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May Day 2018 – International Workers' Day

STOP THE WAR ON WORKERS

The Right to withdraw your labour has been criminalised!

Successive governments in Australia have consistently restricted the fundamental right for workers to withdraw their labour.

The right to strike has never been a "legal" right in Australia but workers have exercised their ability to take industrial action to advance their industrial interests.

However, this ability has been seriously undermined by repressive laws that protect employers' interests and criminalise workers collective action. Workers and their unions are now threatened, criminalised and fined if they fight for their rights in the workplace.

Workers must fight back and fight for their right to strike.

The Turnbull government has:

- Restored Howard's ABCC and given it more powers
- Ignored employers ripping off and injuring or killing workers
- Outlawed and criminalised legitimate trade union activity
- Increased penalties tenfold for breaking bad construction laws
- Slashed penalty rates for 700,000 low paid workers
- Banned the Eureka flag from government-funded construction sites

The Turnbull government will:

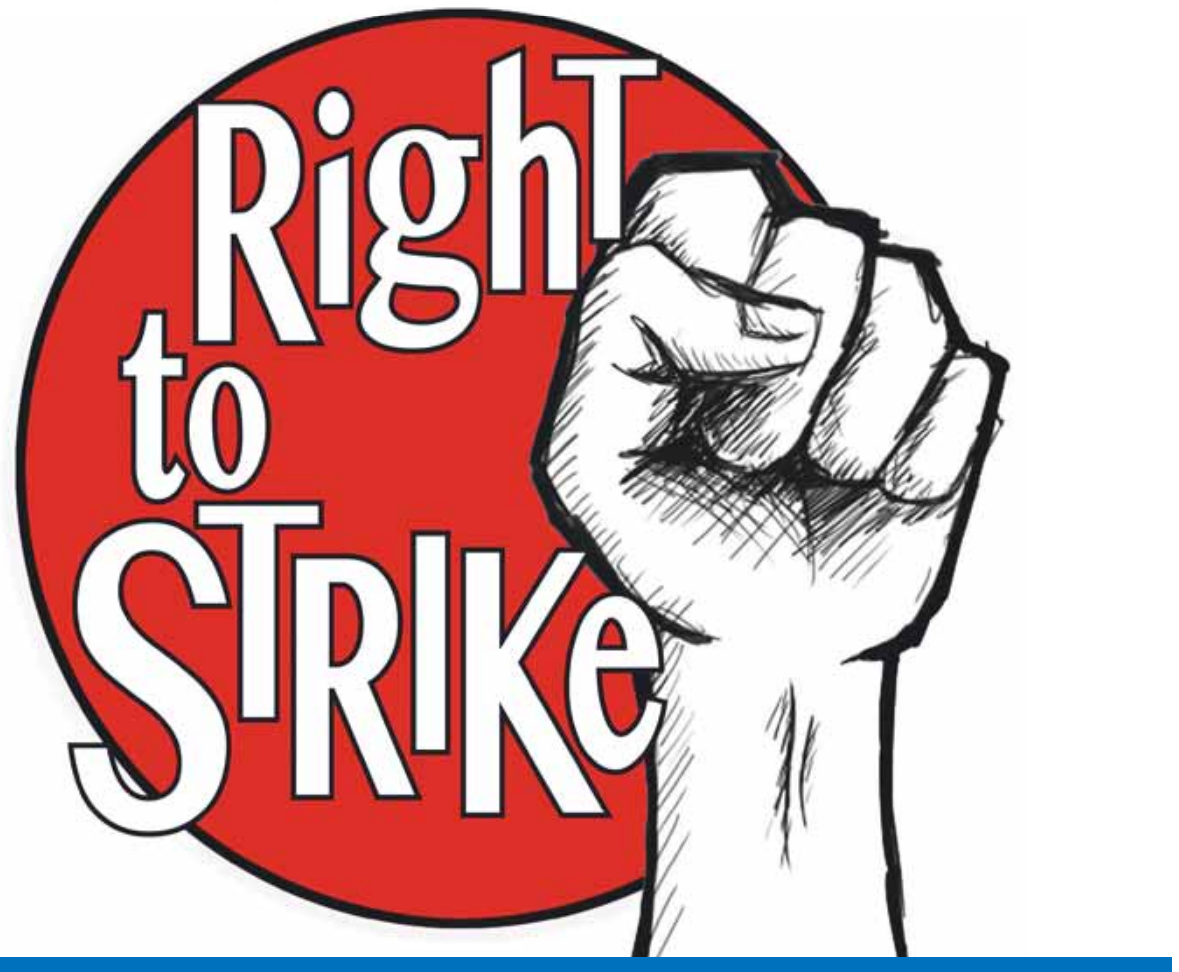
- Restore individual, employer-dictated work contracts
- Deny union officials right of entry and the right to organise
- Abolish the minimum wage and penalty rates, gut Awards and EBAs
- Outlaw all industrial action and pickets
- Privatise Medicare and cut funding to public education
- Cut $60 billion in taxes for big business out of public hospital, Medicare, school, welfare budgets

Tax the rich!

Tax is a class issue. The government's 'trickle down' economic policies benefit the ruling class and provide a safe haven for multinational corporations to avoid paying tax.

More than 500 corporations pay little tax or no tax at all while social and community services continue to be privatised and funding cut. Even the Reserve Bank of Australia has spoken out about the low wages that continue to contribute to a weak economy.

At the same time there is bipartisan support for spending $1 trillion preparing to fight US wars, quarantining military spending from budget cuts, while cutting social security and pensions. The LNP persists with Centrelink's Auto-Debt Recovery Program, attempting to reduce the budget deficit on the backs of the poor.



BAD LAWS MUST BE BROKEN
CHANGE THE SYSTEM!

The Communist Party of Australia would:

- Fully restore penalty rates, increase minimum wage by $50 a week and support union-negotiated Industry agreements
- Abolish labour hire arrangements and put workers currently employed through labour hire and the gig economy on company books
- Close the pay gender gap
- Abolish the ABCC
- Restore the right of entry, the right to organise and recruit
- Protect the Right to strike by law without complex ballot systems
- Create jobs with a shorter working week with no loss of pay and investment in public infrastructure
- Divert the war budget to fund social needs such as public housing, health, education and transport
- Make bulk billing of Medicare dental care universally available
- Fully fund public schools and phase out funding to private schools
- Abolish university and TAFE fees and fully fund them
- Nationalise the energy sector and regulate electricity prices
- Replace coal-fired power stations with renewable energy generation

The Communist Party

The only way to end poverty, unemployment, environmental destruction and war is to take society out of corporate hands and let the working class run it.

Communist:

- Has an outstanding history of struggle for democratic rights, especially workers' rights
- Has always fought for high standard public housing, public education and public health for the people
- The first political party to campaign for the environment, including the "green bans"
- Has always fought for equal pay for women
- The first political party to champion Aboriginal rights
- Among the first to fight for migrant rights and against racism ✪

The CPA calls for unions, workers & community to make a united stand!

3

Change the Rules
End wage theft!

7

On to the next challenges

10

Culture & Life
Guns and the USA ...

12

Along Class Lines
Real anti-Semitism

Guardian

Issue 1820 May 2, 2018

Abolish the ABCC!

With a federal election looming, the message is loud and clear: Abolish the Australian Building and Construction Commission! The witch hunt and the provisions to jail innocent workers for failing to attend compulsory interrogation sessions when summonsed by the special building and construction industry police force, the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), is unacceptable. Ditto the singling out of one group of workers and the denial of their basic legal and other democratic rights.

ALP role

When in 2009, under the Gillard Labor government, the unions put the demand to abolish the ABCC, the government responded by trotting out former trade union leaders – now MPs – to defend the retention of the ABCC in its new guise as a special division of the Fair Work Australia legislation.

When Gillard took the platform at the ACTU Congress that year, almost every one of the 500 delegates wore the yellow campaign T-shirt calling for the abolition of the ABCC. They listened politely as she told them they should be "pounding the pavements" in support of the Fair Work Act and forget about getting anything more out of the Labor government.

Not surprisingly the then right-wing secretary of the shop employees' union, Joe de Bruyn, supported the government's position, claiming it had no mandate to abolish the ABCC.

Former ACTU presidents Martin Ferguson and Simon Crean, former ACTU secretary Greg Combet, and the right-wing former secretary of the Australian Workers' Union – now Labor leader – Bill Shorten along with Richard Marles and Mark Butler – all former union leaders – shored up their front bench careers under the Rudd/Gillard team by giving the nod to the ABCC's paint-over.

Greg Combet told his union colleagues to be "pragmatic", bed down and not fight for new laws!

The Communist Party of Australia proposes the following rights as the basis of new IR laws that would improve the position of working people:

The Right to Belong

- **Unrestricted right of workers to join unions**
- **Unrestricted right of unions to recruit new members (ACTU to determine coverage)**
- **Workers to have the right to access union representatives at any time including during working hours**
- **Legally binding guarantees against discrimination because of union membership or affiliation**

The Right to Organise

- **The right of unions to exist and be legally recognised as representatives of their membership**
- **Union representatives to have the right to unlimited access to workplaces for organising purposes**
- **Paid union meetings and trade union training**
- **Legislated rights for union and worker involvement in all industrial and OH&S issues in the workplace**
- **No limit on conditions included in awards, EBAs, industry or pattern bargained agreements**
- **When a condition is attained by 50 percent of the workforce it becomes a minimum legislated standard**

The Right to Protections

- **The right to an adequate living wage and good working conditions of employment**
- **The right for workers to industry-wide collective agreements and comprehensive awards that apply to union and non-union members alike**
- **Abolition of individual employment contracts, including those made under common law**
- **Guaranteed wage indexation to keep up with the cost of living plus productivity increases**
- **Right to permanent full-time work**
- **Protection against the sack; an appropriate union-controlled forum to be set up to determine the validity of any sacking**
- **A 35-hour week without loss of pay**
- **Five weeks annual leave, 15 days sick leave and carers leave to cater for family and childcare issues**
- **Leave loadings and penalty rates to be restored and increased to the highest current levels for all workers**
- **Equal pay for worko equal value**
- **Twelve months paid maternity leave**
- **Repeal of contractors' legislation so that sub-contractors are employed with the same rights and benefits as other workers**

The Right to Strike

- **No legal barriers to strike action as the basis of new IR laws that would improve the position of working people**

A change of government alone will not bring about the required changes. It will be the strength of the movement in workplaces, on the streets and in the education of workers and involvement of the wider community that will be decisive in delivering workers' and trade union rights.

STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS

Truckies mark safety watchdog closure

A Transport Workers' Union survey shows almost 93% of drivers say pressure on them is continuing or increasing, with drivers listing the financial squeeze from major supermarkets and manufacturers, bad roads, unsafe truck stops and unrealistic deadlines major sources of pressure.

Over 1,000 drivers responded to the survey which was conducted following police blitzes on trucks after a spate of crashes. The survey comes two years after the Turnbull government shut down a road safety watchdog which was investigating safety in trucking and holding major companies to account for low cost contracts which means their goods cannot be delivered safely.

