

Full Citizenship Rights for Refugees, Immigrants!

Australian Elections: Carnival of Racist Reaction

After years of massive expansion in the mining industry sustained by demand from China's growing economy, the effects of capitalist Global Financial Crisis that have ravaged other advanced capitalist economies are increasingly being felt here. As is happening the world over, it is working people who are made to pay, with waves of job losses, rising youth unemployment and homelessness. Now, after several years in Federal government, the Australian Labor Party (ALP) is facing electoral defeat at the hands of the Liberal/National Party Coalition (LNP), the currently preferred party of bourgeois rule.

In a racist electoral ploy, ALP Prime Minister Kevin Rudd despicably sought to outflank the bigoted Coalition conservatives in denying asylum seekers refugee status. In July he announced that any asylum seeker arriving by boat, or rescued at sea, would be immediately flown to the desolate Papua New Guinea island of Manus, effectively left to rot there unless accepted by a country other than Australia. Papua New Guinea, a neo-colony of Australia, is one of the most impoverished countries in the region. While giant corporations like Rio Tinto and Australian-based BHP have made fortunes out of vast mineral deposits there, life for the people of PNG is a nightmare of poverty, high unemployment, and minimal social amenities.

In June we wrote that both major parties were stoking racism "in order to deflect working-class anger as thousands are laid off and the bourgeoisie pushes an austerity drive designed to make workers pay for the impact of the world capitalist economic crisis" (*Australasian Spartacist* No. 220, Winter 2013). This underpins the hollowness of much of the election "debate." Both parties have affirmed their fundamental adherence to the "core values" of the xenophobic Australian ruling class, whose wealth, initially derived from taking Aboriginal land and life, was later built upon plunder and exploitation in the Asian and Pacific regions. In the 1950s and early '60s, hysteria was stoked over a human tide supposedly poised to invade from "Red China." Today, of desperate thousands that

are fleeing the murderous anti-Tamil regime in Sri Lanka, and countries from Iraq to Afghanistan where imperialist terror has wreaked death and destruction, only a tiny number ever reach Australian shores. We of the Spartacist League say: *Shut down the detention hellholes! No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all refugees and immigrants!*

ALP is a Bourgeois Workers Party

The current Labor government came to office on a wave of working-class anger at the Howard-led Liberals' anti-union attacks. And while the ALP's program and leadership is thoroughly pro-capitalist, it is based on the trade unions, the basic economic defence organisations of the working class against capitalist exploitation. The ALP is what Marxists describe as a *bourgeois workers party*, based on the organised working class but with a pro-capitalist program and leadership. The contradiction between the leadership and its working-class base may at certain moments compel this party, in a situation of heightened class struggle, to take a stand against the bourgeoisie. Such is not currently the case. The ALP instils submission to the capitalist order, and in government it administers the bourgeois state.

In these elections we Trotskyists of the Spartacist League say there is no party standing for defence of the working class against the savage onslaught of the capitalist rulers. There is no-one for working people to vote for. Indicatively, an estimated half-million 18-to-24-year-olds haven't got on the electoral rolls, even though anti-democratic laws make voting compulsory!

A precondition for successful class struggle is mobilising the working class independently of all wings of the capitalist class and its state. A revolutionary party will be built by splitting the working-class base from the pro-capitalist leadership of the ALP, centrally through the fight to replace the social-democratic union *mis*leaders with a class-struggle leadership of the unions. This means a fight to break workers politically from Laborism to a communist

**No Vote to the ALP or the Bourgeois Greens!
For a Revolutionary, Internationalist Workers Party!**

perspective, championing the rights of immigrants, Aboriginal people, women, and all the oppressed.

In stark contrast to such a perspective, a multitude of ostensibly socialist organisations have embraced the Greens, an outright bourgeois party whose main role of late has been to prop up the Labor government. For socialists to call for a vote to a capitalist party is unprincipled and a class betrayal. *We say: No vote to the ALP! No vote to the bourgeois Greens! Build a revolutionary, internationalist workers party!*

Anti-Gay Discrimination, Oppression of Women

The Rudd and Gillard-led Labor ministries from the get-go dished out cuts to social welfare in tandem with the slashing of jobs and basic services by the mostly Coalition state governments. Under Labor the gap between women's and men's wages widened, as did the gap between rich and poor. Huge handouts to church-run private schools have continued, at the expense of public and secular education.

Even the simple democratic reform of allowing gay people the right to marry was refused by the Labor government, although the pious Rudd now suggests he may allow MPs to vote on non-party lines if re-elected. While Gillard, who became the first ever woman PM, was targeted by an avalanche of woman-hating filth from pro-Liberal media, it was under her leadership that the Labor government slashed allowances to sole parents, tipping thousands of women and children into poverty.

