

## The seven pillars of socialism

What chance is there that the remnant Left can return from self-imposed exile on the political periphery to challenge the social relations of production upheld through the state. We can actualise that project only by taking up the minute-by-minute needs of working people for housing, transport, employment, health and education. Protection of the environment, both natural and built, is integral to those five pillars and not an alternative to the struggle to improve living standards.

To do so, we shall need to show how such a programme can do so in regard to each pressing issue, at the moment, **penalty rates. The case for their retention has two faces. The first is as compensation for** disruptions to health, and family and social life from having to work when the majority are at rest or at play. The second face is financial. The award rates for regular hours do not provide a living wage, and never have for the basic levels. Hence, workers need the penalty rates to stop themselves from drowning in a sea of debts and pay-day lenders. Hence, in going into bat for the maintenance of penalty rates we must not get boxed into accepting the current regular rates. Our response must be two-fold. First, to push for a higher minimums – and to refute the arguments of the shadowy treasure Andrew Leigh that they cost jobs. Secondly, we must step up campaigns for the provision of social/public goods such as subsidised housing, free medical services and genuinely free schooling. In short, we must push for a social wage that eats into profits and not into workers' earnings.

To wage any campaign, we need to uphold the civil liberties that generations of workers won; to follow our pioneers by breaking laws against picketing and protest.

Without connecting these seven elements in struggle, **we** will continue to have next-to-no effect on the small-l liberal campaigns, notably refugees, that now supply so many activists with self-congratulatory moralising as a surrogate for success: 'Thank you god for not making me like other Australians, a racist,' has become the Trotskyite version of the Pharisee's prayer. To ask where the 12,000 Syrian refugees will be housed is to point to the demolition of public housing under governments of both tory parties. We need to back the HEALTH wellness

Reliable public transport and not dismiss their worries as selfish.

### The Anti-Labour Party

The hardest row to hoe will be in breaking from the assumptions of parliamentary cretinism, which deflects people from struggle with the promise that changing a law will fix reality.

Even more daft has been the hate Howard-**Abbott line, that A Paris-Hilton view** of politics as personality, or the absence thereof. Nothing has been learned about the inexorable needs of capital from 'Fuck Abbott' T-shirts and nothing can be learnt

Replacing one agent of the Billionaires Council in Australia in Abbott by one of those billionaires in Turnbull, or by Short-on who arse-licked the criminal billionaire Pratt, will never alter social power. As ever, this bit of mystification can be dispelled only through the practice of rebuilding social movements to keep pressure on every government and party, including those Greens who have come down from the trees.

The prime obstacle remains the ALP (Anti-labour Party). No steps forward are possible until activists get over the battered-wife syndrome of going back to the fold only to get kicked in the head yet again, as over Killard's un-Fair Work Australia. When in office, the ALP says 'Don't upset things for fear of putting the other Tories in.' Back in opposition, the ALP says 'Don't protest for fear of frightening voters away.' At both parliamentary and workplace levels, the best thing that the Coalition could do for the workers would be to craft a law through the High Court banning union affiliation with the ALP. That won't happen because capital derives too many benefits from its labour lieutenants. Yet the idea of such a ban is invaluable since it highlights that the unions do not run the ALP: it is the ALP which runs the unions. Officials spend far more time on factional brawls than on battling the boss.

### **Critiquing Political Economy**

How we advance under the banner of socialism will always be a question of learning from experience. That understanding, in turn, depends on our making the effort to grasp the fundamentals of capitalism. Jean Baudrillard in *The Mirror of Production* (1973) looked forward to a time when 'we will be finished with a Marxism that has become **more of a** specialist in the impasses of capitalism than in the roads to revolution ...' Thirty-five years later when the crash came, most *soi-disant* Marxists had ceased to be expert on either.

Political Economy at the University of Sydney has succumbed to pluralism

No John Playford's 196?? Dissection of 'pluralism' as

Pluralism fine to get a hearing for any kind of dissent in University departments run as branches of business where to doubt the wisdom of the market is a recipe for failure

Compare Andrew Leigh and his misuse of stats to screw young workers

Gets him a chair at the ANU

**quote Marx from v II**

By all means take in William Baumol on the problems of measuring productivity in the service sector and connect his findings to the disciplining of labour-times, relevant to.

*JAPE* etc

A special issue on health in 2014 from *Journal of Australian Political Economy* made no mention of R.M. Titmuss whose proofs of why health cannot be a commodity should be on the lips of every activist. (source)

Carmichael built on *Australia Undermined* etc from the Trans-National Corporate Institute with Ted Wheelwright and Greg Crough *JAPE* and *Essays* etc

Contrast with *Catalyst* today. Who knows it exists? Or the Search Foundation?

All those documents were attempts to think strategically. What is there today?

Since 2007, a scattering of *Capital* reading groups has scrambled to catch up on the il-logic of capital. Reading *Capital* will take us nowhere if we lack the courage to accept that, to survive, capital is forever throwing up new lines of attack. We cannot resist let alone triumph if we continue to fight the battles we have lost or won. And worse still to fail to understand the conditions that had made for defeat or success.

### **Joan and fascism**

Russell Brand, Jeremy Corbyn, Thomas Piketty, Bernie Sanders and the pope are not about to lead us into the promised land of social equality but they are preparing ways out of the wilderness. Their interventions are casting light on issues that had been off the agenda in the West for the twenty years before the crash of 2007-8. How alarmed capital is by even the mildest questioning of its rule is blatant in the barking-mad counterpunches from its media lackeys. The Left has to take advantage of progressive criticisms of inequality to gain a hearing for much tougher questions. Winning that larger audience will require listening to those who are being enthused by the high-profile critics of capital to discern which elements in their criticisms appeal, and why. Only through learning how to listen will it be possible to learn how to campaign for reforms, such as needs-based school funding, or how to block such deforms as the abolition of penalty rates. Only out of those layers of experience will it become possible to craft a strategy for socialism which is more than rhetoric from May Day platforms.

New things keep happening. That's dialectics for you, comrade. But certain venerable social practices also keep reappearing. Above all, only constant revolutionising of methods of production can ensure the perpetuation of the valorisation process, i.e. exploitation. Labour has to be restructured in order to maintain the structures needed to enforce the rule of capital through its expansion.

Today's union leaders have been battered from pillar to post for so long that few retain the political nous to accept the irreconcilable gulf between capital and labour. Even the best dream about the good old days of 'the Accord' and ask why capitalists won't be nice to them. Scabby leaders like Howes, Ferguson and Shorten mouth the same platitudes in order to tighten their controls. The thirtieth anniversary in 2013 ????. Turnbull's one-day gabfest saw ACOSS sidle up to the Business Council. ????

Twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked fro pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which

Wilhelm Reich *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*

The family and the factory for participatory democracy

Loss of alienation in the scramble for jobs

Quantity not quality

No Labor Party since the sell-off of the Peoples' Bank in 199??

The reverend Brian Howe was the last of the social democrats

Sell-out over China Trade deal

**A working-class agenda**

THC election campaign

Sold out on Gonski

And then on transport dispute

Not opposing what the BCA tells

Not set by the Coalition

But affirmative of the needs of working people

Built from consultation like the kitchen table for a