"Two years ago the federal government scrapped scrutiny and accountability on the major manufacturers and retailers like Aldi over poor rates in their supply chains. This financial pressure means that trucks are not being maintained and drivers are being pushed to speed, drive long hours and skip mandatory rest breaks. This is devastating families across Australia because of truck crashes and it means drivers are copping all the blame for problems in the industry," TWU acting national secretary Michael Kaine said.

"The only response from the federal government to the spike in deaths has been to increase the number of speed cameras to catch drivers and to have police fine them over breaches. This will not solve the problems in the industry and it will not cut the number of crashes. Unless wealthy clients are held to account for low cost contracts the problem in this industry will only worsen," Kaine added.

The number of people killed in truck crashes is increasing. In NSW there has been a 92% increase in deaths from articulated truck crashes, according to data from Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics. The job for drivers is also getting more dangerous. Safe Work Australia data for 2017 showed almost 40% of all workplace deaths involved a transport worker. Since the road safety watchdog was shut down, 361 people have died in truck crashes.

A report commissioned by the government showed orders by the road safety watchdog were cutting truck crashes by 28%.

Hundreds of drivers have held several protests over safety in the industry during the past year, highlighting in particular the role played by retailer Aldi which refuses to take responsibility for safety problems in its supply chain. Aldi last August began a Federal Court case attacking the right of drivers to speak out and protest about safety in its supply chain.

Aldi drivers have spoken out about breaches of fatigue rules and harassment when they raise safety issues. One driver was consistently told "everyone else is doing it, you are the only one with a problem".

Aldi also engages some contractors in its supply chain whose practices pose serious safety risks. This includes inexperienced trainers training new drivers at one SA transport operator, below-award flat rates with no superannuation at a Queensland operator and vehicles not being maintained properly at another Queensland operator. ✪

Six-point pay plan

The Australian Council of Trade Unions has released a six-point plan to ensure pay rises for all working people. The plan aims ate ensuring an immediate pay increase for the 2.3 million workers whose pay is set by awards and empowering 3.7 million working people who have collective agreements with the tools they need to negotiate fair pay rises now and into the future.

The plan includes increasing the minimum wage to a living wage, making our bargaining system fair, ensuring awards minimums improve over time, restoring penalty rates, guaranteeing equal pay for women and ending wage theft.

Wage and superannuation theft is also dragging down wages as employers have to compete with those employers who routinely break the law.

End wage theft

Workplace laws need to change so workers can quickly and easily recover wages and superannuation that is stolen by employers.

A Living Wage

No full-time worker should live in poverty and right now too many are. A living wage would immediately benefit all workers currently on the minimum wage, and will flow through the awards system, benefiting around 2.3 million workers who are award reliant.

Improve Awards

There are currently 2.3 million workers covered under the 122 awards, the number of people depending on awards is increasing. Yet awards have not moved with community standards or with market rates. This has created a widening gap between wages in collective agreements and award wages.

Bargaining

Bargaining rules give too much power to employers making it far too hard for working people to negotiate their share of profits and productivity gains.

Restoring penalty rates

Penalty rates must be restored to pre-July 2017 levels, and the law should be changed to stop business imposing any further cuts to workers pay.

Equal pay for women

Need to establish a Pay Equity Panel that is dedicated to achieving equal pay for women. Women earn 15.3 percent less than men over their working lives and this has barely changed over the last 20 years. The gap persists through all stages of work and into retirement, when women can expect 47% less retirement savings. Many will retire in poverty. ✪

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Labour's enemies talk of peace as they carry on war."

Anon

PRESS FUND

The Turnbull government wants to burn Australia's waste to generate electricity, even though that would generate greenhouse gases and accelerate climate change. They don't want to ban single-use, non-recyclable packaging and they won't limit the production of plastic, which is ruining the environment. They also want to spend $500,000,000 "fixing" the slowly dying Great Barrier Reef – but without tackling the primary source of the problem, the emission of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels like coal. "O brave new world, that has such people in 't!" You can help us oppose the government's appalling environmental policies with a Press Fund contribution, so please send in something for the next issue if you possibly can. Many thanks to this week's contributors, as follows:

Dr G Dittura $10, KM $50, MM $10, "Rough Red" $5, "Round Figure" $15

This week's total: $90 Progressive total: $2,190

Find out more www.cpa.org.au

Change the Rules

End wage theft!

Anna Pha

The dispute at the Barry café is a stark reminder of the wage theft that is taking place, particularly when it comes to low paid workers but also those on higher incomes.

Staff at the café in Melbourne were underpaid by at least $5 an hour, and when they tried to discuss their wages with the owners their shifts were cancelled indefinitely.

They had sent the owners an email asking to be paid the award rate. The workers were being paid an hourly rate of $18 for shifts including weekends. Under the award, the minimum rate should be $24.41 for weekday shifts, and $29.30 for weekends.

The owners then approached the staff individually, with one staff member saying, "When we were on shift they started to interrogate us, asking questions like 'who's the ringleader?'"

In a text message the owner told them: "Everyone can talk to me separately. It's the only way we can talk." Asked why they could not meet as group, he replied: "Each one is a separate agreement. We can discuss separately," which was when they decided to contact the United Voice union.

Wage and superannuation theft have skyrocketed under the Turnbull government. The penalties in the relatively few cases where employers are caught out are peanuts, just seen by companies as a "cost of doing business". They are a fraction of the hundreds of thousands and even millions of dollars in penalties meted out to trade unions for doing as little as attempting to halt the wage theft.

The figures presenting average wage growth at around zero hide the fact that for many workers' wages have fallen, but at the higher end of the pay scale they are rising. The gap continues to widen.

Retailers are concerned at the lack of demand. Some blame the online shopping, which may have affected some of them. The main reason is that millions of Australians just do not have enough money in their pockets to meet their needs.

The slashing of penalty rates in July 2017 hit some of the lowest paid workers. Yet it is the low paid workers who spend their whole income on goods, services and rent, who feed the economy with every cent they earn.

Employers have found a multitude of ways to deny workers their legal entitlements. Wage and superannuation theft also drags down the wages of other workers in the same industry as employers have to compete with those employers who routinely break the law.

The Fair Work Act and the Australian Building and Construction legislation need to be torn up and replaced by new laws that protect workers' rights and provide a living wage – not just a minimum wage.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) has made a claim for a $50 increase in the minimum award wage. This would benefit the 2.3 million or so workers who are dependent on their award.

Employers need to face strong penalties for breaking the law to act as a disincentive. Rather than fines of a few thousand dollars, they should be required to pay sums proportionate to the size of their business, such as 10 percent of their revenue for a first offence. This percentage should grow with each subsequent offence.

Trade union rights

Trade unions need greater powers to enter workplaces, inspect wages books, talk to workers and recruit in workplaces.

Strikes and other industrial action should be legalised. At present it is almost impossible to take industrial action which is not subject to heavy penalties. Trade unions have been robbed of their very basic rights, rights that are needed to fight unscrupulous employers who steal their wages and superannuation and put their lives at risk.

Without the right to take action, wages and working conditions will continue to slide.

Centralised wage fixation

Awards have not moved with community standards or with the cost of living. This has created a widening gap between wages in collective agreements and award wage rates. This gap has meant employers utilising awards can undercut employers with collective agreements.

There should be a return to a centralised system of wage fixation and determination of working conditions where awards are comprehensive and provide a living wage and job security.

Record profits

Productivity has increased and profits hit record highs while wages have fallen or at best remained stagnant. Workers are not receiving a share of the additional wealth they have created.

The cuts in penalty rates and heightened levels of exploitation of workers will only increase profits and further reduce demand for goods and services. In turn that harms the economy.

That is the economic side of the equation. On the human side it results in a rise in already high levels of poverty, homelessness and insecurity with even more families relying on charities.

Securing equal pay for women

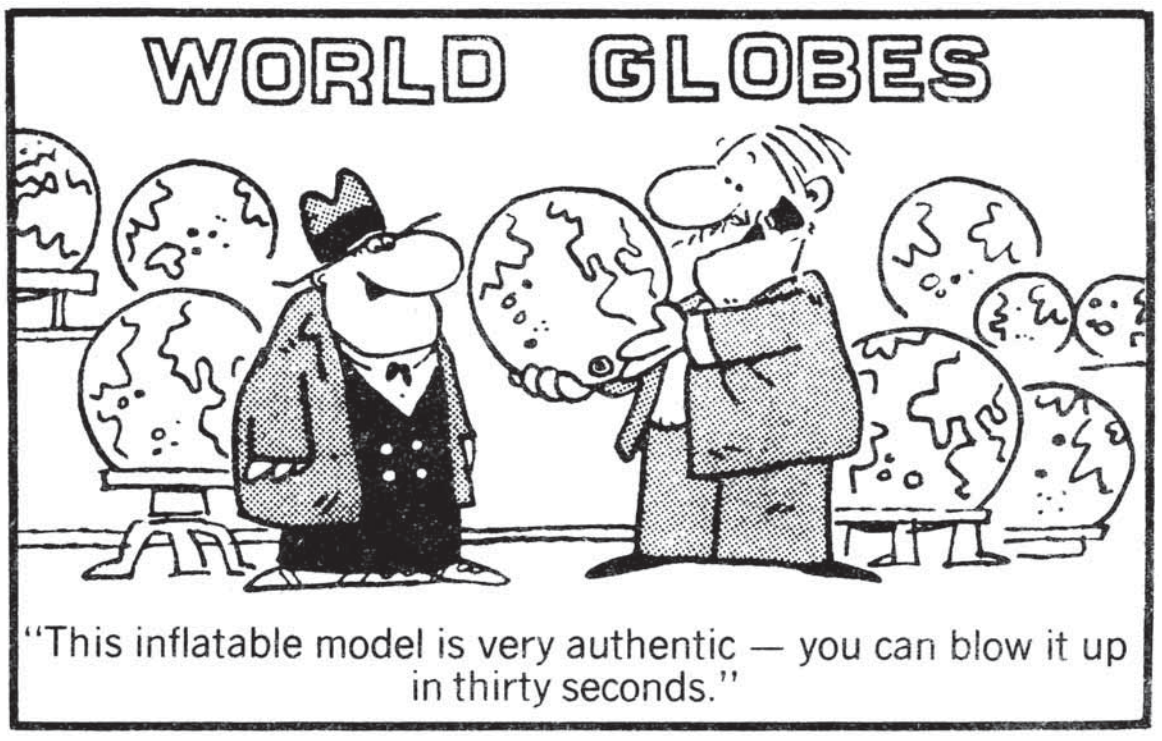
The ACTU is campaigning for equal pay for women, who earn 15.3 percent less than men over their working lives; this has barely changed over the last 20 years. The gap persists through all stages of work up to retirement, when women can expect to have 47 percent less in retirement savings. Many will retire in poverty.

The ACTU is calling for the establishment of a Pay Equity Panel that is dedicated to achieving equal pay for women.

Thousands of Australians are taking to the streets over 12 days of action to *Change the Rules*, demanding a living wage and secure work. Visit the Australian Unions website for details of actions.

