



TROTSKYIST PLATFORM

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The Melbourne suburb of Sunshine, June 2016: Workers at the Bitzer refrigeration firm on the picket line and on the verge of victory. After a hard fought nine week strike workers won a pay rise, the guarantee of permanency for casuals after six months' service and control over what hours they work. The Australian working class is very multiracial. Unity of workers across racial and ethnic lines is key to victory in the class struggle.

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**WORKERS OF ALL COLOURS AND COUNTRIES
ARE KEY TO THE STRUGGLE FOR OUR RIGHTS SO
LET'S KNOCK DOWN THE OBSTACLES BLOCKING
THE FULL FORCE OF THE UNITED WORKING CLASS
OPPOSE "AUSSIE FIRST"
ECONOMIC NATIONALISM
PROTECTIONISM & RACISM ARE POISON TO WORKERS' RIGHTS**

8 March 2017



Women Workers Key to Building a Working Class Fightback

Smash the Cutback to Sunday Penalty Rates through Class Struggle Action

International Women's Day 2017 comes at a time of heightened attacks on women - especially working class women. That is not only because a hard-core misogynist and racist, Donald Trump, has become the president of the most powerful country in the world. Working class women in Australia have to cop lower wages than men. Unaffordable childcare restricts women's full participation in economic and social life. Meanwhile, many low income single mothers continue to be ground down by the former Gillard ALP government's cruel cut to the single parenting payment four years ago. As always, the fate of women's rights goes hand in hand with workers' rights and the rights of all the oppressed



Russia, International Women's Day, 1917: Mainly female textile workers go on strike for bread sparking a general strike and the toppling of the Tsar. The resulting revolutionary period that was opened up culminated half a year later in the October Socialist Revolution. The banner reads "Glory to the Women Fighters for Freedom!"

including Aboriginal people, LGBTI people, coloured “ethnic” people and the unemployed. Alongside attacks on women’s social position, we are seeing the right-wing Turnbull government attack our trade unions – targeting especially the CFMEU construction workers union – and undercut weekend penalty rates for hundreds of thousands of low-paid workers. Meanwhile, all the current parliamentary parties – Pauline Hanson’s fascistic One Nation, the Liberal/National coalition, the Nick Xenophon Team, the ALP and The Greens – are all in various way inciting poisonous nationalism that inevitably targets coloured migrant-derived communities by variously blaming refugees, guest workers or overseas producers for the unemployment and insecurity caused by the capitalist system itself.

Women’s rights are so closely bound to the overall state of the class struggle between capitalist business owners and the working class because women’s oppression is actually built on the foundations of class-divided societies. Under capitalism’s social structure a large proportion of women are denied economic independence. With women denied the opportunity to participate equally in economic and political life, male chauvinist attitudes are spawned that “justify” and perpetuate this reality. That is why we must fight for women’s full economic independence through demanding jobs for all and for equal pay between men and women workers. We must also call for free abortion on demand and freely available access to all forms of contraception. To allow women the greatest chance to participate in economic life, we must fight for free 24-hour childcare, for free school lunches at all public schools and for after-school sports, music and cultural activities provided for free by the state alongside free transport from school to these activities. All these demands, however, clash *head on* with the current system because the capitalists who control the economy are not going to want to sacrifice their profits to make these social programs and full employment possible. Thus, while we can make headway in women’s emancipation through winning concessions through struggle under capitalism, we will only fully open the door to women’s complete liberation when the capitalist system is replaced by a socialist one.

However, women are not just victims of capitalism and will not simply be a major beneficiary of socialism. Working class women, who have the most to gain by ripping up this current system, will also be the key drivers of the struggle to overthrow capitalism. The most powerful example of this occurred on International Women’s Day in 1917 in Russia. It was then that in the Russian capital of Petrograd tens of thousands of mainly women textile workers walked off the job to demand bread. Their struggle sparked off a general strike and a revolt against the tsarist monarchy. The resulting revolutionary period that was opened up culminated half a year later in the October Socialist Revolution. Exactly one hundred years later and this struggle remains the shining path for the fight for women’s emancipation and for the liberation of the masses more generally.

Today, women workers alongside coloured “ethnic” and youth workers are not only amongst the workers most targeted by the slashing of Sunday penalty rates but are crucial to any fightback against this vicious attack.

In February, the “Fair Work” Commission announced its despicable decision to slash Sunday penalty rates between 25% and 50% for hospitality, restaurant, fast food, retail and pharmacy workers. The decision also cuts these workers’ public holiday pay by up to 25%. This will mean a loss of up to \$6,000 per year for some workers. The Fair Work Commission’s decision, done with the backing of the Turnbull government, will hurt some of the lowest paid workers in the country. Many of these workers are already on perilous incomes, not only because their pay rates are low but because many are in insecure, casual jobs where they are forced to work less hours than they want to due to the bosses and the bosses’ capitalist system making inadequate work available. The loss of penalty rates will thus mean a huge proportion of their income will be lost. For many of these workers, the loss of penalty rates could be the difference between scraping enough to pay their rent and simply not being able to make ends meet.

Thus far, the pro-ALP leaders of our trade unions have been relying on petitions and parliament to oppose this cruel attack. However, we should not rely on a future ALP government to reverse the cuts. Although the ALP Opposition is now calling for the government to legislate against the Fair Work Commission decision, before the election ALP leader Bill Shorten announced that a future ALP government would not try to reverse a cut to penalty rates if the Fair Work commission ruled in favour of it. So, what exactly would the ALP do if it ended up being the current gang of politicians in government running the rich bosses' state? What we can expect from the openly anti-working class, Liberal-National government, of course, goes without saying!

What we need is the mobilisation of the power of the working class in mass action – especially including industrial action – to smash the attack on the weekend and holiday pay of hospitality, restaurant, fast food, retail and pharmacy workers. This should not just be the task of the workers directly affected. This slashing of penalty rates is an attack on the entire working class. If the bosses get away with it they will be targeting penalty and shift rates of other workers. Many of those targeted by the recent attack toil in small workplaces where ruthless “small business owners” are able to get away with bullying them. That is why we need workers in larger, more heavily unionised workplaces to also flex their industrial muscle to help crush this attack on penalty rates. Such a mobilisation will also help cement ties between different components of the working class. For example if militant construction workers and maritime workers unleashed their power behind the hospitality, restaurant, fast food, retail and pharmacy workers targeted by this recent attack, they will likely see more of these lower paid workers joining their picket lines when they face impending full frontal attacks from the capitalist rulers.

CFMEU national secretary Michael O'Connor has stated the union's opposition to the slashing of penalty rates and insisted that the CFMEU would “not stand by and watch” as the Government introduced cuts to pensions, family supplements and attempted to regain welfare overpayments. O'Connor continued that:

“The CFMEU stands ready to fight.

“This war on battlers must end.

“The war on the fair go must stop.

“Where the fightback takes place — wherever there is a picket, a rally, a campaign, whatever it is — you will see us there standing shoulder to shoulder with those under attack.”

These statements now need to be followed by actual industrial action by the CFMEU and other unions to smash the attacks on penalty rates, pensions and welfare payments.

If we can defeat this attack on penalty rates through industrial and other mass action, the union movement will win thousands of new workers – especially younger workers – to joining our ranks. We will also become more united and confident to challenge other attacks that we face including the Liberals ABCC - as well as the anti-strike provisions of Labor's 2009 Fair Work Act - cuts to public housing and draconian cuts to social welfare for the poor.

The Fair Work Commission (FWC) decision proves once again that the industrial courts in Australia – like all the courts here – are *not* “independent umpires.” Rather, they form part of a capitalist state – which includes also the police, the military, prisons and the bureaucracy – that was created and is maintained for enforcing the interests of the capitalist exploiting class over the working class. Even when the FWC, on a rare occasion, makes a decision less harmful to workers' interests than that is not because of any inherent sense of justice in the system but merely reflects those cases where workers have won the struggle on the ground in the industrial and political battlefield and the FWC is forced to accept this reality in order to maintain its credibility. That is why we should not bow to the authority of these courts even if the rules under which it operates are changed. The only law that the workers movement should be bound to respect are our decisions on what is in the interests of the working class and oppressed.

The excuse of the greedy business owners and *their* FWC for slashing Sunday and holiday penalty rates is that this helps bosses hire more workers. To this we must say: No – we are not going to let you gouge the incomes of already exploited workers even more as the price we must pay to let you supposedly hire more workers. Instead, we are going to *force* you to hire more at the expense of your already bloated profits. We demand that profitable businesses be banned from cutting the size of their workforce and that profitable firms be forced to increase hiring in proportion to their profits. If the greedy business owners complain that this will make their operations impractical then we say that this only proves that the economy should not be in the hands of these capitalists but should be brought into the socialist, collective hands of working class people.



A Soviet poster advising the woman worker to take up her rifle!

Unleash the Full Power of Lower Paid, Youth, Women and Coloured “Ethnic” Workers

The FWC’s penalty rate cut will especially hurt people from the most oppressed sections of the working class – including lower paid workers, women workers, youth workers and workers from coloured “ethnic” backgrounds. These workers are crucial to the overall cause of the working class. All the obstacles that stand in the way of these workers being able to unleash their full fighting strength – like male chauvinism, skilled worker arrogance towards unskilled workers and racism - must be knocked down. Indeed, one thing that this widely hated attack on penalty rates has done is that, in the face of bi-partisan attacks on refugees and Aboriginal people, the growth in support for the extreme racist One Nation party and everyone from the Coalition to the ALP to the Greens trying to emulate the economic nationalism of hard-right, U.S. president Donald Trump, it has highlighted the truth that the cause of Australian workers’ hardships is not in the least refugees, guest workers or overseas producers but the Aussie capitalist exploiters – and the governments and state institutions that enforce their interests. We need to build a leadership of the workers movement that is committed to explaining this basic truth to the masses. One that will face down the lies of the bosses media and pro-capitalist political parties that try to divide the exploited masses with nationalism and racism. This is part of the struggle to reorient our unions away from trust in the “Australia-First”, ALP and the institutions of Australia’s capitalist state and onto a program of militant class struggle against the greedy Aussie capitalists.

Let’s smash the Australian ruling class’ attacks on hospitality, restaurant, fast food, retail and pharmacy workers! Let’s unite all workers in this country - and win crucial international solidarity action by uniting as one with our working class sisters and brothers abroad - to fight for this goal! Let’s unleash the industrial muscle of the united working class! Let’s win this battle so that we can begin to roll back the over three decades of setbacks that the workers movement has suffered!



Health Services Union members protest against the NSW government's attempt to privatise healthcare by stealth by outsourcing hospital services to private businesses. Women workers – suffering both exploitation as workers and male chauvinism – are key to the working class struggle for liberation.

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Royal Commission

I wanted to use this opportunity to tell the Public and the Commissioners here today, The Problem is Not only Youth Justice and Dondale But Adult Prison and the Justice System Itself. One of the biggest Problems we face is the fact that we are being further Punished whilst in Prison Being sentenced by the Judge to do our time for our crime is our Punishment not the continued mental and physical abuse we continue to Cop while were here. on a number of occasions I have witnessed Officers abusing and yelling at Aboriginal men in here and ~~demanding~~ being put down because they can't speak English properly and that's not fair and needs to stop.

As a victim and a young man I feel upset and let down by the system that these bad things were aloud to go on for so long I really want to see things change so it never happens to anyone else again and I believe this Royal Commission will ~~do that~~ make sure of that. Young people need love and some one to talk to not be locked in a cell with nothing for days on end. Trust me.

~~I would like to thank the whole world for supporting me and me and the~~

The first page of Dylan Voller's statement to the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory at the close of his evidence to the commission. Voller rightly points out that injustices are not only suffered by Aboriginal youth in detention but also by adult Aboriginal prisoners in the mainstream prison system. After a community-led campaign demanding his freedom, Voller, now 19, was finally released from an adult NT prison on 6 February. He and other young victims of the NT's brutal and racist youth detention system have used the limited opportunities that they've been afforded to speak out about the cruel and humiliating violence they've suffered over many years. The Royal Commission was, however, ultimately designed to head off anger over these revelations - originally exposed on the ABC's Four Corners program "Australia's Shame" - and stop those furious at what they saw from drawing broader conclusions about this society. Already the mainstream media - led by the Murdoch press - has begun softening up the public to accept the likelihood that there will be no substantial changes as a result of this process. This will, unfortunately, come as little surprise to Aboriginal rights activists who have watched the rate of deaths of Aboriginal people in custody actually increase since the conclusion of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1991. In the end, real change will only be brought about by a militant alliance of Aboriginal activists with the wider multiracial, Australian working class - an alliance whose vision, sharpened through experience, is free from misplaced trust in the organs of the racist Australian state. Beginning with militant on-the-streets and at-the-workplace and picket line actions this alliance will, ultimately, sweep the over 200-year-old racist Australian capitalist state into the sad, mad & bad dustbin of history where it belongs. See "Free All the Victims of Australia's Racist Torture! Jail the Cops and Prison Guards Who Killed David Dungay, Ms Dhu, Rebecca Maher, Wayne Morrison, TJ Hickey, Mulrunji & the Many Other Victims of the Racist, Rich People's State!" on page 78.

TROTSKYIST PLATFORM

ISSUE 19 MARCH 2017 ISSN 2201-358X

- 12 As Capitalist Rulers Beat on the Unions and Poor:
**Opposing Racism & "Aussie First" Economic Nationalism
Key to Defending Working Class People's Rights**
- 34 **Tens of Thousands Protest in Australia on the Day of Land Theft & Genocide
Rally Attacked by Ruthless Police**
- 37 A Hard Right, Racist Bigot Enters the White House
Capitalist "Democracy" is a Sham
Unleash Industrial Action to Demand Jobs for All
Only Workers United with All of the Oppressed Can Bring about Real Change
- 44 Expand the Union Action in Defence of Public Housing in Sirius:
Fight for a Massive Increase in Public Housing throughout the Country!
**Still a Chance to Prevent the Destruction of
Public Housing in Millers Point and The Rocks**
- 51 Trotskyist Platform May Day (International Workers Day) Statement
**We Need Militant Class Struggle to Smash All Anti-Union Laws &
Win Secure Jobs for All Workers**
- 55 **Workplace Safety Now Better in China Than in Australia**
Australian Rulers Union Busting Drive against the CFMEU Union
Threatens Construction Workers Lives
- 70 Good News: China's Arrest of Crown Executives Endangers Packer's Barangaroo Project
James Packer's Crown Versus Millers Point Public Housing
- 78 **Free All the Victims of Australia's Racist Torture!
Jail the Cops and Prison Guards Who Killed David Dungay, Ms Dhu,
Rebecca Maher, Wayne Morrison, TJ Hickey, Mulrunji & the Many Other
Victims of the Racist, Rich People's State!**
- 96 **Long Live China's 1949 Anticapitalist Revolution!**
Protect the Great Benefits for Workers & the Rural Masses Won through the Revolution:
Stop Imperialist Funding for Those NGOs that Seek to Overthrow Socialistic Rule in China
- 118 Defend the Dominance of Socialistic, State-Ownership in China's Economy!
China: Pro-Worker and Pro-Private Sector Forces Lock Horns
- 130 **Racist Atrocities in Kalgoorlie**
- 131 Force Profitable Companies to Increase Hiring - Make Them Wear the Resulting Lower Profits
Stop Billionaire Bosses from Retrenching Workers!
No to Slave Wage Internships and Work for the Dole! For Fully Paid, Permanent Jobs for All!

