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**Australia-Cuba Friendship Society**  
**Melbourne NEWSLETTER**  
**May 2018**  
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**Next Meeting**  
**Wednesday**  
**7<sup>th</sup> May**  
**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,

April 18, 2018

I'm writing this earlier than usual, so my comments are a little premature, but I decided to go ahead anyway because the international situation is so toxic. Draft Dodger Supremo Donald Trump and his crazed National Security Adviser John Bolton (who Trump thanked for this latest outrage) and all Washington's other bloodthirsty thugs like US/UN bully girl Nikki Haley, are provoking Russia to go to war. A lying, hypocritical media and zombified populace complete the nightmare. **The alleged 'gas attack' in Syrian East Ghouta did not happen.** Videos of murky origin were used by two discredited western-run propaganda outfits, the White Helmets and MI6's one-man-band, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, to claim that hundreds were wounded in a chlorine attack before there was any investigation, let alone proof. NATO joined in by claiming that **'Russia, with its unwavering support for the regime, ultimately bears responsibility for these brutal attacks.'** Hold on. Responsibility for an attack with no evidence? Trump had trumpeted that he wanted the US to leave Syria, but within hours, the New York Times announced **As Trump Seeks Way Out of Syria, New Attack Pulls Him Back In.** It sure did, with missiles and bombing runs. A habit. Since the early 1900s, the US has been involved in 66 major military interventions with a huge loss of life.

So there you have it. After many long and bloody years of war against the democratically elected government of Bashar al-Assad which had finally managed to defeat three major terrorist groups and was getting back on its feet, the US and its colonialist buddies were losing the battle. In total disregard of UN laws (not worth a cracker) this cowardly attack, based on a farrago of lies, was designed to give a green light to the terrorists. Remember the Bay of Pigs? (Vietnam), babies thrown out of cots and Weapons of Mass Destruction? (Iraq). Growing numbers aren't copping the bullshit, so we're all dupes, including Britain's former ambassador to Syria, Peter Ford, who believes the chemical attack was staged. The world now stands on the brink of a catastrophe. Assuming we survive this latest crisis, how long before Trump and his cronies invent another excuse to bomb and kill? These war criminals have already flagged their intent to do so, with talk of a full-scale ground assault. A warning from Albert Einstein: **'I know not what weapons WW3 will be fought, but WW4 will be fought with sticks and stones'.**

As much as 95% of Eastern Ghouta had been liberated by the Syrian Army with tens of thousands of civilians being cared for in relief centres telling horror stories of 'rebels' who routinely decapitate, set fire to people and commit other unspeakable acts. The claim that Syrian and Russian forces would now use chemical weapons to defeat these insurgent dregs is preposterous. In 2013, Syria surrendered all its stocks of chemical weapons under the auspices of the UN and international observers. Strangely, at the site of an alleged chemical attack in April 2017, pictures emerged of the White Helmets, the first at the scene, 'gathering samples' wearing no protective clothing or gloves, but decked out in thongs and casual clothing. It's equally preposterous that anyone with half a brain would believe anything that came out of the presidential gob. For the past month, Russia warned that fake gas attacks were being planned by the 'insurgents' with leaked emails alleging that the White House gave the green light to a chemical weapons attack in Syria that could be blamed on Assad and spur international military action in that devastated nation. Russia also warned the US many times that any attack on Russian troops and installations would mean war, with reports circulating that the entire Russian military has been put on high alert.

But you wouldn't know it here where it's all froth and bubble, with Turnbull sounding peeved he hadn't been invited to the bombing party. We've had cricket scandals, the Commonwealth Games (only Australia competed), blah, blah about a rail link to Melbourne Airport, major sports stadiums being redeveloped for the umpteenth time out of the public purse, with the vast majority oblivious to the fact that we might all be blown to kingdom-come. Climate change? No worries. And no money for all the things that matter, but largesse for our trigger-happy cops being kitted out in US military-style gear with weaponry to match. **According to Police Chief Ashton of particular concern is terrorism in Victorian country towns.** Is he for real?

Facebook billionaire Mark Zuckerberg fronted 100 legislators last week, many of them had received thousands of dollars from his company, and said bugger-all. Why would he, when he knows where all the bodies are buried. Unlike Zuckerberg, the handful of honest journalists still working face serious consequences every day, including violence, imprisonment and death. The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has set up a 'Media Monitoring Services' unit, which is busily compiling a database of journalists and 'media influencers', tracking more than 290,000 global news sources as well as social media in more than 100 languages. So watch out if you express an alternative point of view like Julian Assange, who has spent the past six years holed up inside the Ecuadorian Embassy in the heart of London. He's now been completely silenced, losing access to the internet, his phone and right to receive visitors. **Ecuador cut off his communications a day after it welcomed a delegation from US Southern Command, the Pentagon's arm in Latin America and the Caribbean.** Julian Assange has done what all true journalists should do. Find the facts and tell the truth. But Julian Assange knows too much...

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

**May Day 2018 – Sunday May 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**See all the info on pages 5 and 6**

## **Cuba calls, love answers**

This May Day, when the certainty of victory fills the air in our streets and plazas, the day will resound with pride and confidence in the future

## **Miguel Díaz-Canel receives Bolivian President Evo Morales**

The President of Cuba's Councils of State and Ministers, today April 23, received Bolivian President Evo Morales Ayma, who is on an official visit to the country



## **President of Bolivia to visit Cuba**

During his stay the distinguished guest will hold official talks with Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, President of Cuba's Councils of State and Ministers, among other activities



## **Another April 19, another victory**

The fact that today Cuba has a new President is not only the result of an electoral process. This was a transition from one historical generation to another, which was as natural as it was transcendental



## **The Communist Party will resolutely support and back the new President**

Speech by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee, at the close of the Constituent Session of the 9th Legislature of the National Assembly of People's Power, at Havana's International Conference Center, April 19, 2018, "Year 60 of the Revolution"

# **Anything from the list below you can bring to the ACFS monthly meeting is greatly appreciated.**

### **Food and Household Items**

- |                              |                                            |                         |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • healthy breakfast cereals  | • tinned tomato, corn and peas             | • dishwashing detergent |
| • dried fruit, nuts & seeds  | • tinned beans and lentils (without sauce) | • shaving items         |
| • flatbread                  | • green tea, black tea & instant coffee    | • sanitary pads         |
| • long life (UHT) milk       | • spices                                   | • shampoo               |
| • healthy snack foods        | • honey (in small jars)                    | • soap                  |
| • tomato paste               |                                            | • toothbrushes          |
| • tinned sardines and salmon |                                            | • washing powder        |



**asrc** Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

### **People Feeding People**

These are some practical ways you can help support families seeking asylum, who are living below the poverty line.