The Communist Party of Australia supports the *Change the Rules* campaign and the demand for a $50 wage rise for those reliant on awards. It urges all members, supporters and *Guardian* readers to join the 12 Days of Action and if they are not already a member to join the relevant trade union. ✪

From the Archives ***The Socialist*, May 1982**



Sydney

VIGIL DEMANDING THAT THE USA STOP THE BLOCKADE ON CUBA

5:30 pm Thursday May 17

Sydney Martin Place outside the USA Consulate

Budget blow for people with disability

People with disability around Australia are reeling after the Treasurer's backflip on funding for the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme).

"We are stunned at the news that the federal government is walking away from the commitment to fully fund the NDIS, now and into the future. Last year, the Prime Minister said that the increase to the Medicare Levy was essential so that 'it is fully funded so ... you will know the money is there'", said Therese Sands, Co-CEO, People with Disability Australia.

"People with disability feel betrayed and ambushed by this decision and are left wondering what else is in this year's budget?"

The revenue measures announced last week by the Treasurer are only for this year, and will not guarantee funding for the NDIS in the future.

"The Medicare Levy increase was intended to guarantee funding for the NDIS in the long-term. Now, we are back to the uncertainty around the NDIS, and fighting for funding at every budget," said Sands.

"Last year, we joined with the Australian Council for Civil Liberties and Australian Federation of Disability Organisations to call for secure, sufficient and sustainable funding for the NDIS. A strong, well-funded NDIS benefits our whole community, as people with disability are better supported to fully participate economically and socially.

"As reported, in his speech, the Treasurer will say that people with disability should have 'faith in the big heartedness of Australians' and that this was 'about helping your mates.'"

Sands pointed out that the NDIS is about providing essential daily supports for people with disability, so they can fully participate in society. "We are not second class citizens that should be reliant on so-called big hearts. Our supports must be an integral part of Australia's social infrastructure.

"We are now left to go cap in hand, like charity cases, at each and every budget. This is unacceptable."

People with disability are deeply concerned about this decision from the federal Treasurer and will come together to campaign to restore funding for the NDIS.

"We are sick of what is happening to the NDIS and call on the government to put people with disability back at the heart of every decision that is being made," said Ms Sands.

Joint statement

To cement the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) as a universal system for all Australians, sufficient and sustainable funding must be secured now, while there is strong bipartisan commitment.

The NDIS must not become a "political football".

The NDIS is a long over-due system for providing individualised funding for support services for people with disability in Australia.

The NDIS is recognised as an essential piece of Australia's social infrastructure. At some time in our lives, we, or someone close to us will access services provided under this system.

The NDIS is our newest and most innovative social policy reform.

A strong, well-funded NDIS will be of benefit across our community, as people with disability are better supported to fully participate economically and socially.

It makes sense that the costs of the NDIS are shared by everyone, according to our ability to pay.

The NDIS is not part of the social security system. We do not support raising revenue for the NDIS by shifting funding from social security or other human services. The community rightly rejects this option as inequitable.

The best and fairest way to fund the NDIS is through the tax system.

We welcome the major parties' support for an increase to the Medicare Levy for the purpose of funding the NDIS through the tax system. The Levy is one component of a sustainable funding base that will secure the NDIS in the coming decades.

We call on Parliament, when it resumes, to secure funding for the NDIS based on the following principles:

- The NDIS must be available to all eligible people;
- Everyone should contribute to funding this universal system according to their ability to do so;
- Through a progressive tax system where people with higher incomes contribute a higher share of their income, and the ability for people to avoid contributing their fair share is restricted.

Australian Council of Social Service
Disabled People's Organisations Australia
Australian Federation of Disability Organisations

Govt lied to Australia about Pine Gap

WA Governor implicated in cover-up

Revelations that the US war fighting base at Pine Gap, near Alice Springs, had a secret room that excluded Australians exposes the lies that Australian governments generally and current WA Governor Kim Beazley have been telling the Australian people.

In March, 1985, the then defence minister Kim Beazley insisted the government was fully aware of everything that takes place at Pine Gap. "The Australian Anti-Bases Campaign (AABC) has maintained from its inception 30 years ago that the base was a wholly US affair with little involvement of Australian authorities," Denis Doherty, National Coordinator of the Anti-Bases Campaign, said.

"Over decades we have been called idiots and liars for calling for the closure of Pine Gap but now we have been vindicated.

"Now it is clear that Pine Gap was secretly established and continues to undermine the sovereignty and independence of Australia; it continues to ignore the rights of the Indigenous people of this country; and it involves Australia in contributing to the arms race and the increasing probability of a nuclear war.

"Pine Gap plays a role in the US nuclear and non-nuclear military strategies and its missile defence and killer drone programs," Doherty said.

Dr Hannah Middleton, AABC Star Wars spokesperson, asked: "What can the Australian government say now?

"Clearly Kim Beazley and others lied to create a fiction that Pine Gap and other US bases are 'joint facilities'. Well that fiction has been blown out of the water!

"These revelations are the impetus to renew our push to close all US bases in Australia and to have an independent non-aligned foreign policy.

"The oft repeated phrases 'close Pine Gap' and 'US Bases out now!' are now more immediate than ever. Time to act Australia," Middleton concluded. ✪

Support *The Guardian* by donating to Press Fund

Make Super Fair

Cbus has gotten behind a campaign that looks to close the gender gap in retirement incomes for women. It is not widely known that women, on average currently retire with 47% less super than men and that a third of single women retire in poverty. The Make Super Fair, a campaign run by advocacy group, Women in Super is pushing for recommendations that go some of the way to closing the super gap.

Why is there a gap?

The reasons for the gap relate to broken work patterns due to child rearing and caring responsibilities, the disproportionate number of women in part-time and casual work and the fact that large numbers of women are concentrated in low-paid work.

Cbus executive Robbie Campo says construction workers who also experience insecure work are likely to understand how it impacts on quality of life and the ability to plan for the future.

"Periods of unemployment between jobs, sham contracting, labour hire and the problem of getting on a job when you're over 50 are features of the industry many Cbus members would be familiar with. Large numbers of women know nothing but the struggles that arise from broken work patterns.

"Combining motherhood and work means women often end up in insecure work or in jobs with little career progression," she says.

"The high cost of childcare, particularly if there is more than one child in the family is also an impediment for some women to return to work. These factors lead to a reduction in their income and prevents them from accumulating adequate retirement savings."

Women only get 33% of super tax concessions while 67% go to men.

Industry Super Australia's submission in November 2015 to the Economic Security for Women in Retirement Senate Inquiry states that many women get less government support for super savings. Around half of working women do not get any government support for their super savings at all as tax concessions are not given to low income earners. This is unfair and also affects a lot of low income earning men.

Any job that pays less than $450 a month carries no requirement to pay superannuation. Many women work part-time (sometimes juggling two or more casual or part time jobs) resulting in an estimated 220,000 women missing out on $125 million of super as they do not meet the requirement.

The super system must be modernised to ensure it is delivering its promise of universal and adequate retirement savings for everyone.

Ms Campo says that the system created in the 1980s is a campaign in which construction workers led, reflected the workforce at the time which was mostly male, full time and continuous work.

"Australia's super is the envy of countries around the world, but it's time to modernise it to reflect the typical working patterns and outcomes of women.

So, what can we do about it?

Cbus is supporting the Make Super Fair campaign, which focuses on 5 key changes to the system:

These are:

- Provide women and other low-income earners with an additional $1,000 government contribution annually into their super, boosting their super balance and reaping the benefits of compounding interest over time. To ensure this is a well targeted measure, it would only apply from age 25 and only up to accounts with balances of less than $100,000.
- No further delays to increase the super guarantee from 9.5% to 12% as the current rate does not enable most women, and indeed most average earners, to accrue enough savings for a dignified retirement.
- Remove the $450 monthly pay threshold which sees an estimated 220,000 women miss out on super every year. Make sure that super is paid on paid parental leave – making it no different from other types of leave.
- Measure the impact any future changes to super would have on women.

For more information, visit www.makesuperfair.com.au ✪

Book Review by Bilal Cleland

Traitors

As late as 2014, toleration of right-wing extremism still clung to the Liberals, despite the exposure of the 1970s Liberal Party Migrant Advisory Council. Speaking at the Croatian Club in Sydney on April 13, 2014 MHR Craig Kelly's words were noted in the Australian Croatian weekly *Boca KroPres*: "On behalf of the Prime Minister, who is in Japan, I'm conveying his greetings and good wishes on the occasion of the celebration of the 10th of April to you and all Croats in Australia, and those in Croatia" [*Independent Australia* April 23, 2014].

This was the anniversary of the establishment of the Nazi puppet state of Croatia. It resulted in a "please explain" from the modern Croatian government.

Traitors, by Frank Walker, published this year, is a record of how our Anzacs were betrayed by our own government and by our wartime allies. Although the Moscow Declaration on Atrocities signed by Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt proclaimed that, once the enemies were defeated, they would "pursue them to the uttermost ends of the earth and will deliver them to their accusers in order that justice may be done," this was not honoured.

Three examples of betrayal, two directly related to my relatives and one to the political character of modern Japan, stood out to me.

The case of an SS doctor's use of five Australian POWs for medical experiments on the transmission of hepatitis, after the defeat of Crete, is outrageous. Lance Corporal George Savage from Melbourne, reported the experiments to the army after he escaped and returned to Australia.

His report was filed away and ignored until retrieved by a researcher from the national archives in 2016. The SS doctor involved openly boasted of his research in a German medical journal. He was held for two years at war's end but was soon released and became Director of the Nuremberg Hospital and Professor of Internal Medicine at Erlangen University. One of my uncles was captured on Crete and could have well been used in these criminal experiments.

Experiments on captives were also part of the Japanese war effort. The vivisections of Unit 713 in Manchukuo were the most barbaric, but similar horrors were perpetrated throughout the lands occupied by the Japanese. Ambon, where another uncle died just 10 days before peace, was a place of human experimentation.

