



Australia-Cuba Friendship Society
Melbourne NEWSLETTER
June 2019

Next Meeting
Monday 3rd
June
7.30pm
Unitarian Church
110 Grey St,
East Melbourne

Melbourne	Sydney	Perth	Brisbane	Canberra	Hobart	Adelaide	Central Coast	NSW/Vic Sthn Border	New Zealand
PO Box 1051 Collingwood Vic. 3066	PO Box k364 Haymarket NSW 1240	PO Box 1455 South Perth WA 6951	PO Box 5683 West End Qld 4101	PO Box 6139 Kingston ACT 2604	GPO Box 323 Hobart Tas. 7001	Box 381 N. Adelaide SA 5006	PO Box 1082 Gosford NSW 2250	PO Box 854 Albury NSW 2640	220a Adelaide Rd Newtown Wellington New Zealand

Dear Comrades

26 May, 2019

A lousy election result with voters opting for the hip-pocket god-botherer over and above the future of their children and grand-children. And as for that diddler of workers Clive Palmer, he splurged his largesse purely to keep Labor out in a lying negative advertising extravaganza. The right place for him is in the clink. Same for that other crooked mogul, US citizen Murdoch, whose malign influence continues to hover around the world like the bubonic plague. **I only hope that Labor doesn't get swayed by its right-wing and do a 'post Whitlam' by turning away from its mildly progressive policy agenda.** If it wants to stay relevant it must offer a genuine alternative with climate change in the forefront to give us some hope for the future. But one thing we can be sure of is that we'll always have problems with our media as long as Murdoch draws breath. And as long as we have people who don't give a stuff.

Someone should put the record straight about Bob Hawke's career. 'Working Class Hero', 'Saviour of the Labour Movement', headlines from our media nongs, but **for those with a memory, Hawke was the ultimate sell-out merchant, a class collaborator who wooed the big end of town, especially if it had an American accent.** Along with hard man of the NSW Right, Paul Keating, they took over 'old' Labor and jettisoned long-held principles and policies carefully built up over decades, replacing them with a frenzy of privatisation and deregulation. A nasty womanising drunk rescued from dozens of compromising situations, Hawke 'settled' disputes and cut back tariffs at the expense of workers. He cultivated 'mates', especially if they had power and influence like Mr CIA involved in the 1975 coup, US Ambassador Marshall Green, who was given Hawke's private phone number if he needed any 'help', like his trucking/shipping magnate mate, Sir Peter Abeles. **'Bob and I,' said Abeles, 'dreamed dreams together'.** But not for the likes of you and me. Hawke held secret meetings with Rupert Murdoch and became mates with extreme right-winger George Shultz, who held senior posts in the Nixon and Reagan administrations. Overseas, Hawke was welcomed as a fervent Zionist and anti-communist.

And on that crucial date in November 1975, when unions were mobilising for a general strike and prepared to down tools and take over the streets and cities in support of Whitlam and democracy, Hawke summoned the press and effectively told workers to cool it. And Australia cooled it and lost its bottle. He then had the gall to ask workers to kick in a day's pay to re-elect a Labor government! I was present when Gough and Margaret called him a little rat. In March 1983, Bob Hawke became the Prime Minister of Australia after doing a job on Bill Hayden with considerable help from our media. **Hawke spruiked his version of consensus by pinching Liberal Party policies and adopting a wages**

and prices 'Accord', a slimy way to introduce a wage freeze.

Over the years, the gap widened as socialist ideals took a back seat with political reporting going down the same ideological bungle. Media apparatchiks accepted the bull dish out to them by the Canberra push and the only one to confront Hawke was John Pilger on the ABC. Hawke didn't like Pilger's line of questioning and literally scuttled out of the studio. And the ABC hierarchy apologised to Hawke!

Journalism as we know now it hangs in the balance after the US Department of Justice rolled out 17 new charges against Julian Assange under the Espionage Act - a century-old law used to prosecute spies in war time - the first journalist or publisher to be charged under that draconian law, sending a ferocious warning to every journalist and every publisher. A declaration of war on journalism itself and a fatal blow to a free press that will decide the future of our media. And a wake-up call to certain powerful media outlets who told a pack of lies in the propaganda war against Wikileaks and Julian Assange, calling him an 'enemy of the people' but now realise they too could end up in White House gun-sights and are backing down at the rate of knots.

We're living in rotten times. Within the space of a few days, an unhinged Trump and his tag team from hell have gone from wishing peace for Iran to threatening it with nuclear annihilation, highlighting their depravity. To crow about wiping out an entire nation is beyond insane. The Americans are the only people who have used atomic weapons when they dropped two bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, claiming the 'right' to use nuclear force preemptively. And their Barbarian-in-Chief is bypassing Congress to sell bombs, precision-guided missiles, semi-automatics and drones to the Saudis to kill even more Yemeni civilians and with his henchmen is tightening the screws on Cuba. More than 200 Cuban academics have been refused visas to attend the annual Latin American Studies conference in Boston and the Cuban Government has been forced to introduce food rationing due to the worsening US blockade.

She's 16 and she's Swedish and she's angry. Greta Thunberg, a small girl in a bright yellow raincoat, burst on to the world stage and has transformed that anger into action. - climate action - persuading hundreds of thousands of young people, even a few CEOs, on to the streets and into the battle. **'Adults keep saying we owe it to young people to give them hope. But I don't want your hope. I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. And then I want you to act...I want you to act as if your house was on fire, because it is.'** Viva, Greta.

Joan Coxsedge

Commentator-in-Chief, Melbourne ACFS (03) 9857 9249

Subtle Reminder – Subs are due...please help keep the flags flying

[ALBA-TCP renews its commitment to cooperation, integration and the defense of unity in the face of foreign interference](#)

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, accompanied Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegations of member countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America – Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP), who gathered in the Cuban capital for the regional organization's XVIII Political Council



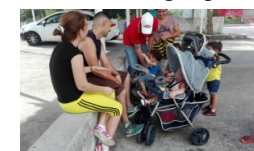
[Raúl and Díaz-Canel receive Venezuelan Foreign Minister](#)

The leaders highlighted the solid ties that unite Cuba and Venezuela and exchanged on regional and international issues



[Revitalizing the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America is strategic](#)

"We are at the doorstep of great victories in Our America, but we must resist forcefully, as the Cuban and Venezuelan people have..." said Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza



[The new families code must support the Revolution's social justice project](#)

Rights cannot be abridged on the basis of stereotyped criteria or prejudices, which can lead to acts of discrimination



[Díaz-Canel receives Turkish Foreign Minister](#)

During the exchange, the Cuban President and Turkish Minister discussed the good state of bilateral relations and issues on the international agenda

[Communiqué from Cuba's Institute of Civil Aeronautics regarding May 18, 2018, aircraft accident](#)

According to statements by Armando Daniel López, IACC president, "The investigating commission has determined that the most probable cause of the accident were the crew's actions and their errors in calculating weight and balance

