



# TIME TO BREAK THE SHACKLES

Anna Pha

**Labor's *Secure Jobs, Better Pay* bill lie to its title. It fails to provide trade unions and the working class with the unfettered right to strike that is so critical to empowering them to secure better jobs and better pay without facing heavy penalties. It makes an already complex system even more complex and confusing – a picnic day for lawyers.**

The bill was introduced to Parliament on 27th October and passed by the House of Representatives on 9th November with little time for analysis and discussion. The government was still drafting amendments when it was passed, and a Senate inquiry was still to report on 17th November.

As noted in last week's *Guardian* the bill introduces new shackles for the trade union movement as well as some positive changes. (#2032, 8th November, 2022, "The ALP's new IR laws: new avenues for action, new shackles")

## "SECURE JOBS"

Any employer could drive a truck through the provisions claiming to improve job security. The bill limits fixed term contracts to two consecutive contracts or a maximum of two years in the same role, whichever is the shorter.

There is plenty of room for employers to avoid giving ongoing work if they do not want to. For example, they could impose a break between the first and second contracts or offer a contract that is less than two years and not renew it.

## BARGAINING STREAMS

At present only 14.7 per cent of the workers are covered by an agreement that has not expired. The remainder of the workforce rely on inferior modern awards, expired agreements, left-over agreements from the Howard era, or virtually no protection at all.

The bill expands the scope of three existing but very limited multi-employer bargaining streams.

The first is "cooperative bargaining stream" which replaces the existing low-paid bargaining stream and is voluntary for both unions and employers. There is no right to industrial action. Unions and employers not already covered by an existing cooperative workplace agreement, could if they agree gain coverage or leave the agreement upon



Photo: Anna Pha

successful application to the Fair Work Commission (FWC).

The "supported bargaining stream" covers low-paid, highly feminised industries and government funded sectors. Unions covering these workers will be able to negotiate across similar workplaces. The FWC must first be convinced that the workers have a common interest such as aged care, disability care or early childhood education and care. It must also believe it is in the "public interest." The FWC would be able to require third parties such as a government who has an interest in the outcome to take part in negotiations. It mainly applies to small workplaces and could involve single or multiple employers. Unions would have access to "protected action."

The outcomes for many of these workers also depend on the extent of the government's willingness to fund higher wages and better

working conditions which no doubt the FWC will take into consideration.

The third stream is the "single interest" which involves multi-employer bargaining and agreements. However, they will have to convince the FWC that the employers have a "common interest", are "fairly chosen," and it is in the "public interest." Unions will be able to initiate negotiations for agreements without employer agreement to negotiate.

These agreements could cover all workers on a site or in the same field of work. The processes around single interest bargaining are fraught with dangers for unions. There are hurdles to jump before bargaining can commence with the FWC required to give its approval. Once bargaining has commenced and prior to a ballot to take industrial action, conciliation sessions with the FWC are compulsory. If bargaining is viewed by the FWC

to be intractable – no prospect of agreement – the FWC arbitrates.

Historically arbitration results in outcomes falling short of union demands. Employers know this and will only dig their heels in to ensure no agreement is possible.

Once a single interest or supported agreement has been approved by the FWC, the agreement may be varied to add additional or remove employers and their employees to their agreement.

Nevertheless, employer bodies are up in arms and campaigning against multi-employer bargaining. "This bill abandons enterprise bargaining, the key driver of productivity-based wages growth, in favour of compulsory multi-employer bargaining, reversing decades of tripartite consensus," Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive Andrew McKellar said.

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## Guardian

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21st November, 2022

# AUSTRALIA MOVES CLOSER TO RATIFYING UN TREATY ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS

As the threat of war continues to loom as tensions rise in Europe, it is the responsibility of every state – to deter as much as humanly possible – the start of another potential world war.

This begins by making firm commitments against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately, the Albanese government has failed to do that.

While under the Coalition, Australia was opposed to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) but under an Albanese government many expected Australia's position to change. It did, but not to the position many had anticipated.

Anthony Albanese has been on the record of supporting Treaty for years. In 2018, at a Labor conference he moved a motion that committed the party to signing and ratifying the Treaty when it came into government, stating that "Nuclear weapons are the most destructive, inhumane and indiscriminate weapons ever created."

However, last month, when it came to vote on the annual resolution on the Treaty at the UN in New York, Australia abstained. While cited by many, including the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) (Australia), as an "important step forward" it is disappointing given that the decision to ratify the Treaty as been a part of Labor's platform as recently as 2021.

Speaking on the positive aspects of the decision, ICAN stated that:

"ICAN looks forward to a formal decision by the Albanese government to sign and ratify the TPNW – in line with its pre-election pledge. The overwhelming majority of Australians support joining this treaty, and progress towards disarmament is more urgent than ever."

A spokesperson for Foreign Minister Penny Wong stated that:

"Labor's 2021 National Platform committed to signing and ratifying the TPNW after taking into account the need to ensure an effective verification and enforcement architecture, ensure the interaction of the TPNW with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and achieve universal support."

The US was less than impressed with Australia's decision and has warned against ratifying the Treaty, with the US Embassy in Canberra stating that:

"While the United States understands and shares the desire to advance nuclear disarmament goals, we do not support the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons," a spokesperson for the US embassy told *Guardian* Australia.

"The United States does not believe that progress toward nuclear disarmament can be decoupled from the prevailing security threats in today's world."

This is typical rhetoric from the world's leading imperialist state and, if Australia was to sign the treaty, would mark a threat to their presence in the region which is of immense strategic importance.

However, nuclear disarmament is important and must be carried out. There is zero justification for their use, given their lasting impact to destroy generations of lives. Australia MUST ratify the Treaty next year!

# TIME TO BREAK THE SHACKLES

Continued from page 1

"Productivity" is employer spin for profits, and "tripartite consensus" spin for class collaboration by unions. (See page three for background.)

The bill is not well written and it is not clear whether the possibility of non-union agreements is increased.

Unions that have "a history" of contravening the FWA over the previous eighteen months – breaching bad laws and protecting members' interests – are excluded from multi-enterprise agreements. They are restricted to "single enterprise agreements." This provision targets militant unions such as the construction and maritime unions that have fought for and won job security, better pay and conditions for their members.

Of great concern, in such circumstances, employees would be able to appoint alternative representatives including other trade unions. This opens the door to company unions and poaching by other unions, causing divisions within, and weakening the trade union movement.

## NEW OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the FWA are amended to include "the promotion of job security and gender equity," which the Fair Work Commission must consider when approving or arbitrating on agreements and setting minimum wages. Importantly, it removes the need for a comparable male-dominated industry which could benefit some feminised areas of work. Two specialist panels are set up to assist with these aims.

Sexual harassment is prohibited with the possibility of employers receiving a penalty of up to \$13,320 (60 penalty units) if they fail to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent the sexual harassment from occurring.

The bill increases the cap on small claims under the Fair Work Act from \$20,00 to \$100,000 avoiding a costly full court process, a long overdue reform.

It will be unlawful to advertise

a job at below the minimum wage rate – incredibly it is legal at present.

At the same time the FWC is given considerably more powers including compulsory arbitration in certain circumstances and the ability to vary agreements that have been reached between unions and employers.

## "PROTECTED ACTION"

Workplace Relations Minister Tony Burke has reassured employers that the bill will make it even more difficult to take industrial action. Amendments to the FWA require unions and employers to attend compulsory conciliation during the ballot period prior to approval for industrial action. There will be "greater flexibility" relieving employers of certain obligations to supply workers with copies of the proposed agreement and notifying them when and how a ballot to approve an agreement is to take place.

"These changes are intended to replace a rigid, rules-based approach to protecting employees' rights to participate in collective bargaining with a more suitable, principles-based approach, without weakening the protections," Burke said. More like employers' rights.

Five days' notice must be given prior to industrial action for single interest and supported bargaining streams and the length of a bargaining period is extended from thirty days to three months. Five days' notice weakens unions tactically giving employers time to put measures in place to reduce the impact.

Arbitration can also take place if unions and employers agree or when employers do not come to the negotiating table within twenty-one days. Industrial action then becomes illegal.

Employers retain the right to lock out workers during a bargaining period, a right that does not exist in almost any other

OECD country and which must be abolished.

## ABCC & ROC

The bill abolishes the union-bashing Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) while clobbering the construction union on the head by prohibiting multi-employer bargaining in the industry. There may still be special provisions covering the industry. Existing court cases will be transferred from the ABCC to the Fair Work umbrella.

The Registered Organisations Commission is abolished in name only, with its functions and powers transferred to the General Manager of the Fair Work Commission. In essence it will remain to load unions with time-consuming and unnecessary bureaucracy.

## BOOT

"We'll make the better off overall test (BOOT) simple, flexible and fair," says Burke. The provisions weaken the test for approving enterprise agreements, with no guarantee that workers will be better off than on the bare minimum award.

The FWC is required to give primacy to the parties' agreement. This opens the way for yellow unions doing deals with employers that undercut entitlements.

Despite some positive aspects, shackles on unions and workers remain. These will only be removed by united struggle on the ground. They will not be won from inside Parliament. The decline in trade union militancy is showing strong signs of turning around and with that will come larger memberships as workers once again see unions as protecting and fighting for their interests.

It's time to break the shackles.

