnesses that are affecting the whole aviation industry: “This is nobody’s fault. It’s not our staff’s fault, it’s not the airport’s fault, it’s not the airline’s fault. It’s just dealing with this aftermath of coming out of COVID.”

However, it is obvious what has been at the heart of the airline’s problems: its cost-cutting measures and anti-union stance.

Following the pandemic, Qantas announced it would retrench 1700 ground staff at major Australian airports, deciding to outsource the work to contractors, which it anticipated would provide \$100 million in savings a year. The result of this strategy has been on public display, embarrassing Joyce to the point where he has offered Qantas customers \$50 “apology” vouchers – but this “offering” has not put the carrier back in anyone’s good graces.

These issues have escalated, prompting a *Four Corners* investigation highlighting the shocking culture Qantas corporate has inflicted on its’ staff.

Former Qantas loading supervisor and Transport Workers’ Union (TWU) delegate Don Dixon – a fixture at the airline for twenty years – explained to *Four Corners* why the Qantas pains were a result of qualified labour cuts and not COVID-19:

“When I started, my supervisor had twenty years experience already, he showed me this is what you do in this position when a machine breaks down, this is what you do when a machine doesn’t work properly, all these things you don’t learn from a book or in training. That experience is invaluable, you can’t buy that. Now, these young people coming in now haven’t got that.”

Speaking to about Joyce had ruined a once reputable career opportunity, Union TWU Assistant National Secretary Nick McIntosh told *On the Job* that:

“I don’t think people are going to forget that this is a guy who throughout the fifteen years, but particularly the last two years, has destroyed what were once secure, well-paid, sought-after jobs. ... He has turned them into jobs that don’t guarantee hours, provide only the minimum statutory rates of pay, and workers don’t know what their roster is for any given week.”

It is an absolute disgrace what Joyce has done to Qantas and its workers, many of whom have dedicated their lives to the company. Joyce’s treatment of these workers indicates that he does not care about Australians but only the shareholders who have paid him a pretty penny.

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The market has failed the children, their families, and the educators.

“All forms of ECEC are subsidised through public financial support delivered to both parents and to ECEC providers. But private provision of ECEC has different economic impacts than public or NFP provision. This is because private, for-profit ECEC must include a margin for financial return to the owners of the firm delivering the service,” Matt Grudnoff says in a report for the Centre For Future Work. “This profit diverts resources away from direct service provision; it also distorts incentives for ECEC providers, encouraging them to sacrifice quality and cut corners in order to maximise financial returns for the owners.

“The focus of private ECEC companies on cutting costs and maximising profit, results in more poorly-paid, insecure jobs for ECEC workers – with resulting consequences for the quality of education and care they can provide,” the report says.

UNDER-VALUED UNDER-FUNDED

The report, *The Economic Benefits of High Quality Universal Early Child Education*, compared ECEC funding levels in Australia and other OECD countries. It found that ECEC spending is lower in Australia than other countries (and much lower than the Nordic countries) – yet private revenues (mostly paid by parents) are higher than in other countries.

“In short, Australian parents pay more, but get less.”

These findings are consistent with a 2021 UNICEF report

comparing the forty-one wealthiest countries in the world, which showed that Australia ranked 34 out of 41 countries on access; and thirty-four out of forty on affordability.

Grudnoff found that Australian women of prime parenting age are twenty-five percentage points less likely to participate in paid work than their Nordic counterparts, and far less likely to work full-time.

“Australia’s reliance on private for-profit providers not only undermines the quality of services received by children and parents; it also diminishes the macroeconomic and fiscal benefits of the whole system.”

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Government funding for public and non-profit ECEC centres generates one-third more employment and GDP than funding for private for-profit firms – which divert revenues into profit payouts and high executive salaries.

The report also finds that if Australian women had the same participation rates and opportunity to work full-time as Nordic women, Australia’s GDP would be some \$132 billion per year higher. By matching Nordic funding levels, with new funds channelled to public and not-for-profit centres (rather than private firms), GDP would grow by another \$167 billion.

A Nordic-scale public and non-profit ECEC system would generate 292,000 new jobs in ECEC centres, related supply industries, and downstream consumer industries.

The economic benefits would more than outweigh the costs. In addition, thousands of women would be able to enter the workforce

or increase their hours of work. Rather than focusing on migration to meet labour shortages, the government could be addressing the gender gap in the employment market through proper funding of public provision of ECEC.

However, expanded ECEC must be done in a manner to maximise these potential economic and social benefits. That means directing new resources into not-for-profit and public centres which put top priority on quality – rather than subsidising profits of private investors in an ECEC system which views children as an vehicle for profit.

POLICY

Pouring more money into private providers would be a waste of money. There is an urgent need for adequate funding, staffing, and for a transition to public ECEC centres. The construction of centres in lower socio-economic and regional areas is paramount. It would not only provide ECEC for children where the need is greatest, it would generate thousands of jobs in construction and ECEC.

Attracting and training more qualified educators will only be possible when pay equity, job security and good working conditions are provided. ECEC educators care and love their work.

The whole of society would benefit from free, universal access, publicly-delivered, high-quality care and qualified staff.

It’s time to value early learning as part of the education system, just as important as schools, and to put children before profit.

As Gibbons said: “The only way out of the crisis in early learning is real reform that respects educators.” ☺



Big Steps Campaign – Early Childhood Educators Stop Work National Action – September 2022, Melbourne. Photo: Matt Hrkac www.instagram.com/matt.hrkac/ – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

MELBOURNE HOSTS ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL CPA NATIONAL SCHOOL

Who started smoking cigars earlier, Arnold Schwarzenegger or Fidel Castro? Which scientific discovery was announced in *The Daily Worker* (a British communist paper) before anyone else could read about it in *Nature*? Answers to these and a range of other mostly communism-related questions were what gained one lucky team of competitors an array of prizes such as wine, Cuban coffee, and a CPA showbag full of goodies at the CPA Melbourne Branch Trivia Night on Friday 7th September.

A happy crowd of CPA members, friends, and relatives with team names like “The L A Lenins” and “Bolshevik Brainiacs” bickered about the questions, as well as straining ears and brains to guess the answers to “Working class hits” and “Name that communist” questions from the TV and sound system in the loading bay hall in Melbourne’s Trades Hall. Hosted by comrades Bri and Floyd, and put together by hard-working Melbourne Branch members, the event raised almost a thousand dollars for the Melbourne Branch’s work, as well as serving as an opener for the National School on Saturday and Sunday, with comrades Christian and David – who organised the school – getting a warm welcome.

The trivia night was very special to the Melbourne Branch; since their previous trivia night had been an online affair in the depths of pandemic lockdown. That was successful as well, but it was great to see members, friends, and supporters having fun and raising funds for the party in 3D.

The National School, starting Saturday morning, was also a roaring success, where CPA members learned about some very non-trivial questions indeed. Comrades from Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales, and Canberra branches taking part in sessions on the National Question, Marxism-Leninism, party organisation, and working with/in unions over two days.

As well as being useful education for party work, the sessions were entertainingly presented, with learners asking frequent questions, breaking for discussions, and at one stage drawing rapidly improvised posters to develop their understanding of Lenin’s *Theses on the National Question* (we can only wonder what Lenin would have thought of the Ned Kelly cartoon, which really should be a prize at the next trivia night!).

On both days, morning sessions were run by younger members, with comrade Valentin taking us through *Foundations of Leninism*, and comrade Bri expounding on the National Question. Lunch breaks combined comradely chat with some bravely exploring that food van near Trades Hall that sells camel burgers. On Saturday night comrades continued the conversation at The Clyde hotel as well as at the “No Bar For Nazis” event on Saturday Night. Everything wound up on Sunday afternoon with some comrades racing for planes back to Sydney, some heading back to the Clyde, and others going home to just lie down and absorb all the information!