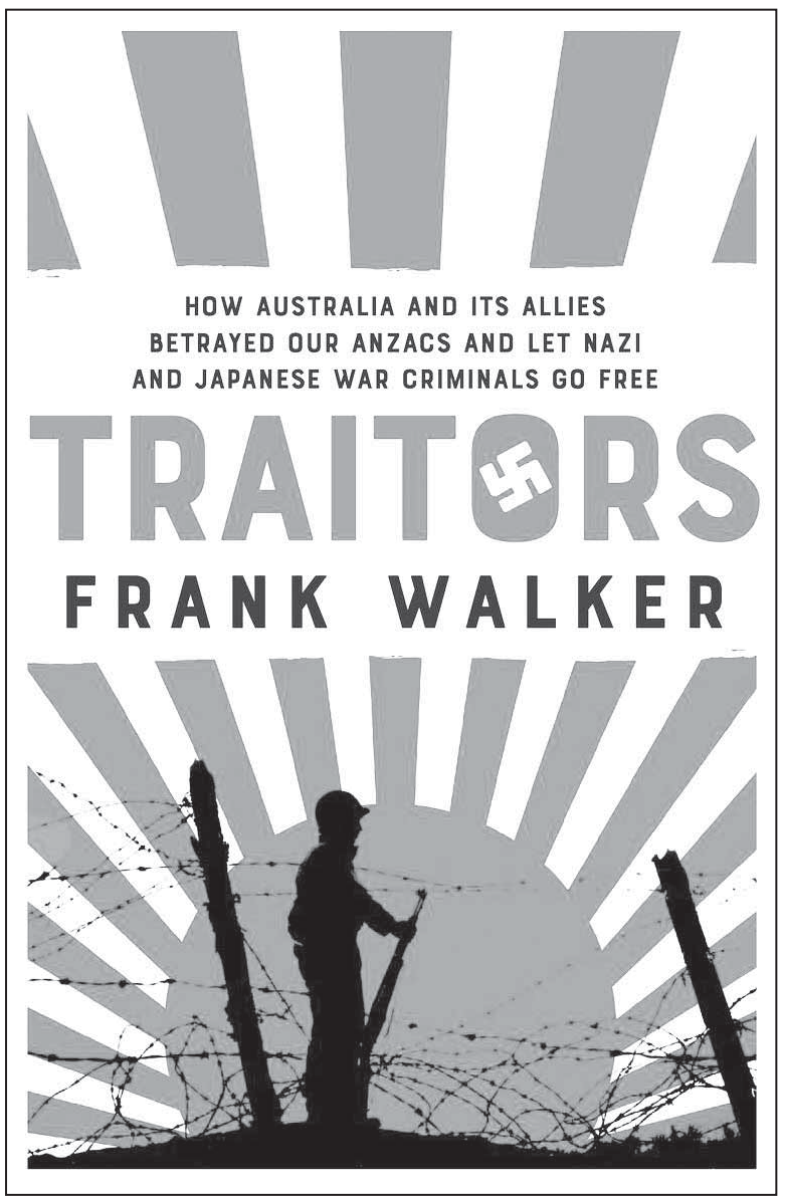
Walker recounts that a prison camp doctor took nine groups of ten prisoners, injecting them with an unknown substance which he said was Vitamin B. Fifty of them died soon after. Other places were equally horrid. "On Guadalcanal two prisoners were shot in the feet to stop them from escaping, and then a medical officer dissected them live, cutting out their livers."

Unit 731, headed by General Ishii Sato, carried out nightmarish experiments involving operations on prisoners without anaesthetic. Ishii escaped prosecution as in May 1947, General MacArthur requested full immunity for Ishii and his associates. "He even cited the living human dissections performed at Pingfang as a particular bonus for America." The question of bacteriological warfare was briefly raised at the Tokyo War Crimes Trials but was immediately suppressed.

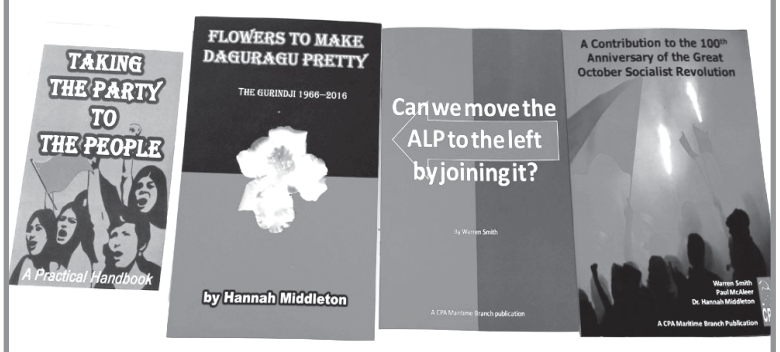
The nature of post-war Japan stands in stark contrast to Germany. The German people have recognised the crimes committed in their name but Japan has not. It did not even admit to Unit 731 until 1982. The appointed "Showa Terror" of colonised Manchukuo, Nabusuke Kishi, and later key member of the Tojo Cabinet who signed a decree conscripting slave labour for factories in Manchukuo, became Prime Minister of "democratic" Japan in 1957. The present Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, is his grandson.

Frank Walker has exposed the depth of the betrayal of our forces and of our allies by the post-war settlements, where the Cold War was used to justify recruiting Nazis and Japanese war criminals for the coming conflict with the USSR. As the introduction concludes: "After reading this book you won't help but wonder, what else did they hide?"

The Beacon ✪



CPA Maritime publications



Publication	Cost
A Contribution to the 100th Anniversary of the Great October Revolution	$10 each
Can we move the ALP to the left by joining it?	$5 each
Flowers to Make Dagu Ragu Pretty	$10 each
Taking the Party to the People A Practical Handbook	$2 or free pdf on request

To purchase a copy of any book(s) contact the branch via peace@mira.net or the party office via the usual methods. A must have for all our members and friends.
Postage costs 1 booklet costs $2.50, 2 booklets costs $3.50
3 booklets cost $5.50

David Bradbury's *America & Me*

Renowned filmmaker David Bradbury (twice Academy Award nominated) will be in Sydney, for the premier of his latest documentary, which chronicles his time in the US during the 2016 presidential election campaign.

America & Me will screen at the Gaelic Club, Surry Hills on Thursday May 3 at 8pm. The screening will be followed by a Q&A with the filmmaker.

"I want people to wake up. I haven't been able to get support from ABC or SBS at all so the only way of getting the film out there is taking it to the people. I have respect within the documentary filmmaking community having covered the world as my beat for the last 40 years. I believe I have something unique and different to say," says Bradbury.

America & Me documents the filmmaker's observations over three months in the US during the lead up to the surprise election of Donald Trump. A one-man band and always traveling with his camera, David Bradbury was easily able to slip into gear and start filming while on tour with his anti-militarism documentary *War on Trial*.

Eight US cities later he chronicled what was happening on the streets of America; 40 years after Ronald Reagan introduced the economic theories of Milton Friedman and the infamous Chicago Boys to the world.

Bradbury interviews veterans of America's failed wars to maintain Empire, gets down in the gutter with the homeless to find out what life is like on the streets, speaks to a nun who was violated by the military junta in Guatemala under the directions of a CIA operative, goes to the US/Mexican border where Trump plans to build the Wall, films out front of CIA Headquarters in Langley, Virginia where deadly drone attacks are ordered up every "Killer Tuesday" by the US President ... and ends up at the Standing Rock protest camp for Election Day.

These vignettes give context to Bradbury's critique of the American penchant for empire, using telling moments from his earlier films shot on the edge of the American colossus – *Nicaragua No Pasaran*, *Chile Hasta Cuando?*, *Frontline* and *South of the Border*.

Visit: cpa.org.au/redirect/bradbury ✪

Care4Calais call

Care4Calais volunteers getting ready to distribute food, hot drinks and winter coats to refugees.

Sam Phipps

Last week Eltayeb learnt the word knee. He is 17 and his knee is sore from a football tackle. It's bad news, not because he won't be able to play football for a while but because he is homeless and being healthy is key for his survival.

Mohamed is even younger, still 16 for another few months. How many more nights will they have to sleep out? By day he and Eltayeb are among dozens of refugees to seek warmth, shelter and somewhere to charge their phones in a building run by the French charity Secours Catholique.

Both have fled violence – Eltayeb in Chad, Mohamed in Darfur, Sudan – then endured hellish journeys across the Sahara and the Mediterranean, with hellish stays in Libya or Egypt in between.

Today they sit at a table in the centre and are hungry for English. Care4Calais volunteers come here regularly. Back in February I joined them for four days, spending some of that time in a warehouse on the edge of the town, sorting and packing clothes for distribution in Calais and Dunkirk.

To handle the donations is heartening in itself, a reminder of kindness pouring in from afar. (One giant box contains 50 pairs of brand new rubber boots.) More touching are the hand-drawn cards from children to be passed on to refugees with messages wishing them peace and safety.

Thirty years ago I got my TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language) certificate and the training has come in handy again after a long time out. We do the present tense. "I live in a forest!" Eltayeb says, and smiles. "I live in a forest!" He can't believe it either. It's a wood really, on the edge of Calais, but this is no time to split hairs. We do the past tense.

"Four people died on the boat," Mohamed says. He doesn't smile. Not till he gets on to his favourite team again, Manchester United. His memory for scores, players and the dates of trophies is amazing. The next teacher needs to look at the future with them.

With the boys round the table are men from Syria, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Egypt. Nearby others play chess or cards or Connect Four or look at their phones or sleep on the floor. At 4.30pm the centre closes and everyone heads slowly out back into the rain.

But who's that round the corner? It's Care4Calais again. More volunteers have arrived in vans – one has sleeping bags and packs of socks, scarves and gloves, the other brings hot tea. As people choose stuff and shuffle around against the chill, I talk to a young man who left Afghanistan when the Taliban blew up his father.

After that he lived in Iran for a year, which he loved. "Iran is a beautiful, beautiful country. I worked there but with no papers so deported back to Afghanistan." He came to France via Germany, which he says also refused to take him. Now he is shivering and coughing in Calais.

Another man, Mhretab, left Eritrea a year ago and also has his heart set on London. "I have two brothers and a sister there." He will keep working to that goal, however long it takes.

About 1,000 refugees are thought to be living rough in Calais and Dunkirk, a fraction of the 9,000 or so who were in the so-called Calais Jungle until it was destroyed in October 2016. They are harassed by police who often take down their tents or ruin them with pepper spray.

On the other hand, many locals of all ages, from taxi drivers to activists and volunteers such as those at Secours Catholique, are clearly sympathetic. On my first night I joined a fundraising ceilidh in a disused silk factory. A large group of volunteers from Soas, London University, were there too.

They had been working with another charity, Refugee Community Kitchen, which makes, delivers and serves a fantastic number of hot meals every day.

The logistics of sifting through clothes in the warehouse are more complex than I realised – if they're too large for the malnourished refugees or too impractical, or dirty or torn, they're no good.

Most of the stuff is fine, but it has to go in just the right place. Categories for jackets, for instance, are warm/light waterproof/non-waterproof. The atmosphere in the warehouse is very friendly, with plenty of chatting and joking, and the more experienced hands do everything they can to help the new arrivals adapt to their various tasks. One or two people make a hot lunch for everyone every day.

Each morning starts with an informal meeting over tea and coffee, with the organisers, Aisha and Natalie, welcoming new volunteers and telling us about the plans for the day. There is often some choice of locations and activities.

On the first distribution run that I join, 50 or 60 Eritrean men, the youngest probably in their late teens, emerge from their makeshift shelters near a roundabout to queue for clothing from the back of the Care4Calais van.

Two of the long-term volunteers, Alex and Ash, walk briskly to the more tucked-away areas to let people know we are here.

It's a welcome surprise – when you are conditioned by so much mainstream media to think of refugees as some faceless group of "others" – to see how strong the individual relationships have become. Many volunteers and refugees don't just know each other's names, they greet and embrace like old friends.

Humour is never far away despite, or maybe because of, the constant struggles.

When you consider what they have all endured to get this far, many things spring to mind – one is that it is obvious none of them wants to be dependent on handouts.

As I pass medium, small or extra-small clothing along from the back of the van to the long and patient queue of men, it does not take too much to imagine our roles reversed, the lottery tickets handed out differently.