This bill is the first of two to come. The next one will cover such issues as wage theft, definition of casual, right of entry, road transport panel, and sham contracting. The campaign around these issues must start now. ✪

**Employers retain the right to lock out workers during a bargaining period, a right that does not exist in almost any other OECD country and which must be abolished**

Find out more about the

**Communist Party of Australia**

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# TIME FOR A CENTRALISED BARGAINING SYSTEM

Anna Pha

**Prior to the adoption of the Accord in 1983 between the Labor government and the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Australia had a highly centralised system of fixing wages and conditions. Awards were comprehensive, covering in detail wages, working conditions, occupational health and safety, rights of trade union delegates, etc.**

When trade unions presented a log of claims, or employers made demands, negotiations were only around those claims. This is unlike enterprise agreements, which have an expiry date, after which everything is then up for grabs, or even worse employers can cancel an agreement and force workers back onto inferior modern awards.

Awards covered an industry or trade or occupation with pattern bargaining across employers covered by that award. Under the Accord the ACTU agreed to wage restraint, making no extra claims on employers to improve working conditions, as well as cooperation with employers – in other words, class collaboration. When the

Hawke/Keating government shifted the focus to enterprise bargaining agreements in the 1980s unions were forced to trade off hard won concrete conditions to pay for part of their wages rises. Wage rises came at little or no cost or even a profit for the bosses.

When unions suppressed struggle, many workers became disillusioned and trade union density fell. This was compounded by structural changes in industry with the loss of some of the most highly unionised sectors of the workforce.

The Accord began the slippery slide downwards with real wage reductions, loss of conditions and suppression of class struggle. In 1996 the Howard government increased the emphasis on enterprise bargaining and brought in individual contracts. It outlawed compulsory unionism and any form of pressure to join a union such as “no ticket no start” that was prevalent in the building and construction industry. At the same time, it gutted awards to twenty “allowable matters” and introduced individual, non-union employment contracts.

While the Rudd/Gillard Labor government overturned Howard’s

individual contracts, it made additional regressive reforms to the industrial relations system by outlawing pattern bargaining and introducing the concept of “protected action” as being the only lawful form of industrial action.

Approval to take “protected action” is difficult, limited to when a new enterprise agreement is being negotiated and action can be halted by a court at any time. Failing to adhere to the rules carries heavy penalties and the possibility of unions being sued by employers.

The Rudd/Gillard government gave employers the right to lock out workers during a bargaining period, making Australia one of the few OECD countries to do so.

Industrial action for any reason was prohibited during the life of an agreement.

The Accord and introduction of “protected action” saw industrial action by unions decline steadily. There is a high correlation between the decline in work stoppages and disputes compared with the decline in wages. In the 1980s the average number of disputes, was 1,919 and by the 2010s it had fallen to 198. Or as The Australia Institute’s Centre

for Future Work put it, every decline in the frequency of work stoppages of about sixty lost days per 1000 workers was associated with a one percentage point deceleration in wage increases.

Decentralisation and restrictions on industrial action severely weakened the union movement. As a consequence, profits are at record highs and wages as a share of Gross Domestic Profit (wealth produced by workers) are a record low.

Trade union density has declined from fifty per cent to fourteen per cent since the Accord with only six per cent of workers aged twenty to twenty-four unionised with higher rates for older workers.

Union resources and representatives have been tied up in negotiating enterprise agreements and attempting to meet the requirements for industrial action. Workers in enterprises with low or no union membership have fallen way behind those with strong, militant unionised workforces. The result is a race to the bottom.

Awards have not kept up with EBAs. As a result, on average workers covered by an EBA are paid \$601 more per week than those relying on awards.

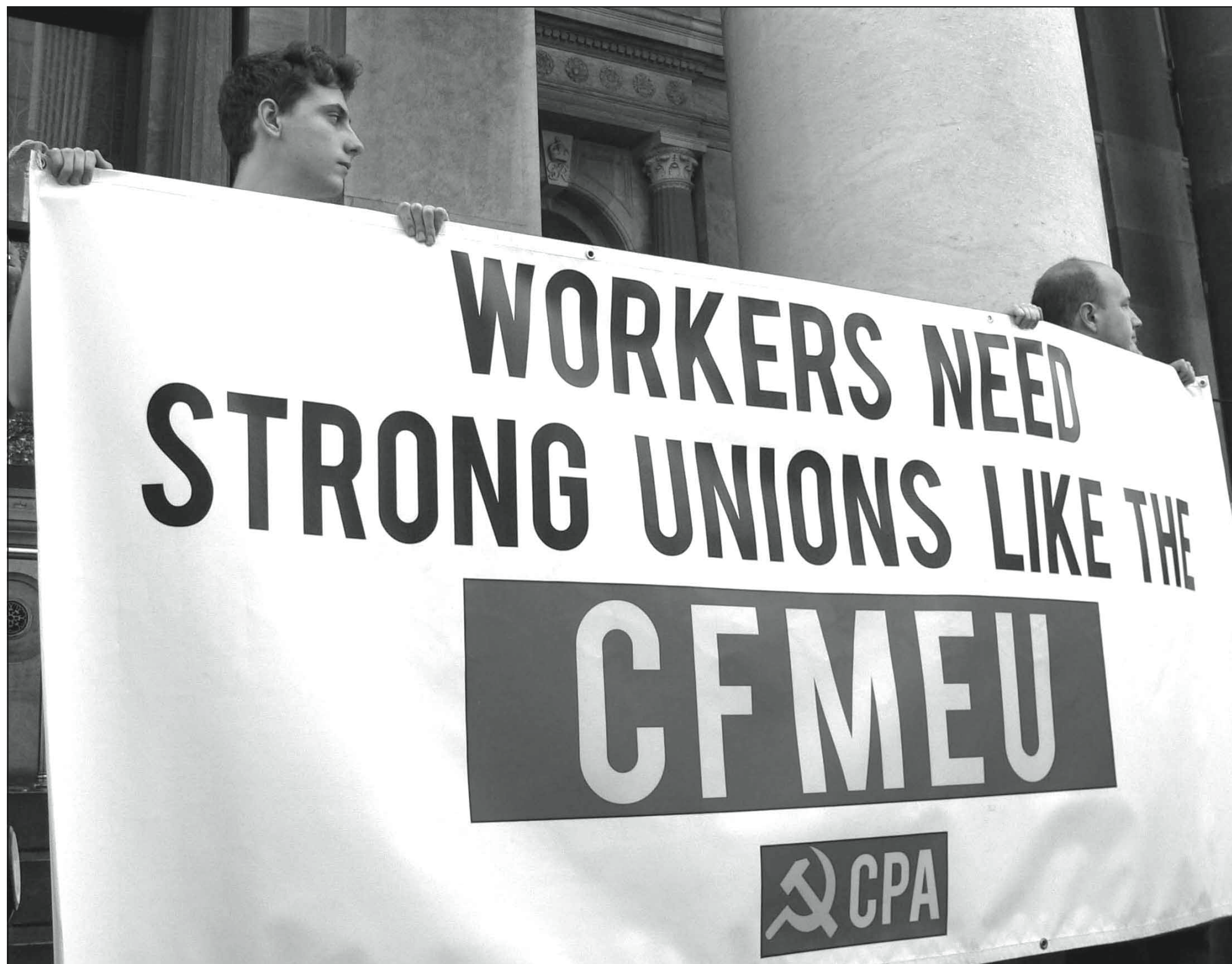
A system of centralised pattern bargaining and the unfettered right to strike are critical to trade union power and improved wages and working conditions for workers.

In his Second Reading speech to the *Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill*, Workplace Relations Minister Tony Burke confirmed that, “The prohibition already in the act on pattern bargaining will remain.”

“Bargaining at the enterprise level delivers strong productivity benefits and is intended to remain the primary and preferred type of agreement making,” Burke said attempting to reassure employers they have nothing to fear.

Such “productivity benefits” are spin for loss of working conditions and higher profits and are behind the shift from centralised bargaining to single enterprise bargaining.

The *Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill* is unlikely to bring about a significant change in this position on its own. Pattern bargaining with a centralised system of collective bargaining by trade unions is the way forward. This must be accompanied by an unfettered right to strike and the right of entry for trade union officials. ✪



# REPORT CHANGE IN THE NAME OF CASSIUS RALLY – PERTH



Richard Titelius

**In Forrest Place in the heart of Perth over 1000 people gathered to remember Cassius Turvey, the fifteen-year-old, Noongar/Yamatji boy who was ambushed and attacked by a 21-year-old Jack Brearley, bashed with a metal pole, leaving him with head injuries that ten days after the incident on 13 October 2022, caused his death.**

The incident occurred in Middle Swan, a north-eastern suburb of Perth, while Cassius was walking home from school. The incident has left many Aboriginal parents in Perth apprehensive for the safety and well being of their children. Since Cassius' death, there have been two community rallies to remember the life cut short and to support the family of Cassius. The first was held at the nearby Midland Oval Saturday 29th October and the second was Monday 31st October with a Halloween theme, as it was a favourite time of the year for Cassius, was also held at Midland Oval.

The lunchtime rally in Forrest Place was seen as a Change in the Name of Cassius Rally; an opportunity for Aboriginal people to unite and give solace and strength to each other. The rally was Co MC'd by Marianne Hedland-Mackay

– long-time Noongar community activist and Megan Krakouer of the National Suicide Prevention and Trauma Recovery Project who said this was to be a peaceful rally – saying no to the atrocities, coming together to show unity among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and to show solidarity.

There were also traditional male and female dancers who presented traditional Noongar dances after which one of the dancers counted to fifteen in the Noongar language to remember each of the precious years of young Cassius Turvey's short, but brightly illuminated life. Greetings were also received from many of the other Aboriginal nations across Western Australia and across Australia. There were also forty-four rallies or vigils which were being either held that day or were going to be held in Australia and also in Los Angeles in the United States and in New Zealand.