[Díaz-Canel continues government visit to Villa Clara](#)

The President of Cuba's Councils of State and of Ministers continued his second day leading a government visit to Villa Clara with the Council of Ministers, with a tour of the Ernesto Che Guevara Cardiac Center



[Díaz-Canel on government visit to Villa Clara \(+Photos\)](#)

Miguel Díaz-Canel, President of Cuba's Councils of State and Ministers begins government visit to the province of Villa Clara



[Ceballos agricultural enterprise begins export of fresh mango](#)

Ciego de Avila's agricultural pole has broadened its portfolio of export products with the first deliveries of fresh mango to several European countries, another positive development here that contributes to the national economy



[Cuban women, Marianas all, from the depths of their souls](#)

A special Mothers Day tribute to Mariana Grajales, in Santiago de Cuba, marked a day of gratitude and respect for Cuban women

[The Helms-Burton is not applicable in Cuba](#)

"The Helms-Burton Act is not applicable in Cuba... because it is a law of the United States and therefore its jurisdiction, its range of action, is the United States... Cuba has a law approved in 1996 that declares the Helms-Burton Act null and void," said Carlos Fernández de Cossío, the Foreign Ministry's director for the United States



[Putting some heart into issues that concern the people](#)

President Miguel Díaz-Canel called for waging war on bureaucracy, against delays in administrative decisions at all levels, and any manifestation of insensitivity, as his visit to Granma province concluded

U.S. lies and threats against Cuba denounced around the world

Voices around the world condemn new U.S. sanctions on Cuba, in particular the recent activation of the Helms-Burton Act's Title III

Author: [Bertha Mojena Milián](#) | internet@granma.cu - may 14, 2019 09:05:02

Voices around the world continue to condemn new U.S. sanctions on Cuba, in particular the recent activation of the Helms-Burton Act's Title III.

The government of Mexico reiterated its rejection of the re-activation of this stipulation in violation of international law, and reaffirmed its commitment to legally protect Mexican companies that may be affected. In an official communiqué, the Ministry of Economy recalled that, in order to counteract the extraterritorial effects of the Helms-Burton, Mexico enacted a law that specifically protects commerce and investment from foreign regulations that contravene international norms, in effect since October 1996.

"Like other countries, Mexico has analyzed the relevant legal procedures to file complaints for violations of international law that the Helms-Burton Act represents," the Mexican government states.

The Islamic Republic of Iran also confirmed its support for the Cuba. "Washington demonstrated, once again, that it resorts to illegitimate mechanisms to pressure independent countries," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Seyed Abas Musavi said.

According to Prensa Latina, a professor at the Chinese University of Political Science and Law, Pan Deng, commented that the Trump administration is attempting to pressure Cuba and affecting the entire international community.

Deng said that Title III is a throwback to the colonial era that violates the principles of the world trade, creating barriers to the exchange of goods and services between different states.

The "Friends of Cuba" organization in Belgium adopted a resolution calling on the European Union and its member states to use all possible means to protect companies and citizens from the consequences of legal suits in U.S. courts, filed on the basis of Title III.

Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, yesterday once again tweeted his appreciation for "the widespread international rejection of the Helms-Burton Act by governments, companies, and individuals."

As our President Miguel Díaz-Canel affirmed: "The U.S. government's threats, sanctions, measures, falsehoods, and lies against Cuba have found no support among political, academic, cultural, business, or religious sectors, inside or outside U.S. territory."

<http://en.granma.cu/mundo/2019-05-14/us-lies-and-threats-against-cuba-denounced-around-the-world>



Photo: Osva



The historic Xanadú Mansion in Varadero is being restored.

How are investments in tourism approved?

To address the topic, Granma spoke with engineer José R. Daniel Alonso, general director for Development at the Ministry of Tourism

Author: [Yisel Martínez García](#) | informacion@granmai.cu - april 9, 2019 12:04:44

A broad investment plan today guides the efforts of Cuba's Ministry of Tourism (Mintur), as work is underway to increase the number of rooms available in the country, hotels are being repaired and new ones begun, along with extra-hotel options that complement the experience of travellers who choose Cuba. Supporting this investment process, and fol-

low-up on the successful completion of projects, are important items on the government's agenda, progress on which is regularly and rigorously evaluated. In several parts of the island, construction is advancing. Before the challenge that this panorama implies, some questions emerge: Who decides where to invest and why are some facilities chosen to become hotels? Granma International spoke with engineer José R. Daniel Alonso, Mintur's general director for Development, about the selection process.

What types of buildings are chosen to become hotels? Why?

As part of the comprehensive development of tourism, going beyond sun and sand destinations, and including visits to heritage cities, natural environments, and experiences in everyday life in Cuba, a significant number of buildings have been identified across the country that could be of interest to tourism.

Some may be heritage sites, as occurred in Sagua la Grande, Villa Clara, where this past year, tourist installations were inaugurated like the Palacio de Arenas and the Hotel Sagua, both in deplorable condition.

On other occasions, for example, buildings that at one time were hotels have been renovated, plus those with only the façade remaining, as was the case with the current Packard, in its era the Biscuit Hotel, and another soon to be completed, the Gran Hotel, close to the Teatro Martí. With this same intention, we are also preparing the restoration of the New York Hotel.

These investments did not emerge randomly, but rather involve a process of reconciliation with governments and proprietors of buildings; and studies of their structures are conducted by specialized enterprises.

Who participates in these decisions?

Investment decisions, in all cases, are made in compliance with the provisions of Decree Law 327, Investment Process Regulation, which governs such activity in the country. In addition, both here in Havana and in the rest of the country, consultations are held with committees charged with approving specific cases, such as Heritage Committees and others that have an impact on the conservation of cities. In this way, all parties involved must state their consent or opposition, through an official document. Nothing is done until a project is first analyzed and approved. When all these entities agree with the submitted project, then the investment is undertaken, but if there is no agreement, I can assure you that, in no case, has the Ministry of Tourism made investments without prior approval of all decision makers. The parties, identified in Decree Law 327, which must approve an investment projects, are the Institute of Physical Planning (IPF), the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (Citma) and other governing bodies in the country involved in these processes. All participating entities must give their approval through the IPF, through consultations established in areas under study and in the certification of precise localization. **How extensive can the construction or repair of a property be, when we're talking about heritage conservation?** In the first place it is determined if the structure can be restored, and if possible, maintain what has patrimonial value. In these cases, we are not only talking about hotels, this is also done with extra-hotel facilities. There are countless examples of non-tourist sites for which this has been done. For example, breweries, restaurants, and others that not only allow cities to preserve deteriorated heritage sites, but also generate income. In no case do we ever arrive and just say: We are going to do what we want; even with our own facilities. The most recent example is the renovation of the Xanadú Mansion, in Varadero.