(In case you’re wondering, Castro started smoking at 15, while Arnold didn’t take up the habit until he was thirty, and thanks to communist scientist JSB Haldane, British communists heard about the discovery of the coelacanth, also known as the “living fossil fish” two days before other scientists did.) ✪



MULTI-EMPLOYER BARGAINING KEY TO IMPROVING WORKING CONDITIONS: ACOSS AND ACTU



Photo: Ethan Parsa www.knighthoodstudio.com – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

B Curphey

The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) has joined with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) to call on the Albanese government to implement a policy aimed at “achieving and sustaining full employment” following the recent Jobs and Skills Summit.

The agreement defines full employment to mean that “people can obtain the jobs and paid working hours they need, the quality of jobs and real income levels are improving along with productivity, and the benefits are fairly shared.” It canvasses a range of measures aimed at improving social security, removing barriers to labour market participation, and improving the federal workplace relations system.

The agreement also recognises that the issues of employment and social security are intimately linked. First Nations people, women, people living with a disability, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds face systemic barriers to labour market participation.

In the context of depressed wages and labour shortages in key sectors (such as the care and education sectors), coupled with

skyrocketing rents and the inability of wages or social security to keep up with the cost of living, big changes are needed to enable workers to win better wages and conditions.

Key to improving wages and conditions for workers – especially those in the care sector – is the legalisation of multi-employer bargaining. ACTU Secretary Sally McManus pointed out that conditions have changed in the care sector and so the sector’s approach to bargaining must change too:

“Workers across the community and disability sectors have been locked out of collective bargaining because it just does not work and was never designed for them. The sector is dependent on government funding and it is ridiculous to think workers can negotiate at individual workplaces.”

Multi-employer bargaining (sometimes called pattern bargaining) enables workers in a sector to negotiate an enterprise agreement with multiple employers at the same time, standardising conditions across the sector. This is currently illegal under the *Fair Work Act*, but despite the illegality the practice

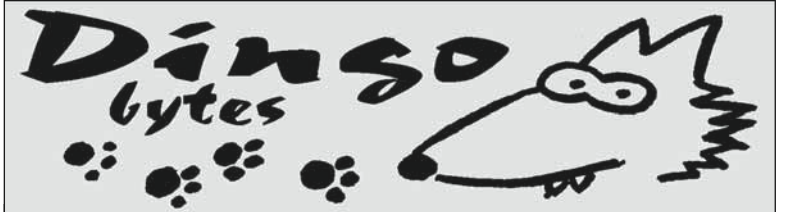
continues in heavily unionised sectors like construction.

The current industrial relations system has worked hard at undermining collective agreements and limiting the power of workers to deal with issues collectively. The ruling class knows that individually, workers are powerless.

It is no surprise why. Empirical research shows that in sectors where pattern bargaining occurs, wages increases are higher on average than in those where it does not occur. ACOSS and the ACTU argue that the care sector is one of the areas in desperate need of an improvement in wages and conditions, and multi-employer bargaining is the way we will win:

“We need a fairer and simpler system of enterprise bargaining that could allow organisations to bargain together in multi-enterprise agreements to reach outcomes that better support care and community organisations and their employees. This must be underpinned by public funding arrangements that leave neither employers nor workers out of pocket.”

There are many more mechanisms that could be implemented to make the industrial relations system work for the working class, but the agreement summed it up neatly: “[i]t should be fair and simple.” ✪



The cause of the Ukraine conflict is the fact that the presence of NATO and US bases, military forces, and nuclear missile systems put Russia’s western border under continual threat. Over the past decade Lithuania, Poland, Latvia, Romania, and Estonia have provided a home to these weapons, maintaining a constant war footing. NATO’s expansion now includes not only Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic – in 2004 seven additional countries were added. NATO once numbered twelve members; now it comprises twenty-eight. Furthermore, the NATO military alliance is looking at Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Ukraine as possible future members. Another factor to be considered in the current crisis is the fate of the four million Russians living in the areas of Luhansk and Donetsk, Ukraine. Agreements reached in 2014 with respect to their autonomy have never been implemented by Ukraine. These regions opposed the 2014 US-backed coup that overthrew the elected president of Ukraine, Victor Yanukovich. During the coup fascist thugs attacked Ukraine’s trade union federation headquarters, locked its occupants inside and set the building on fire, leaving them at the mercy of the flames. Democratic mechanisms in Ukraine have been abolished. After the 2014 state coup, real policy on its territory has been dictated by aggressive nationalist bands. Representing an absolute terrorist minority, they hold Ukrainian people in fear and impose rules of behaviour on members of the political establishment. This accounts for the political transformation of Vladimir Zelensky. Elected by Ukrainians as the president of peace in Donbass and normalisation of relations with Russia, he became a vehicle of the opposite kind of policy. In the international arena the time has come to launch a decisive political offensive against any attempts at the rehabilitation of fascism.

Australia’s support for the fascist regime in Ukraine and for fuelling the conflict includes the testing of new military hardware, with the Albanese government to provide Ukraine with a fleet of thirty Hawkei 4WD military vehicles now being produced at arms manufacturer Thales right here: Australia is now becoming a major arms manufacturer to the world. So far Australia has supplied \$388 million of death dealing weapons to Ukraine. A former Department of Defence public servant, now a member of the might-is-right think tank Australian Strategic Policy Institute, trumpeted this as a “benefit of real-world battlefield testing.”

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: The Albanese government is further demonstrating its commitment as US deputy sheriff in the region by attempting to bully Pacific nations. In the case of the Solomon Islands it is working for regime change, as demonstrated by last week’s blatant attempt to manipulate and interfere in the nation’s internal affairs. Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare pulled no punches, calling Foreign Minister Penny Wong’s “offer” to fund Solomon Island elections “an assault on our parliamentary democracy” and “direct interference by a foreign government in our domestic affairs.”



**Something
to say?
Write to
the Editor!**

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GOVERNOR GENERAL – LOBBYIST PAR EXCELLENCE!

Ron Hall

Essentially Australia's head of state is a prime ministerial appointment whereas, if democratic principles were to apply in choosing the highest position in a democracy like Australia's, ideally that person should be elected by the people directly. This would ensure that the head of state would be more answerable to the public, and this requirement should be enshrined in the constitution. The governor general should hold office for the well-being of the entire nation and concerns for individual should be open and transparent. Personal matters are usually handled by a local member of parliament or a senator.

Recent reports of a third party gaining a sizeable benefit from a relationship with the governor general certainly raises questions as to the role of this office. This situation could well be viewed as an extremely successful case of lobbying, a prominent activity in all parliaments around *the nation*. The governor general is, of course, the monarch's representative in Australia. This poses a question as to whether a queen or king would deign to act in such a manner? In addition, what limitations should apply where patronage or a vested interest may be involved?

Of course, there is a system in place that allows for direct access to politicians in the halls of the national parliament, which is only meant to involve registered lobbyists. In fact, quite an industry has developed around this practice providing employment opportunities for quite a few "insiders", those who previously have been politicians or who have been staffers in politicians offices. So far, governors general have been the exception.

All levels of business including multinational corporations invest heavily in lobbyists in order to achieve favourable outcomes, either financial or legislative or simply as approvals to proceed with certain projects, for example.

So critical in the business world, "money," which according to Marx is "not only the object, but also the fountainhead

of greed," obviously plays a pivotal role in the political process as well. The federal government's extensive means of revenue raising makes the national parliament a most fertile ground for lobbyists. Indeed, lobbying for big business has become a big business in itself. In all, there are 293 lobby companies registered with the Federal Government and these companies employ over 600 lobbyists in a billion-dollar plus industry.

The National Audit Office has expressed concerns over potential failures to comply with lobbying regulations as the Attorney General's Department "has no means to verify that government representatives are checking the register and meeting only with registered lobbyists and with former government representatives only outside the prohibition period," alluding to the so-called "revolving-door rules."

That prime ministers have the power to expeditiously authorise large grants of money is no better exemplified than when a former prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull, suddenly awarded nearly half a billion dollars to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, conveniently when Australia was coming under intense international scrutiny over its commitment to this world heritage listed national icon. In addition, the more recent "sport rorts" scandal clearly illustrates the arbitrariness with which grants may be awarded.