Mechelle Turvey, Cassius' mother spoke at the rally briefly to say that her son spoke to her every day through her heart. From her son's Year 3 School Report while attending the Moorditj Noongar Community College she read out comments from his teachers about how he was a pleasure to teach, "Cassius often contributes to his peers' successes with a positive attitude," he was a helpful enthusiastic classmate who had shown

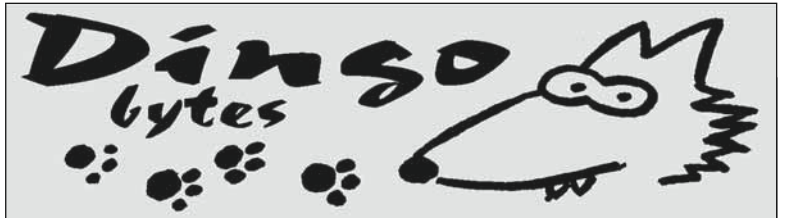
leadership even at a young age. With two other Aboriginal boys he had started a small business mowing lawns called, "Lawnmower Boys," a pay-what-you-can-afford business.

Other speakers addressed the issue of racism which it was said must be eliminated from this country after its often-treacherous beginnings with its frontier violence wreaked on this nation's first inhabitants, recently brought to light nationally through the groundbreaking research vividly presented in the three part series by SBS, *The Australian Wars*.

Cassius' cousins Jasmin Rivers and Ivan Corbett spoke about raising awareness of what happened in Middle Swan 13th October 2022. "What has our society come to when a life is worth less than a broken car window," asked Mr Corbett. We need to take a true look at ourselves. We need to live in a country where our children can come home safely from school. "This rally is not a violent rally, it is a rally to seek justice for Cassius," concluded Corbett.

The rally concluded with a march around the CBD of Perth with the mother Mechelle Turvey and other family leading the march.

The Communist Party of Australia calls for an end to racism in Australia and justice for Cassius Turvey and his family. ✪




In a massive escalation of the simmering industrial conflict being waged by Svitzer Towage's Australian management against local tugboat crew, the company gave notice that it would lock-out its entire national seagoing workforce on 18th November, effectively destroying its capacity to deliver towage services and throwing Australian supply chains into disarray. Svitzer receives taxpayer funding from the federal government and provides essential towage services at every mainland port in Australia, and is a wholly owned subsidiary of the global shipping conglomerate AP Moller Maersk, headquartered in Copenhagen. As an arm of this multi-billion-dollar behemoth, Svitzer Australia funnels hundreds of millions of dollars back to Denmark and pays almost no tax in Australia. The company's Australian management has spent the past three years refusing to finalise a new Employment Agreement to cover tugboat crews at seventeen ports around the country, effectively giving these workers a wage-freeze amidst soaring inflation and massive corporate profits during a COVID-boom for shipping and logistics companies. At every turn, the three maritime unions – Maritime Union of Australia, the Australian Institute of Marine Power Engineers, and the Australian Maritime Officers Union – have sought to drag management back to the negotiating table and work on a mutually agreeable outcome.

Experienced nurses and midwives are out of pocket around \$80,000 each due to the NSW government's public sector wage caps suppressing their income over the past decade. A new report into the impact of wage caps, since their introduction in 2012, shows public sector nurses and midwives will suffer a cumulative loss of \$120,000 in pay by 2023-24, while their superannuation balances will be a further \$12,500 worse off. Dr Jim Stanford, economist and director of the Centre for Future Work at the Australia Institute, acknowledged the outlook and says it could have been avoided. "It is clear the NSW government relies upon harsh public sector pay restrictions as a matter of political and fiscal convenience, without negotiation or consideration of normal wage determinants such as rising cost of living [...]," said Dr Stanford. "The consequences are severe for public sector nurses and midwives, and get worse over time because the sustained pay caps have a cumulating effect. Not only are wage gains in any particular year lower than they would be under normal circumstances, but the base level of pay falls further and further behind where they would be otherwise."

**PARASITE(S) OF THE WEEK:** As Anthony Albanese readied his autograph book for his big moment with Xi Jinping at the G20 meeting in Bali last week, the threat to the planet from climate change hung like the threat it is to us all. At the same time the big resources transnationals in Australia were threatening legal action using the Investor-State Dispute Settlement clauses in trade agreements. This allows companies with investments in Australia to sue the government if a trade deal affects their profits.

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## The incident has left many Aboriginal parents in Perth apprehensive for the safety and well being of their children.



Photo: Unions NSW

# Victorian state election WORKERS' RIGHTS UP FOR GRABS

**Ahead of the upcoming Victorian State Election on the 26th November, labour rights are on the ballot once more. The Andrews Labor government has made sweeping promises to regulate gig work and apprenticeships – regulation which is sorely needed. However, some on the left argue that the Andrews' government's promises do not go far enough in protecting workers. Victorian Socialists (VS) – a broad coalition of leftist parties – are running on a radical platform that puts workers, not profit, first.**

## GIG ECONOMY

Gig workers in Victoria, as in the rest of the country, are exploited by large multinational corporations with little to no protection. Many are classified as “contractors” without the full suite of rights available to “employees” – no leave, no sick pay, no over-time. The Andrews government promises that, if re-elected they will implement new minimum standards to regulate the gig economy. These measures are expected to impact up to 350,000 Victorian workers and has been promised to be the “strongest possible legislative enforcement model” to protect gig workers who aren't in a position to bargain. However, it isn't clear exactly what this strong enforcement would entail.

The Victorian Socialists are running on a platform of abolishing the distinction between contractors and employees and making it illegal to employ workers, like gig workers, as contractors who should be properly classified as employees. This is a policy with some support in other countries, who have abolished this distinction in favour of a broader category of “workers,” who are all entitled to the same minimum standards. If the newly

elected government undertakes such reform, they will be the first in Australia to do so following the controversial decision of the High Court earlier this year in *Personnel Contracting* that has the potential to entrench the distinction in favour of employers (see *Guardian* #1997 28th February, 2022).

## APPRENTICESHIP TASK FORCE

In addition to promising to regulate the gig economy, the Andrews government recently announced that if re-elected they will establish an Apprenticeships Taskforce to help regulate the apprenticeship system across the state. It comes after campaigning from the Young Workers' Centre and the Victorian Trades Hall Council to bring awareness to the flaws in the current system. VTHC Assistant Secretary Amanda Threlfall:

“Apprenticeship reform is long overdue and we are thrilled with the Andrews Government's commitment to establish the Apprenticeships Taskforce. Around half of Australian apprentices complete their apprenticeship because of rampant wage theft, unsafe workplace practices and bullying and harassment at work.”

The apprenticeship system is currently woefully under-regulated in Victoria, with abuse and harassment rampant among apprentices. Only forty-six per cent of apprentices currently finish their apprenticeship, with the leading cause being terrible working conditions and dodgy bosses. Apprentices have even been killed at work by the negligence of dodgy employers forcing them to work unsupervised at tasks they are unqualified to perform.

One of the major issues with apprenticeships is that apprentices are paid so little and union power

is constrained. Therefore, VS advocates for strengthening WorkSafe to make workplaces safer for all workers, and therefore for apprentices. A task-force is a great start, but it may be a band-aid solution for a much larger problem. The same bosses that are exploiting apprentices are probably exploiting other workers as well.

## SICK PAY FOR ALL CASUAL WORKERS

Finally, earlier this year the Andrews government launched a pilot program under which casual workers in some industries would be eligible for up to thirty-eight hours sick pay paid at the national minimum wage and there is some talk that this program will be strengthened if Labor is re-elected. This was a huge win for the union movement in Victoria, especially during the pandemic, and parties on the left generally support its broad expansion to all workers.

VS argues that it should go further and expand to other rights to which permanent workers are entitled. Indeed, the concept of casual work is a quirk of Australian law that has few analogues in other countries, and some have argued that it ought to be updated to protect workers in Australia, many of whom are employed in insecure jobs with few benefits with the rate of casualisation on the rise.

Victorians have a choice to make in the upcoming state election about which party is best equipped to fight for their rights. Radical change, not empty electoral promises, are needed to improve conditions for the working class in Victoria. While this kind of change can't be fully delivered at the ballot box, a strong worker-led government is a key step in the right direction to building a better future. ✪

## WEASEL WORDS

### RESPONSIBLE

/rɪˈspɒn.sə.bəl/

A very useful word this one. You can be responsible *for* something, for example all governments claim to be responsible for good economic news, not so much for recessions and downturns, which are the responsibility of the previous government, China, the global economy, or China. You can be responsible *to* someone (or in the case of Scott “five secret ministries” Morrison, responsible to nobody). You can also be just plain responsible, which has overtones of being sensible, pragmatic and good, all wrapped up in one. This last use of “responsible” is a good way of leaving unsaid exactly who you're being responsible *to*, and what you're being responsible *for*. Prime example; the last Australian federal budget. Our nice new government is giving a few hundred billion in tax cuts to people with over \$200,000 in annual income, and \$48 billion a year to Defence, including, I guess, kicking off the nuclear submarine program, but we've been promised that the budget is responsible. Thanks Jim Chalmers. We now know who you're responsible *to* (not working people), and if there's ever a disastrous military confrontation with China, we'll know who's partly responsible for it.

### FIRM

/fɜːm/

This is one of those words that varies according to whether you like or dislike the person/institution being described – the way countries we like or couldn't care less about have governments, while countries we disapprove of have regimes. If a government that's cracking down on citizens and violating their rights, it's authoritarian, if it's an ally, it's firm.