One of the resort's newest extra-hotel facilities is the remodelled brewery

The installation, which belongs to the Ministry of Tourism, has a high degree of protection, which is why we as an entity do nothing without the agreement of the of Havana Restoration Enterprise, which is the specialist in all matters related to restoration projects. In most cases, it is this entity that approves even the materials that can be used in the property's renovation. The company certifies the materials and verifies that they have the required quality and are consistent with the property's value. In hotels like the Hotel Nacional or the Havana Riviera, the same thing applies. The materials must be of a quality in accordance the buildings to be restored. This is also the case with the façades of hotels and other tourist areas. Right now, across all of Havana, underway is a project, the Master Plan, to restore patrimonial properties. In this case, everything that has to do with properties inside the limits of the central historic district, tourism sector entities consult with the City Historian's Office, and it is established that in this area, there is no foreign investment. The only enterprise modality that is considered is that of administration contracts, but never giving

participation to foreign companies when it comes to equity. This is an important policy that the Cuban government defends.

Previously, City Historian Eusebio Leal Spengler explained to the digital magazine La Jiribilla, the responsibility with which the Office of the City Historian has assumed numerous investment projects within this area of the city. Work done on all buildings by the Office, Leal insisted, has been completed with full respect for their heritage value, with great care and rigor as part of every decision. "In this sense, we have a broad working relationship with the Ministry of Tourism and the GAESA Enterprise Group, always on the basis of mutual respect and observance of current regulations for work on buildings of heritage value. Several of the works that today honor our Central Historical District have emerged from this practice of joint work," Leal added. Many other frequently asked questions regarding investment in tourism could be addressed in this interview. Public information work is key to avoid questioning by a population that is well educated in our history and proud of efforts to protect our heritage. **SPECIFICATIONS-** Investment projects in the process of macro-location studies are submitted to consulting organizations. Considering the characteristics of the investment, others may be consulted, as deemed necessary. When the area to be studied includes areas or sites with declared patrimonial (nationally or internationally), including "protected adjacent zones", the National or Provincial Monuments Commissions should be consulted, as the case may be, and also entities which manage the site. (Decree Law 327, Chapter I, Section I, Art. 20)- As Decree Law 327 explains, as part of the macro-location study, territorial planning analyzes are carried out, with a strong emphasis on the examination of macroeconomic aspects, such as: the economic-territorial proportions; the demographic-labor situation; the potential for and availability of natural resources (soil, water, minerals, forests, among others); the reduction of exposure to natural risks; necessary adaptation to climate change; production-consumption balance; optimization of territorial income distribution; satisfaction of provincial demands; and accessibility.

<http://en.granma.cu/tourism/2019-04-09/how-are-investments-in-tourism-approved>

Trump breaks Cuba-U.S. baseball agreement

The agreement applauded by players and fans around the world was cancelled to further the Trump administration's increasingly confrontational policy toward Cuba

Author: [Oscar Sánchez Serra](#) | informacion@granma.cu - april 9, 2019 16:04:48

It is not news that the Trump administration has cancelled the agreement signed by the MLB and the Cuban Baseball Federation, on December 19, after three years of hard work by both parties. And it is not because the agreement sought to end the human suffering of Cuban athletes. In January of this year, the MLB, not Cuba, sent a letter to the United States government, detailing their plans and intentions with this new deal, stating that it was mainly directed toward avoiding the trafficking in persons that Cubans usually face when leaving the country and the harsh conditions they face in order to be contracted by a Major League team, citing the examples of Yasiel Puig, Yoan Moncada, José Abreu, and Yoenis Céspedes, among others.

These "harsh conditions" include the very high risk of losing one's life to sports merchants conspiring with unscrupulous individuals engaged in illegal trafficking of persons, as happened to Puig, who was taken out of Cuba by traffickers linked to a Mexican drug cartel, according to court testimony.

These same players, born and raised in Cuba, who today fill stadiums for the so-called "show," as U.S. baseball calls itself, celebrated the agreement, precisely so that their fellow citizens would not face what they had experienced. When the agreement was signed, José Daniel Abreu, "Pito," as fans in Cuba know him, told ESPN:

"Words cannot fully express my sincere joy and enthusiasm to hear that Commissioner Rob Manfred and Tony Clark have reached an agreement with the Cuban Baseball Federation. Knowing that the next generation of Cuban baseball players will not face the unimaginable fate experienced by the Cuban players who went before them, is the realization of an impossible dream for all of us. Dealing with the exploitation of smugglers and unscrupulous agencies will finally come to an end for Cuban ball players. Even now, I am still harassed. The next generation of Cuban baseball players will be able to sign a Major League contract, while in Cuba they will be able to keep their earnings like any other player in the world, they will be able to return to Cuba, they will be able to share with their families, and they will be able to practice the sport they love against the best players in the world, without fear or trepidation."

These are the sentiments that U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton opposes. Just before The Washington Post communicated the April 5 decision, he stated that if Cuban baseball players want to play in the Major Leagues, they could escape from Cuba.

He and Senator Marco Rubio have torpedoed an agreement that baseball lovers around the world applauded, the same two who have fabricated Juan Guaidó in Venezuela, and attacked the Sandinista Revolution in the halls of the White House, under the sickly batting of Donald Trump, based on their version of the Monroe Doctrine for Latin America.

Trump's decision puts Cuban baseball in the same position it was in February of 2015, when the Treasury Department and the MLB created the residence outside of Cuba certificate regulation, which obliged any Cuban baseball player seeking to play in the U.S. Major Leagues to sign a statement under oath, assuring that they are not members of the Cuban government, or of the Communist Party, and that they will not return to their country.

Trump's argument is that the December agreement violates blockade laws, because the Cuban Baseball Federation (FCB) is a government entity. He is lying, as he has done in his long career of fake news. The FCB is recognized as a national federation by all international sports organizations, not as a representative of the Cuban government.

Imperialism attacks baseball to attack the Revolution, knowing that the right to sports is one of its great conquests, which will not be stopped.

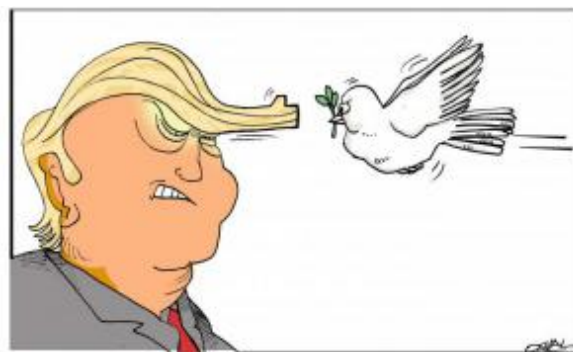


Photo: Osval

Israel tacitly admits to punishing blameless civilians

[Maureen Clare Murphy Rights and Accountability](#) 24 May 2019

Israeli avocado growers have been banned from accessing their greenhouses in Jordan Valley settlements, the Israeli government announced this week. The decision was made after settlers set fire to fields belonging to Palestinian farmers in Asira al-Qibliya village last Friday, causing damage but no injuries.