State Assault on Aboriginal People

Rudd's 2008 "apology" to the Aboriginal Stolen Generations was a total sham. Even before taking office, Labor backed the Liberals' cop/military Intervention in the Northern Territory (NT), which robbed Aboriginal people of basic rights and has devastated whole communities, bringing a reign of police terror down upon poverty-stricken Aboriginal settlements, where possession of alcohol or pornographic material is today a crime. Suicide rates among Aboriginal youth have soared, as has the imprisonment rate for Aboriginal women. Children are being removed from their families in numbers not seen since the Stolen Generations. Writing in the *Guardian* (30 July), John Pilger reported that *over 13,000* Aboriginal children were removed in a recent one-year period. A revolutionary party of the working class would fight, as "tribune of the people" to defend Aboriginal people and the poor from the violence of the state. *For a class-struggle fight for Aboriginal rights!*

The State, Repression and War

The capitalist state, which, as Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin explained, consisting at its core of armed bodies of men—the police, military and their auxiliaries—exists to defend the private property and rule of the capitalist class. Workers and the oppressed cannot simply lay hold of the state machinery and wield it for their own purpose. This state is the instrument of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and

must be smashed through socialist revolution and replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The repressive apparatus of the state was boosted under Labor. For example, ASIO and other spy agencies have grown and become even more tightly integrated with their U.S. counterparts. The right to privacy of all citizens is eroded, dissent is chilled and the way is paved for greater state repression against the left and organised working class. Labor's Defence Minister, Stephen Smith reminded parliament last June that the highly secret U.S. satellite spy base at Pine Gap was "a central element of Australia's ... relationship with the United States." Pine Gap, and other U.S. satellite spy bases in the NT and Western Australia, are integral to military surveillance and targeting over much of the planet. Australian killer troops remain in Afghanistan, part of the blood-stained U.S.-led occupation in which thousands have died. *We say: U.S. bases out now! Down with the U.S./Australia alliance! Australian imperialist troops/cops out of Afghanistan, the South Pacific and Southeast Asia!*

U.S./Australia War Plans Target China, North Korea

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the strategic aim of U.S. imperialism has become the reversal of the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. In 2009 the ALP government released a Defence White Paper militarily targeting China in concert with the U.S. Since Obama's state visit in 2011, U.S. access to Australian air and naval bases has expanded, with U.S. Marines permanently based in Darwin, a threat to millions of workers and poor in Asia who struggle to resist harsh exploitation.

The smashing of the capitalist state in China by a millions-strong peasant-based army, and the subsequent collectivisation of the economy, laid the basis for immense social progress, particularly for women. Today, heavy industry and the central banks remain at the core of China's collectivised economy, and the bureaucratically deformed workers state that defends this is what the imperialists seek to overthrow. *We stand for unconditional military defence of China, Vietnam, North Korea, Laos and Cuba against capitalist military attack or internal counterrevolution!* At the same time we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy. Ultimately it will require the building of Trotskyist parties and victory of workers revolutions, particularly in Japan, the U.S. and other advanced capitalist countries to ensure defence of these existing gains, a program for which Trotskyist parties in each of these societies would also fight.

Trade Unions and the ALP

During Labor's rule, union leaderships all too often paid out members' hard-earned dues in crippling fines imposed by the industrial courts, bowing to anti-union laws. In one 12-month period over \$2.5 million was levied in fines against construction unions in the state of Victoria alone. Union membership has declined. Trade union officialdom as a whole sees its self-

preservation in keeping Labor in office, and the ACTU peak body eagerly offered their services, in the words of president Ged Kearney to maintain “social cohesion” (address to National Press Club, 7 August). But the notion that workers and capitalists have a common “national interest” is a lie!

The ALP’s founders expressed the interests of an Australian white, male “labour aristocracy,” that fought fiercely at the time of Federation to deport Chinese and Pacific Islander labourers from the country, and excluded women and Aboriginal people from unionised jobs. They favoured state subsidies and protectionist tariffs to promote industry locally—pouring millions into the pockets of the bosses. Protectionism lines up workers loyally behind their “fellow Australian” bosses and prevents them fighting alongside fellow workers across national lines against this decaying capitalist system, the real source of global poverty and war.

Union leaderships have pushed protectionist poison, putting the blame for job losses on overseas workers and products as an excuse to dodge the hard fight against the bosses. One of the grossest instances was CFMEU Construction Division leader Dave Noonan’s declaration, while electioneering for the ALP, that “floodgates will open” to immigrant 457 visa workers in the event of a Liberal election victory (*Australian*, 14 August). As we wrote in “Unions Must Defend Guest Workers” (*Australasian Spartacist* No. 220, Winter), “What’s needed is a concerted fight to organise overseas workers into the unions, winning them full union wages and conditions.” *We say: Full citizenship rights for 457 visa workers! One rate for the job! Defend overseas workers, no deportations!*

“Socialist” Opponents of Working Class Revolution

The pro-capitalist role of the ALP government has become so blindingly apparent, it has been so discredited, even in the eyes of many trade-union leaders, that the ostensible socialist organisations are having a more difficult job in their role as Labor apologists.