Sometimes you can be firm by just sticking to an idiotic plan, and make a virtue of being stubborn, the way recently unlamented British PM Liz Truss was described as “standing firm” on a plan to cut taxes for the rich at a time of economic downturn, or for that matter, the ALP being firm on a plan to give money to the wealthy here. So much firmness in prosecuting waste and poverty, I feel infirm just thinking about it.

### DIVISION

/dɪˈvɪʒ.ən/

No, not the stuff you had to do in school when you had to work out how many times 48 goes into 3985. Here we are looking at division amongst the populace, apparently a bad thing. Since democracy is supposed to be a very good thing, and since democracy involves people being allowed to have different views, it's never exactly sure where division fits in with the right to have one's own opinion. As with “firm” above, it depends who you're talking about – *my* opinions are brave and controversial, *your* opinions are bad and divisive. When I see “divisive” in print, I always wonder: “were we united before?”

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# CONTRIBUTIONS

Editor's note: the following are contributions from the Communist Party of Canada and French Communist Party to the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties (IMCWP).

## FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY

On behalf of the French Communist Party and its National Secretary Fabien Roussel, I would like to thank the Cuban Communist Party most warmly for organising this 22nd International Meeting of Communist Workers' Parties.

Our delegation would like to take this opportunity to express our solidarity with the Cuban people and the Cuban Communist Party, who have been fighting and resisting the US blockade for sixty years.

We repeat here that this economic and financial blockade and these extraterritorial laws are scandalous and illegal. They are the expression of intolerable interference by the United States. They are a total violation of the sovereignty of the peoples of Cuba.

It is urgent that the UN resolutions be applied and not just voted.

The French Communist Party will continue its efforts to discuss this issue in the National Assembly, in the Senate, and wherever possible, to allow a stronger commitment from France and Europe to lift the blockade and extraterritorial laws. This will be an important issue that our National Secretary will want to bring to the forefront as he wishes to make an official trip to Cuba in December of this year.

We would also like to take a moment to talk about what is happening in France and in Europe.

After a long electoral sequence during the 1st half of 2022, France once again saw the far right qualify for the second round of the presidential election where they garnered over 13 million votes.

The 2nd term of President Emmanuel

Macron, often referred to as "the president of the rich," is weakened by the fact that he has only a relative majority in the National Assembly. He has sought to flatter the far right (which has eighty-nine deputies) by allowing them access to key positions such as the bureau of the Assembly, which intervenes in the definition of the agenda of debates. This is an act that aims to give institutional legitimacy to this extreme right-wing party and its ideology that is dangerous to our rights and freedoms.

We know that the extreme right and the liberal right are at the orders of capitalism. They exploit the humiliations and resentments of the people hit by injustices, growing inequalities, human insecurities whether they are climatic, food, sanitary, educational, or energy. They feed identity-based withdrawal and hatred of foreigners.

The French Communist Party is mobilising to respond to the search for an alternative to capitalism. With the trade unions, associations, and political forces, we are promoting the idea that an exit from capitalism is not only desirable but possible. This was the meaning of our slogan and our program carried by Fabien Roussel during the presidential election, which calls for mobilisation to build: Happier Days.

In this context, we are currently seeing a social movement taking shape, in a context of high inflation and the cost of living, but also of the search for a better distribution of wealth. Strikes are becoming more and more common for wage increases and for the improvement of working conditions. Obviously, our party fully supports these social mobilisations which seek to shake up the unfavourable relationship between capital and labour.

An awareness of the consequences and the human and ecological cost of capitalism seems to be growing in people's minds.

In the different demonstrations over the last weeks, signs bearing the slogan "In Urgent Need of Communism" were visible.

France and Europe are at the heart of much turmoil. The social crisis, the energy crisis, the start of catastrophic climate change, the democratic crisis, and war threaten human rights and pose colossal social challenges.

In the interdependent world in which we live, all peoples are affected by the rise in energy prices, food prices, disruptions in production, and supply chains.

The unacceptable invasion of Ukraine by Russia, with dramatic human consequences for the Ukrainian and Russian peoples, reinforces, in a quite dramatic way, the vigour of NATO and the United States to stir up war.

The military escalation, the arms race in Europe, the nuclear threats of some, the weakness of the interventions of international organisations, the alignment of Europe behind the United States, the refusal to seek a political solution are very worrying and seriously threaten peace in Europe and elsewhere.

There is an urgent need to seek a means of de-escalation and cease-fire. Under the aegis of the UN and the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) an international peace conference must be opened immediately in order to allow all peoples the guarantee of security while respecting their territorial integrity and sovereignty. We cannot wait any longer, we must build a lasting peace. And we know that the battle for justice, for freedom, for human rights, for the safeguarding of the planet and for peace go hand in hand and are part of a whole that we could call human security.

All these challenges, in particular peace, climate, energy, and human security, require

all our political forces to work together, to cooperate and to strengthen international solidarity.

This is why we are participating in this 22nd International Meeting of Communist Workers' Parties, and we hope that it will result in a final declaration that shows the important need to respond to the global challenges facing us.

In often difficult contexts, communists are working to innovate in order to build transformative, credible and unifying alternatives to capitalism, making social and environmental progress, disarmament, and action for peace a priority.

Communist creativity, adapted to the conditions of our time, can make this possible.

It is both an immense challenge and above all our responsibility.

Solidarity with all the peoples who fight for their ideals, for social justice, for their freedom, for their sovereignty, and for peace.

Long live internationalist solidarity!

## COMMUNIST PARTY OF CANADA

We would like to thank the Communist Party of Cuba for hosting this meeting, despite the damage Cuba has suffered from Hurricane Ian, from the horrendous fire and loss of life in Matanzas, the on-going US blockade, and the sanctions which have caused such hardship on the government and people of Cuba.

We stand in solidarity with Cuba, the bright light of socialism in the Americas, an island of true liberty and real democracy, which we must collectively support and defend at this time of great danger from US imperialism. Cuba stands as the example to the peoples of the Americas – and the world – that it is possible to reject the capitalist road, and to build a new socialist society just 90



Photo: Chmee2 – commons.wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 3.0)

# S TO IMCWP 2022



Photo: Eshko Timiou – commons.wikimedia.org public domain

miles from the strongest imperialist power in the world. Last month, Cuba adopted a new Family Code, which is widely recognised as the most progressive in the world today.

Congratulations Comrades – you continue to light the way forward for gender equality, for the well-being of children, and for recognition of the different types of families living and prospering under socialism today.

We hope this meeting will develop concrete plans for increased international solidarity with Cuba, and increased pressure to lift the illegal 60-year-old US blockade, and sanctions, and the despicable listing of Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism – by the biggest state sponsor of terrorism in the world – US imperialism.

Comrades,

In the three years since we last met, reaction and fascism have grown at a rapid rate, as the economic crisis and inflation surge globally, the pandemic continues its deadly course, the impacts of catastrophic global warming are felt around the world, and the acute danger of a nuclear war grows as a result of the on-going proxy war in Ukraine. A new Cold War has opened up in the imperialist centres, aimed at the socialist countries and all those unwilling to bow to imperialism's diktat. The result is a sharply increased threat of war – including nuclear war, as evidenced in the rapid expansion of NATO, and the creation of the AUKUS and AUD agreements.

As we all know, there is no such thing as a tactical nuclear war, and that nuclear war – whether deliberate or by accident – means

global annihilation. We know that the Russian invasion of Ukraine last February was not unprovoked.

The Maidan massacre and coup d'état in 2014 by Ukrainian fascists and reactionaries, the attacks on ethnic Russians in Ukraine, the months-long shelling of the Russian speaking majority in the Donbas, the refusal of the Ukrainian government to implement the Minsk I and II Accords in 2014-15 which would have granted autonomy to the Donbas republics within Ukraine, the intervention of Boris Johnson to prevent a peace agreement from being signed in April because "the West wasn't ready to end the war," and the expanding encirclement of Russia by NATO despite the 1990 commitment not to expand east of Germany; all of this has contributed to the extraordinarily dangerous war that is blazing in Europe.

NATO – now in every respect US imperialism's global army – has effectively surrounded Russia by pressuring almost every one of the European states on Russia's borders to join NATO, or face the consequences in a "with us or against us" war on Russia that threatens Europe and the world.

Russia has responded with the call up 300,000 reserves and the annexation of the Donbas region and parts of Crimea, which will lead to a longer war, more deaths and destruction, and more opportunity for a nuclear war, by mistake or otherwise.

A political solution is urgent. A ceasefire, withdrawal of all foreign troops and weapons from the region, and negotiations leading to a political solution is the only way to avoid

an expanding war which could become a nuclear war, and which has already killed tens of thousands of civilians and soldiers – including Russians, created a million refugees, and destroyed Ukraine's cities, economy, and countryside.

We must build up the voices and movements for peace, for a political solution, against military spending and against NATO and NORAD, and we must link up the peace and environmental movements in common struggle against destruction of the planet.

Climate change has accelerated, the result of hurricanes, floods, fires, droughts, and heat waves in countries around the world, including floods covering a third of the land mass in Pakistan leaving 1300 dead; floods and droughts in India and China; floods and mudslides in South Africa; wildfires, heat-waves and droughts in Europe, the US, and Canada; ice caps and glaciers that melted; hurricanes in the Caribbean including Fiona and then Ian that left massive damage in their wake.

And each year, the damage increases. Linking the fight for climate justice with the fight for peace and disarmament, and for good jobs, better wages, and higher living standards, can bring together the youth, the working class, and all those concerned about the future, and survival of the planet.