Regarding ministerial appointment, a governor general normally accepts the advice of their prime minister on such matters. What has raised the eyebrows of commentators most is essentially an instance of lobbying which, under required procedure, should have been reported to the Attorney General's Department!

Lobbying hangs over a nation's head as a two-edged sword. It may help to give recognition to brilliant ideas that may otherwise be overlooked but, on the other hand, it can represent a circumvention of government budget processes and the scrutiny thus involved. More precisely, lobbying sits most uncomfortably with the concept of democratic centralism as a Leninist oriented method of developing policy to manage the affairs of a nation. ☼



David Hurley, Governor General of Australia. Photo: gg.gov.au (CC BY 3.0)

DEFENCE PROGRAMMES IN SA SCHOOLS

Bev Hall

In 2010 the then-Federal Government announced a pilot programme to develop a defence curriculum. Three South Australian government schools were initially selected to develop this defence focus pathway. They were Aberfoyle Park (which Raytheon partnered with), Henley High School, and Valley View, with St Patricks Technical school added soon after.

In addition, several defence companies, including Raytheon, contributed to the Ignite programmes for gifted students in maths and science STEM courses. In return, Raytheon and other defence industry manufacturers, scientists, and engineers could have access to students who could be "mentored" into a career in the weapons industry.

The aim of the then \$10.9 million was a National Partnership Agreement to prepare students to work in the defence industry and

the military. After this announcement several concerned community groups and the AEU organised a campaign to highlight the emphasis being placed on war rather than peace. This funding could at the time have offered real futures in developing environmental sciences and broader skills in more constructive and sustainable development.

In June 2014, The Heights School was announced as the Number One defence school in SA and became the first specialist school offering pathways in weapon research and design or military careers. The funding included a project manager for a three-year term to compile the defence curriculum.

The aim was that students would work with defence industries and the industries would assist the more talented to gain university qualifications which led to defence research and manufacturing.

The programme began in year 8, focusing on defence STEM for Ignite students, while other students would be offered pathways

into the defence forces or other military fields. The emphasis from year 10 involved drone designs and manufacture, air vehicles and SWAT projects. Years 11 and 12 were to be immersed into defence industry pathways and research projects involving mentors and university transition programmes in defence-associated studies including submarine technology.

A STEM SISTA programme was established to engage female mentors to encourage girls into the field. Several other schools developed subsections to this defence-oriented programme including some private schools.

There was a great deal of secrecy surrounding these developments which has implications about the real objectives of these programmes, as no public consultation occurred even involving the school's parents. Parents were unaware of the programmes involved only because the schools were receiving funding for STEM support.

Unfortunately, this was a very narrow view of STEM and in

some cases at the loss of a STEM approach developing other pathways for students who were more creatively gifted. Due to zoning, students have no real choice in what pathways they wish to follow if schools limit the available opportunities. Defence pathways lead students into the design and manufacture of cluster bombs, killer drones, and other weapons of mass destruction.

Gearing education towards the manufacture of weapons for the military industry should incorporate an understanding that it is innocent lives which are lost. An example is that killer drones kill 28 innocent people for each 'enemy' killed and the operators of these drones are already suffering from stress disorders.

Although the allocated funds for these trial projects have been expended, and many of these schools have broadened to include the visual and performing arts and social sciences, the defence programmes are now included in most SA schools.

There are some exceptions with several Primary schools with a Peace emphasis and a UNESCO-designated Peace College. In following up since the numbers of students attracted to the defence industry and defence forces was considerably less than expected.

Even though South Australia is regarded as the Defence State, jobs in this industry are limited and unsustainable. What is needed are compulsory pathways into Peace Education, environmental sciences, and the humanities. These are urgently needed for peace negotiation, restructuring, and environmental awareness with programmes leading to construction, not destruction considering humanity is on the brink of extinction.

An example of the present programme can be viewed on The Heights School – STEM in Defence Industry Skills web page. www.theheights.sa.edu.au – find the STEM in Defence Industry Skills programme under the "programs" menu. ☼

CPUSA INTERNATIONAL

“AUKUS IS ABOUT

The following is a contribution delivered by Dr Hannah Middleton to the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) International Conference held in Houston over the 10-11 September.

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of the Communist Party of Australia, I thank the CPUSA for inviting us to speak at this important conference and I send our fraternal greetings and solidarity to all your members and supporters.

I acknowledge that I am speaking from the land of the Gadigal people. I pay my respects to their elders, past and present, and I acknowledge that this is Aboriginal land – always was, always will be.

On the 16th September last year the former Morrison Government suddenly announced the formation of “an enhanced trilateral security partnership” between the US, the UK, and Australia known as AUKUS.

AUKUS is about US imperialism wanting to use Australia as a base to confront and, when the time comes, to attack China. For the US, it is better to set Australia up as a primary target than Hawai'i and the west coast of the US.

The abrupt cancellation of the existing \$90 billion contract for French diesel submarines cost millions of dollars in compensation and ruptured Australian-French relations for over eighteen months.

The major component of AUKUS is Australia's agreement to purchase eight nuclear-powered submarines. The first one will not be operational until 2040, and the last not until 2060. By then, the submarines will be obsolete death traps, susceptible to detection and destruction by existing and new technologies.

Former diplomat Bruce Haigh suggests “The submarine deal was always a smoke-screen to get US nuclear-armed submarines based in Australia. The so-called deal was a sop to public opinion and for the moment it has worked.”

Former Prime Minister Morrison claimed that under AUKUS “Australia is not seeking to establish nuclear weapons or establish a civil nuclear capability.”

These claims were immediately undercut when the Minerals Council of Australia and leading members of his own government called for a domestic nuclear industry to help develop the skills needed to maintain and operate a nuclear-powered submarine fleet.

Others are concerned that the AUKUS partnership will rekindle Australian efforts in the 1960s to acquire nuclear weapons, a debate now under way in Australian strategic think tanks.

However, the US military bases at Pine Gap outside Alice Springs, Shoal Bay near Darwin, and Geraldton and North West Cape in Western Australia are far more important to the US than a few extra submarines.

Australia hosts around fifty US bases, including training, live firing ranges, logistics/materiel, intelligence, surveillance, communications and troop bases.

In addition, all Australian army, navy and air force bases are open for use by the US military at a moment's notice.

There are few other electronic surveillance installations in the world that produce anything near this quantity of intelligence on China's military communications and radar signals, as well as political, economic and scientific communications.

AUKUS is not just nuclear submarines.

Under AUKUS, Australia will be further militarised and garrisoned with more deployments of US aircraft in Australia, more US surface and subsurface vessels in Australia, more joint war games, four new military bases, two new bases for the militarisation of space, greater co-operation in hypersonic weapons, cyber warfare, underwater systems, artificial intelligence, and long range strike capabilities including Tomahawk long-range cruise missiles, and support for combined military operations in the region.

Before AUKUS, the US had been militarising the north of Australia as a potential site to threaten China.

This US military colonisation of Australia's north was accelerated in September 2021 at the 31st Australia-United States Ministerial Consultation which endorsed the following military co-operation:

Deployment of US aircraft in Australia and aircraft training and exercises;

- Increasing US surface and subsurface vessels in Australia;

- More exercises and greater combined engagement with allies in the region; and

- Establishing a combined logistics and maintenance enterprise to support high end warfighting in the region.

The September agreement represents a total subordination of Australia's interests to those of US imperialism. It licenses the deployment of nuclear weapons to Australia, potentially including long-range nuclear armed bombers, ballistic missile submarines, and tactical nuclear cruise missiles.

The agreement is one of a series of many recent developments that are tying Australia to US plans for retaining its regional military dominance in the face of China's rise.