1. Become a [food sponsor](#)
2. Order a Foodbank 'home delivery' through [Coles Online](#)
3. Donate toilet paper online via [Who Gives a Crap](#).

The centre in Footscray is extremely grateful for items already donated by ACFS.

# New Cuban president continues ‘Work of the Revolution’

Posted in [Cuba](#), [Latin America & The Caribbean](#) - By Teresa Gutierrez - April 25, 2018

On April 18, the anniversary of the Bay of Pigs, Miguel Díaz-Canel was elected the new president of Cuba.

Perhaps the most thrilling angle about the U.S. capitalist news coverage of the April presidential elections in Cuba was how the media repeatedly described the country as “communist Cuba.”

For the workers and oppressed here, whose lives are marked every day by trauma, Cuba’s ability to defend and build socialism just 90 miles from U.S. imperialism provides immense hope for the future.

Cuba is far from achieving communism. It has been heroically able to build and defend socialism — a step toward communism and an incredible achievement given the non-stop aggression from the U.S., including the longest blockade in history.

There is still inequality and poverty, but it is extraordinary what the Revolution has been able to achieve in a short 59 years.

That the capitalist media describe Cuba as communist shows how much the ruling class trembles from fear of this beloved island.

## The end of the ‘Castro Era’?

On April 18, the anniversary of the Bay of Pigs, Miguel Díaz-Canel was elected the new president of Cuba. He followed the presidencies of comrades Fidel Castro from 1976 to 2008 and Raúl Castro from 2008 to 2018.

That the new president was not “another Castro” was met in the U.S. with great fanfare. Did the end of the “Castro era” mean a lessening of revolutionary fervor? Was this new administration a sign of a less-militant younger leadership?

Nothing could be further from the truth.

For more than 50 years, U.S. imperialism has cast disparagement about Cuba’s leadership. Every leader has been ridiculed, mocked and lied about, not to mention has survived countless assassination attempts.

The U.S. repeated the lie that Raúl was “softer on socialism” and more open to capitalism than Fidel. This was an attempt to isolate Raúl. This lie was countered over and over by Raúl’s practices, which were a continuation of Fidel’s, just under a different context.

The “Castro regime” was not a familial regime, but rather a recognition by the Cuban people of two extraordinary revolutionary leaders who happened to be brothers — two exemplary Marxist thinkers and tacticians who astoundingly carried out a revolution to oust a brutal capitalist regime in 1959 and dedicated their entire lives to Cuba and socialism.

That there is no Castro as president means only that these two comrades have gotten older and one has sadly passed on — not a change of political orientation.

## Who is Díaz-Canel?



Miguel Díaz-Canel, 57, was born after the 1959 revolution. He is described as a loyal “Fidelista and Raúlista,” which can also be said of millions of revolutionaries around the world.

Díaz-Canel has a long history of struggle and political leadership. He was the first secretary of the Communist Party in the province of Villa Clara, a member of the UJC (Young Communist League) and participated in an international solidarity mission to Nicaragua. He has long supported LGBTQ rights in Cuba.

Díaz-Canel was minister of education, a vice president of the Council of Ministers, and first vice president of the Councils of State and Ministers of Cuba. (Granma, April 19)

He has worked tirelessly alongside the rebels of Cuba, Fidel and Raúl. This gives extra confidence to socialists and revolutionaries worldwide.

At his inaugural speech he began by recognizing the stellar leadership of General Raúl, who ran for deputy and received the most votes in the general elections. The fact that Raúl and other Commanders of the Revolution were in the same hall gave Cubans the “opportunity to embrace history,” Díaz-Canel pointed out. He raised the many “dark,” but failed “attempts to destroy” the Revolution.

He pointed out that in the National Assembly, which also had elections, women occupy “decisive positions in the state and the government.”

The 2018 electoral process has provided Cubans, Díaz-Canel continued, “the consolidation of unity in Cuba.” In fact, hashtags in Cuba abounded that read #SomosContinuidad (#Wearecontinuity).

“The flag of the Revolution is passed on to Younger Hands” was a Granma headline and a main theme of the elections, as Raúl had made it clear that his generation would do just that.

## Raúl: Salute to a revolutionary stalwart

Raúl leaves his position as Cuba’s head of state, but remains first secretary of the Cuban Communist Party, as well as head of the military.

Raúl has rightly earned his place in history. In 1953, he fought at the Moncada Barracks against the brutal regime of the butcher Fulgencio Batista. He was a political prisoner along with Fidel. Raúl is the one who saw something special in Che Guevara and introduced him to Fidel in Mexico. They, along



with many others, launched the famous Granma yacht in Mexico toward Cuba in 1956, opening up the guerrilla war to successfully oust Batista.

Raúl was the minister of defense, vice president and second secretary to the Party for 47 years. Under his leadership, he helped strengthen the economy and provided more internet and cell phone access — not because he was “softer” on opening up society or “open” to capitalism, but because the material conditions for such were available.

When Fidel began to get ill in 2006, Raúl took over more of the leadership. During this time he helped oversee the liberation of the Cuban Five political prisoners from U.S. jails, hosted the first visit of a U.S. president since the Revolution, hosted the Colombia Peace Talks, and achieved many other significant accomplishments.

Díaz-Canel said of Raúl, “He remains our First Secretary, as the reference that he is for the revolutionary cause, teaching and always ready to confront imperialism, like the first, with his rifle at the ready in the moment of combat.”