Of course nothing in the above paragraph is true – except that Israelis from the notorious Yitzhar settlement [did in fact](#) set fire to fields in Burin and Asira al-Qibliya, villages near Nablus in the north of the occupied West Bank on Friday.

Settlers also threw stones at Palestinian homes and fired guns into the air while soldiers looked on and did nothing.

At first Israel blamed the fires exclusively on Palestinians, until the human rights group B'Tselem published video showing gun-toting settlers setting fields on fire:

"Predictably, none of the settlers who torched the area were arrested or investigated, and as always they enjoy almost full immunity," B'Tselem [states](#).

Punitive measure

Contrast that with the punitive measure imposed on an entire industry in Gaza after incendiary balloons launched from the territory caused brush fires in southern Israel earlier this week.

On Wednesday, Israel [limited](#) the fishing zone in which it lets Palestinians ply their trade from 15 to 10 nautical miles off of Gaza's coast.

One day earlier, Israel had said that Palestinians would be allowed to sail up to 15 nautical miles out in some sections of Gaza's waters:

COGAT, the bureaucratic arm of Israel's military occupation, tacitly acknowledged that its restrictions were a form of collective punishment. It said on Tuesday that the expansion of the permitted fishing zone was "a civilian policy to avoid a humanitarian deterioration in the Gaza Strip and part of a policy that differentiates between terrorist activities and an uninvolved civilian population."

In other words, COGAT prided itself on a policy that distinguished between combatants and civilians, and then immediately did the opposite.

Fishers [told](#) the human rights group Gisha that before Wednesday's announcement Israel was in practice enforcing a maximal distance of only 12 nautical miles.

Under the Oslo accords signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization more than 25 years ago, Palestinian fishers are permitted access up to 20 nautical miles out from Gaza's coast.

Israel has never allowed Palestinians access beyond 15 nautical miles, however, and that limit was only introduced for part of Gaza's coast on 1 April this year. On 30 April, the zone was reduced to 6 nautical miles.

Between 5 and 12 May, "access to the sea was banned altogether," according to Gisha.

The impunity enjoyed by Israeli settlers who attack Palestinians and their property stands in stark contrast to the collective punishment imposed on Gaza fishers for events completely beyond their control.

Double standard

It is but one example of a double standard in an inherently unequal system in which the law enshrines one group of people with superior rights and privileges over everyone else.

(There's a [word](#) for a system like that.)

The "everyone else" in this case being the Palestinians, indigenous to the land, but in the way of the settler-colonial ambitions of the Israeli state.

The situation of a Palestinian fisher in Gaza is not analogous with an avocado grower in a West Bank settlement, so the role reversal at the top of this article illustrating Israel's double standards is flawed.

The avocado grower, along with the arsonist and armed settlers from Yitzhar, is an actor [implementing the system of occupation](#) in tandem with the state, which aims to grab and annex Palestinian land, but without the people.

The system was not designed to treat the Gaza fisher struggling to put food on his family's table equally to the avocado grower. It was designed to pressure him and his family to leave. Or at least cause Palestinians to [collectively relinquish](#) their desire to exercise their right to self-determination.

Ripple effect

Israel's restrictions on Palestinians' ability to fish ripples far beyond those working in the industry.

Fish caught off of Gaza's coastal waters are a [major source of nutrition](#) for Palestinians in the territory, though one that fewer and fewer can afford.

After 12 years of Israeli air, land and sea blockade, unemployment and poverty have skyrocketed in the territory.

Half of Gaza's population depends on emergency food assistance. UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestine refugees, [warned last week](#) that it may not be able to provide that aid as it made yet another emergency appeal for funds.

To save life on Earth, abolish capitalism ASAP

Posted in [Climate & Environment](#) - By Teresa Gutierrez - May 14, 2019

Scientists have issued yet another dire warning on the climate crisis. In what the New York Times described May 6 as a "sweeping new United Nations assessment," a 1,500-page report compiled by "hundreds of international experts and based on thousands of scientific studies" alerts the world that biodiversity around the planet is on a dangerous, alarming decline.

Twenty or 30 years ago, most people might have skimmed this kind of article. Only those following the issue closely would have read the entire article, much less the full report. Today, the entire working class and especially those in the global South must know to read such reports carefully, as the loss of homes, land and lives affects more and more people around the world.

The U.N.'s recent report, "UNEP/Global Environment Outlook 2019," (available at

un.org) concludes that "civilization and humans are accelerating extinction and altering the natural world at a pace unprecedented in human history." It points out that this is not the first report about the Earth's ecosystem, but it does elaborate how "human life is intertwined with the fate of other species."

The authors conclude that the devastation of nature has become so dire that piecemeal efforts are no longer adequate. It calls for "transformative changes that include curbing wasteful consumption, lessening agricultural footprint" and comes down on "illegal logging and fishing."

This report, like much other analysis, concludes that "humans" or "civilization" is to blame. But it is not "humans" in the abstract who are responsible for the decline in biodiversity or for climate change. It is the capitalist class and their system that are entirely at fault for creating this crisis.

The report calls for "transformative changes" — and that is important. But that is not enough. What is needed are revolutionary changes. What is needed is an end to capitalism and building socialism. This is needed now, not tomorrow.

Biodiversity - and humans - at extreme risk

The report's statistics on the natural world are indeed alarming. The rain forests of South America, like the jungles of the Congo, are awe inspiring, with an abundance of diverse species not only stunningly beautiful to the eye, but necessary planetwide for the continuation of life itself.

There is awe of another kind, however, at what is happening to the species in these areas — which have already declined by an awful 20 percent.

According to the report, “Activities like farming, logging, poaching, fishing and mining are altering the natural world at a rate unprecedented in human history.” The report estimates that biodiversity loss will accelerate through 2050, just a short 31 years from now. As local climates change, in which fish, mammals, plants, birds and insects evolved over millennia, the very existence of these species is in danger.

‘Our Planet’ is a must-see

A recent Netflix documentary series, “Our Planet,” highlights the all-encompassing connection between these diverse species in our world and human beings. The film opens with narration affirming the U.N. report that in the space of one human lifetime, the whole world has changed. In the last 50 years, wildlife populations have declined by a whopping 60 percent.

Walrus are shown grasping for new space to live on a rocky island because the ice that once provided their home has melted. With no ice, extreme overcrowding leads to stampedes and death. Walrus are having to climb up stony cliffs in search of living space. They are seen plunging from the dangerous cliffs that cannot sustain them. Their bodies pile up in an eerie graveyard on the water’s edge.

The documentary points out that orangutans—indeed a spectacle to behold—are dying at a rate of 100 a week. Only recently this animal was discovered to use tools—a fact highlighting the similarities between humans and the other great apes, our evolutionary cousins.

Why are orangutans dying so rapidly? It’s because some capitalist has decided to clear the animals’ habitat to grow palm oil trees. As a result of that decision, 75 percent of their jungle habitat has disappeared.

It’s true that palm oil is useful to humans, especially for medicinal use such as prevention and treatment of cancer, dementia, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and malaria. But the real issue is about how decisions are made about the land and the species that live there. Capitalists are making those decisions merely to further their drive for profits.