The Canadian government and Parliament are active supporters of war in Ukraine, shipping armaments, troops, and money to Ukraine and to NATO. Canada's Finance Minister, Chrystia Freeland, announced in her April war budget that

Canada was supporting the war in Ukraine because it is a proxy war against Russia, and Russia is our enemy. Last month, Freeland announced austerity measures were on the way, while interest rates and prices on food, fuel, and rents sky-rocket. We are headed into another deep global recession, caused by neo-liberal governments and policies, which continue to guarantee corporations limitless profits, and workers – limitless exploitation and misery.

Canada's Liberal government is being challenged by the far-right Conservatives who are linked with white supremacists, social conservatives and the so-called "Freedom Convoy" which occupied Ottawa for two months last winter, calling for an end to vaccine mandates and overthrow of the Canadian government. This movement is well-funded, has ties to the Canadian military and police, and has ties to the far-right in the US.

Comrades,

The global recession that is driving down wages, living standards, and employment around the world, is also mobilising workers to fightback and protect their families, their health, previous gains, and their class interests that are all threatened by the current capitalist crises and by imperialism's dangerous drive to war. Working people are afraid, but they're also angry. It's our job to ensure that this justified anger is harnessed by the Communists and the forces for peace and social progress, and not by the forces of war and reaction.

That's the challenge before us. ✪

**We must build up the voices and movements for peace, for a political solution, against military spending and against NATO and NORAD, and we must link up the peace and environmental movements in common struggle against destruction of the planet.**

# XI, BIDEN MEET AS WORLD SEEKS MORE CERTAINTIES

Wang Cong, Bai Yunyi in Bali and Yang Sheng

**The current state of China-US relations is not in the fundamental interests of the two countries and peoples, and is not what the international community expects, Chinese President Xi Jinping said during his meeting with US President Joe Biden in Bali, Indonesia, which marked the first face-to-face meeting between the leaders of the world's two biggest economies since Biden took office.**

During the meeting, which reportedly lasted about three hours and 12 minutes, Xi told Biden that as leaders of two major countries, they need to chart the right course and find the right direction for bilateral ties and elevate the relationship, according to Xinhua. Xi also stressed that the two countries should take history as a mirror and let it guide the future.

The two leaders consider that the meeting, is in-depth, candid and constructive, and they instructed the teams of the two countries to follow up on the key consensuses reached by the two leaders, to take concrete actions to push China-US relations to return to a stable track for development and the two leaders agree to keep contacts constantly, CCTV reported.

Such remarks and the summit itself inject a certain degree of positivity into bilateral relations, which have entered a downward spiral due to the US' ever widening containment strategy against China and especially after the provocative visit by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to the island of Taiwan, Chinese analysts noted, calling on the US to stay true to its pledges to avoid confrontation.

The stakes for the summit, which took place one day before the G20 Leaders' Summit was set to kick off in Bali, couldn't be any higher, as the world, with growing concerns over the state of the world's most consequential bilateral relationship, watched intently for any positive signs that the two countries will try to work toward lowering tensions and cooperating on global issues.

## CONSTRUCTIVE SIGNS

After a handshake, the two leaders walked into a spacious room together and delivered opening remarks that lasted over six minutes, with both stressing the importance of the face-to-face meeting.

Xi said that though the two leaders have maintained communication via video-conferences, phone calls, and letters, none of these can really take the place of face-to-face exchanges, according to the Xinhua News Agency.

Xi expounded on the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and its key outcomes, pointing out that the domestic and foreign policies of the CPC and the Chinese government are open and transparent, with clearly stated and transparent strategic intentions and great continuity and stability.

China is advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernisation, basing our efforts on the goal of meeting people's aspirations for a better life, unswervingly pursuing reform and opening-up, and promoting the building of an open global economy, Xi said.

For his part, Biden also said that there was "no substitute" for such face-to-face meetings, according to video footage carried by several media outlets.

Biden said to Xi in front of the press before the closed-door meeting that "China and the US can manage our differences, prevent competition from becoming anything ever near conflict, and to find ways to work together on urgent global issues that require our mutual cooperation."

"The world expects, I believe, for China and the US to play key roles in addressing global challenges," he said.

Since Biden took office, the two leaders have talked over the phone or via video link five times. The last time they met in person was in 2017 during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

The latest meeting took place at the request of the US side at the Mulia Resort in Bali overlooking the Pacific Ocean. China Media Group said that the meeting was held at the hotel where the Chinese delegation to the G20 stayed.

According to the readout released by the White House, Biden remained tough on topics that are China's internal affairs, including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Xizang (Tibet). Chinese analysts said the US has failed to realise that it was its unilateral, arrogant and hostile strategy against China that put bilateral ties in risk of spiralling out of control and toward direct conflict, and in the future, the risk of confrontation between the two great powers will still exist if the US refuses to change its arrogant attitude and hostile strategy.

China-US relations should not be a zero-sum game where one side out-competes or thrives at the expense of the other, Xi said. The successes of China and the US are opportunities, not challenges, for each other. The world is big enough for the two countries to develop themselves and prosper together, he added.

The two sides should form a correct perception of each other's domestic and foreign policies and strategic intentions, Xi said, adding

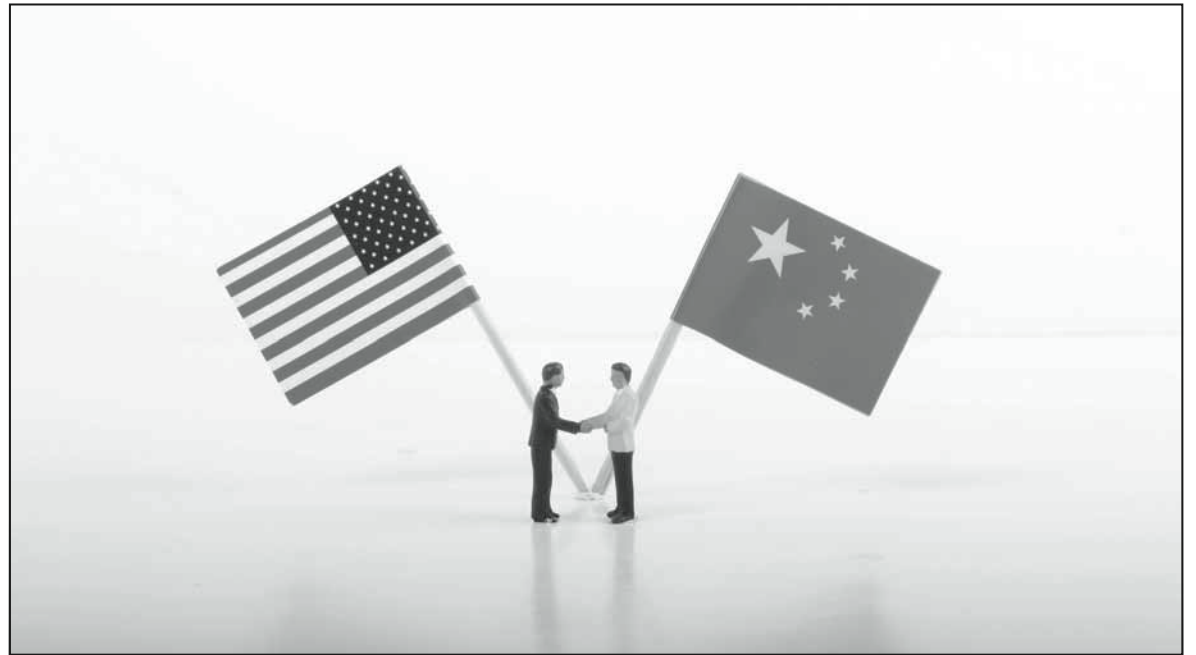


Photo: Marco Verch – Beliebte Fotos (CC-BY 2.0)

that China-US interactions should be defined by dialogue and win-win cooperation, not confrontation and zero-sum competition.

Chinese analysts said the Xi-Biden summit sent a positive signal to the world that even though tensions exist, the world's two biggest economies remain in communication and share the consensus of avoiding direct conflict, and are also trying to seek the possibility of cooperation.

## REDLINES AND GUARDRAILS

Ahead of the meeting with Xi, Biden and the US side released information to the press that they are trying to build "floor" or "guardrails" for US-China ties in the first face-to-face talk with the Chinese leader, in other words, the US side wants to show that they are making efforts to prevent bilateral relations from going out of control, analysts said.

However, the US is the one that should be held responsible for the worsening of the tensions, as its strategy for "competition." Confrontation, in fact, has seriously undermined China's sovereignty on sensitive issues like the Taiwan question and China's development in science and technology, especially in the semiconductor industry, so China is also using the chance to "draw redlines" for the US, warning the opportunists and hawkish politicians in Washington about the danger of challenging China's core interests, experts said.

Xi gave a full account of the origin of the Taiwan question and China's principled position. He stressed that the Taiwan question is at the very core of China's core interests, the bedrock of the political foundation of China-US relations, and the first red line that must not be crossed in China-US relations.

Anyone that seeks to split

Taiwan from China will be violating the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation, Xi said, adding that the Chinese people will absolutely not let that happen.

China hopes to see, and are all along committed to, peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits, but cross-Straits peace and stability and "Taiwan independence" are as irreconcilable as water and fire, Xi said, expressing hope that the US side will match its words with action and abide by the one-China policy and the three joint communiqués.

Xi said "President Biden has said on many occasions that the US does not support 'Taiwan independence' and has no intention to use Taiwan as a tool to seek advantages in competition with China or to contain China. China hopes that the US side will act on this assurance to real effect."