They include significant and extremely costly upgrades at Air Bases Tindal and Darwin to extend runways and upgrade fuel storage facilities to accommodate US long-range bombers and upgrades to training ranges and aviation facilities used by Australian and US forces, particularly the 2,500-strong US Marine Air Ground Task Force on permanent rotation through Darwin.

These developments strongly indicate that the Australian continent will serve as a substantial base for projecting power against China, particularly US power, but also Australian power in a US-led war.

The enormity of these concessions, and the abrogation of sovereign responsibility for the security of Australian citizens, are supported by the new Labor Party Government which is firmly locked into imperialism and defence of the capitalist system at any cost.

In May this year, the right wing lying,



Lance Cpl. Nick J. Padia, a gunner, writes the words “War Pig” on a window of his humvee after reaching Area, South Australia, 2016. Photo: US Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Osvaldo L Ortega – flickr.com (CC BY)

corrupt Morrison Government was thrown out, and the social democrat Australian Labor Party (ALP) won power – except in the Upper House (Senate), where Greens and Independents hold the balance of power.

The new Defence Minister, Richard Marles, has gone so far as to say that we are not only working “inter-operatively” with the US military in numerous ways but we are now committed to “integration” of the ADF into US force structures.

Prime Minister Albanese has said “We will deepen our regional defence co-operation with close partners – including Japan, India, Singapore and others – to bolster our joint capabilities, shape our strategic environment and uphold the rules of the road.”

This is imperialist spin for encircle, contain and defeat socialist China.

The Australian Labor Government has adopted the role of pre-eminent attack dog of US imperialism in the Asia-Pacific region. It has joined with the Biden administration in ratcheting up the confrontation with China which was escalated by the highly provocative visit of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan.

Australian Governments are ignoring history and refusing to acknowledge that Western imperialist domination is ending. This geopolitical shift is characterised by, among other things, changes in trade. In 2000, over 80 per cent of the world's countries traded more with the US than China.

By 2020, seventy per cent had more trade with China.

As a result, there is a threat that Australia may get involved in a conflict that the US and its allies cannot possibly win, and from which we cannot possibly benefit, whatever happens.

With a budget deficit in the trillions, for Australia to squander \$170 billion on these submarines is unforgivable.

In addition, Australia paid \$835 million to French shipbuilder Naval Group and \$35 million to US defence contractor Lockheed Martin in compensation for the cancelled submarine contract.

AUKUS smacks of lining US arms corporations' pockets at the Australian taxpayer's expense. The US has a history of foisting rubbish on the ADF, such as the F35.

There are far better ways of allocating this extraordinary spending – regional co-operation, diplomacy and massive fiscal repair as well as health, housing, education and environmental repair.

The adoption of a peace budget will create far more jobs and far greater security for the Australian people.

US imperialism's current approach of encircling and containing China includes the formation of the Quad, AUKUS, Five Eyes and other strategic military alliances.

US President Joe Biden signed the National Defence Authorisation Act in December last year. This calls for an

The US military bases at Pine Gap outside Alice Springs, Shoal Bay near Darwin, and Geraldton and North West Cape in Western Australia are far more important to the US than a few extra submarines.

AL CONFERENCE 2022 US IMPERIALISM”



ing one of their objective points at Cultana Training
-NC 2.0)



US Marines with Marine Rotational Force – Darwin. Photo: PICRYL Public Domain Image.

unbroken chain of US-armed sentinel states stretching from Japan, India and South Korea, to Australia, Thailand, The Philippines, and Singapore to encircle China.

The narrative built to hide US fear of China as a rival power challenging US imperialism's regional hegemony is that China is an authoritarian state that is a military threat.

However, there has been no pattern of China moving outside its boundaries, other than in respect of territory, such as islands, which it has always insisted were its own.

The war of words and most of the trade actions were consciously provoked by Australia. And when China barred some imports from Australia, the US did not hesitate to fill the gap.

Today US imperialism is fighting to maintain its domination of the Pacific, pouring millions of dollars into “aid”, funding the Peace Corp's return, establishing new embassies across the Pacific and appointing the first US envoy to the Pacific Islands Forum.

But any hope that Australia's island neighbours will welcome further nuclearisation of the region is ridiculous. Within days of the AUKUS announcement, a series of statements from Pacific leaders, community elders and media organisations highlighted the persistence of the deep anti-nuclear sentiment across the region.

Pacific communities are calling for an alternative future that replaces militarised security with genuine human security.

Fiji Prime Minister Bainimarama stressed that “the commitment of the Pacific Island nations to the elimination of nuclear weapons is not based on an abstraction. It is based on real experience with the consequences of nuclear fallout, and it is at the root of our sense of urgency.”

Solomon Islands Prime Minister Sogavare said that his nation “would like to keep our region nuclear-free and put the region's nuclear legacy behind us ... We do not support any form of militarisation in our region that could threaten regional and international peace and stability.”

Marshall Islands President David Kabua stated: “We tirelessly underscore that no people or nation should ever have to bear a burden such as ours, and that no effort should be spared to move towards a world free of nuclear weapons and nuclear risk.”

After World War II, the US was so far in the lead that it could establish and run the global order. The US gave the orders. Gradually however, industrial powers recovered and decolonisation and the non-aligned movement grew.

US imperialism responded by beating all this back violently, using wars, assassinations, overturning governments and more.

With Asia now the centre of global economic power, imperialism is working to retain its economic and political primacy, risking war – and even nuclear Armageddon.

This madness has its origin in the

United States, whose ruling class is greatly threatened by the advances of the Chinese people which pose an existential threat to the advantages long enjoyed by Western corporations which have benefited from centuries of colonialism.

The aim of US imperialism's foreign policy is to prevent any national power becoming a challenge to US. The US has defined China as its principal threat and is now working to instigate a war between Taiwan and China.

Immediately after the announcement last year, anti-AUKUS groups sprang up around Australia and a national organisation is emerging – the Australian Anti-AUKUS Coalition (AAAC).

There have been many protest rallies, leaflet distributions, social media campaigns and more. Our Party worked hard to bring trade unions into this growing movement.

The national coalition is planning an advertisement for a national newspaper, to appear on the first anniversary of the announcement. Meanwhile, a petition already has nearly 26,000 signatures.

Our Party reached out to our fraternal parties in the US and UK and also participated in international peace movement forums. We gave particular attention to the development of resistance among Asian and Pacific states.

However, this initial flurry of intense

discussion and actions diminished as the conflict in Ukraine dominated our attention. It is essential that it is reactivated.

Recognising that war is the product of the anarchic and competitive character of the capitalist world order, we know that in order to end bloody imperialist wars we must overthrow capitalism.

This is an urgent task for as a declining imperial empire struggles viciously to retain its domination, we face a fight that can end “in the common ruin of the contending classes.”

In this situation we must confront this on a global scale. We must build the widest and strongest peace movement possible to win **reforms** that can save the planet and also contribute to the fight to replace capitalism by socialism.

We have to argue that countries buying more and more deadly weapons systems in an escalating arms race does not create peace or security. It has not worked in the past and it never will.

Human security is not based on escalating military spending and war games but on care for the planet and its inhabitants – a state which is impossible under capitalism.

It is time for us to insist that governments around the world redirect their massive war spending to serve humanity suffering from lack of food, water, and other human needs amid an expanding climate catastrophe. ❌

The aim of US imperialism's foreign policy is to prevent any national power becoming a challenge to US. The US has defined China as its principal threat and is now working to instigate a war between Taiwan and China.

THE UKRAINIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC: THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE UKRAINE

J Nielsen

The following is the fourth and final instalment of an edited translation concerning the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The material is drawn from a long entry in the third edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* and deals with the Communist Party of the Ukraine.