As Capitalist Rulers Beat on the Unions and Poor:

Opposing Racism & “Aussie First” Economic Nationalism Key to Defending Working Class People’s Rights

29 January 2017 – Thousands upon thousands of the most economically deprived people in Australia have been driven to despair over the last few months. Many are on the verge of suicide. These people have been sent debt letters by Centrelink telling them that they owe large amounts of money. Many of the letters were erroneously sent. The Liberal-National Turnbull government’s scheme to recover supposed “excess” payments to social security recipients through a computer program matching Centrelink with tax data is full of flaws. The system seems to be wilfully designed to incorrectly flag several types of valid welfare payments as “overpayments.” However, it is not just the errors in the program that are the problem. The whole purpose of the program is the problem: to gouge ever more from the most impoverished people in the country to allow, in part, the right-wing government to implement large tax cuts for rich business owners.

This hated “debt recovery” scheme is symbolic of what the government led by the supposedly “moderate” Liberal, Malcolm Turnbull, has been doing to working class people. In November, the Turnbull government, with support in the Senate from the fascistic One Nation party, the Nick Xenophon team and right-wing “independents” like Derryn Hinch, put through legislation to resurrect the Howard-era Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC). The ABCC is a set of rules and government bodies targeting unions in the construction industry. Its resurrection is yet another sign that the capitalist rulers are ramping up for a full-scale attack on the CFMEU construction workers union. They want to attack one of the most militant unions in the country as a way of pulling the teeth out of the entire union movement.

The Turnbull government has been emboldened by its win in last July’s election. However, even though the Coalition are more openly anti-working class in its agenda than the ALP, even an ALP victory last July would have been no good for the masses. Thus although the ALP opposed the ABCC, it had brought in the previous set of anti-union laws targeting the CFMEU – a regime under which over a hundred union officials were facing legal persecution last year. It is true that the ALP has joined with the Greens to oppose the Turnbull government’s plan for a

massive cut in company tax. Yet in September, it was the ALP’s support that enabled the Coalition to get through its Omnibus Bill of budget cuts that hurt working class people the most while the following month the ALP voted up tax cuts that were exclusively given to the richest one-third of taxpayers. The Omnibus Bill measures that financed the tax cuts for the rich include the slashing of the Energy Supplement for new welfare recipients, high interest charges that will further grind down welfare recipients with a debt, delays to the receipt of the Carers Allowance for many new carers and a more severe repayment through taxation schedule for ex-students with a tuition fee debt. Meanwhile, although the ALP has demanded that the Coalition suspend its Centrelink “debt recovery” scheme, the ALP took to the elections its own scheme to punish welfare recipients with a debt. Under the Labor proposal, welfare recipients who had outstanding fines from government agencies would have their fines automatically deducted from their payments in yet another compulsory “income management” scheme subjugating the poor.

The fact is that the determination to rip ever more from the pockets of the masses comes not just from the ideological nature of the current parliamentary parties but from their adherence to a capitalist order which requires increasing exploitation of workers as a condition for its



Brisbane, April 2016: Construction workers march against the reintroduction of the ABCC anti-union authority. The capitalist exploiting class is attacking the militant CFMEU construction workers union as a way of weakening the entire union movement.

very existence. This is especially so because the world capitalist economy is in a fragile state right now. The Australian economy is somewhat held up from a major collapse by exports to China’s booming economy. Yet China’s continued economic successes – not withstanding the regular but always unrealised predictions made by wishful mainstream Western “experts” that her economy is about to implode – come from the fact that the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) is **not** under capitalist rule. Although the PRC’s leadership has allowed a dangerous level of capitalist intrusion into her economy, China’s economy remains held together by a powerful backbone of socialistic state-owned enterprises. However, let’s look at the condition of the major capitalist economies of the world. Big European economies like those of France, Italy, Germany and Austria have barely recovered from the worst of the 2008-9 Great Recession. The U.S. recovery is a fragile house of cards based on cheap credit and the capitalist Japanese economy continues its long term drift in the doldrums. Meanwhile, large non-Western, capitalist countries like Russia and Brazil are still mired in recession. It is in this context that the Coalition election slogan of “jobs and growth” has turned out to be a load of crock.

If the unemployment rate has remained steady in Australia rather than ballooning up since the election it is only because so many people who want to work full-time are being forced to accept part-time work. Since the election, over 33,000 full-time jobs have been lost. As for “growth,” the latest figures show that the economy actually shrank in the three months since the elections. With the economy in such a state, the capitalist rulers propose the only “solution” that they always advocate for any problem: increase the rate of exploitation of workers.

With both the Coalition and the ALP not even promising much good for the masses and with both stating their intention to implement budget cuts that would hurt the poor, the post-election period was always going to be a challenging one for the masses. Under the system of capitalist “democracy,” elections serve to “legitimise” capitalist governments by giving the impression that they have a “mandate” because they and their agenda have been “chosen by the people.” Therefore, in an immediate post-election period, governments claiming the authority of a “mandate” are often able to implement severe attacks against the masses. But that is only if working class people believe the hoax that

election victories are a “mandate”! It is the duty of those within the workers movement who understand that elections in capitalist countries are not fair reflections of the will of the masses to explain this to others. They must expose how capitalist elections are overwhelmingly shaped by the reality that it is the ultra-rich capitalists who own the mass media and book publishing houses and uniquely have the wealth to fund political parties, employ lobbyists and full-time staffers to shape public opinion, buy political advertising, hire forum venues and establish sympathetic “NGOs” to subtly promote views coinciding with their interests. In other words, it is the capitalist tycoons who are able to, disproportionately to their numbers, shape “public opinion” and election results. The reality of democracy in capitalist countries is not one person one vote but, in reality, something more like *one million dollars buys one million votes*. Furthermore, no matter which party wins the elections, they will be administering a state machine – including at its core the police, courts, military and bureaucracy – that has been built up to enforce the interests of the capitalist class and is tied to this ruling class by a thousand threads. If those vanguard layers of the workers movement who understand this are able to patiently and humbly explain this to the broader masses and in the process win others to also play a vanguard role in spreading such ideas then the working class will be in a much better position to resist the attacks it is facing today.

Today’s onslaught on working class people’s rights is of such severity that there really should

be a working class fightback right now. So let’s clear the confusion that is blocking that fightback by destroying the illusion that capitalist elections give a government a “legitimate” “mandate”! Let’s fight to unleash working class industrial power! Let’s unleash mass action uniting the working class with all the other downtrodden – including brutally oppressed Aboriginal people, people from other embattled coloured ethnic communities, the unemployed and low-income single mothers. Fight to defeat the ABCC and all other anti-strike and anti-union laws! Smash all attacks on welfare and all punitive measures against the unemployed! Let’s put the blame where it should be for unemployment: on the capitalist bosses. Let’s stop billionaire bosses retrenching workers! Force capitalist bosses to increase hiring at the expense of their fat profits! Oppose the moves to make education and health care increasingly “user pays.” For free public education at all levels from pre-school to TAFE and university! Let’s also fight for completely free public medical and dental care. Against the bipartisan sell-offs of public housing we need to demand a massive increase in public housing. There needs to be a struggle to oppose racist state terror against Aboriginal people and the stealing of Aboriginal people’s children. We also need to demand asylum for refugees and full rights of citizens for everyone residing here or currently locked up in the Manus Island and Nauru camps. Let’s demand the closure of all the onshore and offshore detention centres!



Sinister: White supremacist terrorist Michael Holt pleaded guilty to several firearm offences after having been found to have a huge stash of weapons in three properties. The Nazi talked openly to friends of his plans to open fire on crowded public places – his most recent plot being to shoot up Westfield at Tuggerah in the NSW Central Coast. The growth of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation, racist attacks on Aboriginal people, refugees and the rights of the Muslim community by Liberal and ALP governments alike and economic nationalism that is rife throughout the political spectrum are energising the growth of fascist terrorists.

It Is the Capitalist System That Is at the Root of the Problem & Not the “Two-Party System”

Reflecting widespread disenchantment with the status quo of insecure jobs, decaying social services and unaffordable housing, voters punished the Liberals and ALP at last July’s elections. Instead, they gave their vote to independents and smaller parties. Some on the Left have hailed this as a positive development as it undercuts the “major parties” and the “two-party system.” It may indeed show a weakening of the “two-party system” but that in itself is not a step forward. As the support of many of the Senate cross-benchers to the ABCC showed, all the elected independents and minor party parliamentarians are pro-capitalist and anti-working class. The fact is that having more than two pro-capitalist parties in parliament does not make life any better for the masses. Indeed, in many European countries there have long been three, four or even more significant parties in parliament but that has not stopped these parliaments from legislating for capitalist austerity, imperialist wars abroad and racist attacks on non-white minorities and refugees. You see **the problem is not the two party system as such – it is the capitalist system whether capitalist interests are represented by one or two or three or four or five or any number of major parties.**

That the masses are unhappy with the current rulers is inevitable under capitalism. The task of conscious partisans of the exploited and oppressed is to ensure that this anger is directed in the correct direction. The election results signalled that, unfortunately, this is not what is happening right now. One of the most notable aspects of the July election results is the growth in support for Pauline Hanson’s extreme racist One Nation party which now has several seats in the Senate. Like Donald Trump, Hanson’s claims to be “anti-establishment” are completely bogus. A former smaller-scale capitalist business owner who exploited workers, a better description of Hanson and her One Nation Party is that they are **ultra-establishment**. Hanson supports anti-union laws and disgustingly brands those doing it hard as “welfare bludgers.” Indeed, not only does One Nation support Treasurer Scott Morrison’s legislation making young jobseekers wait four weeks before getting the dole but its leader Pauline Hanson has called for the waiting period – i.e. the starving period – to be made even longer. Meanwhile, One Nation’s defining feature – racist scapegoating of Aboriginal people and non-white “ethnic” communities – serves the capitalist establishment by getting the masses to turn on themselves and divert their attention away from struggling against their exploiters: the greedy capitalists.

It is notable how much airtime and sympathetic – or at least “understanding” – coverage the mainstream media have been giving to Pauline Hanson even compared to when she first entered parliament two decades ago. It is also noteworthy how many more other politicians have been going out of their way to show their respect for her and her disgusting racist rants. This reflects the further rightward shift of the ruling class. They see an increasing need for the division caused by fascist forces to help protect their rule. Hanson’s One Nation party allows the mainstream of the capitalist ruling class to ensure that society is flooded with extreme racist views while not themselves taking responsibility for spreading this hatred – lest that upset trade ties with Asia or Australia’s bogus image of being a “human rights defender” (that they use to justify predatory imperialist interventions abroad).

Hanson spews venomous bigotry against Aboriginal people. In her book released soon after she first entered parliament, Hanson made outrageous claims that Aboriginal women ate their babies, claiming that she wanted to “demonstrate the savagery of Aboriginal society.” Although she shifts her main target depending on which type of racism is most in vogue, her agenda is to spread hatred against all people of colour. When she first entered parliament she ranted that, “Australia

was in danger of being swamped by Asians.” Now she makes similar claims about Muslims while continuing to stand by her attacks on Asian communities. The first time round, when Hanson made her drive against Asians, Asian people were often spat on and abused at train stations and threatened and bashed on the streets. Today, One Nation’s bigotry is again inciting racist terror on the streets. Its electoral gains and the ascent of far-right bigot Donald Trump has emboldened violent racists. Various violent fascist groups in Australia like the Party for Freedom, True Blue

Crew, and Australian Settlers Rebellion have been falling over themselves to declare support for One Nation and have been congregating at One Nation public events. There have been at least two white supremacist murders in the period since One Nation made its comeback into federal parliament: the murder of 14-year-old Aboriginal youth, Elijah Doughty, in Kalgoorlie and the murder of Indian-origin bus driver, Manmeet Alisher in Brisbane. How many more racist murders there have been and the much larger number of racist bashings is unknown.

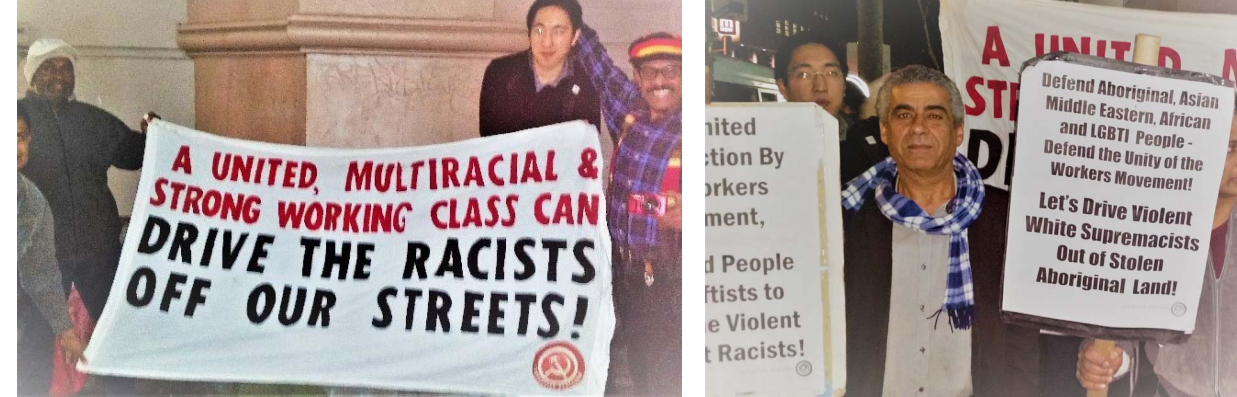
Working-Class Based Opposition to One Nation’s Racist Agenda versus “Take Down Capitalism” Instead

In response to One Nation’s resurgence, people of colour activists and other anti-racists have rightly protested outside some One Nation events and media appearances. However, a leftist Facebook site calling itself the “Communists of Australia” posted a statement that poured cold water on the idea of protesting against One Nation. This 15 September 2016 posting read:

Australian far-right politician Pauline Hanson is back in the parliament after 20 years. The message is the same racist message as before. Capitalism throws up these fascists from time to time. Some will respond by attacking the figurehead. That is OK if they want to do it. But the best way to defeat fascists is to take down capitalism itself. Target the boss instead of the stooge.