Raúl “put his sense of duty ahead of human pain,” Díaz-Canel said, in reference to the loss of Commander in Chief Fidel Castro on Nov. 25, 2016. (Granma, April 18)

### The Revolution continues

“I assume this responsibility with the conviction that all we revolutionaries, from any trench, will be faithful to Fidel and Raúl, the current leader of the revolutionary process,” Díaz-



The Cuban people voted for coherent continuity of the Revolution, another victory for the man who occupied the first seat on the Assembly tribunal, to the right of Díaz-Canel, since its founding: Fidel. **Photo:** Juvenal Balán

April 19, only appeared to be empty, just as it had during Raúl's term in office. The election of Cuba's new president, representing coherent continuity supported by the vast majority of the people, is the triumph of the man who physically occupied that seat in the National Assembly of People's Power since its founding: Fidel. This is his triumph, Fidel's triumph, of the peaceful, indisputably creative, and victorious generational continuity recently seen in Cuba, as conceived and realized by José Martí following the Ten Years War, when the war heroes and the "New Pines" merged under the banner of complete independence and sovereignty for a free, educated, just, and solidary people.

It is always worth remembering that these were the founding principles of the young lawyer, Fidel Castro, in the year of the Apostle's 100th birthday, 1953.

Miguel Díaz-Canel's speech is a coherent reflection of these ideas — without excluding the dialectic — upheld by that young man until his final days, and continued by Raúl, whose loyalty to the concepts contained within his brother's program is unparalleled.

It's also important to remember that during the uncertain hours of Fidel's life, after the failed attack on the Moncada garrison, when no one knew whether he was dead or alive, Raúl, taken prisoner near Santiago de Cuba and transported to the municipal police station, assumed full responsibility for the assault, hoping that Fidel might be protected and somewhere safe. Though little known, this was one of

Canel declared at his inauguration as the new president of Cuba.

He continued, “I confirm that Cuban foreign policy will remain unchanged. Cuba will not accept conditions. The changes that are necessary will continue to be made by the Cuban people.

“I do not come to promise anything, as the Revolution never has in all these years. I come to fulfill the program that we have implemented with the guidelines of Socialism and the Revolution.”

As for the enemies of the revolutionary process, he said: “Here there is no space for a transition that ignores or destroys the work of the Revolution. We will continue moving forward without fear and without retreat; without renouncing our sovereignty, independence, development programs, and independence.

“To those who through ignorance or bad faith doubt our commitment, we must tell them that the Revolution continues and will continue,” he declared.

His final words at this historic inauguration were: “The world has received the wrong message that the Revolution ends with its guerrillas.”

Fidel once said: “A revolution is a struggle to the death between the future and the past.” In the new period in Cuba, the world sees the best of the past and the hope of the future.

<https://iacenter.org/2018/04/26/new-cuban-president-continues-work-of-the-revolution/>

## The seat

*The seat to the right of Díaz-Canel, elected President of the Councils of State and Ministers on April 19, only appeared to be empty, just as it had during Raúl's term in office*

Author: [Marta Rojas Rodríguez](mailto:Marta.Rojas.Rodriguez@informacion@granmai.cu) | [informacion@granmai.cu](mailto:informacion@granmai.cu) - april 25, 2018 15:04:02

The seat to the right of Díaz-Canel, elected President of the Councils of State and Ministers on

the bravest acts in such circumstances; when the life of any suspected protagonist of actions committed on July 26 was worth very little.

On April 19, the seat which has remained empty as a solemn tribute to the Comandante en Jefe since he stepped down as the President of the Councils of State and Ministers, symbolized something else: preserving his victory; especially since on this same date, in 1961, he announced to the combative Cuban people Yankee imperialism's first defeat on the American continent, at Girón.

As it happens, April 19 is a day full of historic symbolism: 120 years ago on April 19, 1898, U.S. President McKinley signed a joint resolution hypocritically supporting the Mambises, proclaiming Cuba to be “free and independent” and demanding the withdrawal of Spanish colonizers, who had in fact been defeated.

Raúl explained this contrived Yankee process in his speech; the overwhelming response to which would be given by Fidel, just 60 years later, with the entrance of the Rebel Army to Santiago de Cuba and thus signifying the definitive triumph of the process initiated by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, who began by freeing his slaves in 1868.

Meanwhile it was Martí that gave continuity to the struggle linking the initial battle waged by Antonio Maceo, Máximo Gómez, and other heroes for 10 years with the new generations in a single front. This was the necessary war as outlined by the Apostle, intellectual author of the Moncada attack, as Fidel proclaimed during his historic trial held in the heroic city of Santiago de Cuba.

Today, free, independent, and sovereign Cuba continues to be led by its initiators and younger generations.



# MARCH ON MAYDAY

SUNDAY 6 MAY 2018  
**DEFEND WORKERS RIGHTS  
DEMAND THE RIGHT TO STRIKE**

ASSEMBLE 1PM  
VICTORIAN TRADES HALL  
CNR VICTORIA & RUSSELL STREETS

SOLIDARITY  
THROUGH  
SOCIALISM

Keep Public  
Assets in  
Public Hands

FIGHT FOR  
A LIVING  
WAGE

UPHOLD  
INDIGENOUS  
RIGHTS

STAND UP AGAINST  
WEALTH INEQUALITY

FIGHT AGAINST  
CORPORATE  
SUBSIDIES AND  
TAX CUTS

FIGHT AGAINST  
ATTACKS ON  
TRADE UNION  
MOVEMENT

OPPOSE AUSTRALIA'S  
INVOLVEMENT  
IN U.S.  
WARS



Sharing the 'Rams' - apologies to Jom Reports



## MAY DAY EVENTS 2018:

**MAY DAY FILM NIGHT:** Tuesday evening 1 May at 7pm. Democritus Workers League, 583 High St, Northcote

**WREATH LAYING AT THE 8HR MONUMENT:** on Thursday 3 May at 5pm. Victoria Street, Opposite Trades Hall

**MAY DAY MULTICULTURAL EVENT:** Thursday 3 May at 6pm. Meeting Room 1, Trades Hall

**MAY DAY MARCH:** Sunday 6 May, assembling at 1pm. Corner Victoria & Russell Streets, opposite Trades Hall.

**FAMILY DAY:** Sunday 6 May at 11am. Before and after the march: Rides and games for children, breakfast, and other activities

**MAY DAY CONCERT:** Sunday 6 May. Straight after the march and speakers' platform. Afternoon tea.

**TRADES HALL CHOIR – Victorian Trades Hall Council Sunday 6 May 2018.** The choir will perform on Sunday outside Trades Hall as they have done for 25 years or more.