ORIGINS

The first Marxist workers' circles appeared in the late 1880s and early 1890s in Kiev, Yekaterinoslav (now Dnepropetrovsk), Odessa, Kharkov, and so on. Names of the early organisers include Melnikov, Tuchapsky, Eidelman, Vinokurov, and Tochisky. Influenced by the St Petersburg "Union of Struggle for the Liberation of the Working Class," which was established in 1895, "Unions of Struggle" were also established in Kiev and Yekaterinoslav. Delegates participated in the preparation and convocation of the First Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) in 1898. With the publication of the newspaper *Iskra*, a network of Leninist-Iskra groups and organisations was created in the Ukraine. With the outbreak of struggle between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks after the Second Congress of the RSDLP in 1903, a southern bureau of the RSDLP Central Committee was created in Odessa in 1904. This bureau oversaw the work of the Odessa, Yekaterinoslav, and Nikolaev committees, was able to unite the Bolshevik organisations of the south, and agitated for the convocation of the Third Congress of the RSDLP in 1905.

REVOLUTION AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION: 1905-1910

During the revolution of 1905-1907, the Bolsheviks of the Ukraine sought to implement the decisions of the Third Congress of the RSDLP by organising the working class and the peasantry to fight against tsarist autocracy. During this time, Soviets of Workers' Deputies were formed in more than 50 cities and factory settlements in the Ukraine. Ukrainian Bolsheviks undertook political, organisational, and military-technical preparation for an armed uprising. Combat-ready workers' squads and detachments of the people's militia were created in all industrial centres.

In December 1905, armed uprisings took place under the leadership of the Bolsheviks in Gorlovka, Yekaterinoslav, Alexandrovsk (now Zaporozhye), Kharkov, Kiev, Mykolaiv, and many other cities were gripped by political strikes. During the revolution, the organisations of the RSDLP in the Ukraine grew significantly and by 1907 numbered over 20,000. Many were the able leaders: Artem (F. A. Sergeev), Bonch-Bruевич, Vladimirov, Voroshilov, Gusev, Petrovsky, N A Skrypnik, A G Shlichter, Yaroslavsky, and so on.

During the counter-revolution of 1907-1910, the Bolshevik organisations of the Ukraine suffered significant losses, but continued their revolutionary activities. Guided by the decisions of the Sixth All-Russia Conference of the RSDLP in 1912, the Ukrainian Bolsheviks worked to expand and strengthen ties with the masses, educate them, and prepare the working people for

new revolutionary battles. During the First World War (1914-1918), the Bolshevik Party organisations in the Ukraine propagandised among soldiers, workers, and peasants, using the Leninist slogan of turning the imperialist war into a civil war.

REVOLUTIONS OF 1917

During the February Revolution of 1917, the Bolshevik organisations of the Ukraine, under the leadership of the Central Committee of the RSDLP led the workers' struggle against the tsarist autocracy, and after its overthrow launched a struggle by the masses against the compromisers and bourgeois nationalists. The process of separating the Bolsheviks from the Mensheviks in the RSDLP and the creation of independent Bolshevik organisations intensified. In the summer of 1917, regional organisations of the RSDLP (Bolshevik) of the Southwestern Region and the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog basin took shape. To direct all the work in this area, the Southwestern Regional Bureau of Military Organisations of the RSDLP (B) was created in the autumn of 1917.

After the Sixth Congress of the RSDLP (B) in 1917, the Bolsheviks began preparing workers for overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie and landlords. The Ukraine was of great help to the Central Committee of the RSDLP (B), which maintained contact with more than 50 local Party organisations. Active work in preparing the masses led to the socialist revolution of October 1917, in which Ukrainian Bolsheviks played a significant role: in meetings and rallies in Kharkov, Yekaterinoslav, Donbass, Kiev, Odessa, and in other industrial cities and districts, workers declared their support for the Russian Soviet Republic and indicated their readiness to fight for the power of the Soviets in the Ukraine.

In December of 1917, two important meetings were held: in Kiev, the regional congress of the RSDLP (B) of the Southwestern Region was held on 3-5 (16-18) December, 1917; in Kharkov, the regional conference of the RSDLP (B) of the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog basin was held on 5-6 (18-19) December, 1917. They called on the working masses to fight against the Ukrainian Central Rada. A few days later, the First All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets met in Kharkov and declared the Ukraine a Soviet Republic. In January-February of 1918, the military formations of the Central Rada were defeated, and the Soviet government won the struggle in most of the Ukraine. However, in February 1918 Austro-German troops occupied the Ukraine. Having gone underground, the Bolsheviks of the Ukraine organised the struggle against foreign interventionists and internal counterrevolution.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF UKRAINE

By July of 1918, the First Congress of the newly-named Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) was held in Moscow, and it was attended by 212 delegates from 45 then illegal Party organisations of the Ukraine, which had 4,364 Party members. The Congress: 1) defined the tasks of the Ukrainian Party organisations in the fight against the occupiers and internal counter-revolution; 2) decided on the organisational structure of the CPU as an integral part of the Communist Party of Russia; stressed the loyalty of communists to the Leninist principles of proletarian internationalism; urged them



to fight even more resolutely for the revolutionary unification of the Ukraine and Soviet Russia; and exposed the nationalist nature of the slogan "independence of Ukraine." Based on the decisions of the Congress, the All-Ukrainian Central Military Revolutionary Committee (chaired by A S Bubnov) and three underground regional committees of the CPU were formed, and they led the workers' liberation struggle.

During the Civil War of 1918-1920, the Ukraine was a major theatre of military operations. The main attention of the CPU was devoted to combating the interventionists and internal counter-revolution. A partisan movement, directed by the Frontline Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPU, was organised. This bureau played a vital role in mobilising the working masses to defeat the interventionists and internal counter-revolution, in restoring and strengthening Soviet power in the Ukraine, in constructing the new state and its economy, and in strengthening the unity of the Ukrainian Party organisations. During the struggle, the CPU held a series of important congresses: the Second (October 1918), Third (March 1919), Fourth (March 1920) and Fifth (November 1920).

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF UKRAINE IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

After the Civil War, the CPU focused the efforts of the Ukrainian people on the restoration of the national economy. During the period of constructing socialism, the CPU organised workers to carry out industrialisation, collectivisation of agriculture, and cultural revolution. During the course of socialist construction, the CPU undertook further work in strengthening the Party in ideological and organisational terms in light of the principles of Leninism. Constant struggle was required against "leftist" deviations, the so-called "workers' opposition," Trotskyites, right-wing deviations, local nationalists, and anti-party movements and groups.

During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, the CPU organised and inspired the struggle of the Ukrainian people against the Fascist invaders. More than 240,000

Communists fought at the front. More than 68,000 Communists fought in partisan detachments and in underground units in the temporarily occupied territory of the Ukraine. In the enemy's rear, there were 23 underground regional committees, 685 city and district Party committees, and 4316 primary Party organisations, which rallied the working people to fight the Fascist occupiers.

After the liberation of the Ukraine (October 1944), the CPU, relying on the comprehensive assistance of the Central Committee of the CPSU (B) and the Soviet government, focused its efforts on eliminating the consequences of the occupation, and on the restoration and further development of the national economy. Fulfilling the decisions of the 19th to the 25th congresses of the CPSU, the Communists of the Ukraine strengthened the leading role of Party organisations in developing the material and cultural life of society, increasing the political and labour activity of the republic's workers, and in tirelessly improving the management and construction of state, economy, and culture. By 1976, there were 25 regional committees, 123 city committees, 115 city and 451 rural district Party committees, 63,892 primary Party organisations, 57,703 trade Party organisations, and 10,838 Party groups, which united over 2,600,000 thousand Communists.

Editor's note: In light of the clear benefits of socialism, the people of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic voted overwhelmingly (more than 70 per cent) in the referendum of March 1991 to remain part of a reformed USSR. However, events moved quickly, with the Yeltsin clique in Moscow staging a coup and asserting effective independence of what became the Russian Federation. By December of 1991, the Ukrainian SSR had no choice and opted for independence. The wording of the March referendum was as follows:

"Do you consider necessary the preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics in which the rights and freedom of an individual of any ethnicity will be fully guaranteed?" 71.6 per cent of people in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic voted "yes" in March 1991. ☺

WAR PREPARATIONS ARE SPARKING THE GROWTH OF AN AUSTRALIAN PEACE MOVEMENT

Bevan Ramsden

The indicators that preparations are being made for war are coming thick and fast.