Another is that Britain is falling pitifully short not only of its moral and legal obligations to take in more refugees but also of its own promises. One glimmer of hope for systemic change came in March when a private member's Bill to reunite refugee families passed its second reading in Westminster after gaining cross-party support.

In the meantime, to anyone thinking of donating to Care4Calais, I can tell you it's going to good use. The clothes and equipment and tea are vital. The interaction is vital.

And to anyone thinking of volunteering here for the first time, I can only say go ahead. It's a relief and a privilege to be able to offer something practical and you will make some difference, even if it feels like not enough.

Morning Star

When you consider what they have all endured to get this far, many things spring to mind – one is that it is obvious none of them wants to be dependent on handouts.

On to the next challenges

WT Whitney

Fidel Castro served as Cuba's President from 1978 until 2008. Raul Castro did so from that year until April 19, 2018. On that day, Miguel Díaz-Canel, 57 years old, became Cuba's president. His presidency thus marks the dawning of an era in which revolutionaries who toppled the Batista regime in 1959 no longer have a direct hand in governmental affairs.

Cuba's National Assembly named Díaz-Canel as president of Cuba's Council of State. That position constitutionally establishes him as Cuba's president. Voters on March 11 had elected deputies to the current session of the Assembly. The Assembly is "the supreme body of state power and represents and expresses the sovereign will of all the people."

Díaz-Canel's rise to the presidency resulted from that National Assembly having elected 31 Assembly members to serve on the Council of State and choosing a few of them to be officers for the Council. The new Council includes 15 women and 11 new members. The members' average age is 54 years; 77.8 percent of them were born after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

The National Candidature Commission, led by leaders of Cuba's labour movement, is crucial to Cuba's electoral process generally and to the procedure used by the Assembly to form the Council of State. The Commission had previously conferred with individual deputies to learn their preferences as to members and officers of the Council of State. It used its findings to create a single slate of proposed members and officers.

The Assembly deputies voted secretly on the entire proposal. Two of the 604 voting deputies chose Council of State members other than the ones offered them. The others approved the recommended slate of members and officers.

Esteban Lazo, newly reinstated as president of the Assembly, presided over the session at which the new Council of State was announced. Revolutionary veterans Ana María Mari Machado, Ramiro Valdés, and Gladys Bejerano were returned to the Council of State. Veteran leaders of the Revolution departing the Council with Raúl Castro included José Ramón Machado Ventura and General Álvaro López Miera. The new first vice-president is former labour leader Salvador Valdés Mesa. Five vice-presidents were named.

Since 2013, the Cuban president's term has been limited to five years. After leaving office Raúl Castro will continue as head of Cuba's Army and as first secretary of the Cuban Communist Party.

In addressing the National Assembly the new Cuban president dedicated his remarks to "the historical generation that with its sanction and humility accompanies us in this time of challenges." He pointed out that, "The mandate given by the people to this legislature is continuity of the Revolution." He stated that, "for us it's totally clear that only the Communist Party of Cuba guarantees the unity of the nation and its people."

Díaz-Canel, grew up in Villa Clara Province. In 1982 he graduated as an electrical engineer from the university there. He was a student leader and later served in the Army and on a solidarity mission in Nicaragua. He taught at the university for three years beginning in 1985. Díaz-Canel, formerly a Communist Party youth leader, became the Party's first secretary in Villa Clara in 1993.

He joined the Political Bureau of the Communist Party in 2003 and in 2009 was appointed Minister of Higher Education. He relinquished that position in 2013 when he became first vice-president of the Councils of State and of Ministers.

Raúl Castro pronounced the closing words at the April 19 session of the National Assembly. He promised to join President Díaz-Canel at the head of Workers' Day celebrations on May 1 and praised the work over decades of departing Council of State members. He welcomed Salvador Valdés Mesa to his new position as first vice-president and lauded Cuba's gains in gender and racial equality. Valdés Mesa, in line to be Cuba's president, is of African descent.

Castro noted that the election of Díaz-Canel is "no accident." According to Cubadebate.cu, Díaz-Canel's "promotion to higher offices was gradual and intentionally so." And "we didn't commit the error of advancing him too fast as we did in other cases." Castro is quoted as saying that, "We live in a place and a time in which we cannot commit errors." He indicated Díaz-Canel would become first secretary of the Communist Party in 2021, when the next Party Congress takes place.

Ángel Guerra Cabrera, an academician writing for Mexico's La Jornada news service, describes Cuba's new president as well "liked by people in the provinces," someone frequently seen "on a bicycle or [waiting] in a line," and a reader. He faces "big challenges since the economic model now in effect has advanced but has not been consolidated; it requires movement soon toward unification of [Cuba's] monetary system, increased productivity and self-sufficiency, and food sovereignty."

Guerra Cabrera suggests that, "The commercial, economic, and financial blockade of the United States, which has strengthened, is dangerous to the national economy." He calls for both "constitutional reforms that fit with the great changes taking place in Cuban society" and "improved methods for carrying the island's exceptional democracy of its own making to higher levels of participation and perfection."

Poetry on the Picket Line

Chip Grim

Poetry on the Picket Line might sound a little unlikely, but it works. It's a squad of writers prepared to turn up on picket lines and read poetry – something a little different and, usually, it goes down pretty well.

It started off by accident a few years ago during the dispute at the National Gallery during the campaign against privatisation which was heavily supported by the PCS union culture group, whose members were taking action to protect their jobs, terms and conditions.

Trafalgar Square isn't a bad place to stage an outdoor poetry gig, but, as it happened, a couple of writers just thought it might be good to have a change from speeches and started reading poems instead. People liked the idea and it grew from that.

The poetry provoked an enthusiastic response – perhaps surprisingly – but a change is as good as a rest and some informed entertainment provided something different for the pickets and their supporters.

Following this, the poets put a gig on outside the gallery which was a resounding success. It coincided with the day the management finally agreed to terms, so Poetry on the Picket Line (PotPL) spun it that it was the poetry that won it. It was about much more than that, of course – 111 days of strike action, apart from anything else.

Word spread quickly – these are quality operators – so now PotPL is in demand, having done work with other PCS disputes across the culture sector but also at the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the junior doctors dispute, the cleaners' strikes at LSE and SOAS, the Barts hospital strike and the Bectu cinema workers dispute. Most recently, they've been very active on UCU picket lines.

PotPL poets do what it says on the tin. Turn up at pickets and demos and read poems — with a mic, without a mic, through a megaphone, whatever. Pickets are generally pretty pleased and surprised to see them. They appreciate the support and some of them even appreciate the poetry.

Plus, it's unusual. So pictures get taken and videos get made and shared on Facebook, Twitter and other social media. That helps raise the profile of the dispute and that's vital in the case of something like the current Picturehouse campaign where there's a boycott of the cinema chain and it helps to raise the profile of the poets too.

Then, when they do gigs, the poets talk about the work, pass the hat round, sell T-shirts and badges, with the money going back into the various strike funds. It's all about the solidarity and it works.

Why does it matter? Because it brings poetry onto picket lines and picket lines into poetry. Real people connecting with real poetry in the real world. That's got to be a good thing.

PotPL will be publishing a weekly poetry column in *Morning Star* from Thursday May 10.

Morning Star

POETRY ON THE PICKET LINE

Fascist moves in Ukraine

John Wojcik

In an attempt to thwart pro-worker demonstrations planned for May Day in Ukraine, government "security services" broke into Communist Party buildings in that country on April 24, according to press releases sent out of the country by the party. The party statement said the government security forces acted on information provided by Svoboda (Freedom).

Svoboda, which is connected to the Social Nationalist Party of the Ukraine, a well-known pro-Nazi party, claimed the communists were harbouring illegal activities including passing out post cards in celebration of the May 9, 1945 allied victory over fascism and planning illegal pro-worker demonstrations on May Day next week. While those activities have indeed been declared illegal by the Ukrainian government the use of fascist symbols and flags, fascist marches and the construction of memorials honouring Nazis are all entirely legal now in that country.

The current government in Kiev came to power in a coup that ousted Viktor Yanukovych, the democratically elected president of the country and then slaughtered thousands of ethnic Russians who resisted the new fascist government.

According to the communists, the government has declared as illegal leaflets seized that read: "Long live May 1 – the day of solidarity with working people." Incredibly, Ukraine is now one of the very few countries where the celebration of May Day has been banned. It is currently celebrated in at least 142 countries, the Ukrainian Communist Party notes in its statement on the raid.

Other leaflets seized read, "We demand Peace, Jobs, and Salaries!" The government said the leaflets were seized because they endanger the "sovereignty" of the Ukraine. "These guardians of the regime apparently confused the interests of the state with the interests of the oligarchs," the communist statement read.

The party has appealed to the United Nations Human Rights Council for action against the government's violation of its rights.

The Kiev government has a long and dubious record in the area of human rights, a record ignored by much of the US media which portrays the Ukrainian government as a bastion of freedom fighting against Russian "invaders."

Celebrations of anniversaries of progressive victories have always been a sore spot for the Ukrainian fascists. When the 70th anniversary of the end of the Holocaust was celebrated three years ago, for example, the parliament in Kiev extended official recognition to political groupings that had collaborated with the Nazis in murdering Jews. Among those recognised as legal groups was the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, an ultra-right, anti-Semitic group that had openly worked with the Nazis.

In the time span of only a few months in 2015 there were at least ten mysterious deaths of opposition figures, with the government claiming they were all suicides. One of those killed was Oleg Kalishnikov, a leader of the opposition Party of Regions, who was shot in his own home after he had been campaigning for the right of Ukrainians to celebrate the allied victory in World War II.

His death and the killing of numerous opposition journalists have been largely ignored in the western media.

Those included the murder of Ukrainian journalist Oles Buzna, a critic of the Kiev fascists, who had protested censorship that the Ukraine has imposed on news outlets that don't carry forward the government's positon on issues. Also murdered was the dissident journalist

Seriy Sukhobok. There were reports after his death that his assailants had been found but later the government changed its story and said they had not been found.

The US State Department, both during the Obama years and now under Trump, has pushed the narrative that the Ukrainian government has been initiating democratic reforms. While there is little evidence of any such reforms the government has been busy, however, slashing pensions for seniors, hiking fuel prices and implementing International Monetary Fund demands for austerity in exchange for that fund having bailed out Ukrainian banks.