We will respond to this assertion not necessarily because of the weight of the group making it but because this stance represents a viewpoint held by a section of the nominally “Marxist-Leninist” left. In itself, the statement that, “the best way to defeat fascists is to take down capitalism itself;” is of course incontestable. However, the struggle against capitalism will not be advanced by merely proclaiming its necessity, although that must certainly be done as well. The revolution against capitalism will mainly be built by conscious pro-socialists supporting struggles waged against the various injustices and oppressions caused by this system and fighting to direct these struggles onto an anti-capitalist strategy. It follows that in addition to participating in workers’ struggles for economic gains and in struggles against

government racist measures, we must also join with those protesting against the extreme racism of One Nation while fighting to turn this anti-racist resistance into a pro-working class, anti-racist resistance. This is different to the perspective of not only the “Communists of Australia” but in a different way also to that of most of the left social democratic groups – like Socialist Alternative. These latter groups – to their credit – are heavily involved in building anti-racist rallies against One Nation and have raised slogans at such actions that correctly link One Nation’s rise to the racist policies of the major parties (even though they tend to soft-pedal on criticism of the ALP’s racist policies). However, the slogans that these groups build the anti-One Nation rallies on and the slogans that they raise at the events shy away from linking the anti-racist struggle to the class-struggle of the working class. They choose such a strategy because they hope that this will allow small-l liberals and middle-class antiracists, who may not be pro-working class, to be more comfortable about attending the actions. However, a huge price of making the events as amenable as possible for such elements is that it holds back the movement from becoming a force that opposes



Sydney, 18 July 2016: Trotskyist Platform signs at a 200-strong protest against Pauline Hanson’s appearance on the ABC Q & A program. We oppose any attempt to channel understandable fear of the Far-Right into support for the ALP and The Greens. Instead, Trotskyist Platform calls for workers’ action to swat down the fascists swarming around Hanson’s One Nation, for determined resistance against the bi-partisan racist war on refugees and Aboriginal people and for a class struggle fight for jobs for all in sharp opposition to nationalist calls for “Jobs for Aussies Workers First.”

the capitalist ruling class – the class whose attacks on jobs and social services fuels support for One Nation and whose racist policies legitimise such fascistic outfits. In other words, the strategy of the reformist left groups, while helping to attract well-meaning, anti-racist university students to rallies, retards the movement from turning to the direction that can actually lead it towards its goal. Moreover, it makes it harder to attract the powerful workers movement into joining these struggles. In contrast, Trotskyist Platform (TP) has been participating in anti-Far Right actions with slogans that not only oppose the government’s/ALP’s racist attacks on Aboriginal people, refugees and Muslims – which other Left groups also do to some extent – but with slogans that directly appeal to the interests that the workers movement has in strengthening its unity through combating racism. Our slogans also seek to connect healthy hatred of One Nation’s racism with opposition to the mainstream, “Aussie first” economic nationalism that helps legitimise the extreme racists. We call for class struggle opposition to the bosses’ job-slashing and casualisation that is the cause of the unemployment and insecurity that is helping fuel fascism’s rise.

Even though the reformist left groups that are currently leading the anti-One Nation protests shy away from an openly pro-working class strategy, this is no excuse for the so-called “Communists of Australia” to downplay the need to participate in anti-One Nation actions. To reject intervention in this way means to turn one’s back on the

possibility that a movement burning with hatred at far-right racism can – or at least its most pro-working class elements can – be steered onto an anti-capitalist strategy. Worst of all it means turning one’s back on the desperate concerns of people from the various coloured “ethnic” communities – the people who are suffering the direct brunt of the redneck violence and abuse that One Nation’s racist hate speech fuels – and refusing to walk them onto a path that connects their passion to fight against far-right racists to an all-sided struggle against the capitalist system that breeds racism.

It is simply wrong to reject struggles against fascist and fascistic forces on the supposed grounds that it diverts from a direct struggle against capitalism. Workers from various embattled “ethnic” communities form an important part of the working class – the class that is central to the fight against capitalism. Many work in the most exploited jobs and, thus, have the most to gain from anti-capitalist class struggle. Some are even today amongst the most militant trade unionists. Yet the vilification that they cop from the likes of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation and the violence being incited – and sometimes directly carried out – by outright fascist groups intimidates coloured workers and thus undermines their ability to participate in the struggles of the workers movement. Opposing the far-right racists is thus an important part of the struggle to unleash the full combative potential of “ethnic” workers and, therefore, of the workers movement as a whole.

It is, thus, incorrect to suggest that struggles against far-right forces somehow takes away from the necessary struggle against capitalism. In fact, the very opposite is true *provided that struggles against the Far-Right are waged on a pro-working class agenda that refuses to be diverted into the dead end of “lesser evil” support for liberal or social democratic-led capitalism.*

That is why, in contrast to the likes of the “Communists of Australia,” we communists in TP stand for spirited, working class centred, anti-racist protests outside One Nation events. Let’s demoralise One Nation supporters and discourage new ones from joining by showing them how much resistance they will face. Most importantly, we fight for actions uniting trade union contingents with Aboriginal people, coloured “ethnic” communities and other anti-racists to drive off the streets the outright fascist groups that have been congregating at One Nation events. When the workers movement mobilises in this way to stop violent fascist forces, it not only enhances their unity but also strengthens their trust in their own power, develops their fighting organisation and experience and increases their willingness and ability to unleash their might in direct physical action. In other words, acting to crush fascist outfits – who are still overall unpopular – helps prepare the working class for the future, more difficult task of overturning capitalist state power. This is partly why Lenin’s Bolsheviks, who would go on to lead the 1917 socialist revolution in

Russia, devoted so much effort to mobilising to crush the violent far-right groups that existed in Russia in their time – like the notorious Black Hundreds. By downplaying the importance of similar tasks today, the avowedly “Marxist-Leninist” Communists of Australia group are actually turning their back on an important aspect of real Marxist-Leninism.

The biggest reason why it is wrong to claim that struggles against far right racists are counterposed to a direct struggle against capitalism is that workers unity is absolutely essential to any struggle against capitalism and such unity cannot be built without fiercely counteracting the dividing effect of racism – whether it be the extreme racism of the Far Right or the patronising racism of the mainstream of the ruling class. In white supremacist Australia, racism and economic nationalism are, indeed, the biggest factors tearing apart workers’ unity. Indeed, the racism and economic nationalism engendered by capitalist society can be so strong that even some avowed socialists recoil from directly standing up to it. Those leftists who say that there is no need to attack One Nation, with the excuse that the dominant capitalist bosses should be attacked instead, are misusing Marxist theory to rationalise a reluctance to challenge extreme racist ideas. This is an opportunist capitulation to backward racist notions amongst their co-workers, acquaintances and those considered potential allies of their parties.

Migrants’ Trade Union in South Korea established in 2007. During their struggle to register the union and to resist bosses, five senior officials were deported by the right-wing capitalist government. However, following support by other unions, in 2015 the South Korean courts backed down and accepted that even “illegal workers” had the right to join a union. Unions in Australia must fight to bring 457 Visa workers and “illegal immigrants” into our unions and must struggle to win for them the full rights of citizens so that these workers can much better fight for their rights.



Protectionism Hurts the Struggle to Save Workers’ Jobs

The germination of openly racist forces in Australia has been bred in a noxious political climate created by the major parties’ – and the mainstream media’s – attacks on refugees, Aboriginal people and various different coloured “ethnic” communities. In particular, the mainstream of the ruling class has infused society with anti-Muslim hysteria through the repression and coded racist messages associated with its “War on Radical Islamic Terrorism.” Direct Australian imperialist intervention in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq further intensifies the chauvinist climate at home. Meanwhile, the Australian fascist groups sprouting into the open have been pollinated by their rapidly breeding counterparts in other parts of the capitalist world. Most significant has been the ascendancy of racist, ultra-protectionist Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency. There has also been the Brexit vote in Britain – in which racist hostility to immigrants and protectionism were the main factors – and the growing influence of extreme right-wing parties throughout Europe from France, Netherlands and Austria to Hungary, Ukraine and Russia. With the current social democratic leaderships of the workers’ movements refusing to mobilise a militant class struggle fight for workers’ jobs, far-right forces have been able to promote restrictions on immigration and extreme nationalism as an “answer” to unemployment and deteriorating social services. Since economic insecurity remains rife in a capitalist world that is still caught in the vortex of the late noughties Great Recession, many in the middle class and some backward workers have bought into such illusory “solutions.” What has arguably most legitimised the Hard Right and their agenda is that social democratic politicians – including supposedly “anti-establishment” ones like America’s Bernie Sanders and British Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn – have been standing on similar economic nationalist platforms as the Far Right. Bernie Sanders has even on several occasions praised Donald Trump for his opposition to trade deals from a protectionist standpoint – even promising to work with Trump if he seriously implements such an agenda.

In the wake of this growing influence of national-chauvinist ideologies and the increasing weight of fascist forces in all the capitalist powers it has hardly been just One Nation and its satellites that have been spewing racist filth and extreme protectionism. Barely a week after Trump’s election win, immigration minister Peter Dutton criticised former prime minister Malcolm Fraser, who was from Dutton’s own Liberal Party, for allowing in some migrant groups in the 1970s. Dutton blamed their descendants for social problems. This was part of a cosy interview he did with extreme racist media commentator Andrew Bolt who attacked “allowing in” people from Middle Eastern and African nations or cultural groups. Later, Dutton singled out Lebanese Muslims as a community that he believes should have been excluded. Lebanese Muslim Association president Samier Dandan responded aptly:

Let us not beat around the bush here, what Mr Dutton said was racist, what he implied was racist, and the lack of outrage in Parliament

reflects on the racism underscoring much of how we talk about minorities in Australia.

This statement reflects widespread outrage at Dutton’s stance within Lebanese and other migrant communities. Yet Turnbull stood by his openly racist minister.

The Labor Opposition did criticise Dutton’s comments – albeit very mildly. However, the ALP itself has been spreading poisonous nationalism. In November, Bill Shorten ranted that temporary overseas workers are “taking the jobs” of Australians. He made this xenophobic claim as part of announcing Labor’s plan to place more restrictions on guest workers entering on the 457 Visa program. Shorten’s comments came within a week of Trump’s election win. He was aping Trump’s “America First” protectionism. Claiming that Australia must learn from Trump’s victory, Shorten raved that, “we make no apology for saying Labor’s approach to the Australian economy is buy Australian, build Australian,

employ Australians.” Although Shorten would deny it, by claiming that foreign workers were “taking the jobs” of Australians, Shorten is inciting racist hostility to migrants. After all, the primary cause of racist attitudes are ignorant notions that other races present a threat to the majority ethnic group’s economic security. Arch-racist Pauline Hanson knows this, which is why she was quick to hail the ALP leader’s comments. Indeed, the ALP’s renewed protectionist push reflects not only a buy into the Trump approach and, of course, its own lifelong embrace of economic nationalism but an attempt to appeal to supporters of the newly resurgent minor parties. The distinguishing feature of the newly elected – or re-elected – minor parties and independents is rabid protectionism. This is the case whether it be One Nation, Jacqui Lambie or the group led by multi-millionaire, property investor Nick Xenophon.

Apart from fuelling racism, claims that foreign guest workers are “taking the jobs” of Australians are **simply not true**. The number of 457 Visa workers in Australia is just 94,890. (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-11-15/what-is-a-457-visa/8026280>). **This makes up a tiny 0.8% of the workforce!** Furthermore, even if this number were all stopped from entering it would not increase employment for Australians. Other countries would likely respond by placing restrictions on Australian expatriates working overseas. These Australian citizens would then be forced to come back here and try to engage in, supposedly, “taking the jobs” of Australians already residing here. Indeed, the number of Australian citizens working in Britain alone approaches the entire total number of 457 Visa workers in Australia. When you add the 65,000 Australians working on temporary work visas in the U.S. (out of a total Australian population of 200,000 there) and the tens of thousands of Australians resident on temporary work visas in each of the UAE, Hong Kong, Thailand and China and tens of thousands more in other parts of Asia and the world, one can see that the number of Australians working abroad as guest workers far exceeds the number of 457 Visa workers in Australia. In other words,

mutual restrictions on temporary workers in Australia and other countries would lead – if one accepts the warped logic of the ALP, One Nation and Co. – to a net taking away of the jobs of Australian workers.

Yet, regardless of the relative amounts of 457 Visa workers in Australia and Australians working as guest workers abroad, the whole notion that temporary workers or immigrants are “taking the jobs” of Australians is false to the core. A 457 Visa worker employed here not only works but spends money and pays taxes: both of which create jobs. In the end, the entry of guest workers just like immigration in general is employment neutral – it neither leads to more or less unemployment. **The actual – and indeed sole – cause of unemployment is the relentless drive for profits of capitalist business owners.** This means that capitalist bosses often would rather employ less workers and produce less than put the resources into training additional workers. Depending on market conditions, corporate bigwigs may find it more profitable to cut production and jobs because that enables them to increase prices since they have a lower number of goods or services to sell. Then there is, of course, the unceasing campaign of bosses to boost profits by cutting jobs and pressuring those left behind to work dangerously faster. All this means that greedy business owners will slash jobs even when they are making filthy high profits – if that can help them make even larger profits. Meanwhile, companies that have ripped hundreds of millions in profits out of the toil of their workers do not hesitate to throw these workers onto the scrapheap if they make a slight loss for even one year. Over the last couple of years, fabulously wealthy Australian-owned mining giants and big banks have slashed thousands upon thousands of jobs in search of even more billions of dollars in profits. So have the greedy owners of profitable IT giants, breweries and hundreds of other businesses.

Under the capitalist system, there is always a certain – rather high – level of unemployment below which unemployment will not drop. This is because as more workers are hired and unemployment falls bosses are less able to make

workers accept lower wages and less able to make their standard threat (which may be spoken or unspoken) to bully workers: “if you don’t like the [miserable] conditions that I am giving you there are plenty more without a job that I can hire.” This reduced ability to keep wages low and conditions poor when unemployment falls makes capitalist bosses recoil from hiring any more workers. And it has absolutely nothing to do with the number of immigrants or the number of guest workers. **Even if there is zero immigration, no guest workers and a very low population there will always be this certain unemployment rate under the capitalist economic system.** The only way that this level of unemployment can be reduced is if class struggle by the organised working class is powerful enough to force capitalists to maintain a larger workforce than that which enables them to make the greatest profits.