## May Day call to action: End the U.S. war on immigrants

Posted in [Actions](#), [Immigrants & Refugees](#), [In the U.S.](#), [Spotlight](#)

**NYC Parks Department illegally denies MayDay Rally at Union Square**  
**Activists to protest at the NYC Parks Department to defend annual MayDay rally**  
**NYC Parks Department's arbitrary permit policy is a violation of constitutional rights**

NEW YORK – This year, the NYC Parks Department is attempting to arbitrarily push the historic MayDay Rally to a location 3 blocks away, at the back end of Union Square.

The sudden change in location threatens to throw the whole of May Day into confusion. Many hundreds of New Yorkers who arrive at Union Square on May 1 will not know where to go. Logistical and safety plans are at risk. This decision is an intentional move by the City of New York to shut down May Day.

For over 100 years working people, unions, migrants, community organizations and organizations of oppressed people have gathered at the broad South Plaza of Union Square, along 14th Street in Manhattan on May 1 – International Workers Day, also known as May Day. The south plaza location is a major cross street thoroughfare.

Defense of Migrants, Muslims, LGBTQ community, the Black Lives Matter Movement, union rights, opposition to racist police repression and all U.S. wars are the themes of the annual rally and march.

One week before the planned annual rally at the usual historic location their permit for Union Square South was denied and organizers were told that only the backend of the park was available to them. The fraudulent excuse given by Claudia Pepe, Director of Special Events and Permits for the NY Parks Service, was that there is currently heavy construction on the 14th Street Union Square plaza location.

Activists quickly exposed that there is no construction at the location or anywhere in the park, and documented this with video and photo evidence of 14th Street between Broadway and Union Square West. There is no obstruction that blocks pedestrian access anywhere on the wide-open South plaza.

Sara Flounders and Sharon Eolis of the International Action Center have applied for the MayDay Rally permits annually since 2005. Sara Flounders asserted: "This denial is a clear violation of the constitutional right to assemble in public places. In the age of Trump such arbitrary abuse of bureaucratic authority should be challenged. It is part of the climate of raids, round-ups and growing police repression and militarization.

City officials and in particular the NYC Borough Commissioner of Parks William T. Castro must be held accountable for the unconstitutional violation of First Amendment Right of Assembly by Claudia Pepe, the Director of Special Events and Permits."

Sharon Eolis explained: "The organizers of MayDay at Union Square applied for the required Parks Department permits more than 3 months ago. In a personal visit to the NYC Parks Department we confirmed that there was no conflicting event on the Plaza. NYPD Sound permits were also applied for.

**INTERNATIONAL  
Action Center**



Nina Macapinlac, an organizer with the International League of Peoples' Struggle, which is part of the same May Day Coalition, declared: "Many hundreds of young activists are determined to defend their legal right to assemble and protest the current onslaught of militarism, raids and round ups at the site where working people, especially generations of immigrant workers have gathered for decades.

MayDay is being increasingly criminalized. Last year there was an unwarranted and intimidating police presence. The denial of a park permit is part of a trend to attempt to intimidate communities from celebrating International Workers' Day. Despite this, we will take collective action because International Workers' Day is all about standing up for our communities and asserting our rights."

The Rally on Tuesday, May 1, **MAY DAY** is scheduled for **Union Square South** from 12 pm to 5 pm

Tell the city of New York and @NYCParks:

**You can't shut down May Day! We have a right to rally and demand our rights!!**

NYC Borough Commissioner of Parks

William T. Castro - ([William.Castro@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:William.Castro@parks.nyc.gov)) - 212-408-02010

Claudia Pepe, the Director of Special Events and Permits ([Claudia.Pepe@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:Claudia.Pepe@parks.nyc.gov)) - 212-408-0112

**2018 MAY DAY Union Square**  
[facebook.com/MayDayUnionSquare](https://facebook.com/MayDayUnionSquare)

[www.IACenter.org](http://www.IACenter.org)

## **May Day Actions around the America**

*By Teresa Gutierrez - April 12, 2018*

As May Day approaches, migrants and refugees in the U.S. and around the world remain in a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions. President Donald Trump's continued move to the right is exacerbating this situation.

In the U.S., raids at courthouses and workplaces have increased. The National Guard has been sent to the southern border to further militarize the area. The U.S. attorney general has strengthened repressive legal measures to terrorize immigrant workers and divide the working class.

Now more than ever, the struggles for migrant and refugee rights must be linked to the struggle against state police terror and to win workers' rights.

It is easy to turn away from the spectacle that is the Trump administration or to laugh Trump off as no more than a no-talent, orange clown in a cheap circus. But Trump is extremely dangerous. In league with an ultraright faction, he has made his administration into a militaristic, white supremacist regime.

This has disastrous consequences for the workers and oppressed everywhere. This must be fought tooth and nail.

### **Hardline racist agenda**

This month, Trump once again decreed his anti-immigrant agenda through a series of "Easter tweets," in a nod to his white-supremacist "Christian nation" base. (CNN, April 5)

He called for new laws to make it even harder for immigrants to obtain refugee status. He acquired a whopping \$1.6 billion from a willing Congress to build his racist wall on the Mexican border — and demanded more. He asked right-wing governors to send their National Guard troops to the border. He also declared he would assign U.S. military troops to patrol there, though that action requires congressional approval by law.

To fan the flames against immigrants, Trump again stated that immigration policies "have weakened the country" and "led to public safety risks." (Washington Post, April 3) But that racist rhetoric is really a smokescreen to confuse white workers about where the real assault on their wages, health and education is coming from.

For instance, the total estimated cost for Trump's white-supremacist wall would be about \$25 billion — money that could and should be earmarked instead for health care, teachers' salaries, and other needs of working and oppressed people.



The truth is that migration into the U.S. is at some of the lowest levels in years. The anti-immigrant climate that has grown since 2006 means fewer and fewer Mexican workers are coming into the U.S. while more are leaving to go back home.

In early April, Trump verbally targeted a caravan of migrants who were travelling from Central America through Mexico, aiming to reach the Tijuana border. Covered on Fox News with fear mongering rhetoric, the caravan was portrayed as a horde of dangerous criminals "snaking" and sneaking their way into the U.S.