Previous governments have committed close to one-quarter of a billion dollars on so-called defence, but the items suggest war preparations coordinated with the US and aimed at containing or confronting China militarily. Here are some of these commitments:

- Upgrading the Royal Australian Air Force's Tindal aircraft runway to take US B1 bombers, capable of carrying nuclear weapons.
Cost: \$1.1 billion;
- Building a huge fuel site in the NT to power US fighter jets.
Cost: unknown;
- Acquiring 135 US M-1A2C Abrams Tanks.
Cost: \$3.5 billion;
- Producing/acquiring high-speed, long-range missile defence systems.
Cost: \$9.3 billion.

Acquiring eight nuclear-powered submarines at a cost, which experts predict, will blow out to \$170 billion; these hunter-killer subs are designed for operation at long distances from Australia and are too large to be effective in the relatively shallow coastal waters of Australia.

\$10 billion is to be spent building a port on the east coast of Australia to service nuclear-powered submarines, and we are told it will be made available to the US and UK for servicing their nuclear-powered and probably nuclear-armed submarines.

Seventy-two, F-35 fighter bombers are to be purchased from the US at a cost of \$10 billion, or more, if the predicted blowout on costs occurs.

Australia is purchasing nine frigates at the cost of \$35 billion.

The cost to Australia of having over 2,000 US marines stationed in NT each year is unknown as questions by the Independent and Peaceful Australian Network (IPAN) to the Minister for Defence evoked the answer: "It is a matter of national security and cannot be divulged." These foreign troops stationed on our soil are not under the control of the Australian government. They take their orders from the US Indo-Pacific Command, which has recently established a regional HQ in Darwin.

Every second year the Talisman Sabre military war exercises are carried out mainly by the ADF working in an integrated way with the US military. This is a land and sea operation involving aircraft, warships, landing craft and land-based vehicles and missiles. Recent war exercises have had a clear aim of practicing for war aimed at China.

These military preparations and expenditures have been backed by war talk by ex-Defence Minister Dutton and government advisory "think tanks" such as Australian Strategic Policy Institute. Former Defence Minister Peter Dutton bluntly warned on ANZAC day this year of the prospect of war with China over control of Taiwan. He



Anti-war rally, 2003, Sydney.

said it cannot be ruled out but said it was ultimately a question for China. Former Prime Minister Tony Abbott was reported as supporting Dutton, saying that the battle for Taiwan could start quite soon and citing recent statements by US military commanders to that effect.

The strongest indicator of preparation for war has been Australia joining with the US and UK in what appears to be a war pact called AUKUS whose aim is to contain and confront China militarily. This new alliance was entered into without any parliamentary or public discussion and has been imposed dictatorially upon the Australian people.

The change of government has not seen, as yet, any change in this general thrust to prepare for war. The Albanese Government supports AUKUS. And whilst Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong have sought to use more moderate language towards our neighbours on their recent overseas tours in an attempt to heal relations broken by the previous government, the thrust of their foreign policy has not changed.

In a speech recently in the USA, Defence Minister Richard Marles called for the integration of our ADF with the US military rather than interoperability, which was the policy of the previous Australian government. This would mean loss of sovereign control of our own ADF to the US.

Indeed, ex-PM Tony Abbott has congratulated the Albanese government for providing seamless continuity in foreign policy with the previous government, telling ABC radio: "One of the things that encourages me about the new government is that they are very much continuing the line of the former Morrison government

when it comes to Australia's defence and strategic policy. [...] Good on you Richard Marles and Anthony Albanese for doing so."

Respected defence analyst Dr Hugh White has issued a warning in his article, appearing in *Quarterly Essay* entitled "Sleepwalk to War; Australia's Unthinking Alliance with America." In this hard-hitting essay, Dr White writes that:

"The spirit of AUKUS and the logic of the Morrison Government's position make it close to inevitable that Australia will be entangled in detailed US war planning for a conflict with China, if that has not already happened [...]. The danger is that once we allow US military staffs to build Australians forces into their war plans, it becomes harder for us to make an independent decision about going to war when a crisis occurs."

In commenting about possible war with China over Taiwan he said:

"The best way out of this predicament for America is to abandon ambiguity and acknowledge frankly that it cannot and will not defend Taiwan with armed force. And the best path for Australia is to urge America to do this and tell the Americans that we will not support them in a war over Taiwan."

Former PM Paul Keating has previously said the same thing. Reported by the ABC on 10th November, 2021, he: "warned the federal government not to be drawn into a military conflict over Taiwan, saying the fate of the self-ruled island is 'not a vital Australian interest' and played down the prospect of a Chinese military invasion."

All this war talk and massive spending on war preparations have not gone unnoticed in the Australian community. It has provoked a response which is rapidly spreading that our foreign policies are taking us into an unnecessary and

avoidable war, and not towards security and peace.

A recent Lowy Institute poll showed that just over half the Australian population are opposed to Australia going to war against China. The city councils of both Newcastle and Wollongong are united in opposing the establishment in their cities of port facilities for nuclear powered submarines and the Brisbane city council has re-affirmed its commitment to a nuclear free city. A number of trade unions have strongly condemned AUKUS and the planned acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines. These are: the Electrical Trades Union Queensland branch, National Maritime Union of Australia, the NSW Teachers Federation, Unions NSW, ACTU Retired Unionists Network, Retired Manufacturing Workers in Qld, Retired Rail, Tram and Bus Workers and the National Tertiary Education Union. Community organisations including Friends of the Earth, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, the Australian Conservation Foundation, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Pax Christi, the Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament, Australians for War Powers Reform and IPAN, have condemned AUKUS and the acquisition of nuclear submarines.

A petition raised by IPAN in conjunction with the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign has received 25,500 signatures. The petition is headed: "No Nuclear-Submarines; End US dominance; Healthcare not warfare" and reads in part: "The Australian Government must withdraw from AUKUS, stop the development of nuclear submarines and end integration into the US military."

Community, trade unions, faith and peace groups and individuals

have united to form the Australian Anti-AUKUS Coalition, the AAAC, to campaign nationally against preparations for war against China, to oppose nuclear submarines and oppose the AUKUS war pact with public anti-AUKUS protests in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Wollongong, Sydney, Newcastle, Brisbane and Darwin with more planned in the coming months.

The AAAC is currently coordinating the gathering of hundreds of signatures from individuals and organisations for a national newspaper advertisement which reads as follows:

"We call on the Government of Australia in the interests of peace and security for the Australian people and the region:

- To advise its AUKUS partners that Australia will not be involved in a war against China over Taiwan or disputed territorial waters in the South China Sea, or any other country, and will not allow use of Australian territory for that purpose;
- To sign and ratify the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons;
- To cancel military spending for AUKUS war preparations, including cancellation of the acquisition of nuclear-propelled submarines, so that urgent domestic social needs (climate change mitigation, education, health including public hospitals and housing) can be better addressed."

To add your signature go to antiaukuscoalition.org

Every stop should be pulled out to prevent Australia being drawn into yet another disastrous US war and the peace movement is growing rapidly to do its best to prevent that happening. ☺

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

email: editor@cpa.org.au



Stage set for Indigenous Voice to Parliament

Dear editor,
Thank you Franc Stregone for an excellent article (*Guardian* #2020 22nd August 2022) which captured well the diverse opinions among our First Nations people about the ALP Prime Ministers proposal for a referendum being put to the Australian people about an Indigenous Voice to the Australian people to be contained somewhere in the Australian Constitution.

I agree with NT politician Yingiya Mark Guyula, a Yolgnu elder, who said it was “hopeless,” “not good enough,” and “not what we

wanted.” The Greens and many Aboriginal people, especially those who took part in the Makarrata at Uluru in 2017, also have concerns about what Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has put on offer. There are those progressive forces who say a Treaty is more urgent and more necessary and arguably the referendum to amend the Australian Constitution to include an Indigenous Voice to parliament is a distraction and a delaying tactic to achieve real and more meaningful change for our First Nations People.