This base level of unemployment within capitalism occurs at the best of times – even when capitalist economies are at the highest booms that they can reach. As capitalist economies move out of this high point in their economic cycle, unemployment rises. And when the capitalist

system is wracked by its periodic crises of over-production or other states of chaos, rich business owners throw their workers out of their jobs like there is no tomorrow. Unemployment rises rapidly and again this has nothing to do with the number of guest workers or immigrants. Thus, the highest unemployment rate Australia has ever had was in the height of the Great Depression in 1932 when the official unemployment rate was around 30%. This was a time when the population was barely more than a quarter of what it is now, when there were no guest workers and when the racist White Australia Policy still existed. Similarly, consider the most severe unemployment in Australia in the last few decades. This occurred in 1993, during the early 1990s recession, when official unemployment was nearly twice the rate that it is now. Yet not only was this three years before the 457 Visa program was even introduced, it was at the end of a five year period of falling immigration levels (<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/2f762f95845417aeca25706c00834efa/a9aa86b3d7a17cc6ca2570ec0075135a!OpenDocument>). In that period of extremely high unemployment, the net migration into Australia was only 34,000

Odisha, India, 2 September 2016: Indian trade unionists overturn a scab mini-bus as part of enforcing a nation-wide general strike against government opposition to their wage demands and planned anti-worker changes to labour laws. Protectionism harms the building of unity between Australian workers and their working class sisters and brothers overseas.



per year – which is about five times less than it is currently (<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3412.0/>). In summary, when immigration was five times less than it is today and no guest workers were arriving, unemployment was twice as high. This once again confirms that **the entry of immigrants and guest workers has nothing to do with creating unemployment and if anything one could argue the opposite.**

Although Marxists do not advise the capitalist rulers on how many or how few guest workers should be brought to work in this country, we do resolutely oppose all attempts to turn guest workers into scapegoats for unemployment and oppose all the other divisive rhetoric – and associated laws – that counterpose the interests of local workers to those of guest or foreign workers. We do so because any attempt to set up local workers as rivals of guest workers diverts workers from fighting to stop the real cause of unemployment – the capitalist bosses and their decaying system. It also divides local workers from their important allies – guest and international workers. This, in turn, weakens the ability of the working class to struggle against the capitalist exploiters and demand jobs for all. Such class struggle, which in the end would culminate in the replacement of capitalist rule with working class rule, is the only effective way to defend workers' jobs. Put simply, **calls to put "Australian workers first" in hiring actually harms the fight to protect the jobs of local workers – and, of course, the jobs of international workers too.**

This does not mean that local workers' fears are not real that bosses will try and make 457 Visa workers a lower paid workforce and use their extra exploitation of these workers to drive down the conditions of all workers. After all, this is part of the reason why big business owners are in favour of the 457 Visa program and why the capitalists' open representatives in the Liberal Party favour the scheme. Yet the response of the workers movement to this should not be to make demands calling for local workers to be favoured against guest workers but rather to fight to improve the working conditions of guest workers themselves. In other words, the workers movement must use the same approach

to guest workers as the approach that it ought to use towards specially vulnerable groups amongst local workers: like casual workers, apprentices, youth workers and workers on probation. Especially severe exploitation of all these latter sections of our class can also be used to drive down the conditions of all workers – but that does not mean we should call for kicking these workers out of their jobs. Rather, we should fight to uplift their conditions, legal rights and job security – in particular, by fighting for permanency for all these workers and for their wages and conditions to be brought up to that of the rest of the working class. Similarly, in order to prevent greedy Aussie bosses super-exploiting vulnerable 457 Visa workers, local workers should demand that guest workers be given additional protections such as a requirement that they be paid at the highest pay rate going for those doing their type of work in Australia. Most importantly, the Australian workers movement must demand that all 457 Visa workers be given the rights of citizenship. This will stop bosses threatening guest workers by pointing to the current reality where they will be booted out of the country if they lose their job. By fighting in this way to defend the rights of guest workers, local workers will not only undercut attempts by the bosses to undermine general working conditions but will be able to attract guest workers into our unions and unite with them in struggles to demand improved working conditions and more jobs for all workers. Our guest worker sisters and brothers can in this way bring much to the trade union movement here. Many of these workers have experience in intense class struggles abroad. Furthermore, because they often suffer intense racist discrimination here, many guest workers may well have less sympathy for the capitalist order than local workers do. Therefore, when freed from the threat of deportation and when uplifted by the hand of solidarity by local workers, guest workers could become a militant component of the trade union movement in this country. They would become a key part of a united working class fight to win fully paid, secure jobs for all workers through stopping capitalist bosses from retrenching workers and forcing profitable companies to increase hiring at the expense of their own profits.

Workers of All Countries Unite!

It is not only the fascist One Nation, the right-wing Coalition and the social democratic ALP that have been pushing "Australia First" nationalism. So too in a big way have the middle class, "progressive" Greens. Soon after Bill Shorten launched his "Australia First" push in November, the Greens campaigned for new legal measures restricting 457 Visa workers and the use of imported steel on construction sites. The Greens lower house member, Adam Bandt, openly proclaimed the measures as an attempt to compete on protectionism with not only the Nick Xenophon Team but with One Nation. Bandt stated, "We'll see whether Pauline Hanson is serious about looking after local jobs or whether she just talks protectionist in Queensland to win votes then backs the elites when she's in Canberra" (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 November 2016, <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/greens-to-test-one-nation-xenophon-with-local-jobs-amendment-on-key-industrial-relations-bill-20161124-gsvvjb.html>).

Yet, even after promoting such rabid economic nationalism, the Greens still manage to attack the ALP for inciting racism with their attacks on 457 Visa workers:

For years, the Greens have been urging we protect our sovereignty without racist rhetoric. Now Labor has embraced the Greens' policies but with Pauline Hanson's rhetoric.

Do Bill Shorten and Labor genuinely want to help create jobs for locals by fixing our migration and employment laws or is this just dog-whistling in a post-Trump attempt to chase the One Nation vote?

<http://sarah-hanson-young.greensmps.org.au/articles/labor-putting-pauline-hanson-first-greens-test-labor-trade-and-jobs>

Class struggle can save workers' jobs. Sacked Carlton & United Breweries maintenance workers picket Melbourne's Abbotsford brewery. Even though their struggle was endangered by Laborite union leaders' refusal to mobilise a full shutdown of the brewery, the sacked workers eventually won back their jobs after a seven-month-long struggle.





Left, Melbourne, August 2015: Union-led rallies against the China Australia Free Trade Agreement (CHARTA) have been based on the divisive nationalist agenda of giving greater support to local bosses in trade and purchasing over overseas producers. The rallies have also been shot through with irrational fear mongering about China as seen by this sign (Centre) at the Sydney 31 July 2015 anti-CHARTA protest. The national-chauvinist essence of this protest was indeed so strong that the fascist Party For Freedom felt comfortable enough to participate and brandish its openly racist slogans (Right). Down with all economic nationalism – workers of all countries unite!

There is, indeed, no doubt that the ALP is churning out Pauline Hanson-like racist rhetoric and dog whistling. However, the irony is that by promoting “Aussie First” migration and employment policies, the Greens – like the ALP – are only pouring fuel into the engine of fascist units like One Nation who are, after all, always the most consistent nationalists. The Greens economic nationalist policies are fuelling One Nation’s rise no matter how clean and liberal the rhetoric that they present these policies with.

As harmful as the Greens’ hard line protectionism is, this poisonous ideology spreads deepest into the workers movement when it is being poured by those within it; that is, by the ALP parliamentary and union leaders. Economic nationalism pushed by our union leaders in particular does the most harm as they have more authority amongst workers than ALP parliamentary politicians. But not only are most Laborite union officials pushing protectionism – they are doing so with increasing vigour. The more that these officials – unwilling to defy anti-strike laws – recoil from a class struggle fight against bosses slashing jobs, the more that they promote “Australian workers first” policies as an illusory “solution” to joblessness. The Laborite, current union leaders slogans include not only calls to keep out guest workers but demands to favour Australian companies over overseas producers. Yet just like calls to favour

local workers in hiring, calls to favour locally made products are an illusory strategy to “save Australian jobs.” For any restrictions Australia places on overseas produced items would be met by countries abroad placing similar restrictions on Australian-made products. In the end all that such demands do is to divide workers of different nations by setting them against their sisters and brothers abroad. Meanwhile, the capitalist bosses in all the different countries are left laughing all the way to the bank – laughing because their own workforces, instead of fighting against these bosses who exploit them, are set against their actual allies, workers overseas.

Even the most left-wing union leaderships in Australia are strongly pro-protectionist. Take the Sydney branch of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA). To the credit of the members and leaders of this union, the MUA Sydney Branch amongst all unions in NSW have done the most to support anti-racist causes like Aboriginal rights and refugee rights. However, the union has also long used the divisive nationalist slogan, “Australian crew on Australian ships” as part of a campaign to stop overseas workers working on ships on Australian coastal routes. This campaign was put into overdrive when workers on the MV Portland were disgustingly sacked on January 13 last year. After the workers who worked on this Alcoa alumina cargo ship had found out the ship was

to be taken to Singapore where they were to be replaced by overseas seafarers on much lower pay, the local crew refused to sail the ship to Singapore and took industrial action by docking the ship in the far south-west Victorian port of Portland. The greedy Alcoa bosses eventually organised dozens of security guards to raid the ship at 1am at night and heavy the workers off the ship. This sacking of the MV Portland workers by Alcoa and their use of physical thuggery to break industrial action was indeed despicable. **It was despicable because all smashing of industrial action and all sackings of workers, especially by a multi-billion dollar behemoth like Alcoa, is despicable, no matter what the reason!** The sackings deserved to be opposed by industrial action. However, instead of focussing solely on the sacking of workers by Alcoa, the MUA leaders chose to focus on the issue of Australian workers being replaced by overseas workers. They ran a campaign called “sacked for being an Australian” complete with rallies, media publicity and canvassing of politicians. The campaign addressed not only the events around the MV Portland but the broader issue of overseas crew working on Australian coastal routes. It won the support of the ACTU and Bill Shorten and other politicians. At a rally outside Malcolm Turnbull’s office, union officials wore “Sacked for Being An Aussie” t-shirts, questioned the competency of overseas seafarers and the validity of their Australian visas and spoke favourably about how the campaign against foreign crew on Australian coastal routes had even won the support of right-wing radio shock jocks from 2GB and the like. Yet the only reason that those staunchly anti-union shock jocks were supporting the movement was because it appealed to Australian nationalism and stoked hostility to overseas workers from the “Third World.” Those anti-working class, multi-millionaire shock jocks love workers being divided. The fact is that the “Sacked for Being An Aussie” slogan is something that a far right political party could come up with!

A far most honest t-shirt expressing the plight of the MV Portland workers would say something like, “Sacked for being a more decently paid

worker by a greedy company seeking to make more profit.” Unions should of course oppose all sackings of workers – including when bosses seek to cut wage costs by hiring new workers on lower pay. Where workers are being replaced by overseas workers on lower pay our unions should not make the issue about local workers being replaced by overseas ones. That is not the point. **It is about workers being sacked because of greedy capitalists trying to drive down wages ... full stop! Our unions should simply demand that sacked workers get their jobs back and, instead of shouting divisive slogans against the hiring of overseas crew, should demand that all workers on Australian routes be paid – the much higher – local wage rates.** However, the MUA leadership has chosen, instead, to appeal to xenophobic Australian nationalism and hopes to win support from broader elements – like “independent” politicians and right-wing media commentators – on this basis. In doing so they are in the long run shooting the union in the foot. For the very Australian nationalism that they are churning up today will tomorrow be hurled back against the union – including by the very same right wing shock jocks who today claim to back the union campaign – when the union launches any major strike to defend workers’ interests. These shock jocks and other Australian nationalists will scream that the union is “harming Australia’s national interests” and “putting at risk Australian jobs and Australian industry.” Furthermore, by turning the issue into an Australian workers versus overseas workers issue, our union leaders are undermining the potential for international solidarity action in support of the sacked workers. Consider, for example, how an alternative strategy for the struggle would look like: The union refuses to make this a question of Australian workers versus overseas workers. Instead it demands through industrial action not only the reinstatement of all sacked workers but, as a way to build international solidarity and undercut Alcoa’s efforts to play one lot of workers off against another, demands that a portion of the proposed overseas crew also be hired. It, of course, insists that this overseas crew is hired on the better Australian wages and

conditions with the resulting lower workload per worker, resulting from a now larger workforce, being used to reduce working hours with no loss in pay. The right wing shock jocks and politicians, of course, then refuse to support the union campaign. However, the union's internationalist stance meets with a very enthusiastic response from Alcoa workers throughout the multinational corporation's operations in nine other countries. These workers then launch protest industrial action in support of the MUA demands. Now that's a strategy worth fighting for! A strategy befitting the very good work that the MUA is doing in other arenas to oppose racism and support other progressive causes like defence of public housing in Millers Point.

Yet protectionist ideology is so overwhelming within the workers movement in Australia – and indeed most of the richer capitalist countries – that even most of the Far Left embraces it. Thus, the newspaper of Socialist Alliance, the *Green Left Weekly*, supported the MUA leadership's "Australian workers first" strategy on the MV Portland sackings while trying to ignore some of the most blatantly national chauvinist aspects of the campaign (see <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/rally-save-mv-portland>). However, Socialist Alliance are hardly alone on the Left in pandering to economic nationalism. So too does Socialist Alternative (SAlt) and – in an even more blatant way – the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). Both these groups hailed the largest economic nationalist rally in Australia in recent times: the 10,000 strong "Local Workers First" rally in Perth in July 2012. To be sure, they sought to distance themselves from the most jingoistic aspects of the rally. Yet, no matter in how cleansed a form they presented it, as the rally's main banner slogan "WA Kids Miss Out When Miners Use Overseas Workers" made all too clear, this was a poisonous campaign that pitted local workers against their overseas comrades.

Just like the Greens, those far left groups that think that it is possible to have a "clean" version of protectionism that does not dog whistle to racism are deluding themselves. Any policy that calls for putting the interests of (mainly white) Australian

workers over (overwhelmingly coloured) lower paid workers from "Third World" countries will inevitably appeal to and reinforce White Australia xenophobic attitudes as well as "First World" arrogance. *This will be the case regardless of whether those making such calls intend this to happen or not.*

Yet even if it were hypothetically possible to promote protectionist policies without inciting racism it would still be harmful to the struggle for working class people's interests. For it would still divert workers away from the struggle that is actually needed – the one against the job-slashing exploiters – and would still pit local workers against their natural allies: the working class people of the world. Marxists have long understood the danger that could arise if workers end up being divided along national lines. That is why Marx and Engels chose to make the slogan, "Workers of All Countries Unite!" as *the central slogan* of their famous *Communist Manifesto*. This slogan does not only mean that workers in one country should collect money to support a strike by workers in another country or take industrial action in solidarity with an overseas workers' struggle. All that, of course, is a very important part of it. But to "unite" means much more: it means **to fight as one**. That, naturally, means rejecting any calls for workers in one's own country to be prioritised over workers abroad. Indeed, the *Communist Manifesto* even emphasised that fighting for the common interests of the international proletarian working class – as opposed to standing for one's own national working class in competition with those of working classes abroad – is indeed the **number one** difference between communists and other tendencies in the workers movement:

The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality...

Those nominal Marxists who spit on this central message of the *Communist Manifesto* by making calls to favour Australian workers in hiring over their sisters and brothers abroad have no right to call themselves "communists."