Many such righteous caravans have made their way through Mexico for decades, as migrant rights advocates built support for the millions of displaced workers in the region. Every year, caravans travel throughout Mexico. They are not just for Central Americans but also for families in Mexico who have lost touch with their emigrating children or other relatives and are trying to find out what happened to them.

These families do not know if their loved ones made it into the U.S. or are in detention. Perhaps they lost their lives riding "La Bestia" (The Beast), the freight train that migrants jump on to make their way north, and where hundreds fall to their deaths or lose limbs in the attempt.

Trump specifically demonized a caravan organized by Pueblo Sin Fronteras (People Without Borders). Highlighting the concerns of Central Americans — many from Honduras, Guatemala or El Salvador — the caravan began with more than 1,000 people. The logistics of arranging transportation, food and accommodations on that scale shows the courage and determination of the movement for migrants in Mexico.

### **Growing U.S. militarization**

Why are so many caravanning north? Not to do ill, as racists rant, but because U.S. militarism and imperialism have destabilized their homelands, destroyed their homes and taken away their livelihood. For example, Honduras has become the scene of widespread instability and repression since the 2009 coup, when the progressive regime of President Mel Zelaya was overturned. That illegal coup had U.S. fingerprints all over it, particularly those of then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

For Trump and his ilk to deny the racism they aim at these migrants is calculated hypocrisy. To deny political asylum to the hundreds of





refugees forced to flee their region is not only wrong — it is a death sentence.

U.S. imperialism has militarized the beleaguered countries of Mexico and Central America, and now Trump aims to further militarize the U.S. border. Not the northern border with Canada, of course, but the U.S. border with Mexico.

In the wake of Trump's call for troops at the border, conservative governors from Arizona and Texas deployed their National Guard units (Newsweek, April 7), although still at numbers lower than called out under both Republican President George W. Bush and Democrat President Barack Obama. Arizona deployed 150 members and Texas promised 250. The total from all border states is predicted to reach 4,000 eventually.

California Gov. Jerry Brown announced April 11 that he would send troops to the border. This is alarming, as the migrant rights movement has been very strong in California. That a so-called liberal governor felt the pressure to go along with reactionary governors shows the Trump anti-immigrant hype is gaining momentum. Brown's announcement is also an example of how the Democrats continue to sell out immigrants and their advocates.

#### **Workplace raids increasing**

Trump's summoning of the soldiers is meant to send a chill through migrants and activists alike. This follows other policies to terrorize the migrant and refugee community. On April 5, Trump issued a directive that U.S. immigration enforcement agencies cease any "catch and release" practices. In this degradingly nicknamed procedure, undocumented immigrants who had been arrested at the border were released while their cases were processed.

In addition, the Department of Justice, run by archracist Attorney General Jeff Sessions, will now set quotas for immigration judges in an effort to speed up deportations. According to National Public Radio, "to get a satisfactory rating on their performance evaluations, judges will be required to clear at least 700 cases a year and to have fewer than 15 percent of their decisions overturned on appeal."

Immigration lawyers criticized the plan. "Decisions in immigration court have life-or-death consequences and cannot be managed like an assembly line," said Jeremy McKinney, secretary of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. (NPR, April 3)

Meanwhile, in what may be the biggest workplace raid under Trump's assault, 97 people were taken into custody and processed for deportation or detention on April 7, following an Immigration and Customs Enforcement raid at a Tennessee meat-processing plant.

This follows synchronized ICE raids at over 100 7-Eleven stores in early January. On one day alone, ICE agents stormed into 100 stores searching for undocumented workers. (Newsweek, Jan. 10)

The ICE acting executive associate director boasted at the time that they were just getting started: "It's not going to be limited to large companies or any particular industry, big, medium and small. ...

This is what we're gearing up for this year, and what you're going to see more and more of."

#### **Nowhere to go**

Immigrants and refugees in the U.S. are living under a state of siege right now. Whether out shopping or going to religious services, whether in school, at court or at work, while driving or walking anywhere, migrants and their families are living in sheer terror. The risk of post-traumatic stress is real, especially among children of migrant families, with long-standing consequences.

Migrants are forced to leave their homelands and migrate into the U.S. because of intolerable conditions, resulting directly from U.S. imperialist militarism. Only by shutting down this country's predatory, racist system once and for all will this war on migrants end. May Day 2018 must once again be dedicated to the struggle of migrants and refugees — whether they come from Honduras or Haiti, Syria or Somalia.

There are no borders in the workers' struggle!

*Teresa Gutierrez is a longtime immigrant rights activist.*

*Photos: Massive nationwide rallies in September 2017 defended immigrants, here in Los Angeles and Houston.*

## **Black Workers for Justice say: 'No to U.S.-led war on Syria'**

Posted in [North Africa & West Asia](#), [Syria](#) - April 21, 2018

*The following statement was issued by Black Workers for Justice, based in North Carolina.*

Again, we see the U.S. government trying to start another war as a diversion from the capitalist crisis that is causing great suffering among masses of working-class and poor people. The U.S. wars violate international laws and the U.S. Constitution, while attacking basic democratic and human rights to challenge the suffering and brutality carried out by the capitalist economy and the "State" (government).

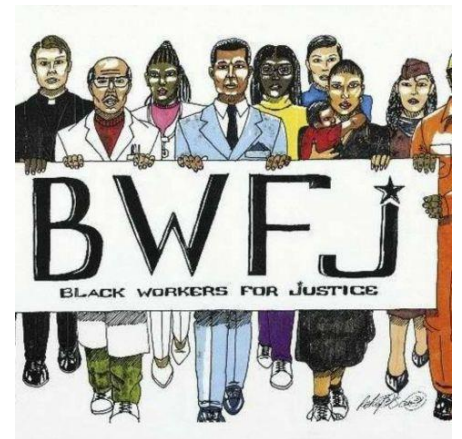
Trump got elected president on the racist promise of making America great again! Trump is intensifying the War on Black America — killing, maiming and jailing Black and Brown people, criminalizing immigrants and Muslims, and fostering regime change throughout the Americas.

This attack on Syria is part of a U.S.-led global war that includes the War on Black America. Black people must oppose this war on Syria, all wars abroad and in the U.S. This war contributes to the economic and social crises.