Their response to this is to move right, generally calling for votes to the openly bourgeois Australian Greens. While the Greens speak out in defence of refugees, against anti-union laws, and for the right of gays to marry, they are a small capitalist party, predominantly based on the liberal petty bourgeoisie. They abhor any challenge to the profit system, and founding leader Bob Brown once declared heartfelt support for “our loyal Australian defence force personnel in Iraq” (Greens media release, 21 March 2003). Greens deplore “foreign ownership” of industry and this nationalist protectionism has gained them support from some trade unions.

To support the Greens is to betray working class independence, but this is nothing new for most fake-socialist organisations. *Solidarity*, and the *Guardian* of the Communist Party (CPA), unequivocally push a vote to the Greens in the current elections, as a means to pressure the ALP. In *Red Flag*, which is the “new” newspaper of Socialist Alternative (SAI), these “alternative” Cliffites again call for “a vote for the Greens above Labor,” as they did in the 2010 elections, to “give Labor some pause for thought.” The only difference this time around is that they call for a first preference vote to their prospective fusion-partners Socialist Alliance (SA) in seats where they are standing—because the Greens have “done little to build resistance to the government they have in effect been part of” (*Red Flag* No. 6, 21 August). As for SA, their program is not for socialist revolution but merely nationalisation of some industries, as part of a “revolt” to “defend and extend public ownership and control.” Hefty taxes on the oil industry by capitalist Norway are hailed by SA as “a step in the right direction.” Capitalist Venezuela, which in SA’s fantasy is on a socialist road, is held up as a model. In other words SA peddle an illusion of gradual socialisation through pressuring the capitalist state, the same old Laborism.

The Socialist Party, affiliated to the Committee for a Workers International, has a candidate in the Melbourne electorate. They criticise the National Tertiary

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Education Union for backing the Greens, noting the Greens propped up the Labor minority government. Under the heading “An alternative to the market system” (*The Socialist* No. 96, August) the SP says that big corporations should pay more tax, and should be “brought into public ownership to be run for the public good,” but without any mention of the need for workers revolution. In fact, the SP backed capitalist *counter-revolution* across the former Soviet bloc, as indeed did SA and SAIt, and today none of these groups stand for defence, for example, of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state against capitalist restoration.

Finally nobody should be fooled by the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) who are political bandits, flying any flag that suits them. While they currently describe the Greens as a bourgeois formation, the SEP are the local outpost of a political tendency led by David North, whose history, as the then-“International Committee” of fake-Trotskyist Gerry Healy, includes an admitted record of corrupt dealings with, and political services for, Arab capitalist regimes. Their predecessors hailed the execution in 1978 of Communist Party supporters within the Iraqi army by Saddam Hussein. Today the SEP say that trade unions “are no longer workers organisations” (“Support the socialist alternative to war, austerity and the drive to dictatorship,” 15 August), and call for rank-and-file organisations to be formed “independent of and opposed to the trade unions.” In wilfully conflating the trade unions, which are the economic defence organisations of the working class, with their misleaders, the SEP effectively line up behind the bosses’ anti-union attacks, while providing an apologia for strikebreaking.

For a Communist Future!

We Marxists do not in principle oppose participating in parliamentary elections, while exposing the many

anti-democratic features that ensure workers protests are surely muffled. In the words of Lenin: “To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—such is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism...” (*State and Revolution*, 1917). In standing for election, and if elected, communist candidates would politically intervene in order to use this as a forum for revolutionary agitation and exposure.

However just as it is unprincipled to give political support to any capitalist party or politician, it is completely unprincipled to stand for and assume executive office, for instance as a president, prime minister or mayor. The cabinet ministers of any party that takes government in Australia are still required to be sworn in by a governor-general, acting on behalf of the British monarch, and Labor has done this without demur time and again. *We say: Abolish the monarchy! For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!*

Abolishing the private ownership of the banks, factories, mines and industry, the proletariat in power would create a society based on collectivised property and a rational, planned economy. Ultimately it would take the international extension of revolution to pave the way to a classless communist society of abundance, a society free of all exploitation, social and national oppression and war.

We Trotskyists of the Spartacist League, section of the International Communist League, seek to build a genuine communist vanguard party. Such a party of the working class would be built on the model of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which led the October 1917 Russian Revolution, the only consciously-organised successful workers revolution to date. *Join us!* ■

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