Indeed, those leftists and trade union officials that promote "Australian workers first" demands are not only violating the key principle of Marxism, they are in fact violating the spirit of trade unionism itself. The essence of trade unionism is the idea that only if workers stand united *as one* can they effectively fight for their rights. Trade unions – and, indeed, workers' unity at a workplace – are built on the understanding that if one group of workers – say, senior workers – ask for the boss to favour them in employment and conditions over other workers and the other sections of workers – including, say, a bloc of younger workers – who,

in turn, respond by making their own selfish demands all that will happen is that workers will be divided and weakened in their ability to win concessions from the boss and *all workers will end up losing out*. If, in the above scenario, one replaces the senior workers making demands to be prioritised with Australian workers and those groups responding to these demands as the workers of other countries, then one can see how "Australian workers first" demands **not only fly in the face of basic trade union principles but damages the interests of all workers.**

Is "Globalisation" Really the Problem?

The most seemingly left-sounding argument that pro-protectionist leftists and social democrats use to justify their demands is to claim that giving jobs to Australian workers instead of foreign workers saves those non-local workers from being badly exploited. Of course it is true that 457 Visa workers and workers in poorer countries are often exploited more starkly than local workers. However, **to say that these workers should have their livelihoods taken from them to save them from being exploited is the very height of cynicism.** Will that not make them suffer even more? Will that not compel many of these workers to accept other even lower paying jobs? Mexican workers themselves answered these questions when they angrily protested outside Ford dealerships in Mexico against Trump's plan (which is similar to Bernie Sanders' plan) to make auto companies move their production from Mexico to the U.S. Their protest actions on the day of Trump's inauguration especially targeted Ford after the company pulled out of a car assembly plant that it was building in Mexico's Villa de Reyes in the wake of Trump's election.

To the extent that social democratic protectionism is not consciously a selfish, nationalist agenda to favour workers in one's own country at the expense of their counterparts abroad, it is the core

part of an ideology that sees the main problem of the world as "globalisation." Now, "globalisation" means different things to different people. The term is generally used in the economic sense to

A man comforts Ilies Soufiane, fifteen-year-old son of Azzeddine Soufiane, one of the six people murdered when far-right terrorist, Alexandre Bissonnette (Right), opened fire on a Quebec City mosque. The heinous white supremacist was notorious for online rants against refugees and supporters of women's liberation. He was also a proud supporter of Donald Trump and far-right French politician, Marine Le Pen. The 29 January 2017 massacre came just two days after Donald Trump's notorious ban on U.S. entry for nationals of seven Muslim majority countries. The official racism of capitalist politicians is encouraging extreme right-wing terrorist attacks.



refer to growing trade as well as investment by capitalists in other countries; and in particular to investment by capitalists of richer countries in business operations in poorer countries. Leftist supporters of protectionism, when seeking to mask the nationalist essence of their politics, focus on opposing “economic globalisation” which they say hurts the working class and poor of all countries. Now, certainly in the ex-colonial countries, which are still subjugated by imperialism, opposition to “globalisation” represents a very understandable resistance to the imperialist exploitation of the masses in these countries by the capitalist bigwigs of the richer countries. However, anti-“globalisation” sentiment in the imperialist countries – like the U.S., Australia, Britain, Germany etc – usually reflects a “First World” chauvinist desire to keep the privileged position of these countries by ensuring that jobs and trade advantages do not flow to the poorer countries. The “leftist” cover for such sentiment is the cynical – as we have shown above – claim that ensuring that economic activity is kept centred in the wealthier countries saves the “Third World” masses from being unscrupulously exploited. This opposition to “economic globalisation” from social democrats ends up being quite similar to that of the Far Right. For example, fascistic U.S. president Trump rails against U.S. jobs being lost to Mexico and against Mexico supposedly hammering the U.S. in trade. The racist Far Right, of course, add to the reformist Left’s stand against “economic globalisation” opposition to the movement of people and opposition to “cultural globalisation” – in other words, they add open xenophobic nationalism to economic nationalism.

The working class in the imperialist countries like Australia should solidarise with the concerns of the masses of the so-called “Third World” about “economic globalisation.” They should do this by very militantly standing against the raping of the poorer countries by capitalists of the richer countries. This should be the case whether that imperialist theft takes the form of exploitation of labour, plundering of natural resources, reaping

of exorbitant interest payments from indebted poorer countries or through forcing producers in these poorer countries to sell their produce at ultra-low prices through tyrannical imperialist control of world markets. That means we should oppose Australian capitalists looting exorbitant wealth out of the likes of East Timor, PNG, Fiji and the Solomon Islands and to some extent also from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Sri Lanka; just as we should stand against U.S. imperialists raping the likes of Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Nigeria, Egypt, India, Malaysia and Thailand.

However, Leninists understand that whether there’s more “globalisation” or less, capitalism will bring misery to the masses. Therefore, the Left and workers movement – while standing resolutely with the masses of the neo-colonial and semi-colonial countries against imperialist exploitation – should be neither for more or less “economic globalisation.” This does not mean we should be indifferent to the case where capitalists in richer countries close down factories in these countries in order to set up ones using a lower paid workforce in poorer countries. Capitalist bosses use the threat of such offshoring to bully workers in their base countries into accepting poorer wages and conditions. This is, after all, why mainstream conservatives and liberals tend to support economic globalisation. We should of course stand against all workers losing their jobs – importantly including when the bosses are to hire other workers on lower pay. However, the slogans we must fight on should not be the divisive and deliberate pandering to nationalism of “save Aussie jobs from being exported” but, instead, demands of “no job losses,” “jobs for all workers” and “the best and equal conditions for all workers.” In cases of mooted offshoring, we should not in the least object to the plant opening up in the poorer country. We should welcome more jobs for our working class sisters and brothers abroad. Only we demand no loss of jobs for the already employed workers in the richer home country of the business and demand a massive uplifting in wages for any workers hired in the poorer country.



Miami Airport: One of the huge protests in the U.S. against Trump’s 27 January 2017 executive order suspending entry by nationals from seven Muslim majority countries and all refugees. People from coloured & migrant-derived communities have been prominent at the demonstrations.

At the same time we should understand that the impact of companies slashing jobs to move operations to poorer countries abroad is full of myths. One myth is that companies are moving in a big way to China. Although that may have been true in the past it is now largely *out of date news*. China’s socialistic economy has pulled its people so far out of the dire poverty of its pre-1949 capitalist days and wages are rising so quickly there and workers’ rights have been so boosted by Red China’s 2008 pro-worker Labour Law that many Western factory owners are actually leaving China (<https://www.bcg.com/documents/file84471.pdf>). Some are moving their plants to lower wage countries like Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mexico and Thailand. However, others are even slowly picking up shop to move or return to wealthier countries like the U.S. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-foxconn-taiwan-idUSBREA0Q01F20140127>) In the five years to March 2016, **almost 100,000 factory jobs have moved back from China to the U.S.** Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of job losses in Australia have nothing to do with being “exported

overseas.” Indeed, many types of jobs cannot be sent overseas by their very nature including most jobs in construction, commuter and cargo transport, infrastructure, mining, maintenance, home service/repair, medical and aged care, childcare, teaching, utilities, warehousing, post, hospitality, food service, tourism, retail and the public service.

So, when part Australian-owned mining giant Rio Tinto slashed nearly 700 jobs last year – those jobs were not sent overseas at all. It was simply that the greedy company owners who were already making a profit of some \$2.3 billion dollars in just half a year wanted to make even more profit by cutting their wage costs. Similarly, the over 4,000 jobs axed by the four big banks last year were not “exported.” The bank bosses simply cut these jobs in order to boost the already exorbitant profits of these corporations by downsizing less profitable divisions. The same goes for the 500 jobs slashed by retail giant Woolworths last July. And the over 18,000 federal public service jobs that have been axed over the last three and a

half years have certainly not been off-shored – the jobs have simply been eradicated to help the government finance tax cuts for wealthy business owners. So all this gets us to the crux of the matter about “globalisation.” Although we should oppose companies slashing jobs in order to move operations to lower-wage countries and should stand with the “Third World” masses in opposing imperialist exploitation of their countries; and although the workers movement should neither call for more or less “globalisation” under capitalism: we must expose the myth that “globalisation” is the major cause of unemployment. For this myth is obscuring the truth that the principle cause of workers losing their jobs is the drive of the owners of profitable businesses to make even more profits by pruning their workforce in order to cut “labour costs.” In other words, **belief in the myth that “globalisation” is the main cause of unemployment is diverting workers from a fight to force capitalists to maintain larger workforces – which is the real way to struggle against unemployment.** Furthermore, this myth about globalisation, which is consciously promoted by sections of the mainstream media in order to impede class struggle, is propelling the growth of dangerous far right, racist forces.

Even when a corporation cites overseas competition as an excuse for job cuts such cuts

are only “necessary” because those bosses insist on maximising profits. Consider Australia’s biggest steel manufacturer, Bluescope Steel. The steel industry and Bluescope in particular have been at the centre of protectionist calls to buy Australian-made steel and restrict competition from imports. In October 2015, Bluescope arm-twisted unions into a deal that saw 500 jobs axed and wages frozen for three years which the company said was essential to keep its Port Kembla operations going. Yet, the company, which is owned by rich investors through several wealth management firms, was even then making over \$136 million in profit! Its latest annual profit was in fact over \$353 million. In other words, if we do the maths and assume generously that Bluescope’s average annual wages bill per worker is between \$80,000 to \$100,000, we will find that **if Bluescope had not slashed those 500 jobs and even if those workers contributed zero to total revenue (which would of course not be the case), the company would still only have most lost some 11% to 14% of its current profit. Here we see very starkly exposed how protectionism covers up the truth that job shedding is not ultimately caused by competition from imports or from a lack of “buying Australian” but from the drive of greedy company owners to make even more profits than they are making today.**



Chicago: One of many large protests that erupted throughout the U.S. following the election victory of hard-right candidate, Donald Trump. This movement, driven by understandable hostility to Trump’s extreme racism, misogyny and homophobia, must be broken from influence of – and illusions in – the capitalist Democratic Party so that it can become a powerful force against the capitalist system – the root cause of racism, the subjugation of women and unemployment.

Those Who Understand the Harm Done to the Workers Movement by Economic Nationalism Must Fight Against It By Organising Themselves into an Internationalist Workers Party

Today, protectionism – whether pushed in the name of “anti-globalisation” or open economic nationalism – is rapidly escalating all across the capitalist world. It is being pushed by those from right across the political spectrum from outright fascists, to far-right leaders like Trump and Pauline Hanson to mainstream Laborite social democrats to Greens to so-called “anti-establishment” progressive liberals and social democrats (like Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn) to reformist far left groups to pseudo-“Marxist Leninists.” This economic nationalism is undermining class struggle resistance to job slashing. That in turn leads to higher unemployment and hence leaves the masses even more prone to accepting protectionist slogans. Protectionism is, on the one hand, being incited by national chauvinism and racism and, on the other, is itself further igniting national chauvinism and racism. In this way the raging wildfire of economic nationalism is continually spreading and getting hotter. It will end up in setting off a trade war. We know that trade wars can in turn ignite a shooting war. Notwithstanding pseudo-Marxist attempts to resurrect a version of Kautsky’s theory of a united imperialism – which Lenin so fiercely attacked – by explaining the world as consisting of just a single imperialist bloc led by the U.S., we are actually in a world of inter-imperialist rivalries. Massive U.S. spying on Germany revealed a couple of years ago and prickly relations between new U.S. president Trump and some West European imperialist leaders amid a backdrop of impending trade frictions and a possible re-alignment in U.S. alliances with other capitalist powers all point to increasing rivalries between imperial powers. To be sure, competing imperialist powers are somewhat held together by their common enmity to socialistic rule in China. However, the long term trend of the capitalist “order” and heightened economic nationalism is towards inter-imperialist conflict – especially when capitalism dives into severe economic crises. Let us not forget that last century the imperialist powers plunged humanity into two catastrophic world wars (although the socialistic USSR’s role in WWII was to wage a progressive class war of a workers state against Nazi-led, German imperialism). This time all the capitalist rivals will have access to nuclear weapons at the start of a war!

Below, Great Shot: Leader of the U.S. fascist “Alt-Right” movement, Richard Spencer, is given a small taste of what he deserves by an anti-racist while giving a media interview on the day of Trump’s inauguration. At a meeting of his National Policy Institute which celebrated Trump’s election victory and was full of race-bate messages against blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Jews, Spencer invoked unmistakable Nazi rhetoric and concluded with a toast, “Hail Trump, hail our people, hail victory!” This was met with a Nazi salute by several in the audience (Bottom Right). The new U.S. president has brought such fascists into his administration – making former leader of the Alt-Right Breitbart News, Steve Bannon, his Chief Strategist (Bottom Left). Trump’s election has emboldened outright fascists worldwide leading to a marked rise in violent attacks on people of colour from the U.S. to Canada to Britain to Australia.





COUNTRY COMPARISON :: CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 5 YEARS UNDERWEIGHT

Children under the age of 5 years underweight gives the percent of children under five consider Underweight means weight-for-age is approximately 2 kg below standard at age one, 3 kg below standard at age two, and 4 kg below standard for ages four and five.

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RANK	COUNTRY	(%)
1	TIMOR-LESTE	45.30
2	INDIA	43.50
3	YEMEN	43.10

December 2013: Protest in East Timor's capital, Dili against the Australian rulers' theft of its oil and gas wealth. As a result of Australian imperialist plunder, enforced by repeated Australian military intervention to ensure a more compliant government there, East Timor (Timor Leste) has the highest rate in the world of children under five who are underweight due to malnourishment. Contrary to nationalist myths that Australia is a victim of foreign control, Australia is an imperialist country where the rich capitalists here not only exploit workers at home but rip-off even more cruelly the masses of South Pacific and developing Asian countries.

Even right now protectionism is doing immense harm to the masses. Economic nationalism in Australia is literally strangling workers' resistance to job slashing and casualisation. It is also hurting union membership numbers. For if the fight to save jobs is focussed on calling for policies to help Australian corporations compete against overseas rivals then that takes away a sizeable part of the reason for workers to join our unions. Workers could help Australian corporations by joining the bosses lobbying efforts to government for "Buy Australian" policies – they don't need a union to do that. After all, the purpose of our unions is to unite workers to stand up *against* the bosses. Economic nationalism has, indeed, so diverted the workers movement from fighting the capitalist exploiters and so poisoned workers' class consciousness that most job slashing by bosses is today met with little resistance. About the only time that most Laborite union leaders are taking any stand against job losses is if they can demonstrate a connection between these layoffs and off-shoring or competition from imports. Yet, as we have shown above, their answer to such job cuts is simply more protectionism which, far from saving jobs, divides and diverts the working class and, thus, ultimately harms the fight to save workers jobs. Furthermore, the majority of job slashing by bosses has little to do with either competition from imports or offshoring.