As our tax money is spent by the ruling 1% for war, there are more cuts to public services, schools, vocational education, jobs, health care, affordable housing, clearing up the environment, repairing the infrastructure, and supporting veterans that are disabled and mentally broken from fighting in these imperialist wars.

The struggle for Black liberation must also be a struggle against imperialist wars. The European heads of the global capitalist system — the U.S., France and the U.K. are again deciding what part of the world they want to dominate and control for increasing their wealth, and positioning their militaries to dominate the world.

**We Say No to U.S. Led Racist and Imperialist Wars!**





# Labor in France confronts President Macron, tool of the oligarchs

*Posted in [Europe](#), [Labor solidarity](#), [World](#) - By Rémy Herrera - April 15, 2018*

Paris, April 8 — Since the beginning of March, France has plunged into social turbulence. Dissatisfaction is rising everywhere. Demonstrations multiply, as do strikes, notably in public transport — from railway to Air France workers, among sanitation workers, and also in the mass retailing sector. Workers in the French supermarket group Carrefour, the country's largest private employer, struck after the announcement of the closure of hundreds of stores and the loss of thousands of jobs, despite a billion euros in profits recorded last year.

This is, at last, the first real confrontation of labor with Emmanuel Macron since his election as head of state almost a year ago. But the question is: Who is French President Macron? He's called handsome, elegant, brilliant. At just 39 years of age, he was elected president of the republic in May 2017, after a meteoric political rise. He also impressed Donald Trump, whom he invited to Paris last July 14 to celebrate a national holiday and attend a military parade on the Champs Élysées.

This is the first time France has a president who speaks English so well and smiles "like an American." That should be no surprise: He was a member of the "Young Leaders" of the French-American Foundation, an institution responsible for "strengthening ties between France and the United States."

Nevertheless, Macron's electoral base is very narrow. Although he led the first round of the presidential elections in April 2017, he received only 24 percent of the vote — 8.66 million votes — only slightly more than the far-right-wing National Front candidate Marine Le Pen, who received 21.3 percent, or 7.68 million votes. His other opponents, François Fillon on the right with 20 percent and Jean-Luc Mélenchon on the left with 19.6 percent, trailed him by a bit less.

Running against the far-right candidate in the second round, Macron played it smooth: France is not racist; it is a well-known fact. Macron was elected by a landslide, with 66.1 percent of the voters, but with more than 25 percent abstaining.

Sure of himself, he celebrated his victory the evening of the first round by holding a reception in a luxurious Parisian restaurant, surrounded by powerful jetsetters like Jacques Attali, former adviser to President François Mitterrand and great friend of the establishment, and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, former leader of the May 1968 student revolt, who later became a loyal servant of European big capitalists.

## Product of high finance

Macron is a pure product of high finance. After having been a public auditor, he declined a proposal from his boss's boss, Laurence Parisot, to accept the post of general manager of the employers' association, Mouvement des Entreprises de France (MEDEF), preferring to

work as an investment banker at Rothschild, where he became a managing partner.

President François Hollande, who was elected as a member of the Socialist Party, first appointed him deputy secretary general of the Elysée (2012)

and later minister of Economy and Industry (2014). Choosing a banker to run industry, what could be more logical? The "Macron Act," which was forced through Parliament in 2016, made the labor market even more "flexible," allegedly to "unblock" the French economy by eliminating laws that protect workers' rights.

Macron's success can largely be explained by the decline of the country's two traditional governing political parties: the classic right, currently called the Republicans, and the formerly left Socialist Party, which has become the new right, as it no longer defends workers' rights at all.

With the presidencies of Nicolas Sarkozy (2007-12) and Hollande (2012-17), Republicans and "Socialists" had indeed modified their historical trajectories and bowed down before finance, becoming its faithful servants. That was quite new in France. And this is the main cause of the collapse of these two main parties, which shared power before Macron, both holding executive power without providing alternative programs.

Macron is nothing more than the repolished and rejuvenated synthesis of a fundamental trend in French political life: abandonment of national sovereignty and absolutely lamentable submission of the state. It is no surprise that the pro-U.S. imperialist line oriented to NATO and North America is strengthened at the same time.

It was enough to get him elected. His election campaign, orchestrated by an obsequious and unanimous media under orders from a handful of oligarchs, sold him like a commodity. With the allure of an airport novel to boot: his spouse, Brigitte Macron, was his high school drama teacher!

That's because in this deteriorating democracy, they needed a talented actor to make the French population forget that their country is no longer sovereign but governed by high finance. However, the play whose performance is announced was not written in advance. Social unrest is growing.

*Herrera is a Marxist economist, researcher at Centre National Recherche Scientifique, working at the Centre d'Économie de la Sorbonne, Paris. G. Dunkel translated.*



## The 10 most common lies about alleged health incidents affecting U.S. diplomats in Cuba

*Since the story was first reported a series of inaccuracies and blatant lies have appeared in international media and official statements. Granma shares a list of the 10 most common.*

Author: [Sergio Alejandro Gómez](#) | [informacion@granmai.cu](mailto:informacion@granmai.cu) - april 26, 2018 09:04:49

After months of investigations by U.S. and Cuban authorities, there is no evidence that U.S. diplomats were the victims of "sonic attacks" in Cuba.

However, the case is being manipulated for political ends, to damage the Revolution's image internationally, and as a justification to take unilateral measures directly impacting the Cuban people.

Since the story was first reported a series of inaccuracies and blatant lies have appeared in international media and official statements. **Granma** shares a list of the 10 most common:



Photo: RT

## **1. U.S. DIPLOMATS WERE VICTIMS OF “ATTACKS” IN CUBA**

The use of the word “attack” implies a certain position with regard to the incidents. Neither Cuban or U.S. authorities have been able to identify the origin or cause of the alleged incidents, which are by their very nature profoundly sensationalist.

An FBI report leaked by **Associated Press** noted that there is no evidence of a “sonic attack” against U.S. diplomatic personnel in Cuba. Nor have those working the case been able to identify possible authors or persons with the motive, intent or means, to carry out such actions.

If this were a court trial, the case would be missing a perpetrator, the device, and victims. Despite this, the international press and White House, continue to use the word “attack.”

## **2. CUBA POSSESSES A STATE-OF-THE-ART “SONIC DEVICE”**

Since the story hit the headlines the theory has circulated that a state-of-the-art sonic weapon could be responsible for the incidents. However, this has been overwhelmingly refuted by national and international scientists.