By the end of “Our Planet,” the viewer is committed to saving not only humans, but the natural world from the climate crisis. You might find yourself Googling “eco-warrior!”

All life is connected

If the natural world is in decline, it is an understatement to say that humans are dramatically impacted—because the relationship is as decisive as life and death. Humans cannot

live without food security, clean water, clean air—and these are dramatically and negatively affected by climate change.

Humans are producing more food than ever. Now. But if there are no bees or other insects to help pollinate fruits and vegetables, people won’t have these foods to eat.

Only a fraction of the living creatures on Earth, about 1 million species, have been identified. Scientists estimate there may be 8 million plant and animal species still to identify. But these and other species may cease to exist before they are even recognized. Extinction rates are “currently tens to hundreds of times higher than they have been in the past 10 million years.”

(New York Times, May 6)

Land is being ravaged. Forests being cleared for farmland, for unplanned roads and cities that mainly aid the travel of capital, have meant that “three-quarters of the world’s land area has been significantly altered.”

Though tropical jungles and rainforests provide medicines—like the ingredients for aspirin—the unplanned, uncontrolled exploitation of these resources for corporate profit is also driving plant species toward disappearance.

What then for humanity? As the Earth is changed by fossil fuels, as ice caps melt away, the warming of the globe and rising seas result in danger for all the planet’s biodiversity. Just as walrus lose space, so too do humans find themselves uprooted and endangered.

Jakarta, Indonesia, is one of many examples. A city of 10 million, Jakarta faces “obliteration by rising seas and sinking land. Models predict that by 2050, 95 percent of north Jakarta could be submerged.” (Wired, May 2)

Who is to blame?

Who decides what is planted, where and how to log? Who has the equipment to enter the rainforest and pillage its resources? Who decides that palm trees are more important than keeping the rainforest’s land inhabited by its indigenous species?

It is not adequate to say “humans” are making these decisions. An impoverished worker in Kerala, India, may have no choice but to place fishing nets and ropes to trap and kill sea turtles. That worker must eat and support a family.

But who will stop the Trumps of the world from buying and selling ivory? That act has killed off nearly 7,000 elephants—wondrous

social, communicative, memory-bearing creatures—in the last two years alone.

Who decides when to practice agricultural monoculture rather than grow more than one crop and thus replenish the soil’s natural nutrients? Who decides where, when and how much to clear in the Amazonian forest? With a fascist president in Brazil who is a climate-change denier, who will protect the Amazon? The U.N. can publish all the groundbreaking reports it wants, but that won’t and can’t stop President Bolsonaro.

Will the capitalists of Indonesia allow the government to move a city of 10 million fairly and safely? Will they pay for it? Will the government be up to such a task without the intervention of the masses?

Are these decisions being based on human need—or on profit?

According to the Decolonial Atlas website: “Just 100 companies are responsible for more than 70 percent of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions since 1988. The guys who run those companies—and they *are* mostly guys—have gotten rich on the backs of literally all life on Earth.” We should add “ultra-rich.”

The most eco-sustainable country on Earth is socialist Cuba. In 2006 the World Wildlife Fund reported Cuba to be “the only country in the world to reach a sustainable development, because the country covers their present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (tinyurl.com/y2t3w9bj) Merely compare Florida’s coral reefs to Cuba’s, and you will see that the former look like a cancerous lung, while Cuba’s are sparkling with health.

China, with its centrally planned economy under the aegis of its Communist Party, is actively combating global warming. The Environmental Defense Fund admits, “As the United States steps away from global climate leadership, China is stepping up.” Even though China has become “the factory of the world,” it has exceeded the pledges made in the Paris Accords to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, while the U.S. government has walked away from the accords and even denies global warming.

It is capitalism that created climate change. It is socialism that will resolve it. Only a planned economy based on solidarity and human need, not avaricious profit, can adequately and genuinely deal with the effects of climate change.

Remember Hurricane Katrina. Remember Hurricane Maria.

<https://iacenter.org/2019/05/14/to-save-life-on-earth-abolish-capitalism-asap/>

U.S. war threats intensify on Iran

Posted in [Iran, North Africa & West Asia, Top](#)

By Sara Flounders - May 21, 2019

May 20 — Another U.S. initiated crisis reached an ominous level this past week with President Trump's announcement that Iran suddenly presented a new, unspecified threat, serious enough to send a U.S. Naval aircraft carrier battle group churning toward the Persian Gulf, along with U.S. B-52 Stratofortress bombers and plans for 120,000 troops to the surrounding region.

No evidence or information was provided regarding the supposed looming threat.

The latest "maximum pressure" threats against Iran follow weeks of military threats and extreme sanctions against Venezuela, an escalating trade war with China, ratcheting up a harsher level of sanctions against Cuba, firing an intercontinental ballistic missile across People's Korea and confiscating a Korean freighter.

In an effort to mask the growing capitalist economic instability, Trump's strategy seems to be lurching from one manufactured crisis to another in order to keep whole regions of the world locked in apprehension, as new demands are raised on them.

Washington suddenly demanded that even such countries as China, Japan and India, who had a temporary U.S. waiver on Iranian oil purchases, immediately stop importing any Iranian oil, despite signed contracts, or face U.S. sanctions against their economies.

Imperialist allies of U.S. corporate power sharply cautioned against the latest wild moves. The opposition of these European allies, who are also rivals, was based on the impact that cutting Iranian oil has their own economies.

On May 15, British Major General Chris Ghika, the deputy commander of the U.S.-led coalition fighting the so-called Islamic State group, publicly challenged the wild claims of the Trump-Bolton-Pompeo White House.

"There has been no increased threat from Iranian backed forces in Iraq and Syria," Ghika told Pentagon reporters. (cnn.com, May 14)

Germany's Foreign Minister Heiko Maas called the U.S. threats "ill advised," unilateral and an additional fuse. "Maximum pressure always carries the risk of an unintended escalation." (nbcnews.com, May 16)

Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen warned: "No one in Europe' wants a second Iraq." (nytimes.com, May 19)

He said it is particularly provocative that the U.S. re-imposed sanctions against Iran after pulling out of the signed agreement with Iran and that it has threatened companies which continue to work with Iran.

The U.S. decision to recall all nonessential personnel from its embassy in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad and a consulate in Iraq's northern town of Erbil drew an immediate warning from Iraq. Iraqi officials warned the Pentagon that Iraq won't let Washington use its territory in a war against Iran.

The totally fraudulent claims that Iraq was a threat to the U.S. were the basis for the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Even the compliant Gulf State monarchies voiced apprehension. Anwar Gargash, the foreign minister for the United Arab Emirates, said, "I don't think it's in anybody's interest to see a flare up, a confrontation, with Iran." (cbsnews.com, May 16)

U.S. Congressional members, usually compliant on U.S. military moves from both Democrats and Republicans, demanded more information. Many raised the disaster of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq and the false information in 2003.