Jin Canrong, associate dean of the School of International Studies at the Renmin University of China, told the *Global Times* that "the US will continue to provoke China on the Taiwan question. After the midterm elections, Republicans are set to take the House and the new Republican House speaker will very likely follow what Pelosi has done to visit the island, to show that Republicans dare to be tough against China."

Apart from this, the two major US parties will push the Taiwan Policy Act to keep forcing the White House to abandon strategic ambiguity on the Taiwan question, and this will then bring a new round of serious impacts on China-US relations, Jin said.

"So it's important for the Chinese leader to warn the US side again about where the redline is and what would happen if the US crosses the red line. This is how China is making efforts to prevent direct conflict while the US is being provocative," the anonymous expert said.

Biden reaffirmed that a stable and prosperous China is good for the US and the world, saying that the US respects China's system, and does not seek to change it.

The US does not seek a new Cold War, does not seek to revitalise alliances against China, does not support "Taiwan independence," does not support "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan," and has no intention to have a conflict with China, he said, adding that the US side has no intention to seek "decoupling" from China, to halt China's economic development, or to contain China.

Seeking or exploring possibilities for cooperation is a way to prevent conflict, experts said. In fact, China and the US share common ground in many aspects, from climate change to the nuclear issue in the Korean Peninsula and Iran, as well as handling the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukraine crisis and dealing with the food and energy crises, Jin said.

During the meeting, the two sides vowed to keep constant strategic communication between the diplomatic teams of the two sides, and agreed that the teams on financial affairs from the two countries would have dialogues and coordination on macroeconomic policies and trade issues. The Chinese and US leaders also agreed to make joint efforts to push the UN Climate Change Conference COP27 to reach success.

The two sides also reached consensus to promote cooperation and dialogues in the fields of public health, agriculture and food security, and the two sides also agree that the people-to-people exchanges are very important, and agree to encourage the expansion of exchanges between personnel from various areas of the two countries, according to China Central Television.

*Global Times* ☆

**Anyone that seeks to split Taiwan from China will be violating the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation, Xi said.**



# THE WORLD SAYS ENOUGH IS ENOUGH, TIME FOR THE UNITED STATES TO LISTEN: CUBA WINS FOR THE 30TH CONSECUTIVE TIME AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Vinnie Molina

**Activists around the world celebrated Cuba's win at the UN General Assembly as 185 countries voted in favour of Cuba's draft resolution to end the criminal US 60-year-old blockade. As has been usual for a number of years only the United States and Israel voted against the resolution with Ukraine and Brazil abstaining.**

For the 30th consecutive year the entire world has said enough is enough!

The 60-year-old blockade directly affects the daily lives of every Cuban family. Most Cubans today have only ever lived under the blockade. They have learnt to navigate life under a blockade, but wonder what they have done to deserve this imperialist act of war against them.

The blockade imposed by the United States in 1960 has been a bipartisan policy in the US. The aim has always been for regime change on the island through causing as much pain as possible on the population. The Biden Administration hasn't changed any of the 243 new executive measures introduced by Trump, which has implications for every single financial transaction made by Cuba. The blockade is an illegal policy with extra territorial consequences as it penalises third countries for trading with Cuba.

The constant attacks on Cuba affects workers and their families and has implications for purchasing capacity as every purchase is penalised making things more expensive and difficult to get for Cuban families. Cuba's calculations are that the criminal US blockade cost around US\$15 million per day.

The Biden Administration hasn't done anything to alleviate it despite President Biden's electoral promises. In fact the blockade has cost Cuba more than US\$6 billion since Biden took office.

Delegates to the 22nd International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties held in Havana on 27-29 October witnessed first hand the impact of the blockade on Cuban families.

Delegates attended meetings with officials but also shared time in neighbourhoods like La Timba to see one location of a project called "Neighbourhoods in Transformation" which is a people led, government supported project designed to help communities confront and alleviate some of the worse effects of the blockade and its terrible effects on the people. Programs such as Neighbourhoods

in Transformation aims to involve people in being part of the solution by jointly identifying problems and needs and finding collective solutions.

The CPA delegation visited the neighbourhood and spoke to a nurse and doctor in their local clinic. They live and work in the neighbourhood and understand the challenges confronted by the community and also play a role in finding solutions to their scarcities.

The challenges brought by the COVID pandemic was overcome by Cuban biotechnology which despite the blockade was able to develop five vaccines (Soberana 1, Soberana 2, Soberana Plus, Abdala and Mambisa). The fifth of them, Mambisa, is the first nasal vaccine in the world. The CPA delegation requested the vaccine as a booster and we can report we didn't experience any side effects. It has been proven as an effective vaccine of ninety-four per cent efficacy against COVID with no need for syringes, easy administration, storage and access. ([www.thelancet.com](http://www.thelancet.com) Vol 16 December 2021).

Cuba is the first country in the world able to vaccinate their entire population from the age of 2 with their own vaccines and most restrictions have been lifted in Cuba. Numbers being reported during the meeting 27-29 October there were two cases of COVID reported in Cuba and they were travellers to the island.

The delegation also got to witness the trust Cuban people have for their government which contrasts strongly with what has been experienced in Australia. The Cuban people consciously followed all the measures adopted to protect people from the pandemic. Many Cuban people spoke with great respect and pride for their scientists and health professionals as well as their vaccines.

As we have seen so many times before Cuba is prepared to share their small resources with the world and has already shared the vaccine technologies with other countries as well as sent health professionals in the way of medical brigades to more than 40 countries including wealthy European countries.

The experience of our delegations to the meeting ranged from organised visits and the event's program to personal visits to Cuban families to their homes. This is where the impacts of the blockade are most felt and it was hard to see Cubans having to experience the long queues to purchase basic foodstuffs and other supplies similar to the special period when the USSR collapsed.

Despite all the difficulties of the blockade,



Party President Vinnie Molina getting his booster.

Cuban pride and trust in their revolution has not changed and their generosity is felt when you are welcomed into their homes full of music and dance. As one Cuban family told us it can be tough but nobody dies in Cuba for lack of food or a decent roof. The government ensures every Cuban receives a ration for their families. The basic food is guaranteed including powdered milk for young children.

After spending time in Cuba visiting and talking with Cuban people I fail to understand why the United States persists with this criminal policy. In fact it doesn't make sense. Cuba doesn't consider the US as an enemy; Cuba wants to develop respectful diplomatic relations with its neighbour. What Cuba demands from the US is their right to

self-determination and independence and to respect its sovereign decision to build a socialist society.

I really encourage more Australians to travel to Cuba. The best way to visit Cuba is in the Southern Cross solidarity brigade which travels to Cuba in December each year for about 3 weeks. This year the brigade starts on 27th December 2022.

2023 marks the 40th anniversary of the Australia/NZ solidarity brigades to Cuba. It is a good opportunity to plan a trip in December 2023 through to January 2024. The best way to express solidarity with the brave island in the Caribbean that has a lot to show to the world. In fact we have a lot to learn from Cuba and its revolution. ✪

**They have learnt to navigate life under a blockade, but wonder what they have done to deserve this imperialist act of war against them.**

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

email: editor@cpa.org.au



Dear Editor,  
I am very happy about the recent victory of Lula in regaining the presidency of Brazil, but he has a lot of work ahead of him. He will practically have to start again from scratch.

He definitely needs to fight against the hold that reactionary fundamentalist evangelical Christians have on the minds of many Brazilians – a factor that was very important in the disastrous presidency of Bolsonaro.

These supporters were often from the bourgeoisie classes, imagining that Bolsonaro would look after their interests. As it turned out, he accelerated the disastrous burning of

the Amazon, and made the COVID pandemic a disaster of epic proportions.

I do not recall Brazil ever taking action against members of the military dictatorships for the torture and violence they inflicted on large numbers of the Brazilian people.

We can only hope that Lula makes the most of the opportunity he has been given by the people of Brazil this time around. His victory is a good omen for the whole of the Brazilian people, and also for working people in the Americas and around the world.

In Solidarity,  
John Esposto  
Kingsville, VIC



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

## POLISH POLICE CONDEMNED FOR TOLERATING NAZI SYMBOLS WHILE TARGETING ANTI-FASCISTS AT NATIONALIST MARCH

**Polish opposition politicians condemned police at the weekend for detaining anti-fascist counter-protesters on Friday while ignoring Nazi symbols on the annual far right-led Independence Day march through Warsaw.**

And the American Jewish Committee raised the alarm at events in Krakow, where an Independence Day rally speaker talked about burning Jews and the crowd chanted: "Down with the Jewish occupation."

Polish Senator Krzysztof Brejza of the opposition Civic Platform tweeted a photo of march participants bearing a banner with the Black Sun symbol used by the Nazi SS.

"During the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, thousands of Poles died at the hands of German Nazis from the SS.

"I don't know why the police didn't respond to such criminal symbolism in Warsaw, which suffered so much in World War II. On the other hand, demonstrators with democratic views were forcibly removed," he said.

Poland bans the promotion of "totalitarian ideologies," though exactly which symbols fall under the ban remains contentious. The Black Sun symbol has drawn attention recently as it is prominently used by Ukrainian far-right militias like the Azov Battalion and Nato has been forced to

delete tweets celebrating Ukrainian military action where the symbol has been spotted on troops' clothing.

Police removed protesters in Warsaw holding white roses and a banner reading "nationalism is not patriotism" from their place alongside the march route, and held some for hours. Police spokesman Sylwester Marczak said they were held because they restricted police work and refused to show ID, but Poland's deputy human rights commissioner Hanna Machinska said the protesters had not been given a legal reason why they must show ID.

The annual independence day march in Poland has long been dominated by far-right

groups, and as usual this year saw banners proclaiming "white pride" and denouncing homosexuality, as well as abortion, which Poland's Law & Justice government has largely banned.