Although sonic weapons do exist, above all in the arsenals of developed countries, for audible sound to cause damage, it would need to be as loud as plane engine and would be impossible to go undetected. Cuba meanwhile, has categorically denied that it owns, has any knowledge of, or is familiar with such technologies.

## **3. TARGETED ATTACKS**

It seems unlikely that the alleged incidents would have occurred where they reported to have taken place: including sites guarded by the U.S. itself and without direct access from outside.

The attacks would have had to have laser-like precision to affect a specific individual without also causing damage to others.

## **4. VICTIMS SUFFERED BRAIN DAMAGE**

The symptoms cited by U.S. diplomats include ear pain, loss of hearing, dizziness, headaches, fatigue, cognitive problems, difficulty sleeping, and the most mysterious of all, brain damage.

Experts have noted that there is no documented medical case of sound leading to concussions or cognitive problems. According to “Joseph Pompei, a former MIT researcher and psychoacoustics expert, “Brain damage and concussions, are not possible... Someone would have to submerge their head into a pool lined with very powerful ultrasound transducers.”

## **5. MEDICAL REPORT SUPPORTS WASHINGTON’S THEORY**

On February 14, a controversial article was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* entitled: *Neurological Symptoms Among U.S. Diplomats in Cuba*.

The text has been used to lend scientific credibility to Washington’s theory. However, authors Christopher C. Muth and Steven L. Lewis noted that “a unifying explanation for the symptoms experienced by the U.S. government officials (...) remains elusive and the effect of possible exposure to audible phenomena is unclear.”

The study concludes in very general terms stating that diplomats seem to “have sustained injury to widespread brain networks.”

According to an article in **The Guardian**, Robert Bartholomew, an expert in mass psychogenic illness (MPI) who teaches at Botany Downs Secondary College in Auckland, New Zealand, said he was “floored by the study” and claims that it reads like U.S. government propaganda. “It’s like the authors are trying to get us to believe an attack has occurred,” he noted.

Meanwhile, the committee of Cuban experts assigned to the case explained that the information provided has mainly been subjective, based on the statements of those affected, and the opinion of investigators, while objective data (medical exams) are insufficient and incomplete.

## **6. AN “ATTACK,” THE ONLY EXPLANATION**

Psycho-social factors have also been put forward as a possible cause for the alleged incidents, which would explain the variety of symptoms cited by Washington.

In an online forum about the case, Cuban experts noted that an in-depth study of all possible causes must be carried out before forming an opinion.

Meanwhile international experts agree that: “From an objective point of view it’s more like mass hysteria than anything else,” according to Mark Hallett, the head of the human motor control section of the U.S. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, who noted, “Psychosomatic disease is a disease like anything else. It should not be stigmatized.”

## **7. CUBAN AUTHORITIES REFUSE TO COOPERATE**

Ever since the alleged health incidents were first reported in February 2017, Cuban authorities have dealt with the issue in a timely, serious and professional manner.

Cuba even allowed FBI experts to conduct investigations on the ground on several occasions, all of which failed to find any evidence of the supposed attacks.

Meanwhile, the committee of Cuban experts working the case encountered difficulties due to a lack of cooperation from U.S. authorities, who failed to share all available information, and denied Cuban authorities access to patients and their medical records.

## **8. DIPLOMATS ARE AT RISK IN CUBA**

Cuba is renowned for its adherence to the Vienna Convention and has never perpetrated attacks of any kind against diplomatic personnel from any country, or allowed its territory to be used to do so.

Meanwhile, Cuban diplomats have been the victims of acts of violence in the U.S. orchestrated by members of well-known terrorist groups with links to Washington.

One of the most famous cases is that of Cuban diplomat Félix García Rodríguez, who was murdered in broad daylight by members of the Omega 7 terrorist group, on September 11, 1980, while serving at the country’s United Nations mission in New York.

Cuba, faced with the threat of war or in moments of great tension, has never opted for violence. Why would it do so after making the sovereign decision to reestablish diplomatic relations with Washington?

## **9. SOUTH FLORIDA POLITICIANS ONLY CONCERNED FOR THE WELFARE OF U.S. DIPLOMATS**

Sectors opposed to rapprochement between the two nations have been manipulating the issue of the alleged health incidents to justify a reversal in the process to improve U.S.-Cuba relations and advance their own agenda.

The politicization of the case, which recently led to unilateral measures by the U.S. government, only benefits a small group of right wing anti-Cubans, led by Marco Rubio, which continues to promote a hostile policy toward the island - against the interests of the country and its citizens

## **10. TOURISTS AT RISK**

As part of the political manipulation of the case, the White House alleged that in September of last year a dozen U.S. citizens who had traveled to Cuba, also experienced symptoms similar to those of the diplomats.

But bearing in mind that terms as general as dizziness and headaches are used, one can appreciate the absurdity of the accusations.

Over four million international visitors traveled to Cuba last year, including 620,000 U.S. citizens.

Their experiences on the island and satisfaction, according to specialist surveys, is proof of Cuba’s tranquility, security, and stability, which has been recognized by international organizations such as the UN and other tourism agencies.



# ABORIGINAL PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO PROTEST THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES AS STOLEN WEALTH

6 April 2018

**Amy McQuire** tears away the facade on the Commonwealth Games currently under way in Australia, on Queensland's Gold Coast. Australia has a long history of presenting a sunny, sporty picture of itself, complete with Indigenous icons and 'celebrating' native people. There is rarely a hint of the greatest theft of land in recorded history and the brutality that accompanied it, especially in Queensland, the bloodiest state, and which goes on today...

Australia has always wanted to stake a claim on Aboriginal culture - but only when it benefits them. They remain ignorant when the legislative bullets are fired to weaken and destroy it, and do not seek to protect it when the right to culture and ceremony is in the way of profit and white prosperity.

But when we need to show ourselves to the world, when we need to present a different face, it is Aboriginal culture that is seen as the antidote to the cultural cringe.

Suddenly, Australia is proud of the 100,000 years of human habitation that colonialism sought to wipe out, and which Australia devalues. Suddenly, it is "ours", and one for which we all hold a shared pride.