Threats escalate

U.S. hostility toward Iran and Pentagon war threats are hardly a new development. They are rooted in the 1979 revolution that overthrew the Shah and the whole corrupt Pahlavi royal family, who were compliant U.S. puppets and enforcers of U.S. corporate interests in the oil-rich region.

The radical demands and mass participation of the Iranian revolution and the use of nationalized oil revenue for development made a dramatic improvement in the standards of health, education, housing and infrastructure in Iran.

After decades of U.S. and Western pressure to halt Iran's economic development, Iran negotiated and signed an agreement in 2015 to halt its programs to develop nuclear energy. Iran never had nuclear weapons. But just like every industrialized country, Iran needed nuclear energy for industrial and medical use.

The long-term deal on Iran's nuclear program with a group of world powers — the U.S., Britain, France, China, Russia and Germany — was known as the P5+1 Accord. Five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, plus Germany, signed the agreement with Iran.

It was hoped that the signature among six powerful nations would bind the U.S. to honor the agreement.

Under the accord, Iran agreed to give access to international inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency to any and every site connected to the possible development of nuclear energy.

Under the agreement, Iran's uranium stockpile of low-enriched uranium was reduced by 98 percent and shipped to Russia.

Iran abided by every clause in this onerous international agreement.

In return the debilitating economic sanctions were to be lifted and Iran was to regain access to \$100 billion in frozen funds. The key part of the agreement was that Iran could resume selling oil on international markets and use the global financial system for trade.

Now the U. S. government has violated these key provisions on Iran's ability to sell its oil. Besides military threats, the U.S. has also attempted to stop Iran from exporting any oil to its customers. These exports are necessary for the Iranian economy.

Just as with U.S. sanctions against Venezuela, Zimbabwe and other countries, the sanctions are collective punishment — outlawed by international law — that hurt the population in general in these countries. Sanctions against Iraq in the 1990s killed 1.5 million people, including half a million children under five years of age.

U.S. broken treaties

However, just three years after signing the accord, in May 2018, Trump arrogantly abandoned the long-term, legally binding international agreement. In November 2018 Trump went even further. He reinstated sanctions targeting not only Iran but any country trading with Iran.

This unilateral breach led to a sharp downturn in Iran's economy. Iranian currency lost 80 percent of its value. The annual inflation rate quadrupled, driving away foreign investors and triggering protests against shortages.

Initially the five other signers opposed the U.S.-imposed sanctions and attempted to set up an alternative payment mechanism aimed at helping international companies trade with Iran without facing U.S. penalties. The latest dire threats of war are an all-out effort by the Trump administration to break up any support for Iran and block any form of exchange.

U.S. imperialism has never honored any of the more than 500 treaties it signed with the Indigenous Nations, many of which were ratified.

Just some of the most recent example of agreements it has pulled out of include the forced revision of the NAFTA Free Trade Agreement signed with Mexico and Canada and sabotage of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Its refusal to sign international treaties on human rights, child labor, rights of labor, rights of women and against landmines confirms its lawless status.

But while refusing to abide by any international agreements, U.S. imperialism's new demand that every country must abide by U.S. laws and participate in strangulation sanctions on Iran, Venezuela, Cuba and Korea is a dangerous new step in its piracy and gangster politics.

<https://iacenter.org/2019/05/22/u-s-war-threats-intensify-on-iran/>

Bob Hawke: The PM who tamed the labour movement

[Jim McIlroy](#) May 24, 2019

Bob Hawke, Australia's longest-serving Labor prime minister, died at his home in Sydney on May 16, aged 89.

The same night, former Liberal PM Tony Abbott caused a stir when he released a statement on Twitter, describing Hawke as a "great prime minister". After listing what he believed to be Hawke's key achievements — "financial deregulation, tariff cuts and the beginning of privatisation" of major national public assets — Abbott went on to claim they "went against the Labor grain".

"You might almost say he had a Labor heart, but a Liberal head," Abbott said.

On the last morning of campaigning before the disastrous May 18 election loss, then- Opposition Leader Bill Shorten refuted Abbott's contention: "Bob Hawke had a Labor head and a Labor heart."

The Accord

Maybe, in retrospect, they were both right. The era of the Hawke Labor government, 1983–1991, was the crucial period of the taming of the Labor Party and the labour movement, primarily through the introduction of the Prices and Incomes Accord.

The Accord supposedly traded "wage restraint" by the unions for price controls and raising the "social wage" — social welfare and provision of government services to working people. However, in practice, while wages were effectively held down, prices were never properly controlled and social wage improvements were limited.

In [13 Years of Hard Labor: Lessons of the Accord experience](#), Pat Brewer and Peter Boyle write: "Most importantly, the major role the union movement played in policing industrial peace and wage restraint under the Accord eroded traditions of militant and independent unionism, leaving the union movement widely discredited in the eyes of workers and in a poorer position to resist the capitalists' reactionary offensive.

"Today it is clear that the Accord was a disaster for the working class and paved the way for the reactionary Liberal-National government that replaced Labor in March 1996."

The historic decline of the Australian trade union movement, which escalated sharply during the Hawke years, is indicated by the drop in union membership from 51% in 1981 to 40% in 1992. It further dropped to 25% by 2000.

By 1992, the number of work days lost to strikes had plummeted to its lowest level in 30 years. Since then, industrial action has declined to all-time lows, as union membership has sunk to 15% or less.

While the anti-union attacks of Coalition governments from 1996 onwards have played a major part in accelerating this decline, the rot had fully set in under the Hawke-Keating Labor governments.

Taming unions

It should not be forgotten that the attempt to destroy the Maritime Union of Australia in 1998 during the Patrick dispute, promoted by John Howard's Coalition government, was prefigured by the deregistration of the Builders Labourers Federation by the Hawke Labor government in 1986, and the same government's use of the RAAF to break the anti-Accord pilots' strike in 1989.

Hawke had form on this. After becoming ACTU research officer in 1956, he

showed such promise in settling industrial disputes he was elected president of the peak union body in 1969.

A prime example of his role in selling out militant unionists was the betrayal of the Victorian State Electricity Commission (SEC) workers in February 1972. The workers had struck for two weeks in support of their demands for no redundancies, four weeks' annual leave and a shorter working week, in face of a state Coalition government threat of sackings and wage cuts.

I attended the February 15, 1972, mass meeting of 3000 angry power workers in Yallourn, at which Hawke and other union leaders urged them to return to work and accept arbitration of their dispute. In the end, they reluctantly voted to end their strike.

The SEC strike is "a test case — a test of the solidarity of the working class against the employers' offensive," I wrote in the March 1 issue of *Direct Action* newspaper. "The role of Hawke is in quite the opposite direction to this. He is directly selling out on this issue ...

"Hawke as a 'left-winger' is only a myth ... His attitude includes the idea of keeping things 'quiet' in order to elect a Labor government. This is a false perspective.