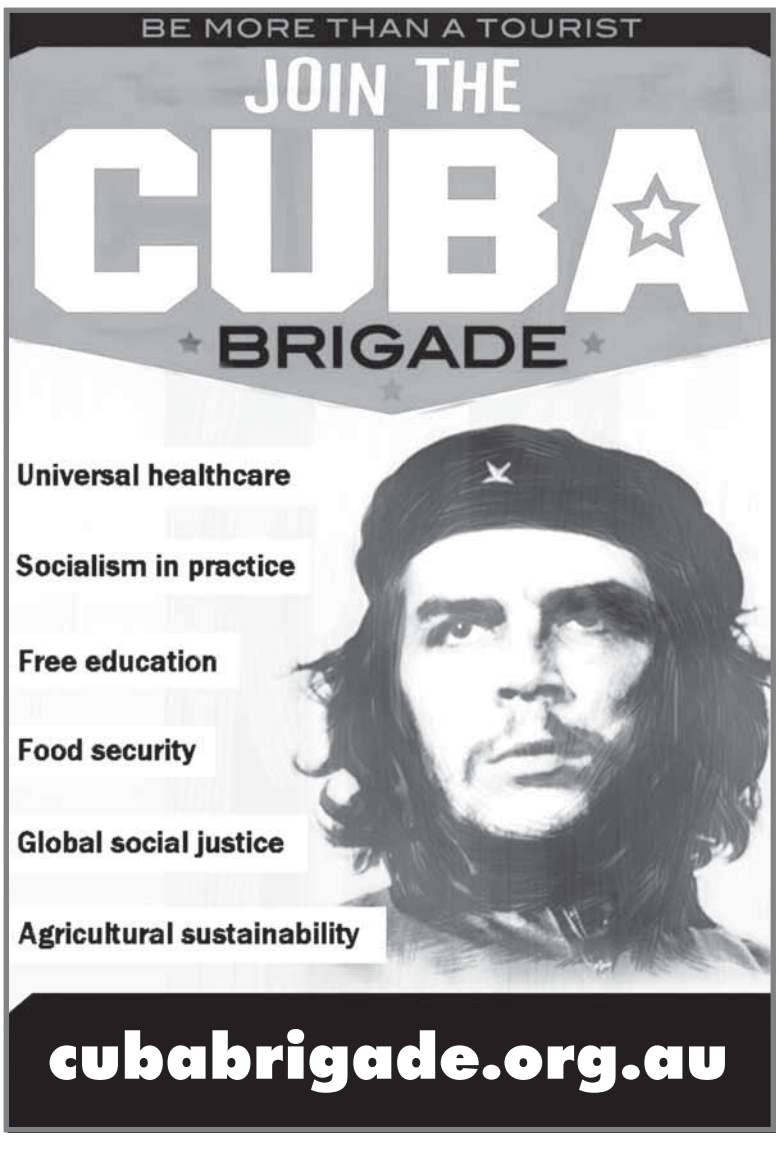
Nazism has a long history in Western Ukraine since World War II, particularly in cities such as Lviv which boasts a well-kept cemetery to veterans of the Galician SS, the Ukrainian chapter of the Nazi SS.

The "mass" protests against the last legally elected president, Yanukovych, included 100-member brigades of neo-Nazi militias bused into Kiev. After the coup, Anriy Parubiy, a leader in Svoboda who was a fascist commander of the so-called "defence forces" of the demonstrators in Kiev, was elevated to the post of national security director. He led the government expeditions into eastern Ukraine to fight the ethnic Russians resisting the coup. Thousands of the pro-fascist fighters marched into ethnic Russian villages in eastern Ukraine under banners bearing swastikas and other fascist symbols.

The generally right-wing London *Telegraph* departed from the type of reporting at that time generally seen in the US when its correspondent, Tom Partiff, wrote in an article: "Kiev's use of voluntary paramilitaries to stamp out Russian-backed Donetsk and Luhansk 'peoples republics' should send a shiver down Europe's spine ... the men use the neo-Nazi Wolfsangel (Wolf's Hook) symbol on their banner and members of the battalion are openly white supremacists, or anti-Semites."

In interviews with the *Telegraph*, fighters denied the Holocaust, expressed admiration for Adolf Hitler and said that they were in fact Nazis.

People's World ✪



Teaching the children well

DENVER: First it was West Virginia. Then Oklahoma. Then Kentucky. Then Arizona. Now add Colorado to the ever-lengthening list of states where teachers are taking to the streets in mass marches, protests, and campaigns to demand more funds for their students.

The differences in the Centennial State? Several: It won't be a state-wide strike, but dozens of schools closed on April 26-27. And Democrats, who are more sympathetic to education, have a state surplus to spend, and they control the governor's chair and one house of the legislature.

Another difference: The campaign at the Capitol building in Denver, expected to attract 10,000 teachers, is their second such march on the legislature in a month. The first won a reversal of pension schemes. And two state legislative Republicans reacted with a bill – which may go nowhere – calling for mass firings and jail for striking teachers and a big fine against the union.

But there are similarities with the other states, which in turn brought Colorado teachers into action. One is crowded classes: Colorado is 14th-worst in the US, at 16.4 students per teacher, including primary grades and kindergarten. Arizona, at 23.8, was second worst.

Another is low pay: Colorado, at an average of $46,155 in 2016, is 46th in the US, National Education Association data show. That's up 3.9 percent – the second-largest percentage hike – in one year. That jump lifted Colorado from 49th.

That #46 ranking understates the pay problem, says Kerrie Dallman, president of Colorado Education Association, the state's largest union.

"We have starting salaries in this state at $29,000," she told a recent local TV interviewer. "No educator planning to come down here wants to be here rather than in the classroom. But as educators, we feel compelled to be here for our students."

That's because her union says the state's funding shortfall for Colorado schools is $828 million – and because it hits rural schools especially hard.

"We have great public schools in Colorado, but in too many communities we are not giving schools the resources they need for every child to succeed. To be sure we can attract and retain high quality educators to Colorado, we must prioritize education funding so educators can support their families and contribute to our communities and our children can reach their full potential," the union said in announcing the mass rallies at the end of April.

"School districts and public school supporters end up begging for the leftover money at the end of every legislative session while our dedicated educators are forced to work second jobs and buy school supplies out of their own pockets. Our members are taking a stand ... to demand something better than the leftovers," said Dallman.

"Lawmakers are uniquely positioned to make game-changing investments in K-12 this year and we want to see big results, like a multi-year commitment that proves Colorado values students and respects educators. We invite community members everywhere to join us in demanding the schools our students deserve."

That takes money, and the teachers offer lawmakers a solution: "Commit to a freeze on corporate tax breaks of all kinds until school funding is restored or until per-pupil funding reaches the national average." Arizona's teachers have a similar demand.

People's World ✪

Working people and EU exit

The Scottish Socialist Party has never been a fan of the European Union. Although we voted to remain in 2016 we saw that as "the lesser of two evils."

Colin Fox*

Brexit has dominated British politics for the past two years and is likely to do so for the next two. There is also no escaping the fact this has been a debate dominated by voices from the right. The Scottish Socialist Party is therefore eager to explore how working people might benefit from these Brexit negotiations.

To that end we have organised a forum under the auspices of our newspaper *The Scottish Socialist Voice*, bringing together several influential voices to consider what demands the left might make to influence the outcome.

As Brexit is inevitable we believe the left should focus not on overturning the 2016 vote but on how best to deliver a "Brexit premium," as it were, for working people.

Those who argued a Leave vote would be a defeat for the ruling class and an opportunity for the left have some explaining to do. For whatever the merits of the tactic at the time, we can surely all agree it didn't happen that way.

Brexit was a victory for the right, for Nigel Farage's Ukip and the "Little Englanders" who wanted to "take back control." It was they who obsessed over Europe for two decades. It was they who demanded the referendum. And it was their victory.

The Scottish Socialist Party has never been a fan of the European Union. Although we voted to remain in 2016 we saw that as "the lesser of two evils." But we accepted the result. We believe it is now vital the left fully appreciates the implications of the fact we have no team on the park here.

We have influenced the Brexit debate little and are now at the mercy of two sets of neo-liberals who plan further attacks on working people.

So how does the left influence these negotiations? What Brexit premium, if any, can be achieved to benefit working people?

These are the questions the Scottish Socialist Voice Forum will consider on April 28 in Edinburgh with those interested in finding a way for working people to benefit from the changed political landscape.

Public ownership of key industries and utilities, which we were repeatedly told was expressly prohibited by EU regulations, surely offers one important new opening.

Gordon Martin, Scottish organiser of the RMT, will lead this part of our discussion and explain how we return our railways and other important industries to public hands.

Another Brexit premium might be to end the casualisation, insecure jobs and poverty wages endemic in British society.

The Scottish government announced earlier this month for example that there are now one million people here living in poverty – and most of them are working.

For the past decade average wages across Britain have struggled to maintain their purchasing power. They remain below their 2008 level and as things stand are not set to recover until the mid-2020s.

"The persistent weakness of wages," concludes Chris Giles of *The Financial Times*, "is one of the most important features of the UK economy and explains the dismal performance of living standards and public dissatisfaction with British capitalism. Employees have lost bargaining power and employers see opportunities for further exploitation."

The keynote address at our forum will be therefore be delivered by the Norwegian trade union leader and author Asbjorn Wahl who will fly over to join our panel.

His thoughts on neo-liberalism and the crisis of social democracy are worthy of wide attention.

The left must face the new landscape in Europe, he says, with a determination to defeat the neoliberal hegemony. He warns the trade union movement across Europe to recognise that the supposed era of "social dialogue" is over and that social democracy itself is in profound crisis.

So how are we to mobilise public opinion behind progressive, popular ideas such as extended public ownership, ending casualisation and poverty wages and challenging the hegemony of the market?

Given Boris Johnston's fictional promise of "an extra £350 million a week for the NHS" after a Leave vote, one popular demand would be to bring England into line with the rest of the UK by abolishing the highly iniquitous NHS prescription charges.

This "tax on the sick" sees patients in England put at a particular disadvantage. For they alone now pay twice for their medicines (£8.80 for each item on the script) while patients in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland pay only once via general taxation.

This is one significant Brexit premium millions of working people could benefit from if timed for withdrawal from the EU. Millions of working people in England would find a health parity with patients in the rest of these isles currently denied them.

An affordable social housing program akin to the post war reconstruction is another proposal which would meet with widespread approval and end another ongoing scandal. Paid for by a Tobin tax (levy on all stock exchange transactions) this measure would meet widespread approval.

I expect further ideas like these to emerge from the Voice Forum in Edinburgh on April 28. That will be the measure of its success.

*Colin Fox is the national spokesman of the Scottish Socialist Party.

Morning Star ✪

More journalists jailed

Steve Sweeney

Turkey sentenced 13 journalists from the opposition *Cumhuriyet* newspaper to lengthy jail sentences last week as press freedom came under further attack. In a "sham trial," the notorious Silivri court found the staff from the country's oldest newspaper guilty of helping multiple terrorist organisations.

The journalists, along with cartoonist Musa Kart, received jail sentences of between two and eight years. All defendants were released following the verdict, with the sentences to be confirmed by the upper court. Editor-in-chief Murat Sabuncu, who was sentenced to seven-and-a-half years, remained defiant.

"No penalty can stop us from doing journalism. If needed, we will go to prison again, but we will continue to do journalism," he said.

The *Cumhuriyet* trial has caused international outrage with the journalists accused of supporting the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's nemesis, US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, who he accused of plotting the failed July 2016 coup attempt.

Former editor-in-chief Can Dundar was arrested in November 2015 after *Cumhuriyet* published video footage showing Turkish intelligence service MIT shipping a vanload of weapons across the border to Syria, which he claimed were bound for Islamist militants.

He was sentenced to more than five years in prison and is living in exile in Germany.

Investigative journalist Ahmet Shik, was sentenced to seven years and six months in prison. "On behalf of those who have been standing against unlawfulness and violation of rights for their entire lives, let's respond to this gang and others alike by repeating what we've been saying from the very first day. It's you who should surrender," he charged.