Open anti-semitism is regularly expressed at Polish independence day rallies. Last year in the city of Kalisz, a crowd chanted "death to Jews" in front of the town hall while burning a copy of the Statute of Kalisz, a 13th-century document granting Jews legal protections.

*Morning Star* 🌟

## AUSTRALIA URGED TO AVOID CHEAP TRICKS

Choe Mun Song

**Recently, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, via the Voice of America gave commentary to "criticise" the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). It denounced the routine missile testing conducted as part of measures to build self-defence capability, as a "violation of the UN Security Council resolution". Also as an "act detrimental to the international nuclear non-proliferation system."**

No country has the right to find fault or pick a quarrel with the DPRK's steps to increase its defence capability. The steps are an open and aboveboard exercise of the right to self-defence of a sovereign state. This is essential to cope with the anti-DPRK policy of hostility that have been in place for decades by the US and its lackeys, even into this new century. An illegal excuse has been fabricated by the US and supported by Australia under the "UNSC resolution" which is an abuse of the UN for the purpose of isolating and stifling the DPRK. This is not worth any more consideration

but it cannot be overlooked that it talked about the "International nuclear non-proliferation system."

Australia has taken issue with the DPRK whenever opportunity arises ignoring its role in destroying the "International nuclear non-proliferation system."

Australia has openly committed an unprecedented act in history of nuclear proliferation through AUKUS in league with the US and the UK. Australia has itself now become the butt of international criticism and denunciation.

Voices of apprehension, protest and denunciation have been raised

that the one-year-old AUKUS sets a dangerous precedent which could shake the International nuclear non-proliferation system as a whole. These voices continue to call this out in the neighbouring countries of Australia as well as China and Russia.

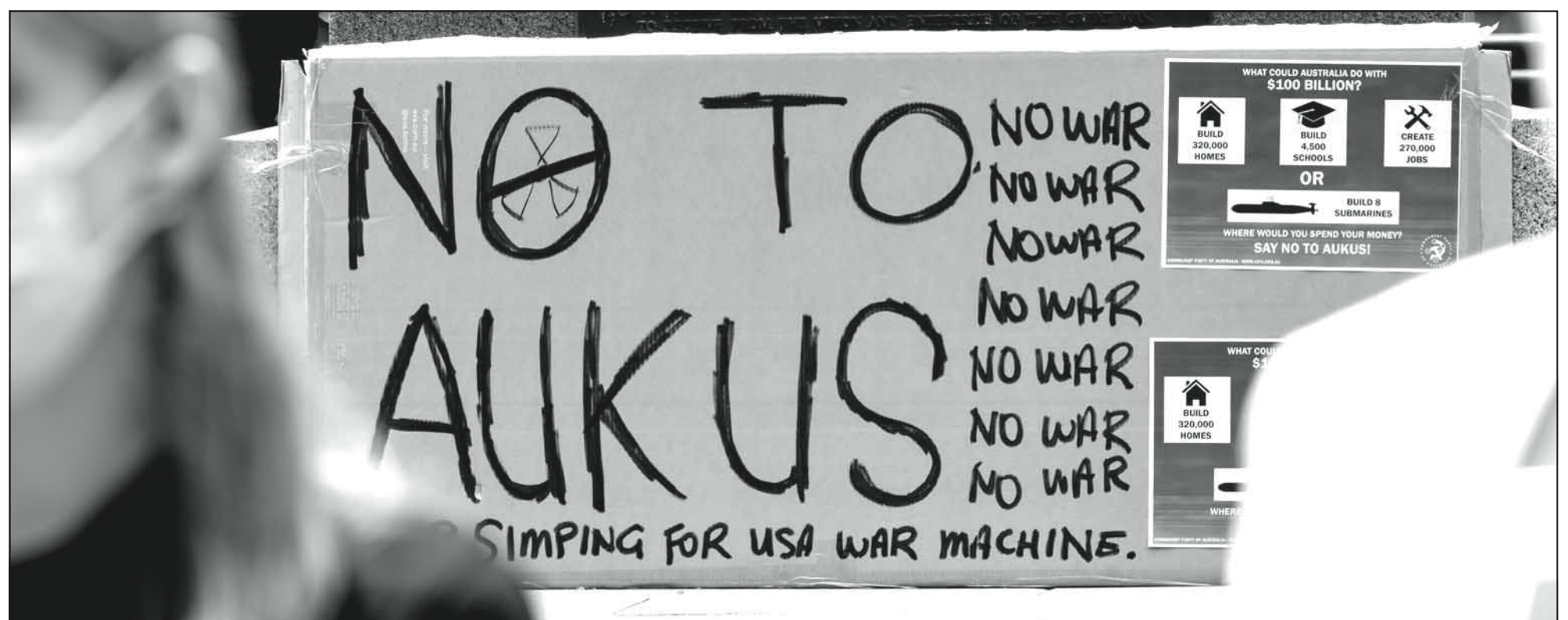
Australia can't cover up its part in undermining the international nuclear non-proliferation system with the cheap trick of branding the DPRK as a "destroyer of the non-proliferation system."

We remember that there are still the remains of Australian mercenaries buried in the DPRK territory

after joining the Korean war started by the US in 1950, allured with a small sum of money.

We request that Australia ditch its cheap tricks as they cut no ice with the DPRK and give up the dirty habit of finding fault with the latter at any old time and instead concentrate on peace and diplomatic relations in the region.

*The Pyongyang Times*  
A foreign-language edition of the Pyongyang Sinmun which is published by the Workers' Party of Korea Pyongyang Municipal Committee. 🌟



Rally to oppose the AUKUS security pact. Photo: www.matthrkac.com.au – flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

# IRELAND: BUILDING THE UNITY OF OUR CLASS

Jimmy Corcoran

## A spectre is haunting sections of the Irish left: the spectre of Irish reunification.

Ever since Britain voted for Brexit – a position supported by the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI) – the political tectonic plates upon which the partition of Ireland rests have become unstable. The emergence of Sinn Féin as the largest party in the Stormont Assembly, and the recently released census figures for the Six Counties, added further shocks to the political equilibrium. Irish reunification, discussion of which has been beyond the pale in “respectable” political circles, has now become a legitimate topic in the media and within the ranks of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. Even some “liberal” unionists have begun to look again at reunification, albeit as a means of getting back into the EU.

We can be certain that any movement towards reunification led by the bourgeoisie will not result in the anti-imperialist 32-county republic sought by communists and by republicans. The recent furore over the celebration of the Republic’s senior women’s soccer team shows that “official” Ireland is still uncomfortable with our history of struggle against British imperialism, while there is widespread popular identification with that struggle.

Unfortunately some sections of the “left,” even those who gave lip service to the demand for Irish unity, have now put forward arguments against any movement towards reunification.

Three main arguments have been advanced. The first is that reunification is a distraction from class politics, the second that there should be no attempts at reunification until the majority of the Protestant/unionist/loyalist community supports it, and the third that any reunification will be at the behest of imperialism, so it must be opposed by the left.

The first argument purports to be radical and revolutionary and rejects the call for national reunification as reactionary and a distraction from the struggle for socialism. It rejects Connolly’s position that the struggle for national independence and the struggle for socialism are two sides of the same coin. It also ignores the history of China, Cuba, Vietnam and other countries whose struggle was anti-colonial as well as anti-capitalist. Far from being revolutionary, such a position would leave the make-up of a united Ireland to forces hostile to socialism and the working class.

Sectarianism was, and remains, the means by which British imperialism divided the Irish people, defeated the struggle for independence, and partitioned the country.

The second argument against unity – that it cannot be allowed to happen

until the Protestant/unionist/loyalist community support it – is a sectarian position. It perpetuates the sectarian division within the Irish working class by giving one section a veto over progress. It is an objectively pro-imperialist position, which it shares with the most reactionary elements of the British capitalist class and its agents in Parliament and the media.

Those on the “left” who support this position, far from being the vanguard of the working class, believe that the working class should only advance at the pace allowed by the most reactionary, pro-imperialist ideology. It accepts and works within the parameters allowed by imperialism. It is akin to telling the Palestinians that they can have their own state only when the majority of Israelis agree; or that the ANC should not have overthrown apartheid until the majority of white South Africans agreed.

The third argument against unity is that it will come about as a result of decisions made by imperialism, and therefore it must not be supported. Proponents of this position also argue that as long as the twenty-six Counties remain within the EU, unity would be a retrograde step for the working class in the North. Unless there is a vast change in the balance of forces nationally or internationally, any united Ireland that emerges would more than likely be capitalist and ensnared within the grasp of imperialism.

They gloss over the fact that partition was imposed and is maintained by imperialism. Are we really to accept that a partitioned Ireland, dominated by imperialism, is more acceptable than a united Ireland, still dominated by imperialism but with a united working class capable of confronting imperialism? It is a very pessimistic position to adopt. It believes that imperialism will be able to implement its plans without any opposition. It is a defeatist position, which doesn’t believe in the revolutionary potential of the Irish working class.

Back in 1918 the bourgeois nationalists said that Labour must wait. In 1922 the infant CPI tried to get the republican forces to adopt a socialist programme to rally support for the Republic. They were rebuffed. Is the labour movement to leave the political and economic structure of a future united Ireland to those forces that are opposed to socialism?

We must organise all-Ireland campaigns on such issues as health, housing, the environment, sustainable economic development, and neutrality. We must not wait for a British government decision to hold a referendum, nor for the bourgeoisie, north and south, to broker a deal between themselves. We must build the unity of our class through joint struggles and lead the movement towards national unity, independence, and socialism.