“Workers, of course, must work towards getting a Labor government into office, but a Labor government with Liberal policies which continues to run capitalist society in the interests of the bosses is no use to the workers.”

This was Bob Hawke’s strategy for most of his union career and it continued into his position as prime minister.

Hawke, using his full authority as the former president of the ACTU and then prime minister played a key role in orchestrating the shackling of the union movement to a strategy of class collaboration with the Australian corporate sector and the state. We are now living with the disastrous consequences of the decline in union power and militancy that exists today.

This is the primary legacy of Bob Hawke and his Labor government. Whatever else might be written and spoken about the “man of the Australian people”, the “silver bodgie”, he was the person who did more than anyone else to undermine the Australian labour movement’s tradition of industrial struggle and militancy.

Privatisations

In addition to this, Hawke played a crucial role in “modernisation” of the Australian capitalist economy: tariff cuts, deregulation of the banks, and most disastrously of all, the privatisation of key public assets. The privatisation of the government airline Qantas and, most significantly, the Commonwealth Bank (CBA), established the basis for the accelerated neoliberal offensive launched under Coalition governments after 1996.

Perhaps the most critical of these privatisations in the long term was that of the CBA, which contributed in a major way to the profiteering, rip-offs and corruption of the Big Four banks, as revealed in the recent royal commission. Moreover, a publicly-owned CBA today, placed under workers’ and community control, could play a leading part in reviving the public sector, which has been devastated under both Coalition and Labor governments over the past three decades.

Hawke claimed to be a champion for Aboriginal land rights and a treaty.

However, he backed down under pressure from the right wing and the mining corporations.

He overturned the Gough Whitlam Labor government’s free university education policy, and introduced tertiary fees in the late 1980s.

Hawke also sent Australian troops to join the US invasion of Iraq during the First Gulf War in 1990. He remained a loyal supporter of the US-Australia Alliance and a close friend of Israel throughout his career.

Bob Hawke played a critical role, along with Paul Keating, in the launching of the international neoliberal offensive in Australia during the 1980s, which has now reached its peak under the current Coalition regime. But perhaps his most damaging legacy is the taming of the trade union movement, which has had long-term serious consequences right up to this day.

<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/bob-hawke-pm-who-tamed-labour-movement>

Fight back begins

Anna Pha - <https://www.cpa.org.au/guardian/2019/1869/01-fight.html>

The unexpected victory of the Coalition in the May 18 federal elections is a severe blow to the hopes and aspirations of working people. It signals further attacks on workers and organised labour, on the unemployed, social security recipients, Indigenous Australians and other disadvantaged and vulnerable people.

It also sends a signal to employers and the Australian Building and Construction Commission to heighten their war on workers. It means the rejection of a progressive redistribution of wealth through tax reform, cuts to public education and public health services. The ABC and SBS face further cuts and likely privatisation.

The Coalition has an absolute majority in the House of Representatives. The opinion polls got it wrong. The bookmakers got it wrong. But the biggest losers in this election are working people, their trade unions, the unemployed, age pensioners and other social security recipients.

Labor leader Bill Shorten has stepped down and the factional back-room leaders are already on the job of choosing a new leader. Anthony Albanese was first to publicly throw his hat into the ring. Jim Chalmers and Chris Bowen are also possible contenders.

At the time of writing, counting was still underway. The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) had the Coalition in front, predicting 77 seats. This is one more than required for an absolute majority in the House of Representatives, providing the extra MP for a Speaker. The Coalition appear to have picked up three seats and Labor lost three.

The AEC predicts Labor will have 68, along with one each for the Greens (Adam Bandt), Katter’s Australian Party and the Centre Alliance (formerly Nick Xenophon Team). It is likely there will be three independents. That makes a total of six cross-benchers.

The Greens, who represent the most progressive of the parliamentary forces, had an overall average of 10 percent of the vote in the Lower House, as they did in the 2016 elections. There were, however, large variations between electorates. Adam Bandt held onto his seat with an increased majority. The trade union movement fought hard to defeat the Morrison government, centring its actions around the Change the Rules campaign.

Presidential campaign

Prime Minister Morrison ran a one-man show, constantly portraying the campaign

as a battle between two men – himself and the not-so-popular Labor leader Bill Shorten.

Morrison got amongst the people, being warmly accepted and looking at ease in a range of circumstances – kicking a football, learning to cook, shearing a sheep as well as the usual baby shots.

Shorten did not have the personality to pull it off in the same way, no matter how hard he tried.

Morrison trotted out feel-good, simplistic slogans that had little substance. In the guise of Coalition policy, he talked about “building our economy” and “securing your future” while never missing an opportunity of painting Labor as high taxing, high risk and poor economic managers.

Shorten and shadow Treasurer Chris Bowen presented complex policies on negative gearing, capital gains tax and dividend franking credits. Morrison jumped on top of these, branding them as new taxes on pensioners, self-funded retirees and workers. Labor failed to explain them clearly or counter these claims convincingly.

There was considerable anger amongst voters over these policies, even amongst those who might not be affected. The impact

these had cannot be underestimated. Murdoch's media machine helped fan the flames of fear.

Hollow rhetoric

Prime Minister Scott Morrison promised jobs, jobs and more jobs. In Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania where Labor suffered setbacks, unemployment is a serious problem.

The Adani mine and all the promised jobs that it would supposedly bring, were big factors in Queensland where Labor had hoped to pick up some seats. That was not to be. Instead Labor lost two seats, leaving it with five out of 30 in that state. They were successfully wedged between jobs and the environment, with jobs coming first in the north.

By sitting on the fence over the giant, polluting Adani coal mine, Shorten satisfied neither voters in the Galilee region who mistakenly believed it meant thousands of jobs, nor the many voters further south who strongly opposed the mine for sound environmental reasons.

Labor's policies on health, education, early childhood education, climate change, etc, were attractive to many but seemed to get lost and overlooked in the end.

Climate change and the environment were on the minds of many voters and a majority of the cross-benchers are determined to bring about action on these critical issues.

No shortage of money

Clive Palmer's United Australia Party (UAP) spent an estimated \$60-80 million on a multi-lingual advertising blitz around Australia and globally across the social media. Massive billboards, full-page coloured advertisements in the print media, endless ads on social media and wide coverage on the airwaves.

It was not just the Chinese WeChat that was hit with advertising. Ads appeared on YouTube in other languages. He brazenly told lie after lie in a scare campaign against Labor and the Greens.

There were the claims that the Greens would bring in death taxes.

And while the UAP spewed out lie after lie it demonstrated little interest in selling itself apart from promising to "Make Australia Great", parroting Donald Trump's line.

The result of all this expenditure might not have come to anything when measured in terms of seats for the UAP, but that was not its real aim. It could be given credit for playing an important role in the defeat of Labor and re-election of the Morrison government.

It begs the question: Were these elections bought by a mining magnate? Also, was it all Palmer's money or were other big business interests backing UAP?