As Patrick Wolfe wrote: "In Australia, the erasure of Indigeneity conflicts with the assertion of settler-nationalism. On the one hand, settler society required the practical elimination of natives in order to establish itself on their territory. On the symbolic level, however, settler society subsequently sought to recuperate Indigeneity in order to express its difference - and, accordingly, its independence - from the mother country".

The Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony was a reminder of this. The highlight of the night was the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements, from the traditional smoking ceremony by Luther Cora, to the Bangarra Dance Theatre and the Torres Strait Islander hip hop artist Mau Power.

No doubt, the First Nations people who took part should be celebrated because their performances, despite occurring inside the arena, represented acts of resistance and defiance - a display of survival in a state that was one of the largest killing fields in the nation. But it is deeply ironic that while the Aboriginal flag was being lifted, and broadcast across the world, right outside the arena, Aboriginal protestors were being arrested, their own flags dragging along the ground.

SBS journalist Stefan Armbruster, one of our allies and the few to be outside reporting on the protests, reported that three Aboriginal activists - Dylan Voller, Ruby Wharton and Meg Rodaughan - were detained by police outside the stadium.

All of them were part of a delegation to the Gold Coast, to protest the imperialism and colonialism of the 'Stolenwealth'. They were continuing the legacy of previous resistance fighters, like the thousands who converged on Brisbane to protest under the draconian administration of Joh Bjelke-Petersen in 1982.

As the Stolenwealth rally interrupted the baton relay earlier this week, the mainstream media ramped up its assault. The most racist of all was Sky News' Paul Murray, who called them "hard core lunatics who are not even on the fringe of the Aboriginal population". "These are the people who believe that they are not just the traditional owners of the land, they remain the traditional owners of this land. They believe the Commonwealth Games is a celebration of the Stolenwealth... get it? Because evil white people jumped on ships a few hundred years ago and stole all of these countries and to celebrate this through sport is in itself a disgusting thing."

Well that is true - it is not just a 'belief'. Aboriginal people are and always will be the traditional owners of the land, and the waves of

invasion did not stop, but morphed into the very issues we see in many communities today. And evil white people did jump on boats and invade Indigenous lands. We even have a word for it: colonialism.

I would rather boycott a sporting event than celebrate imperialism, colonialism and genocide, not just in Australia, but around the world.

The idea that we should deflect our attention from the continuing crimes of the coloniser so that we can win shiny medals is as unappealing to me as Prince Charles himself.

But Murray seems to think that as a white man, he knows what the "real" issues are. He wants to set the parameters of protest, despite having no understanding of the feeling in community. Murray claimed the rally was a "pointless, hopeless fight", and "even if you gave them everything they wanted it would still not be enough." Murray then regurgitated the colonial spin he has inherited as the direct beneficiary of the oppression of Aboriginal people: "And anyone who seen just part of the opening ceremony tonight, which has just been very much about traditional Australia and Indigenous Australians, there is still complaints on the internet that it is still too white. We cannot engage with these people, they will never be happy. And by the way, these are the same people who believe that because the Prime Minister won't have a third chamber of parliament just for Indigenous people, the people could take up terrorism or guns in the name of Aboriginal Australia during these games. These people are an absolute joke."

This is a complete misrepresentation of the Uluru Statement, which called for a Voice in parliament, not a third chamber, the design of which was never decided due to the Turnbull government's outright rejection of Aboriginal designed consultation processes. The protest isn't even aligned with the Uluru Statement though.

Murray also paints Aboriginal people as potential terrorists, as the feared 'other', as irrational and irresponsible, as a people who should shut up and assimilate. He is an example of the very type of racism that Aboriginal people are protesting. His view, grounded in white supremacy, is a view that Aboriginal people are putting their bodies on the line to fight against.

For many Aboriginal people, the Commonwealth Games, previously the British Empire Games, represents the continuing legacy of settler-colonialism in this country. It is an opportunity to raise our voices on the world stage - to show how the colonial project is still alive in the lived experience of Aboriginal people, from the black jailing rates, to the skyrocketing rates of child removal, to the life expectancy gaps, to homelessness, and poverty and violence.

Their acts of resistance reveal the hypocrisy of a white Australia that appropriates Aboriginal culture for its own agenda, while continuing to devalue Aboriginal people and lands.

They may not be the acts of resistance that you like; they may not look good for the cameras, but they are essential to the fight of our people.

They are a reminder that there is more to the Commonwealth Games than the medal tally.

**Amy McQuire is a Darumbul and South Sea Islander. She is Buzzfeed Australia's Indigenous affairs reporter and worked as a researcher on John Pilger's film, Utopia.**

<http://johnpilger.com/articles/aboriginal-people-have-a-right-to-protest-the-commonwealth-games-as-stolen-wealth>



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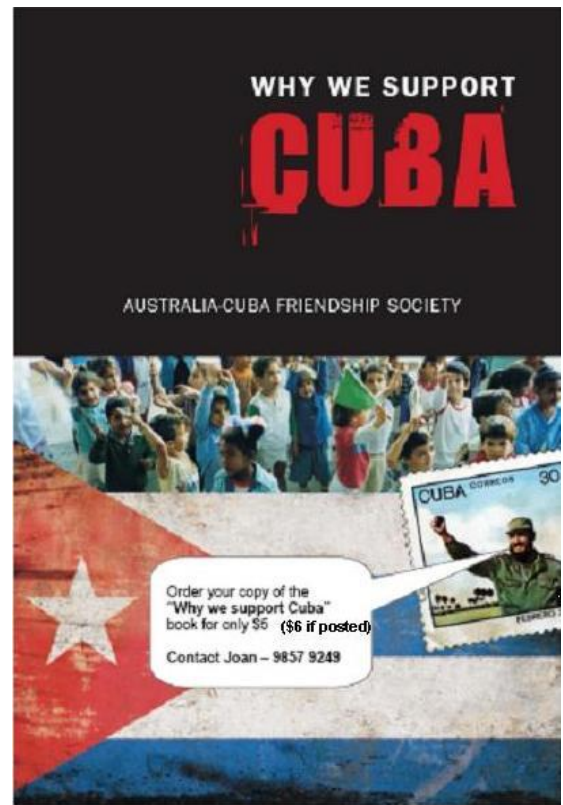
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