A rare example of a recent union struggle against

job slashing was seen in the struggle of Carlton & United Breweries maintenance workers at Melbourne's largest brewery in Abbotsford. There, the bosses outrageously retrenched 55 maintenance workers last June and told them to re-apply for their jobs through a new non-union contract involving a 65% pay-cut and a loss of most of their hard-won conditions. However, after a seven-month long struggle involving sacked workers picketing the brewery and stopworks by production workers, the sacked workers won back their jobs with most of the previous pay rates and conditions and a guarantee of no forced redundancies for at least three years. Although the struggle was endangered by Laborite union leaders refusing to mobilise a shutdown of the brewery – through a no-cross picket line and an ongoing strike by production workers – the December victory does show that class struggle can stop job slashing.

Worker activists need to outline a class struggle program to win jobs for all if we are to turn back the tide of protectionist ideology that is engulfing the workers movement. Working class people, understandably worried about finding and keeping jobs in these uncertain times, will be hypnotised by the false salvation promised by economic nationalist policies if they are not presented with a viable alternative. However, a class struggle movement will only be powerful enough to force bosses to retain a larger workforce

than their profit imperative requires if it is able to unleash the full power of the workers movement. This requires a program to defy the whole swath of anti-strike laws that have been instituted by Liberal and ALP governments alike – abiding by which makes it very hard to win any struggle. Of course, defying these laws up the ante and would be met with threats of repression by the capitalist enemy and hysterical denunciations from their media. However, if our trade unions in turn crank up the struggle with indefinite strikes backed by solid picket lines and secondary solidarity strikes then we can hurt the bosses' profits so much that they may be scared to actually use their anti-union laws. We need to turn our union movement into one that understands this and is prepared to fight for such a militant, class struggle perspective. Such a movement requires a leadership that does not restrict its outlook to what is possible within the capitalist system – which is what the current social democratic leadership does. For if the working class starts to look like winning victories in forcing capitalists to maintain larger workforces than they want to, the capitalists will scream that this will make the system collapse and will threaten to withdraw their capital. We must respond that: if you capitalists are not capable of running your businesses and the economy in such a way that providing jobs for all will not cause collapse then we will need to strip you of the means of production and place it into our, the working class peoples, hands under a state where it is we who have the power.

However, to even begin to mobilise such a struggle we need to counter economic nationalist ideology within the workers movement. For economic nationalism and its divisive and diversionary effects has become *the number one obstacle* to a working class fight back against capitalist attacks. Currently, the proportion of worker and other Left activists who do understand the harm done by protectionist ideology is relatively small. This makes it triply important that those that do understand stand up and energetically take on this political battle. Unfortunately, however, even amongst these layers many shy away from this

crucial ideological struggle. Some do so because they are uncertain about their own impulse to oppose protectionism – given that they are constantly bombarded by economic nationalist appeals from Laborite union officials and from their co-workers. Others worry about being "vanguardist" if they "tell workers what to think." The problem with this notion is that workers are constantly being told "what to think" by the mainstream media, by pro-capitalist politicians and by the current, Laborite union leaders. To not counter the false ideologies of economic nationalism and White Australia chauvinism that these forces are flooding the workers movement with is to be complicit in drowning the class struggle. It means leaving the working class under the "vanguardship" of Laborite social democracy – and that spells defeat for the working class and all the downtrodden. It is therefore the *duty* of those who understand the harm done by protectionist ideology to resolutely oppose it. This, of course, necessitates strengthening one's own ideological commitment to opposing economic nationalism, co-ordinating with like-minded activists to amplify their common political struggle and winning others to this perspective in order to strengthen the forces waging the battle against protectionist ideology. Yet a group of like-minded worker activists who coordinate in a struggle for a revolutionary class struggle perspective and against economic nationalism, who consciously seek to improve their ideological training and who seek out new activists to wage this political struggle is nothing other than a budding revolutionary, internationalist "vanguard" of the workers movement. Such a class struggle, would-be leadership of our unions would be linked to a party that would also include the most active revolutionary elements from all the most downtrodden sections of society. The prospects for a badly needed working class fight back depend on the building of such a revolutionary workers party. So do efforts to pull humanity to the safe haven of socialism as we, increasingly rapidly, near the cliff that will drop down to the hell of fascism and world war.

Tens of Thousands Protest in Australia on the Day of Land Theft and Genocide Rally Attacked by Ruthless Police



26 January 2017, Federation Square, Melbourne.

It was the largest Invasion Day protest for many years. The burning issue of extreme racism in capitalist Australia could not be hidden. The capitalist media had to discuss this matter publicly as over 50,000 protested in Melbourne and 10,000 marched in Sydney.



Left: Marauding police violently attacked many demonstrators during the latter stages of the march. Right: Police brutalise a respected young Aboriginal activist after spraying him and other protesters with fire extinguisher during the Sydney 2017 Invasion Day rally.

In Sydney, Aboriginal speakers outlined the brutal state murders taking place of Aboriginal people in custody and the continued stealing of Aboriginal children from their families by “community service” bureaucrats. The Sydney rally was also addressed by a representative of the MUA trade union and an MUA contingent joined the rally. Also rally participants loudly applauded members of the Muslim community when they stated their solidarity with the Aboriginal people’s struggle for justice.

There has been greater consciousness on the oppression of Aboriginal peoples amongst a section of the masses. They have made it clear that they do not want to celebrate Australia Day like it presently is celebrated. Trying to get onboard the sentiment, many small-l liberals, Greens, and soft-lefts have called for changing the date to a more broadly “acceptable” celebration of Australian nationalism. Even conservatives are calling to change the date of Australia Day. Ian Macfarlane, a noted conservative and representative for Queensland’s mining capitalists, stated he wants ‘Australia Day’ changed to another day.

But the staunch young activists of Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance - WAR called for the abolition of ‘Australia Day’ altogether, rightly stating that:

“WAR does not want the date of Invasion Day (so called ‘Australia Day’) to be changed. WAR instead stands for the abolishment of the day all together... Changing the date will simply allow another day that Australia can celebrate their nationalism, their patriotism, their past and present genocidal acts against our people.”

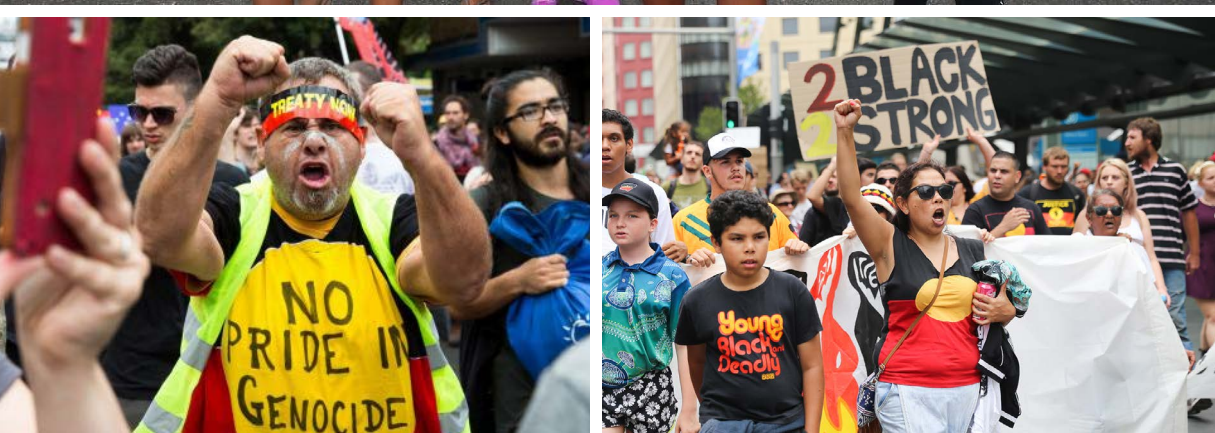
<https://www.facebook.com/WARcollective/posts/1245000778928812>

In Sydney, police assaulted peaceful protesters towards the conclusion of the Invasion Day rally injuring many protesters. On the videos circulating of the event, big and aggressive policemen are seen without warning charging into the middle of the protest, knocking over many unprepared and smaller framed protesters including the elderly and children. Police tried to justify their violent attack on the rally by claiming they were trying to prevent a well respected young Aboriginal activist from burning the Australian flag - a flag which symbolises colonialist genocide. Burning a flag itself is not illegal but the police came prepared with a fire extinguisher to deliberately harass Aboriginal activists on a day of mourning and protest against systematic racism in Australia. From pictures and videos, at least one young male protester and one young female protester were seen unconscious and in extreme pain after being knocked over by police. It seems the young man fell on his head as he was violently

knocked backwards by the rampaging police. The young woman later was revealed to have suffered serious head injuries and had to spend a week in hospital. Showing commendable solidarity, many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people came to the assistance of their fellow demonstrators who were being attacked. Police outrageously arrested one protestor on the day. FIRE (Fighting In Resistance Equally), the organiser for the Sydney rally, released a statement condemning the reckless police attack and called for the bogus charges to be dropped against the arrested protester. Subsequently, a second protestor has been charged. Trotskyist Platform adds our voice to the call for all the bogus charges to be dropped against all those protesters charged from the Invasion Day march.

The police attack on the Invasion Day protest march is typical of the racist and anti-working class police in Australia. We call for our trade unions to mobilise in bigger numbers to support future Aboriginal rights actions. Through the presence of unions playing a prominent role, police and their capitalist masters will think twice before they attack another Aboriginal protest as it could provoke a greater working class and industrial backlash. The participation of the workers movement united with Aboriginal people is integral to the fight for Aboriginal rights and to the fight against racism. Not only should the workers movement be focused on just the workers' immediate economic issues but also on advancing the overall struggle of the whole working class and all the oppressed as one force against the racist capitalist exploiters.

Sydney, 26 January 2017: Some of the approximately 10,000 people who marched through Redfern and the City in the Aboriginal-led, Invasion Day protest. The intensifying racist oppression of Aboriginal people has pushed a new layer of determined young Aboriginal women and men into anti-racist political activism.



A Hard Right, Racist Bigot Enters the White House Capitalist “Democracy” is a Sham

Only Workers United with All of the Oppressed Can Bring about Real Change



Trump's election and inauguration have been met with large protests against racism, misogyny and homophobia.

9 November 2016 - Hard right-wing candidate Donald Trump - a billionaire capitalist exploiter and extreme racist and misogynist - will become the next president of the U.S.A. In yesterday's election, he defeated the candidate supported by the mainstream of the American capitalist class, Hillary Clinton.

Like most far-right demagogues (including Hitler), Trump poses as a “rebel” and “anti-establishment” figure. Actually, he is a tycoon who is very much part of the capitalist ruling class and a key part of his economic program is big tax cuts for the rich. His main beef with the mainstream of the racist establishment is that they are not openly racist and economically nationalist enough for his liking. His blatant racism serves to protect the capitalist establishment by dividing the masses and diverting their economic frustrations and insecurity onto minorities and other groups in society who are made into scapegoats for

the mass inequalities that capitalism inevitably creates. Similarly, his protectionism diverts anger about job losses onto overseas workers, thus shielding the capitalist exploiters in the U.S. from any blame and making the masses think that they have a common interest with their own exploiters in protecting American business.

Eight years ago when Obama was first elected, Trotskyist Platform actually predicted that the inevitable failure of a small-l liberal led regime to improve the lives of the masses could well lead to the eventual takeover of hard right forces in



The Handover or Phony Hope Shakes the Hand of Blatant Bigotry. A moment that ought to finally dispel anyone's lingering illusion that capitalist democracy can ever be reformed into a system that operates in the interests of the working class. Obama prepares to calmly hand the administration of the U.S. capitalist state over to Trump just as George W. Bush did for him eight years earlier. The teetering edifice of the capitalist state requires both left and right pillars to keep it from completely collapsing beneath the dead weight of its own contradictions.

America (and, indeed, in his language Obama was the most liberal-sounding U.S. president in decades). Here is an excerpt from the article we wrote upon Obama first taking office (for the full article go to: <http://trotskyistplatform.com/Obama.html>):

That the Obama electoral triumph, if anything, dulled workers' class consciousness means that even the present shift away from the conservative right wing is fragile. Without an understanding that it is the capitalist profiteers who are responsible for unemployment, recession and decay the masses will be vulnerable to right wing demagoguery when they see that the new Administration is no more able to satisfy their aspirations than the previous one. The conservatives are waiting in the wing. And they will be able to mobilise right wing activists from amongst the all too many bigoted elements who were horrified that a black person should become President. Hence, there is a real danger that the rise of the liberal Obama could turn out to be just a prelude to a right-wing regime more frightening than Bush's – perhaps led by a Sarah Palin-like figure. While the left rest on their illusory laurels, the frighteningly fascist right are now surely mobilising their forces, stirred up like a wasps' nest ready to strike!

Only by mobilising their own power to squeeze concessions out of the exploiters can the working class begin to address the needs of the American masses and stop the re-emergence of the right. The working class can through industrial action force companies to avoid shedding jobs. And its

power can be mobilised in a campaign to demand free health care for all. In all such struggles of the American workers movement, black workers will be at the forefront. These workers will join together the multiracial workers' movement with the ghetto poor in the fight for black liberation.

Although Trump's views and agenda are certainly fascist, fascism has not yet triumphed in the U.S (nor does it currently hold sway in any other country). Fascism is not just a government of people with a really right-wing agenda but involves the mass mobilisation of the middle class and some of the unemployed (and even politically backward workers) to violently smash all workers' organisations - like independent trade unions and left-wing parties - and institute a capitalist regime which dispenses with the formalities of parliamentary "democracy." Such a regime can only be instituted by physically defeating an inevitable degree of resistance from the politically conscious, working class masses. Nevertheless, Trump's triumph will greatly encourage fascist outfits in the U.S. and will spur the development of fascist militias. American blacks, First Peoples, Hispanics, Asians, gays, women seeking abortion and leftists will face ever more violent attacks.

Regardless of Trump's particular policies, the normal workings of the capitalist boom and bust cycles mean that in some four to twelve months there will be an economic downturn in the U.S.A and a consequent rise in the unemployment

rate. Given the chaotic state of major capitalist economies, this could turn out to be another serious global economic crisis. In that context, mass struggle led by conscious working class and anti-racist forces could weaken the right-wing regime and undermine support for it. However, in the absence of such struggle, the increased economic insecurity could further fuel the flames of fascism.

Trump's ascendancy will also embolden far-right and fascist forces here in Australia. Hard-right Liberal politician Cory Bernardi as well as the LNP MP George Christensen openly backed

Trump. And Trump's victory was hailed by the fascist senator Pauline Hanson of One Nation infamy. Indeed, at a fascist rally in the northern Melbourne suburb of Eltham last weekend against a refugee centre, some of the fascist scum were wearing Trump T-shirts.