*Socialist Voice* ✪

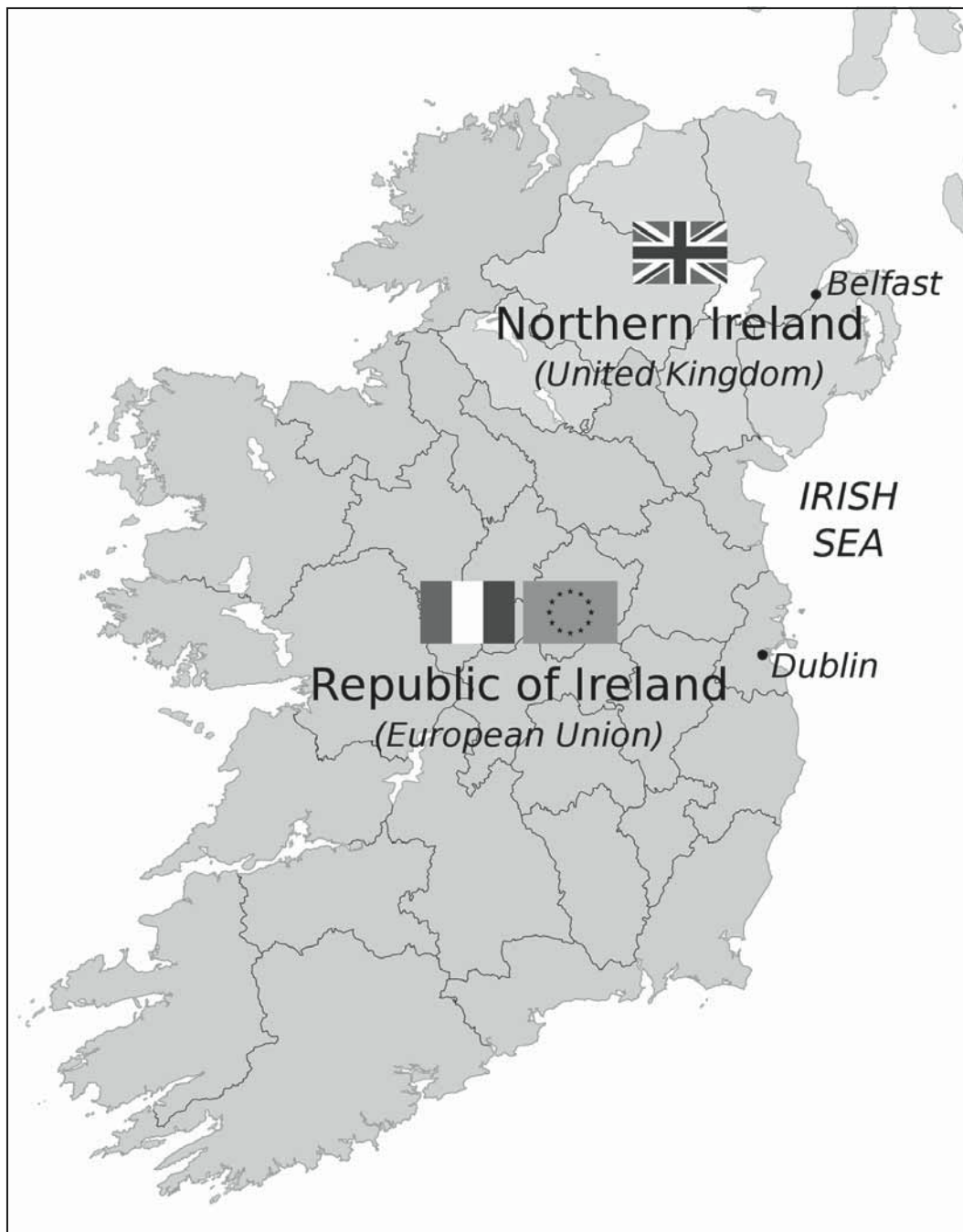


Image: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British-European\_Union\_frontier\_in\_Ireland.svg  
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**Are we really to accept that a partitioned Ireland, dominated by imperialism, is more acceptable than a united Ireland, still dominated by imperialism but with a united working class capable of confronting imperialism?**

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# PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS HOLD BACK "RED WAVE," ANTI-MAGA MAJORITY PREVAILS

## The Communist Party of the United States of America

The midterms were a significant setback for the MAGA crowd, with many Trump-supported candidates losing their elections. With a few important exceptions, it appears that the big conclusion from midterms is that the people's coalition that sent Trump packing two years ago remains formidable — the anti-MAGA majority remains strong.

Congratulations! Indeed, the much-vaunted Republican wave failed to materialise as key extreme, election-denying Trump-backed MAGA candidates went down to defeat. Without a doubt, a key issue driving turnout was abortion rights.

It was the most important issue for young voters, seventy per cent of whom in some states voted for Democratic candidates — a huge generational shift. Led by a huge surge of working-class women, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and youth voters, democracy, while remaining severely challenged, secured a second electoral wind.

The exceptions are important. Even though the red wave didn't materialise, the threat to democracy is ongoing and calls for year-round organising in defence of democracy and a historic mobilisation in the 2024 elections.

Across the country, over 200 election deniers won office. If current trends continue, the GOP may have won the House by a very slim margin, though importantly it appears that the Democrats will continue to control the Senate.

The result: continued gridlock in Congress and a stalled presidential agenda. Control of the House would enable Republicans to hound Democratic officials with innumerable investigations and hamstringing efforts to prosecute the leaders of the January 6th insurrection.

Trump's likely coming announcement of another presidential bid will be an important backdrop to these developments, and Tuesday's results will certainly impact how his

fascist-minded backers will pursue the race, should he decide to run. One thing is sure: the GOP will use whatever wins it secures to "rule ugly," that is, to act as if they have a huge mandate and majority, a strategy that must be met head on. Pitched class struggle and democratic battles lie ahead.

Many of the right-wing victories are attributed to the weakening of democracy, through extremely gerrymandered districts in Florida and Louisiana (approved by the Supreme Court this summer), the radical redrawing of the lines for four districts in New York State, bringing four extra Republicans into Congress in one of the bluest states in the nation, and billions of corporate dollars flooding campaigns, even for state legislation and school board races; and the usual but rising racism, anti-Semitism, misogyny, and anti-trans hatred.

On the other hand, the victories of Democratic senators, governors, and secretaries of state in important swing states like Michigan, Minnesota, Arizona, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania will likely forestall GOP maneuvers to hijack voting rights with likely big implications for the 2024 presidential election.

The wins of progressive ballot initiatives will slow the right wing as well. Reproductive rights have been voted into the constitutions of three states — Michigan, California, and Vermont — while Kentuckians rejected an anti-abortion measure.

Illinois voters said yes to enshrining workers' rights in the state constitution. These victories were driven by more democracy, not less, as women and especially youth voted in higher numbers.

Millennials and GenZers, who tend to vote Democratic, will likely be the largest voting bloc in 2024, representing a huge generational and ideological shift.

Clearly, both the price of gas along with the cost of freedom weighed heavily on the minds of midterm voters.

But just as clearly a majority rejected a



Photo: Phil Roeder — flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

narrow calculus and understood that nothing can be valued over reproductive and voting rights. At the same time the cost of living, gun violence, and the environment cannot be ignored.

So too with the Biden administration's Cold War 2.0 foreign policy. Key to moving forward, however, is rejecting the GOP's use of red baiting, racism, and anti-LGBTQ demagoguery to marshal and expand its base.

But progress on these issues is impossible without mass grassroots movements demanding redress — that's what's gone missing in the past two years, including this election season. The ongoing potential of

these movements was indicated by the energy and excitement of end-of-campaign rallies in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and other states.

But don't hold your breath for the powers that be to organise them.

Women's, civil rights, and union organising efforts made the difference in the midterms and will be the difference between defeat and victory over the fascist danger going forward.

CPUSA initiative and candidates must be a big part of this mix. Let's start to make plans now, and, in doing so, let's unite to defeat the right! ✨

## VENEZUELAN GOVT REJECTS RENEWAL OF EU SANCTIONS AGAINST STATE

The Venezuelan government rejected the renewal, for one more year, of the sanctions imposed by the European Union (EU) against its country, considering that they are illegal and limit the population's access to medicines and food.

"The unilateral coercive measures illegally applied by the European Union in a premeditated manner, punish and massively

violate the human rights of the Venezuelan people, since their indirect consequences end up limiting access to food, medicines, primary inputs, machinery, spare parts and equipment necessary to guarantee fundamental rights and ensure the normal development of our society," declares the statement issued by the Foreign Ministry.

On 11th November, the EU announced the renewal, until 14th November, 2023, of the sanctions

against officials linked to the administration of Nicolás Maduro.

In this regard, the government highlighted that the renewal of the sanctions were announced on the same day in which the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, publicly expressed the willingness to support negotiations between the Venezuelan government and a sector of the opposition.

"It is incoherent and constitutes a slap in the face of the French

initiative called the Forum for Peace [...] We repudiate the unhealthy policy of resorting to these tools of political blackmail, contrary to democratic and human rights principles, instituting a dangerous practice contrary to the principles of international law and peaceful coexistence between States," the statement reads.

According to the communiqué, this decision "is intended to insist on a completely erroneous strategy,

with which the EU has failed, in the last five years, to achieve its objective of overthrowing the Bolivarian government."

Among those sanctioned for more than four years are Vice-President Delcy Rodríguez; the Minister of Petroleum, Tareck El Aissami; as well as military, electoral and justice officials, deputies and governors, among others.

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