Press freedom is severely restricted in Turkey, which has jailed more journalists than any other country – a third of the world's total.

More than 150,000 public-sector workers have been sacked under a state of emergency which has been in place for nearly two years while opposition MPs from the People's Democratic Party (HDP) have been jailed and stripped of their parliamentary status.

The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) said the sentences were part of a "clear intimidation" strategy which will have a "chilling effect on press freedom in the wake of new elections."

"We stand by our colleagues at *Cumhuriyet* who are ready to continue their profession with the support of the public opinion and despite the crack down," it said in a statement.

Morning Star ✪

Letters to the Editor
The Guardian
74 Buckingham Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
email: tpearson@cpa.org.au

Anti-fascist tactics

At the approach of WW2 Leon Trotsky argued that if "French fascists should make an attempt today at a coup d'etat and the Daladier government found itself forced to move troops against the fascists, the revolutionary workers, while maintaining their complete political independence, would fight against the fascists alongside of these troops".

The essence of that quote is clear – if the forces trying to overthrow the status quo are more reactionary than the status quo, then the Left should support the defence of the status quo, which in the current situation in Syria means supporting the defence of the government against the reactionary alternative. If some self-styled Trotskyists can apply this logic to a colonising power like France, but not a nation that France actually once colonised like Syria, then they expose only their colonial chauvinism.

Some on the Left note our opposition to Trotsky. The irony is that we're often among the few actively applying his thoughts, correct on this occasion, in a pamphlet he wrote titled "Learn to Think" in 1936, which is where that previous quote came from!

Vladimir Lenin wrote about imperialism at a time when the world was ruled by colony-possessing empires that tended towards war with each other for global territorial control.

The national liberation struggles that ended colonialism across most of the planet transformed imperialism into a geopolitical project dominated by the United States and committed to reversing the gains of national-liberation. We need an internationalist perspective about the significance of the second world war to understand this.

Nazi Germany waged a war against the Soviet Union so they could clear resource rich territories of their Slavic, Romani, and Jewish populations to make way for German settler colonisers. Imperial Japan waged a similar genocidal war against China and Korea in attempts to access the resources they needed to fuel their empire.

Had the colonisers won the second world war, it would have meant the repartitioning of the world between colonisers, which is the grim world Lenin lived in.

T Southern
Brisbane

Have your say!
Write a letter to the Editor.
email: **tpearson@cpa.org.au**

Robber barons

So we have the Coalition government and the ALP trying to take the moral high ground on the Banking Royal Commission?

Both are as guilty as one another, time and time again both have protected banking and taxation together. We can go back to the great depression and how the law protects big business people and bankers.

But let's go back about 30 years and the attempted ATO prosecution of Kerry Packer for not paying tax on hidden gold bullion. He was found guilty, but no conviction was recorded as well as the ATO having to pay his legal bills!

Gina Rinehart paying less personal tax than her COOK! Banks and insurance companies have always been the biggest robbers – legally or not – in my lifetime. I have never seen one of these parasites jailed or a cop a fine.

The Coalition blames the ALP but of the last 22 years the ALP have only had 6 years in government to skim off the cream. Doesn't say much for this government … or our capitalist system.

Allan Hamilton
Western NSW Branch CPA

Culture & Life

by Rob Gowland

Guns and the USA – again

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School memorial.

The scale of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida in February this year – with 17 dead and 17 wounded – appears to have been the straw that broke the camel's back as far as meek acceptance of the US gun lobby's propaganda is concerned. A mass nationwide protest by school students saw thousands take to the streets on April 20, the anniversary of the 1999 mass shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado, demanding state and federal authorities institute some form of gun control and reject the shrill cries of the National Rifle Association and the rest of the "gun lobby" that any such move would be a denial of Americans' "right to bear arms".

The size of the protests and the fact that the participants were predominantly young appears to have taken the gun lobby in the US by surprise. It would not be overstating the case to say that millions of American youth are in revolt against a system that treats tens of thousands of gun deaths annually as not just normal and acceptable but as somehow evidence of American exceptionalism!

But not any more: the gun lobby has lost the initiative. Their traditional reliance on a combination of patriotism and paranoia has failed to carry the day. At least for now. That may change, of course. For there are some very powerful economic forces that support the gun lobby in the US. For a start there is the private gun industry itself, manufacturing and selling millions of guns for "personal use". They are backed up by the US government and the corporations it serves, all of whom have a vested interest in sustaining a high level of national paranoia which makes it so much easier to channel public spending into such profitable areas as boosting the arms race or starting a convenient war.

Curiously, but perhaps predictably, one argument that is often used to justify the huge number of privately-owned guns in the USA – approximately 4 million would you believe – is the presence of illegal immigrants in the country. One has a right to protect oneself, doesn't one?

The national symbol of the USA is the Statue of Liberty, a gift from France, celebrating the way the USA welcomed refugees and the poor from Europe when it needed settlers to build up its economy. Today the statue is a 93-metre-tall sick joke, as would-be refugees and immigrants are hunted down by police and returned across the border. They are treated not as refugees but as criminals.

A plaque on the base of Miss Liberty, as Americans call the landmark statue, proclaims: "Send me your huddled masses yearning to be free". But unless the huddled masses are white and well heeled, there is no welcome for them in the USA today. Except, that is, as part of the thriving black economy, which depends on the cheap labour of illegal immigrants to provide the rich with all the services they take for granted, from house cleaning to waiting table in their favourite restaurants to working in their non-unionised sweatshops.

Donald Trump, however, has seized on the presence of illegal immigrants as a convenient explanation for the USA's seriously malfunctioning economy. The loss of American manufacturing jobs apparently has nothing to do with a deepening crisis of capitalism itself or with the uncaring greed of US corporations, who have no qualms about shifting their industries from the US to low-wage countries elsewhere.

Apparently America's economic woes are simply a case of sneaky foreigners "stealing" Americans' jobs. Trump's solution – building a huge wall between the USA and Mexico, to be paid for (believe it or not) by Mexico – would have people falling about in helpless laughter in almost any other country. In the USA however, although public debate about government policy is popular, it is simultaneously extremely superficial.

Only in the US could Trump's Mexican wall fantasy be treated as a serious public works project! But then, the USA is a highly dysfunctional country by any measure.

Compared to other countries, so many US citizens die violent deaths they might as well be living in a war zone. In fact, life in the USA is not safe by any definition of the term. The country is rife with mass shootings at schools, shopping malls and picture theatres. One in three homes with children in the United States has a gun. Despite the headlines, most shooting deaths occur in the home or some related place.

In fact, official US statistics show that a gun in the home makes the likelihood of homicide three times higher, suicide three to five times higher, and accidental death four times higher. For each time a gun in the home injures or kills in self-defence, there are 11 completed and attempted gun suicides, seven gun criminal assaults and homicides, and four unintentional shooting deaths or injuries.

And of course, since this is the USA we're talking about, not only are there a tragically absurd number of gun deaths every year, but those deaths are compounded by the country's ever-present racism. Poor Black, American Indian, and Alaska Native children and teens – the oppressed in America – are disproportionately likely to die from a gun.

They are also disproportionately likely to be arrested and jailed – usually on drug-related charges – in the USA's booming private prison system, These are industrial prisons, with inmates providing free labour in what has correctly been described as a new system of slavery in the US.

A system of slavery that – like the earlier version – is principally focussed on oppressing and exploiting people of colour.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the judicial system was used to condemn poor people – regardless of colour – to lengthy terms of slavery ("convict labour") for trivial offences, or just for being poor. With capitalism increasingly dysfunctional, and sources of profit increasingly elusive, the dominant – but desperate – capitalist power seems intent on trying to revive some of the worst practices of the past. In the hope that they will offer the possibility of producing profits.

Which, let's face it, is just not a good enough reason. ✪

Film Review by Chauncey Robinson

Gehenna

History itself can be a horror story sometimes. One filled with war, famine, and the genocide of oppressed peoples. *Gehenna: Where Death Lives* is a horror film that uses the supernatural to reflect on the real-life terrors of colonisation and war in a chilling story of haunted World War II bunkers and Indigenous peoples seeking witnesses to the transgressions of imperialism and murder. It makes for a scary movie that delivers effective thrills and pushes themes that dig a little deeper.

Gehenna was written by well-known special effects artist Hiroshi Katagiri. His 39 film credits in special effects include such titles as *Wolverine*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Alien v Predator Requiem*, *Cabin in the Woods*, and *The Hunger Games*.

The American-Japanese horror film also serves as Katagiri's directorial debut. The film stars Lance Henriksen (*Aliens*), Eva Swan, Simon Phillips, and Justin Gordon, along with the star of the Academy Award-winning movie *The Shape of Water*, Doug Jones.

The plot of *Gehenna* deals with characters Paulina and Tyler, who work for a real estate development company, visiting the island of Saipan to pick a location for their company's latest resort. After finding the so-called perfect location – which also happens to be a cursed burial ground according to the locals – they discover a hidden cave on the property and decide to explore it with their small group.

The cave reveals a long abandoned Japanese military base dating back to WW2. From there, things take a turn for the worst, as the bunker turns out to be more than what it seemed, leaving the small group on a race against time to escape.

Locating the story on the island of Saipan appears to be a purposeful choice by Katagiri. It is a place where the native population has dealt with conquest for centuries – from the time of Spanish colonisation all the way up to WW2. The Spanish formally occupied the island in 1668 with the missionary expedition of Diego Luis de San Vitores.

Saipan became a port of call for Spanish and occasional English, Dutch, and French ships in 1670. The native population dropped dramatically due to European-introduced diseases and conflicts over land. The Indigenous survivors were forcibly relocated in 1720 to Guam by the Spanish colonizers in order to control and assimilate them.

The island was captured by the Empire of Japan in 1914 during the First World War. In the 1920s, there were strong waves of immigration by ethnic Japanese, Koreans, Taiwanese, and Okinawans, resulting in the development of large-scale sugar plantations.

In mid-1944, nearly 30,000 Imperial Japanese Army and Imperial Japanese Navy troops were based on the island. The Battle of Saipan from June 15 to July 9, 1944 was one of the major campaigns of World War II. It cost the lives of 3,426 Americans, 30,000 Japanese soldiers, and 20,000 Japanese civilians. So Saipan is clearly an island whose history is haunted by death and violence.

This history plays a significant role in the film, as the plotline of the cave and the haunted bunker is interwoven with the real life historical travesties the island has witnessed. The land Paulina and her colleagues want to build on is sacred ground, and it is required that it stay untouched as a monument to the tragedies of history that natives experienced. Of course, Paulina and her colleagues don't listen. Greed and money drive them forward to disregard the warnings, and that ends up being their undoing.

When first coming upon the movie, and reading the plot synopsis, I was wary that this film would fall into the worn out – and somewhat racist – trope of having it so the people of colour, in this case the native population of Saipan, being used as "magical" beings to simply drive the plot forward in another case of the so-called "mysterious other." Thus leaving only the white characters with any real agency.