Trump's rise will not only boost organised far-right forces but will also incite violent tendencies amongst garden-variety rednecks in Australia. The latter are people who may not be politically active in an extreme right-wing movement but are, nevertheless, simply filled with racial hatred. A couple of months ago, one such redneck murdered



On October 28, Indian-born Brisbane bus driver Manmeet Alisher (Bottom Left) was murdered by Anthony O'Donohue (Top Centre). The killer boarded the bus (Top Left) and heinously set the driver alight in what was manifestly a racist attack. The attack by the white terrorist also caused the bus to burn down, threatening the lives of many passengers when the bus was stopped in the multiracial suburb of Morooka. O'Donohue was known to hold fascist views - including anti-union conspiracy theories. The election of hard right wing racist, Donald Trump, to the U.S. presidency and the ensuing emboldening of far right Australian politicians like Pauline Hanson (Top Right - posing for a photo with notorious Sydney Nazi, Ross "Skull" May) will incite further white supremacist terror. Mass mobilisations of trade unionists and all the intended victims of the fascists must drive violent racist filth off the streets - such as happened in Brisbane on 2 May 2014 (Bottom Right). On that day a large contingent of unionised construction workers joined together with anarchists, Trotskyist Platform supporters and other leftists and anti-racists to shut down an attempted march by the fascist Australia First Party.

14-year-old Aboriginal youth, Elijah Doughty, near the Western Australia town of Kalgoorlie. Then late last month, Indian-origin bus driver, Manmeet Alisher was cruelly murdered by being set alight with a fire bomb by a man of white Anglo-Saxon appearance, Anthony O'Donohue. O'Donohue, formerly an accountant, was known to harbour fascistic, crackpot conspiracy theories against trade unions. Although the media and cops have done their best to cover up the racist nature of this Brisbane murder the victim's family are sure that it was motivated by racism. Several people with origins from the Indian subcontinent have told Trotskyist Platform comrades the same thing. They pointed out that the Indian man was specifically singled out. One man of Indian background, in explaining how Manmeet's killing was a racist murder, told us that while living in the same multi-cultural Brisbane suburb where the murder took place, Moorooka, he had been attacked by racists and once had to literally run

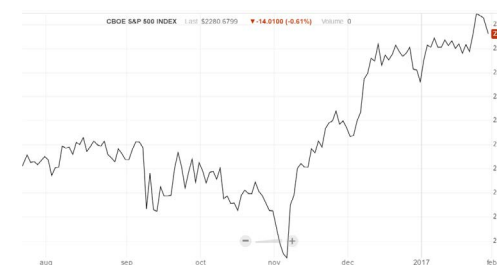
for his life to escape from a white racist who was threatening him.

All this underscores the need to build, here in Australia just as much as in other capitalist countries, a mass mobilisation of trade unionists, Aboriginal people, non-white "ethnic" people and all anti-racists to drive the fascist filth off the streets. This is an urgent necessity of self-defence for all the intended victims of the fascists. Although self-defence action against fascist groups will not directly stop the daily and incessant racist attacks and abuse from the innumerable garden-variety rednecks scattered throughout this country, by landing blows against organised fascists we can send a message to the garden-variety racists out there that they had better pull their heads in. These racists must learn that the organised and united multiracial working class has both the will and the power to stand up and defend anyone who is vulnerable to their racist, cowardly attacks.

San Francisco International Airport, 28 January 2017: One of many massive protests that erupted at U.S. airports and other locations to protest against Donald Trump's fascist-like order banning entry of all citizens (and it seems most dual citizens) of seven majority Muslim countries. The executive order includes an indefinite ban on the entry of all Syrian refugees.



Trump's administration is largely a collection of capitalist billionaires and retired officers from the U.S. imperialist military. Trump chose for Secretary of State the then Chairman and largest individual shareholder of oil giant ExxonMobil, Rex Tillerson (Top Left). Although many political and media representatives of the capitalist class find Trump's extreme right-wing policies too crude at this time and thus too destabilising and damaging to American soft power, most of the actual capitalists themselves are enthusiastic about Trump. President and CEO of Ford, Mark Fields (Top Right) hailed Trump's economic policies which include a planned halving of the corporate tax rate! Trump's election win, after a very brief dip, saw a massive surge in the Wall Street stock market (Bottom Left). Australia's richest tycoon, Gina Rinehart (Bottom Right), is also an ardent fan of Trump.



No to Divisive Protectionism: For a Class Struggle Program of Jobs For All!

Trump's victory will also encourage various forces here to more rabidly push for protectionism. In fact, economic nationalism was one of Trump's main points of attraction for the U.S. masses, especially in the Mid-West rust belt. To be sure, when the media reports that working class people in the Mid-West were supporting Trump this can be a bit misleading since, in actual fact, Trump still did not do that well in cities. What they mean by "working class" is people with a lower income rather than in terms of their actual relationship to the means of production. Trump's support came not so much from currently employed industrial workers as it did from laid-off workers now trying to hustle a living as self-employed contractors or small businessmen or those now in insecure, non-union casual jobs or, perhaps, still unemployed or forced into early retirement. Unionised workers who are brought together at the point of production and united together in unions are, overall, less susceptible to right-wing demagoguery than isolated self-employed and unemployed people. And, though it is true that even a portion of unionised workers did vote for Trump, analysis of exit polls actually revealed that the higher the income, the more likely you were to vote for Trump.

We need to firmly oppose economic nationalism here not only because it fuels racism but also because it directly undermines the fight to build actual struggle against the greedy bosses at home. However, we can only successfully oppose protectionism if we counterpose to it a class struggle program of jobs for all - that is, by highlighting the demand that profitable enterprises be forced to increase hiring at the cost of their own profits and then linking this demand to the fight for the ultimate confiscation of the means of production from the capitalist class by the working class. Trotskyist Platform has

been emphasising opposition against any form of protectionism and promoting a class struggle program of jobs for all but we will intensify this work by fighting to build more actions promoting this essential perspective.

Unfortunately, much of the Left either themselves embrace economic nationalism - while trying to rid it of its openly racist aspects - or just try their best to ignore it. However, any leftist force that capitulates to economic nationalism is an obstacle to the fight for workers' rights whether it happens to call itself socialist, Trotskyist, Marxist-

Leninist, anarchist or any other kind of *ist*. The protectionist ideology of the pro-Democrats, American union bureaucracy has pushed a section of American unionised workers – and many laid off industrial workers – into the arms of far-right populism. The economic nationalist slogans of the current, pro-ALP Australian union leadership should also not be allowed to push

Australian workers into the filthy arms of Hanson's One Nation and its ilk who, after all, are the most consistent nationalists of all. Challenging the economic nationalist ideology that is currently dominant in the Australian workers movement is key to unleashing a class struggle fightback to defend our unions, protect workers rights and win jobs for everyone.

Implications for the Leninist Program on International Questions

On international policy, Trump has not disguised the fact that he is going to push an even more openly hostile stance towards socialistic China. He wants to draw capitalist Russia into this task by building an alliance with Russia that would bring the world's two most powerful military powers into a *capitalist super alliance*. Part of the aim of this perspective is also to weaken the U.S.A's European NATO allies cum imperialist economic rivals. Additionally, there is ideological affinity between the hard right wing in the U.S. and the Putin government. Putin, as well as being a hero to right-wing, "Third Way" (i.e. "neither socialism nor capitalism") conspiracy theory types is also a hero to fascist groups throughout the West (the Australian Defence League here, for example, has openly hailed him) as well as to more mainstream right-wing forces (like racist, Islamophobic senator Jacqui Lambi: see, for example: <https://sputniknews.com/interviews/201411131014711108/>) because of his government's hard line anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim policies as well as his homophobia.

However, whether Trump and the Far Right's proclivities for an alliance with Russia will be implemented remains to be seen. Trump's regime will be, in effect, an alliance of hard line right wingers like himself and more mainstream figures from the right wing of the Republican Party. The latter are less inclined to an alliance with Russia as they believe the U.S. is strong enough not to share its spoils with any emerging power and do not want to allow a new player into the imperialist club. Furthermore, Putin himself would probably play hard to get with Trump since he knows the U.S. is a weakening empire. He would also not want Russia to play second fiddle to the U.S. too much and would hold out for as many concessions as possible. Furthermore, the Russian bourgeoisie may be hesitant to be pulled in too brazenly into an anti-China alliance since, despite their hostility to socialism (the Russian government from Putin down were, after all, active in the counterrevolution that destroyed the USSR and brought capitalist class rule back to Russia) they stand to make a fortune from selling oil and natural gas to neighbouring China which has few of these resources itself.

Nevertheless, a U.S.-Russia capitalist super alliance is certainly quite possible and if it does transpire this may affect the position that communist internationalists should take towards events in Syria. Whatever effect a Trump presidency has on U.S.-Russia relations, one thing is pretty certain: the Trump ascendancy will see an intensification of open U.S. hostility to the Chinese workers state. So, despite the bureaucratic deformations and capitalist incursions into China - and we must remember that nearly 60% of her economy is controlled and nearly all of her economy's commanding heights (that is, the heavy industries, finance, transport, telecommunications etc) are fully owned by the Chinese workers state, a bigger slice of the economic pie than that enjoyed by the Soviet Russian state during Lenin's time - **authentic socialists need to be ready to intensify our struggle to defend socialistic China against imperialist attack and imperialist-backed, anti-communist NGOs.**

We live in scary times. The ascendancy of Trump to the U.S. presidency will – in the absence of mass resistance – incite in both the U.S.A and Australia

a further escalation of racist attacks on coloured ethnic minorities, Muslims and First Peoples communities. However, we should be aware that the rising of fascistic forces is a sign of the utter decay of capitalism which in its death throes is releasing such noxious fumes. But the system will not die by itself. It needs to be overthrown by the conscious working class-led masses united with all of the oppressed. It is our job to advance the struggle for such a socialist revolution. This is a time when every major capitalist country is seeing the rise of sinister far-right forces: from the U.S.A to Australia to most of Europe to Russia and the Ukraine. In Indonesia a violent racist movement has erupted and targeted the governor of Jakarta purely for his being a member of an ethnic and religious minority. In India a sinister fascistic mass murderer is the prime minister. In fact, the one great socialistic power in the world, Red China, looks rather good by comparison. It is the one large nation where far-right racist forces based on the majority ethnic community are not on the march.

Why, in Australia, must the flower of Aboriginal youth fall victim to murderous, racist rednecks or become prey for a relentlessly systematic kind of brutal "justice" that continues to send young Aboriginal men and women to languish in jail cells or detention centres for years on end or worse? They are victims of the essentially *immoral* 200 year-old Australian capitalist racket. As are the brave children, women and men who have been held hostage in the Nauru, Manus Island and Christmas Island hellholes. Can anyone seriously argue that if these asylum seekers came from, say, England or Denmark instead of mainly from the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East that they would be treated in the same heartless manner? In fact, the Australian capitalist state's border control policy provides tacit official sanction to every act of racist violence and xenophobia perpetrated out there on the streets of Australia.

A mighty, radical shift is needed. Any deluded notion of a middle ground that social democrats might be clinging onto is fast falling away beneath

their feet and the pieces being greedily gobbled up by the awaiting, wide open fascistic jaws of your Donald Trumps and Pauline Hansons. Now is not the time for sitting on fences. The fence has already collapsed under the combined weight of too many fat, middle class rumps. Increasingly, humanity is faced with a choice between *fascism* and *communism*. Behind *fascism* stands the capitalist, property-rich ruling class which is willing to unleash its nazi dogs as a last resort to protect its ill gotten gains and its global control of immense human and industrial resources. Behind the prospect of *communism* stands the organised, international working class which is willing and able to seize control of the world's business from the tiny minority of capitalist owners in the name of all the people and then commence work towards a collective, humane and socialistic organisation of society. A handful of countries have already - bravely and with sometimes seemingly intolerable sacrifice - embarked on the road to a communist future despite the perpetual harrassment and often bloody resistance put up by the imperialist powers. We workers of Australia must offer our sincere respect, our immense gratitude and, most of all, a comradely - critical if necessary but always helping - hand to these frontier *workers states* because our futures are inextricably linked. Let's work hard to advance the struggle for communism here too! **Let's promote a class struggle fight for jobs for all workers! Let's fight to unite the working class masses right around the world by uncompromisingly standing against both racism and economic nationalism!** You'd have to be blind now not to see capitalist democracy for what it really is - a filthy, rich man's game. But the riches of the world have always really belonged to the working *many* and not to the exploiting *few*. The exploiters can choke on the racism, hatred and division they sow. The fruit of our labour is of a different sort altogether. Already the workers of the world have begun to unite in order to form a community of kindness which can embrace *all* of our *common* humanity without exception. *From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs.* Friends, the time to mobilise and to strike back is now.

*Expand the Union Action in Defence of Public Housing in Sirius:
Fight for a Massive Increase in Public Housing throughout the Country!*

Still a Chance to Prevent the Destruction of Public Housing in Millers Point and The Rocks

18 November 2016: Over the last two and a half years, officials of the conservative NSW state government have bullied and cajoled public housing tenants in the Sydney CBD's Millers Point, Dawes Point and Rocks areas to vacate their homes and move to other locations. The Liberal-National government has already sold off many of these sites in auctions to private buyers. Many of the sites are being snapped up by capitalist developers planning to knock down the homes and build luxury dwellings in their place or to wealthy individuals seeking investment properties. The government's argument is that selling off this public housing on prime land will provide the funds to enable them to build more public housing elsewhere. This is rubbish! The truth is that governments of all stripes – whether the Liberal-Nationals, the ALP or defacto ALP-Greens coalitions – at both federal and state level have been slashing public housing throughout the country over the last 15 years. Meanwhile, when residents are re-located from these city areas to other public housing dwellings, they are moved into homes that could have been allocated to some of the 60,000 families on NSW social housing waiting lists – not to mention the hundreds of thousands of others who actually need public housing. The truth is that the sell-off of public housing in the CBD is part of the government's agenda to cut back public housing throughout the state and drive lower-income people from the city.

The NSW Liberal government's agenda became even clearer at the start of this year when they announced their "social housing" scheme. This plan does **not** involve the building of additional public housing. Instead, over 1.1 billion dollars will be given to the private sector as subsidies to encourage them to deliver "social housing." But **this will not be the same as public housing.** The private firms, since they are profit-driven, will prejudice against the most disadvantaged potential tenants since they are the least likely to be able to keep up with rents. The private operators will also be even more ruthless than the public housing authorities in refusing repairs and evicting tenants. Even when "social housing" is placed into the hands of "not for profit" private groups and operated as "community housing," it will still be, in good part, operated in the way that profit-obsessed corporations would operate them since these operators are meant to "break even." But social housing is not meant to be about "breaking even" – it should be about securing the right to

housing for lower income people. Furthermore, some of these "not-for-profit" operators are churches which means they will have an inherent bias against prospective tenants who are either non-Christian or who do not lead what they deem to be "a Christian lifestyle" – for example, people from the LGBTI community, single mothers and unwed older women. These groups are already some of the most discriminated against groups in society. What's more, in the NSW government's plans, a large part of the public funds will now end up going as profit into the pockets of wealthy capitalist developers – funds that could have been used to build or acquire additional social housing dwellings.