The amount spent by Palmer demonstrates what a fossil-fuel worshipping government is

worth to this mining magnate and others involved. He has grand plans for two large coal mines, one of which – the Alpha North project – is adjacent to the Adani site. If it were to get approval, it would cover an area of 144,000 hectares and produce around a third as much more than the Adani mine! He also has an interest in seeing Adani go ahead as he is interested in using its rail line to gain access to the port.

The Coalition had a lie factory of their own ludicrously saying that Labor would force people to use electric cars and take away people's utes and weekends.

We don't know is what the Coalition parties have promised Palmer in return for an exchange of preferences. Likewise, One Nation did a deal to exchange preferences with the Coalition. There is no doubt that the preferences of these two parties were instrumental in the wins of a number of Coalition candidates.

In the 2016 elections the Coalition exchanged preferences with Labor to keep One Nation and the Greens out. On this occasion the Coalition turned to One Nation and the UAP to keep Labor out. The Greens and Labor exchanged preferences in an attempt to defeat the Coalition government.

Significant changes

Nationally, the swing in the first preference votes against both Labor and the Coalition was 0.9 percent. These figures do not reflect the huge variations between electorates across the country. Local issues and the work on the ground of candidates played a big role.

The carve-up of seats between the Coalition and Labor is not so different to the last Parliament, which does not reflect significant changes taking place in the political landscape.

The rise of the extreme right, neo-fascist forces is not reflected in seats at this stage. Neither Palmer's UAP nor Hanson's One Nation won seats in the Lower House but none-the-less they are playing a significant role in driving the political agenda to the right, in particular that of the Coalition parties.

This is a global trend, as can be seen in the current EU elections where the extreme right forces are organising.

A large number of small ultra-right parties and ultra-Christian organisations focused their propaganda on attacking the Labor Party and Greens. These include the Liberal Democratic Party, Conservative National Party, Shooters and Fishers, Christian Democratic Party, Democratic Labor Party, Fraser Anning's Conservative National Party, Australian People's Party and Citizens Electoral Council.

Most of them failed to get half a percent of the vote.

Senate

There are 40 Senate seats at stake in this election with the other 36 positions continuing until the next elections. Senate counting is far from complete with a number of seats still undecided. The AEC predicts a total of 17 Coalition, 13 for Labor, six for the Greens, one for Jacqui Lambie Network, and the remainder unclear, depending on preference flows.

The UAP and One Nation on average, nationally won 3.4 and 3.0 percent respectively, with considerable variations between states and electorates.

These neo-fascist forces should not be underestimated. They are having an impact on the overall political climate as the Coalition, in particular, pursues their potential electorate and do deals with them. They will work tirelessly from now until the next elections and have huge resources backing them.

Scorched earth agenda

Regardless of the final outcomes, the left and progressive forces in Australia have a massive battle ahead. The Coalition ran a negative election campaign attacking Labor while revealing very few policies. But it has an agenda, scripted by big business and right-wing think tanks such as the Institute of Public Affairs.

This agenda is centred around large corporate and personal income tax cuts for the wealthy; gutting of the public service; social security cuts; massive expansion of coal mining; further cuts to penalty and wage rates; outlawing the right to strike; replacing EBAs with individual, non-union employment contracts; further privatisations; and environmental vandalism with destruction of Barrier Reef and deregulation of land clearing and water usage.

Key to this economic and social agenda is the crippling of, bankrupting and destruction of the trade union movement. The union movement faces the possibility of an extension of the Australian Building and Construction Commission to all industries, to all trade unions. The aim of the Coalition's masters is a life without unions.

After all it is the trade union movement that presents the main barrier to the ambitions of big business.

It is imperative for their survival that trade unions stand up, fight back and take the struggle to a new level. They cannot do this alone. It will need the broadest movement possible involving community organisations and left and progressive organisations and activists.

The Communist Party of Australia is committed to working to build the strongest and broadest movement possible to ensure workers' rights are protected and the Coalition government cannot enact its agenda.

The campaign to defeat the Coalition government begins now.

CUBA NEEDS YOU!

Join the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society

The Australia-Cuba Friendship Society aims to promote and encourage friendship, understanding, cultural, trade and other exchanges between the peoples of Australia and Cuba.

[] I wish to join the ACFS. Enclosed is a cheque/money order for \$30 (full membership) \$15 (concession)

[] I am interested in the annual work/study trip to Cuba. Please send me information.

[] I wish to donate \$ _____ towards the material aid campaign for Cuba.

Name: _____

Address: _____

P/C _____ Phone: _____

Newsletter preference (please tick one) Email ☐ Mail ☐

Email address: _____

Send to: ACFS PO Box 1051, Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia

Please send your remittance to:

Bank: Commonwealth Bank of Australia

BSB: 063011


Account Number: 00900817

Account Name: Australia-Cuba Friendship Society Victorian Branch

Please include your name in the receipt.

WHY WE SUPPORT CUBA

AUSTRALIA CUBA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY



Order your copy of the "Why we support Cuba" book for only \$5 (\$6 if posted)

Contact Joan - 9857 9249

Old CUBA World Heritage By Joan Coxsedg

"A personal story about Cuba during my three visits to the tiny island nation with drawings, text and a potted history"

"In presenting this fine collection of pen and pastel drawings, I am certain that Australians who view it will be inspired to learn more about Cuba..."

Eusebio Leal, Chief Historian of the City of Havana

Only \$20 Plus postage (\$2:10 -1copy, \$3:50 for 2)

Please make cheques payable to:

Joan Coxsedg

8 Leicester Street, North Balwyn, 3104



OLD CUBA
WORLD HERITAGE

A personal story about Cuba during my three visits to the tiny island nation with drawings, text and a potted history

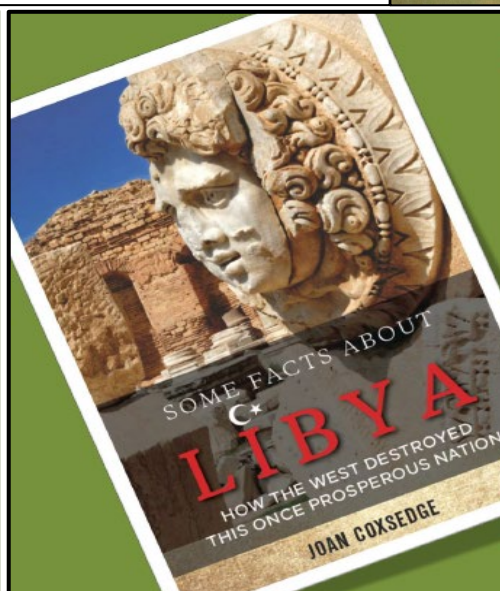
Joan Coxsedg

Don't forget to check out the latest on the Melbourne ACFS Website

www.melbourneacfs.org

Or contact us directly at

melbacfs@yahoo.com.au



LIBYA

Get your copy of this important new book by

Joan Coxsedg

Available only at ACFS meetings

\$5

SORRY...NO POSTAGE due to cost