We've seen one too many so-called scary movies where a mysterious island of brown people is stumbled upon by white protagonists, and in the end it's up to the white protagonists to win against the brown peoples' "evil voodoo" or something along those lines. Another extreme example of this overused plot device is the *Magical Negro Trope* and the *Magical Native American Trope*. This is where a person of colour, usually poor, is shown to have some other worldly magic or wisdom, and their only purpose is to help the white main character.

Gehenna somewhat turns this trope on it's head. The real evil, or driving force, isn't the magic of the natives, or the possible curse. The real evil is something way more sinister and tangible, the supernatural only brings it out into the open. It's always nice when a movie chooses to subvert the sometimes biased status quo of Hollywood themes to force segments of society to take a look at themselves, and their history, in an unflinching way. The film doesn't knock us over the head with messaging, but the messaging is definitely there.

The movie has solid acting, pacing, and a cool twist at the end. The special effects are great, which is no surprise since Katagiri also worked on that aspect of the film.

The look and feel of what should be outright grotesque dead bodies and blood actually take on an almost artistic morbid beauty, which creates a scary enough atmosphere. There are a few times when the screen is a bit too dark, but some space can be given considering it's supposed to be underground and inside a cave.

Overall, this film delivers in horror and good storytelling. The audience will, whether looking for something deeper or not, most likely be satisfied in some capacity with what they get. They're in store for a wild ride through time that may even spark their curiosity for an impromptu history lesson, as it did with me.

People's World ✪

Sydney

Annual Nakba Commemoration

Dr Ramzy Baroud

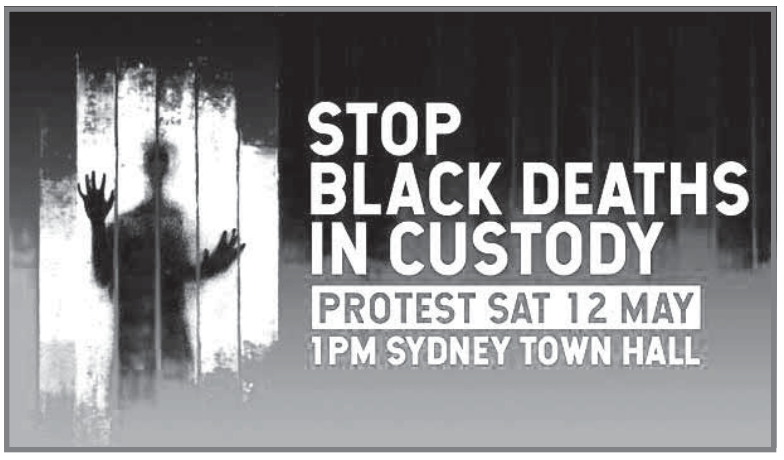
Coalition for Justice and Peace in Palestine will present our annual Nakba commemoration this year which is the 70th anniversary of the Nakba.

7 pm Wednesday May 16

NSW Parliament Macquarie Street Sydney

SPEAKER: Dr. Ramzy Baroud, a widely published and translated author, an internationally syndicated columnist and editor of the PalestineChronicle.com.

coalitionforpalestine.org



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Editorial Office
74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010 Ph: 02 9699 8844 Fax: 02 9699 9833 Email: guardian@cpa.org.au

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Sydney

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NORTH KOREA: HUMAN RIGHTS & SECURITY, INCOMPATIBLE

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Along Class Lines

Real anti-Semitism

Peter Frost

The current well-orchestrated campaign to try to make the word Zionist synonymous with the word Jewish has made me look back over a political lifetime where real anti-Semitism, as opposed to politically motivated and devious accusations of it, has shaped the life and political thinking of me and those close to me.

I started writing this article with the idea of marking the 75th anniversary of the brave rising against the obscenity of the Warsaw Ghetto where, between April 19 and May 16, 1943, one of the most heroic acts of Jewish resistance ever was played out in Nazi-occupied Poland.

I will relate the story of the ghetto, but, before we come to that, let me tell another story nearer home, and itself set nearly 50 years ago and only a score of years after the heroism of the ghetto uprising.

This story starts when blackshirt Oswald Mosley stood in Kensington North in the 1959 general election. Mosley suffered a humiliating defeat but still battled on over the next two years trying to bring the various wings and splinter groups of post-war British fascism together.

This curious coupling would see the birth of the British National Party, but Mosley wasn't to be any part of it. He was just one of far too many big-headed bigots who thought they deserved the top job as British fuehrer.

Mosley also organised meetings and conferences all over Europe for the rump of those far-right fascist groups that had escaped post-war justice. Finally, with them, he formed The Party of Europe and, like most things he put his mind to, it was a grand failure.

Long-time fascist, self-confessed Jew-baiter, street fighter and Mosley admirer Jeffrey Hamm was living in Holland Park in the late 1950s and was delighted when the race riots broke out in nearby Notting Hill.

Hamm had helped open the Union Movement's fascist bookshop and meeting place in Kensington Park Road in 1959 and organised Mosley meetings in nearby Kilburn High Road and in North Kensington. As often as possible he would try to get the man he thought of as "The Great Leader" to speak at these street corner meetings.

Whether Mosley was speaking or not, the meetings would always be disrupted by local anti-fascists not least from the Communist Party, Young Communist League (YCL) and from many London Jewish groups.

One of those young communists was a 16-year-old apprentice hairdresser from Paddington. She remembers that her YCL branch would race to beat the fascists to the best street corner spots for their soap box meetings.

She had come across the YCL in Kilburn High Road at one of those very meetings. She bought their magazine *Challenge*, liked what she read, and sent off the membership form.

Just a year into membership it was suggested she should climb up on the soap box as a speaker. "I was terrified at the thought of public speaking," she recollects.

"Then I remembered our last YCL meeting. The subject had been the Warsaw Ghetto. The heroic actions of those women and men so inspired me that I climbed up and made my first political speech in public. They haven't been able to shut me up since."

So, I hear you ask, what happened to that young communist woman who, so inspired by the Jewish heroes of the ghetto, was to spend a life opposing not just anti-Semitism but all kinds of prejudice, injustice and racism?

To only slightly gender-realign Charlotte Bronte's climax to Jane Eyre: "Reader, I married her."

The heroes of the ghetto

Late in 1939 Hitler gave one of his favourite officers, Reinhard Heydrich, an important job – all Jews in Poland were to be confined to ghettos surrounded by barbed wire, brick walls and armed guards.

Heydrich wasn't slow to get to work. Jews had their property confiscated and they were herded into these new ghettos. The two largest were in Warsaw and Lodz.

Warsaw Ghetto – Jews from Austria and Czechoslovakia were being shipped into these ghettos.

By October 1939, Jews from Austria and Czechoslovakia were being shipped into these ghettos. Huge numbers died on the journey and Adolf Eichmann told those who survived that they would need to build their own shelters.

In Warsaw Nazi troops sealed all entrances to the ghetto. Conditions were so bad that in just two years an estimated 100,000 Jews died of starvation and disease.

In January 1942, in a Berlin suburb beside lake Wannsee top Nazis met to start to plan what became cynically known as the "final solution."

The pretty location could not have been further at odds from the ugly aim of the conference. Hitler's Holocaust had started.

In the late summer of 1942, 310,322 Jews were deported from the Warsaw Ghetto and sent to the newly established extermination camps.

Rumours of what was happening in these camps filtered back to the ghetto. The Jews of Warsaw knew they must make a stand to resist any further deportation.

In January 1943, Heinrich Himmler gave instructions for Warsaw to be made Jew-free to celebrate Hitler's birthday on April 20. In the Warsaw Ghetto, resistance strengthened and groups sprang up – the Polish Home Army (AK), the Jewish Military Union (ZZW) and the communist Jewish Combat Organisation (ZOB).

On April 19, 1943 Nazi troops moved into the ghetto. The women and men of the ghetto had just two machine-guns, 15 rifles and 500 pistols, but they fought back with home-made grenades and petrol bombs.

Nazi military commander Brigadier-General Jurgen Stroop had never seen such resistance. He ordered his men to retreat and then gave cowardly instructions for the ghetto to be burnt to the ground.

The few Jews who escaped the flames were rounded up and deported to the extermination camp at Treblinka.

The heroic fighters of the ghetto continued the battle from the cellars and attics of Warsaw. Getting desperate, on May 8, the Nazis pumped poison gas into the last fortified bunker. About a hundred women and men escaped into the underground sewers but most were killed by the gas.

Just over a year later, on August 1, 1944, the Warsaw Uprising began and lasted for two months and Himmler had boastfully demanded that every inhabitant should be killed and that Warsaw should be razed to the ground as an example to the rest of Nazi-occupied Europe.

Nearly three-quarters of Warsaw was left as smoking rubble.

Finally, the Red Army fought their way into Warsaw against heavy Nazi resistance. It took five days of heavy fighting for the Soviet forces to capture the right bank of the city but the tide of war had turned.

Hitler's plan for a thousand-year Reich in the East lay smashed in dust and ashes.

Fewer than one hundred Jewish women and men survived the 1943 ghetto rising. But the courage and inspiration that they and their other brave comrades left behind will live for evermore and still inspires us 75 years on.

Morning Star

Find out more about the

Communist Party of Australia

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email **cpa@cpa.org.au**
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Celebrate May Day

Sunday May 6 – Fremantle Esplanade

Join UnionsWA to celebrate May Day

10:00 am – Kids entertainment, food and coffee to open
11:30 am – Sally McManus Speech and Working Voices Choir
11:50 am – Begin assembly
12 noon – 12:40 pm – March
2:00 pm – Event finishes

This year we will recognise the 20th anniversary of the 1998 Patricks Dispute and the ACTU Change The Rules campaign.

UnionsWA

Communist Party of Australia

www.cpa.org.au cpa@cpa.org.au

General Secretary
Bob Briton
email: gensec@cpa.org.au

Party President
Vinnie Molina
email: president@cpa.org.au

Adelaide Elias Alevizos email: sa@cpa.org.au phone: 0405 020 614
postal: PO Box 612, Port Adelaide BC, SA 5015 web: adelaidecommunists.org

Brisbane phone: 0499 476 540 email: bris@cpa.org.au postal: PO Box 6012, Manly, Qld 4179

Canberra email: act@cpa.org.au

Darwin Vinnie Molina phone: 0419 812 872 email: darwin@cpa.org.au

Melbourne Andrew Irving email: cpavic@cpa.org.au phone: 03 9639 1550
postal: Box 3 Trades Hall, Lygon St, Carlton Sth Vic 3053

Newcastle email: newcastle@cpa.org.au

Head Office (Sydney)
postal: 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010
phone: 02 9699 8844 fax: 02 9699 9833 email: info@cpa.org.au

Perth Vinnie Molina email: perth@cpa.org.au phone: 0419 812 872
postal: PO Box 98, North Perth, WA 6906

Western NSW Allan Hamilton email: western.nsw@cpa.org.au
postal: 121 McKay St, Cootamundra, NSW 2590

Sydney email: sydney@cpa.org.au phone: 02 9699 8844
postal: 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010

Tasmania Bob Briton email: tas@cpa.org.au phone: 0418 894 366

Youth email: youth@cpa.org.au phone: 02 9699 8844
postal: 74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010