The Australian Constitution is another institution that is broken, does not serve the Australian people, beyond repair and needs to be totally redone from top to bottom to make it fit for purpose for an Australia of

the 21st Century. Only then can it begin to undertake the more the lofty ambitions which people wish to ascribe to it. At present, retaining or tinkering with this relic from the late 19th Century will only serve the capitalist classes who continue to do so well from it and reactionaries who wish to cling to outdated and oppressive social, political, and economic norms.

A referendum should not be seen as the only course of action at this time, a good thing and a forgone conclusion.

Thank you
Yours truly,

Richard Titelius
Perth, WA

EXCLUSIVE:

“CONCEALED, ADAPTABLE” WEAPON OF NSA’S CYBERATTACK ON LEADING CHINESE AVIATION UNIVERSITY EXPOSED

Cao Siqi

A “concealed and adaptable” weapon used by US’ intelligence centre National Security Agency (NSA) to launch a cyberattack on the email system of Northwestern Polytechnical University in Northwest China’s Shaanxi Province – well-known for its aviation, aerospace, and navigation studies – was captured by Chinese cybersecurity experts, the *Global Times* learned from a source on Tuesday.

On 5th September, a Chinese technical team announced that by extracting many trojans samples from internet terminals of Northwestern Polytechnical University, with the support of European and South Asian partners, it initially identified that the cyberattack on the university was conducted by the Tailored Access Operations (TAO) (Code S32) under the Data Reconnaissance Bureau (Code S3) of the Information Department (Code S) of US’ NSA.

Aiming at Northwestern Polytechnical University, TAO used forty-one types of weapons to steal the core technology data including key network equipment configuration, network management data, and core operational data. The technical team discovered more than 1,100 attack links had infiltrated inside the university and more than ninety operating instruction sequences, which stole multiple network device configuration files, and other types of logs and key files, the team said.

A deeper analysis conducted by China’s National Computer Virus Emergency Response Center and Beijing-based Qi An Pangu lab showed that the cyber-sniffing weapon, known as “drinking tea,” is one of the most direct culprits responsible for the theft of large amounts of sensitive data.

A cybersecurity expert from the lab told the *Global Times* that TAO used “drinking tea” as a tool to detect secrets, implanted it into the internal network server of Northwestern Polytechnical University, and stole the login



Photo: blogtrepreneur.com/tech – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

password of remote management and remote file transfer services, such as SSH, to gain access to servers on the Intranet, and other high-value servers, resulting in the stealing of large-scale, persistent sensitive data.

“Drinking tea” can not only just steal accounts and passwords for remote transfer of files, but also is very capable of concealment and adapting to new environments. According to the anonymous expert, after being implanted into the target server and equipment, “drinking tea” will disguise itself as a normal background service process, and send a malicious load stage by stage, making it very difficult to find.

“Drinking tea” can run on the server stealthily, monitor the user’s input on the terminal program of the operating system console in real time, and intercept all kinds of user names and passwords from it, just like the “peeper” behind the user.

“Once these usernames and passwords are obtained by TAO, they can be used to carry out the next stage of the attack to help the office steal files on the servers or deliver other cyber weapons,” the cybersecurity expert said.

In February, experts from Qi An Pangu lab told the *Global Times* that they have discovered a top hacker group under US’ NSA, which has been using a cyber weapon “Telescreen” for more than a decade, infiltrating forty-five countries and regions including China, Russia, Japan, Germany, Spain, and Italy, and involving 287 important institutional targets.

“Telescreen” has also been found to have been used together with “drinking tea” to launch the attack on Northwestern Polytechnical University’s email system, the source said.

According to the source, Chinese experts also found traces of the “drinking tea” attack in the

network of other institutions, which shows that the weapon is likely to have been used by TAO to launch a large-scale cyberattack on China.

In addition to that, a research report, entitled “American Dragnet: Data-driven Deportation in the 21st Century,” which was released by US Georgetown University’s Center on Privacy and Technology Law in May, showed after two years of investigations, the center found that in the name of counterterrorism, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has pushed ethical and legal boundaries to build a surveillance dragnet that covers most Americans by bypassing Congressional oversight and privacy laws.

It means that the US government’s unlimited access to data surveillance has expanded from “regular” law enforcement departments such as the NSA, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation or police

department to administrative agencies like ICE.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning has urged the US to immediately stop its wrongdoings, saying that cyberspace security is a common problem affecting all countries worldwide.

China has asked the US through multiple channels to explain the malicious cyberattack and immediately stop the illegal behaviour, but so far we have not received any substantive response from the US, Mao said.

“I want to stress that what the US has done has seriously infringed on the technical secrets of relevant Chinese institutions and seriously jeopardised the security of China’s critical infrastructure, and institutional and personal information. The US must stop immediately and give a responsible explanation,” Mao said.

Global Times 🌐

VOTERS IN CHILE REJECT NEW PROGRESSIVE CONSTITUTION

W T Whitney Jr.

Supporters of a proposed new constitution for Chile suffered a big defeat in a plebiscite on Sunday, 4th September. The “reject” side captured nearly 8 million votes, or sixty-two per cent of the total, while 4.86 million – thirty-eight per cent – approved the document. Voting in such a plebiscite in Chile is mandatory; participation was eighty per cent.

Chile’s current constitution, produced in 1980 under the Pinochet military dictatorship, and with alterations since, remains in effect. The issue in question, according to Hugo Guzman, editor of the Communist Party’s *El Siglo* newspaper, was “whether Chileans will continue to live in the midst of a repressive political structure and an exploitative economic model installed by a ruthless dictatorship some four decades ago, or whether they will choose to start a new and egalitarian chapter in the history of Chile.”

The vote marked the end of a process that began with huge youth and labour-led demonstrations throughout Chile in October 2019. They continued for months. Protesters were reacting to inequalities generally and to privatisation and austerity initiatives, particularly, those that interfere with equitable access to education, health care, and social security.

The pressure led billionaire president Sebastián Piñera to agree to a nationwide vote authorising an assembly charged with devising a new constitution. On 25th October, 2020, 79 per cent of Chileans voted to approve a Constitutional Convention.

An election was held in May 2021 to choose delegates to the Convention, which would be in session from 4th July, 2021, until that day a year later. Meanwhile, voters in December 2021 elected Gabriel Boric, centre-left in political orientation, to succeed Piñera, in the process rejecting an extreme right-wing candidate. While campaigning, Boric had prioritised carrying on with a new constitution.

The proposed constitution contained meaningful advances, including:

- Women would make up at least fifty per cent of the officials and officeholders in all state agencies and institutions;
- Chile would take on the character of a “multinational and intercultural state,” where Indigenous peoples would be regarded as nations occupying autonomous regions;
- The state, rather than private entities, would assume primary funding



While campaigning, Gabriel Boric had prioritised carrying on with a new constitution. Photo: Mediabanco Agencia – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

responsibility for education, healthcare, low-income housing, and pensions;

- The proposed constitution recognised the “free exercise of sexual and reproductive rights.” It limited the penalisation of abortion;
- The document prioritised ecological sustainability and especially water rights;
- Formation of a Congress of Deputies for passing laws and a Chamber of the Regions for dealing with legislation agreed upon at the local level. The National Congress, with its Chamber of Deputies and Senate, would disappear; and
- No longer would there be high quorum requirements for passing legislation.

Commentary following the plebiscite suggests multiple reasons why the “approve” vote failed, among them:

- Myths circulated in the media. The new Constitution supposedly would promote “late term” abortions, dismemberment of the national territory, and empty pension funds. Critics alleged the malign influence of Cuba, Venezuela, and/or Bolivia;

- The Constitutional Convention presented the appearance of disorganisation and a lack of experienced deputies. Social movements supposedly exerted more influence within the Convention than did political parties;
- The Convention failed to provide the public with updates on its deliberations and was unable to overcome propaganda from the corporate-dominated media;
- The government’s apparent failure to cope with “galloping inflation” – now thirteen per cent annually – and a precipitous fall in copper prices and export income overall cast a pall over the idea of a new constitution, according to one critic.

Another suggests that the winning majority included a “punishment vote” by those Chileans who normally don’t vote in elections – when voting is optional.

The fight against the “approve” campaign, according to Guzman, found support in “the right-wing and far-right parties, the Catholic church hierarchy, the so-called ‘military family,’ liberal social democratic sectors, financial groups that own the [...] consortiums that control private pension and health services – and most of the media and business associations.”

Reaction to the defeat of the proposed constitution varied. For commentator Cristóbal León Campos, the “shadow of Pinochet weighs heavily,” with Chile joining

Ecuador and Bolivia in sheltering “the most regressive sectors of Latin American conservatism, neofascist in nature.”

An editorial statement from *The Citizen (El Ciudadano)* news service emphasised the “gigantic sums of money” big corporations paid “to influence the opinions and decisions of millions of people.” It assigned blame to the government for not directing the state media to “confront this tremendous assault.” The editorial pointed to “an intelligence operation aimed at bringing down the most advanced constitutional project in the world.”

The command centre of the approve campaign called for “work toward a new social pact because what was rejected was the text and not the impulse toward a new constitution.” Social movements within the campaign joined in declaring the outcome “to be a matter of an electoral defeat, not defeat of the effort itself.”

Political parties making up the “Approve Dignity” coalition responsible for electing President Boric agreed, and insisted that the project would continue under his leadership. These included the Socialist, Radical, Liberal, Communist, For Democracy, and six other parties.

Boric himself promised “to put everything he had into building a new constituent process, together with the Congress and civil society.” He urged Chileans “to unify and together continue building the future.”

People’s World ✪

“... what was rejected was the text and not the impulse toward a new constitution.”

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The Guardian

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Published by
Guardian Publications Australia Ltd
 74 Buckingham St,
 Surry Hills, 2010

Printed by
Spotpress
 24-26 Lillian Fowler Pl
 Marrickville 2204

Responsibility for electoral comment
 is taken by **T Pearson**,
 74 Buckingham St,
 Surry Hills, 2010



Sydney Vigil

STOP USA BLOCKADE ON CUBA

Join us in Sydney to demand that the USA stops the blockade on Cuba with the right to self determination. Also stop other blockades like Venezuela and Gaza.

12:30 pm Saturday October 17
 Sydney Town Hall

UK: BEWARE – A BONFIRE OF OUR RIGHTS IS PLANNED

Professor Keith Ewing and
Lord John Hendy KC

The trade unions are all that stand between the working class and catastrophe. Inflation is going through the roof. Businesses facing unmanageable increases in costs are already closing and shedding jobs.

For workers the value of wages, having been stagnant for twelve years, is now falling. Offers of wage increases which are less than the rate of inflation are, in effect, wage cuts.

Unions are fighting back. But unions are only able to negotiate in companies where they have collective bargaining rights. Collective bargaining used to cover eighty per cent of workers.

But successive government policies since the 1980s have driven that coverage down to less than twenty-five per cent of workers. And many of those are not in a strong enough position industrially to demand a wage increase.

Many others in the public sector have the benefit of collective bargaining but not about wages – because their wages are fixed by pay review bodies or government diktat.

In consequence, most of our 30 million workers are entirely at the mercy of employers in setting wage increases.

Yet even for that small percentage where their union is in a position to demand higher pay, the Liz Truss government intends to strip their bargaining power.

The government intends to add to the “most restrictive laws on trade unions in the Western world” as Tony Blair described them in 1997.

Since then, we have had the Trade Union Act 2016 with more restrictions on trade unions and picketing. This year, there has been already legislation against noisy pickets, the limit on damages payable by unions has been increased to £1 million for big unions, and agency labour to break strikes has been legitimised.

Now Truss is considering the following:

- Use of emergency powers by a minister to outlaw any industrial action deemed to pose a “national emergency”;
- Increase in the current threshold percentage ballot

turnout (in addition to a majority vote in favour);

- A yet higher threshold percentage of votes in favour than under the 2016 Act in “important public services” (i.e., the “key workers” who the government applauded during lockdown);
- Four weeks’ notice of industrial action to be given instead of two;
- A ballot authorising industrial action will be valid for only one occurrence of strike action within the current permitted six-month period;
- The six-month period reduced to three;
- A mandatory cooling off period of 60 days and a “dispute resolution process” after each strike action;
- An absolute limit on the number of pickets permitted in the vicinity of “critical national infrastructure”;
- Inflammatory and intimidatory language on picket lines prohibited;
- Ballot papers not only to identify the issues in dispute (as now), but also to set out the employer’s response by way of a right of reply;
- The tax authorities to collect tax on any strike pay by unions to their members; and
- Employers will be entitled to short-circuit collective bargaining (where it exists) by making offers directly to union members.

All these measures violate international laws ratified by and binding on Britain. The unions will fight these legal restrictions through Parliament and in many cases will sidestep them if passed. Many workers will probably ignore them and take unofficial action.

But this is not the end of it. The new administration is apparently not content with income cuts for workers as a result of inflation and fuel price increases, nor with the further erosion of trade union rights, thereby weakening the power of workers to resist.

We now also have a third threat, in the form of leaked proposals for a “bonfire of workers’ rights,” or at least what is left of them, since Britain is already the “lightest-regulated economy” in the developed world.

In other words, British workers are already less well protected than



Photo: Garry Knight

their counterparts elsewhere. While the EU continues to develop plans for a minimum wage through collective bargaining, the new British government is about to trash what is left of the European legacy.

Leaked reports have so far focused on the working time regulations. It is not clear yet how big the proposed bonfire of rights will be. But it does not have to be huge to be damaging.

Take, for example, statutory holiday pay. This could be removed altogether, or the number of days cut, or the amount payable reduced.

Or employers could be allowed to roll up holiday pay with ordinary pay so that the employer can say “we won’t pay you during holidays because we’ve already priced your holiday into your wages, and it’s up to you to make the necessary savings each week.”

Just like the proposed restrictions on trade union rights, measures of this kind carry risks for the government if done – as was suggested in one report – in order to secure some competitive advantage for “Britannia unchained.”

The legally binding agreement Britain made with the EU at the time of Brexit contains a “non-regression” clause designed to stop the dilution of workers’ rights by the British government looking for cheap trading opportunities. Either the government is unaware of this provision, or it doesn’t care.

Faced with these attacks, workers so far have mobilised in what has been a heroic struggle in defence of their incomes and their jobs.

That seems set to continue as unions look at other measures to protect the working class: coordinating with each other to secure wage increases, linking up with campaigns and community groups, reinvigorating trades councils, establishing food kitchens in schools and elsewhere, and the possibilities of national days of action involving hundreds of thousands of union and non-union members.

All have come to realise that enough is enough. Beyond that, however, there will emerge a new political strategy alongside the campaign of resistance.

That political strategy will be informed by the energy generated by the resistance and the expectations it creates. But in order to make change, it is necessary to win political power rather than scoff at it.

And that change needs to be built on a trade union platform which emphasises the importance of the trade union role in what leading scholars refer to persuasively as our “economic constitution.”

That economic constitution needs to be underpinned by a strong suite of trade union rights if the current threats to living standards and to our legal rights are to be addressed for the long term.

It will require more than simply a Labour government as an alternative to the Tories, offering sticking-plaster solutions to contemporary problems.

While Labour’s New Deal for Working People is a good starting point, more needs to be done to set in concrete the right to organise, the right to bargain collectively and the right to strike as the constitutional and permanent foundations of a progressive economy.

Morning Star 🇬🇧

In order to make change, it is necessary to win political power rather than scoff at it.



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