The most harmful part of the NSW government's plan announced in January 2016 is that 35% of public housing stock will be transferred to privately-run "community housing" operators over 10 years. The transfer of public housing into "community housing" is a big step towards the outright privatisation of public housing. Make



Sydney, 17 September 2016: Over 1,500 people including members of the CFMEU and MUA trade unions marched through Sydney's Rocks area against the NSW government's plans to demolish the inner city Sirius public housing block.

no mistake about it: the government's agenda is to privatise public housing. **Their sell-off of public housing in the Waterloo, Millers Point, Rocks and Dawes Point areas is not about financing new public housing at all – it is part of an agenda to privatise public housing!**

Although most tenants in Millers Points and the Rocks' Sirius Building have already been pressured into re-locating, a hardcore of tenants are courageously staying put. Their stand is crucial because some developers are intent on putting up large scale, high-end commercial projects and that requires them to clear most of the space currently occupied by public housing dwellings. Thus, even a few tenants being able to hold out can stifle the plans of some of the greedy developers and their henchmen in government.

Through determined action there is still time to reverse the removal of public housing tenants from the Millers Point and Rocks public housing areas. We need to mobilise to literally stand by the side of those tenants resisting relocation as they face down further attempts to bully them into

submission. **When Department of Family and Community Services or Housing NSW officials arrange a visit to a dwelling to arm twist a tenant into relocating, trade unionists and other public housing activists should happen to be there visiting the tenant in large numbers at the time of the appointment. We can then throw the state's intimidation back in their faces.**

There is especially plenty of support for the struggle to keep the Sirius Building in the Rocks area for public housing. The Liberal government wants to evict all the tenants from Sirius to sell off the building to developers who will demolish the building in order to turn the space into luxury private apartments for the wealthy. Two months ago, over 1,500 people marched through the Rocks against the NSW government's plans to sell off Sirius. Some of the speakers at the demonstration, including representatives of the MUA and CFMEU unions, rightly skewered the government's plans as a "social cleansing" attempt to drive low income people out of the city and make it an exclusive preserve for the wealthy. Most

importantly, coinciding with the protest rally, the CFMEU construction workers union and Unions NSW imposed a ban on any union members being involved in the state government's plan to knock down the Sirius public housing building. Should any demolition work be attempted, unions could establish a picket line to block it. This struggle has the force of history behind it. The Sirius building was constructed in the 1970s to allow working class people in the city displaced by major construction to be able to continue to live in the area. It came as an indirect result of "Green Bans" imposed by the militant Builders Labourers Federation trade union, in part, to stop those demolitions and development that hurt working class people.

The ban imposed by the CFMEU and Unions NSW is a powerful boost to the campaign to stop the sell-off of public housing in the CBD. However, a weakness of the "Green Ban" put on the Sirius Building was the way it was motivated. In part, it was motivated absolutely correctly by unions. As CFMEU president, Rita Malia, explained:

The removal of residents from Millers Point to make way for the city's elite shows us what will happen if Sirius falls.

The top end of town will move in and working people will be moved out, putting multibillion-dollar projects ahead of green spaces and affordable housing. We can't let that happen.

However, the laudable union action was not explicitly motivated as part of a campaign to increase the amount of public housing more generally - i.e. statewide and nationwide. If our unions did take a militant pro-working class line and proudly declared that their Sirius ban not only aims to save public housing in the CBD but is part of a struggle to win a massive increase in public housing everywhere and to defend all the services that working class people need the most, their action would win excited support from other public housing tenants facing eviction, from the hundreds of thousands of people on the social housing waiting list, from the millions more in dire need of low-rent housing and from other working class people who are concerned

about the lack of resources for public health care, public education and publicly provided childcare. This would also build additional, reliable support for the CFMEU amongst working class people which is so crucial at a time when the ruling class and its government are set to unleash a head-on assault on the union. However, pro-ALP union officials hope, instead, to make the Sirius campaign more powerful by uniting with Labor and Greens politicians and Sydney Lord Mayor, Clover Moore. Labor and Greens politicians do want some proportion of working class people to be able to live in the city but do not necessarily in the least support a massive increase in public housing – **indeed, the ALP and Greens oversaw a slashing of public housing when they were last in office together federally as well as when the ALP last administered NSW.** Their outlook is largely shared by Clover Moore – notorious from a working class standpoint for her opposition to the 1991 NSW General Strike when she was in the state legislature and for her support for police repression against the 2011 anti-corporate Occupy Sydney protests. The base of support for Moore, who participated in the September protest against the sell-off of Sirius, are small-l liberal, upper middle class elements who find that having some amount of working class people (but really not too much or else their property prices may fall) residing in the city makes the Sydney CBD "quaint" and "vibrant." To appeal to such elements and to architects and town planners, union leaders in part motivated the ban on work on the Sirius site as a "Green Ban" aimed at protecting the building's historic "Brutalist" architecture style and its heritage value.

Now it is all well and good for architects and other upper middle-class elements to support the campaign but the problem is that by our side not explicitly locating the ban as part of a struggle to increase the amount of public housing more generally and by diluting the pro-working class content of the campaign with issues about architectural styles and the like, it allowed the Liberal government to posture, albeit shamelessly, as the defenders of social housing.

Thus, the Liberal government is claiming that while it is interested in providing affordable housing for low-income people - and selling Sirius is, they say, part of a plan to build much more public housing places elsewhere - the opponents of the sell-off are more interested in architecture and heritage. This is, of course, the height of cynicism. This Liberal government has been, from Wollongong to Waterloo, selling off public housing left, right and centre. That is part of their anti-working class, privatisation agenda. Furthermore, **the resources for public housing should not have to come from selling off other public housing.** After all, when the government wants to put resources into things it is committed to, like the police - who the ruling class needs to enforce its dominance over the working class - they don't get it by selling off other assets in that sector. No, they take it from consolidated revenue! Public housing, as an essential need for the working class, should be funded out of consolidated government revenue which, in its turn, ought to be boosted by grabbing bundles of the exorbitant wealth that business tycoons rake in from exploiting workers. Nevertheless, despite the despicable dishonesty of the NSW government, the fact remains that because the

campaign to save Sirius has (in deference to ALP and Greens politicians) avoided branding the movement as part of a struggle to increase public housing statewide and nationwide and because it has played up the architecture, heritage and city "vibrancy" aspects of the issue (in deference to the Greens and Clover Moore and her liberal, upper middle class base), the Liberal government has been able to thus far isolate the campaign from the many people seeking public housing statewide and from public housing tenants elsewhere facing forced relocation. We need to turn this around! It is working class people who will be the decisive and reliable support in the struggle for public housing not upper-middle class liberals and flaky, "progressive," pro-capitalist politicians - who time and again have proved that when they have to choose between defending social services that working class people need and maintaining support from the capitalist big end of town they end up choosing the latter. **Let's unashamedly announce to all that the brave struggle to stop the sell-off of Sirius and of Millers Point public housing is a pro-working class campaign that is part of the fight to win a massive increase in public housing everywhere.**

A home in the Millers Point public housing area with a protest sign. Although the NSW government has been able to intimidate most public housing tenants in Millers Point to leave, a determined hard core are refusing to leave, giving hope that the "social cleansing" of the area can be reversed.



This Struggle Can Still Be Won - Now is Not the Time for Despair!

With the government relentless in its drive to clear out public housing from Millers Point, Dawes Point and the Rocks and with many tenants having already been arm twisted to move, some involved in the struggle are feeling resigned to defeat. Yesterday, the Save Our Sirius (SOS) coalition issued a press release proposing a compromise deal with the state government. Under the proposed arrangement, the building will be kept but the government will still be able to raise the money it said it needed for social housing elsewhere by selling 50 of the apartments to wealthy buyers and keeping just 29 for public housing. The Save Our Sirius group includes some of the tenants from Millers Point and Sirius who have been at the forefront of the proud struggle to stop the sell-offs as well as union leaders but is led by architects and dominated by ALP, Greens and mainstream independent politicians. One big problem with the proposal that SOS has put forward is that it accepts the government's very false notions that it is selling the public housing in the area in order to fund social housing elsewhere and that the resources for social housing should come from such sell-offs rather than the overall budget. Now it is true that sometimes when our side is not strong enough we have to accept a compromise deal in a clash with the other side. However, we should not be the ones ceding positions before the struggle is over and we should definitely not be accepting the false arguments of the capitalist government as good coin. It appears that the compromise deal has been shaped by the proclivities of architects - some of whom are genuinely sympathetic to public housing but many of whom nevertheless place a higher priority on preserving Sirius' architectural style than on defending public housing - and by mainstream politicians who, while opposed to a total sell-off of public housing in the CBD, have far from a firm commitment to increasing public housing. Indeed, in their reply to the NSW government's budget last year, the ALP Opposition announced a plan to transfer all of NSW's public housing to private, "community housing" operators (http://lukefoley.nationbuilder.com/labor_budget_reply_labor_vision_for_affordable_housing). **That's three times more extreme than the privatisation that Liberals are undertaking!**

It is especially wrong to make a concession to the government on Sirius - that would see nearly two-thirds of all public housing spots in the building gone - when the union bans on any work in the building are still in place. These union bans, if enforced and backed up by mass picket lines to stop any work by non-union labour at the site, are a game changer. If the CFMEU and Unions NSW leadership stick to their commitments and enforce the ban and mooted picket line - and pro-working class supporters of public housing and rank and file union members should be organised to agitate to ensure that this happens - then the state government is on the back foot. Now is definitely not the time to be ceding positions to them.

Furthermore, the struggle to defend public housing in the Sydney CBD area unexpectedly received a major boost from an international factor last month. This is connected with the six-

star hotel and high-roller casino that billionaire James Packer's Crown Group is establishing in the area. The complex will be located not more than, literally, two stone-throws away from the public housing being knocked down in Millers Point. Several of the Millers Point tenants who have spearheaded the struggle to defend public housing believe that Packer's casino/luxury hotel is part of what is driving the government's relentless campaign to boot out public housing residents from Millers Point. This sounds more than plausible. Packer would, no doubt, like the current Miller's Point public housing area to be turned into luxury dwellings that can be used by his casino patrons looking for longer-stay, nearby accommodation outside the hotel and for his executives overseeing the casino/hotel complex. Furthermore, even if a re-developed Millers Point site ends up not being directly used, in its majority, by patrons and executives of Crown's Barangaroo



Sydney, 2016: From 60 to 100 people are forced to sleep rough at Belmore Park opposite Sydney's Central Station. The slashing of public housing by federal and state Liberal-National, ALP and ALP-Greens governments alike has driven more and more people into homelessness.

complex, its planned presence is nevertheless driving wealthy speculators yearning to grab hold of this land. However, last month all of this was put in doubt when the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) detained 18 executives of Packer's Crown empire for breaking PRC law. The rich executives are suspected of illegally organizing tours and money transfers for high rollers from China to gamble in Crown's overseas casinos - including, naturally, Australian ones. Gambling is banned in mainland China and PRC authorities are especially keen to stop local rich individuals from being enticed to gamble abroad. They understand that depositing money in overseas casino accounts becomes a means for the wealthy to circumvent the socialistic PRC's strict capital controls and allows corrupt officials and businessmen to launder money abroad. Among the high-flying Crown executives that the PRC has arrested are at least three Australian ones including Crown's boss of VIP operations, Jason O'Connor. James Packer has expressed "deep concern" for his arrested executives. However, what Packer is most worried about is that the PRC crackdown threatens to hit his Barangaroo business model for six. You see, although the proportion of high rollers in China is not especially high - indeed their proportion is tiny - China has such a huge population (60 times that of Australia) that these high rollers are numerically still a big number. Furthermore, since gambling is banned in mainland China and PRC authorities have been cracking down on wealthy mainlanders travelling to Macao to gamble,

Packer was counting on luring Chinese high rollers to Barangaroo as a significant component of the revenue source for his casino. The PRC government's repression of his illegal attempts to do this is widely believed to threaten the economic viability of his whole Barangaroo plan. Indeed following the PRC's arrests, a whole one billion dollars was magnificently belted off the value of Crown shares. As the headline of an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (18 October 2016) put it: "James Packer's Barangaroo could be the world's tallest white elephant." And if that did occur that would only be good news for the struggle to save public housing in Millers Point and the Sydney CBD more generally. For if part of the economic forces that are driving the government's sell-off of Millers Point public housing are stopped, then the government will be less unwilling to back down if faced with significant opposition from our side.

Buoyed by Red China's crackdown on Crown's greed and knowing that we have the power of a union ban backing us, working class supporters of public housing must energetically support the struggle to defend public housing in the Millers Point, Dawes Point and Rocks area. We also need to reorient the campaign onto a path that places all our trust in the united power of working class people and our allies and does not, at all, rely on Labor and Greens politicians or subordinate ourselves to the agenda of upper-middle class elements and the small-l liberal politicians that serve them. That means we must do the following:

- Push for the CFMEU and Unions NSW to repeatedly restate in public their union ban on any work to demolish the Sirius site. This will make sure that the government, developers and wealthy property investors get the message. It will also give our side confidence that our union leaders will not back down from the ban. Our union leaders must also announce unambiguously that should any contractor try to do work on the site with non-union labour they *will* be stopped by a mass union picket line.
- Call for the union ban and promised picket on the Sirius site to be extended to include the stopping of any demolition of public housing at Millers Point and any re-development of sold-off public housing sites.
- Support the PRC's crackdown on Packer's high flying executives. We should say: China is cracking down on corporate greed – it's about time that it starts to happen here too!
- Stand by those brave tenants still refusing to relocate! Organise delegations of trade unionists and other public housing activists to happen to be present when government officials make a scheduled visit to a dwelling. Don't let these bureaucrats arm twist isolated tenants into relocating!
- Again organise protest pickets at auctions selling-off public housing dwellings as well as broader actions in defence of public housing.
- Insist that funding for public housing should come not from selling off other public housing assets but from the government's general budget. The latter should in turn be boosted by grabbing chunks off the fat profits of capitalist exploiters and property speculators.
- Clearly locate the inspirational struggle to defend public housing in the Millers, Dawes Point and Rocks area as part of the fight to stop the sell-off of public housing everywhere (from the coast around Wollongong to Waterloo to Glebe) and to demand a massive increase in public housing. Furthermore, clearly outline that the struggle for public housing is part of the fight to win all the services that working class people need the most – from properly funded public health care and public schools to free childcare to free TAFE and university education – and part of the broader struggle of the working class against the exploiting class. In this way we can win broader support for protest actions. And if a picket line is erected to stop the demolition of the Sirius site, public housing tenants from throughout Sydney and Wollongong, people on the social housing waiting list, nurses and other hospital workers, teachers and other supporters of working class interests will flock to join CFMEU members on the picket line.



Sydney, 26 August 2014: Millers Point tenants and their supporters rally against a sell-off of a Millers Point public housing dwelling at the private auction of the property. The photograph shows one of the Trotskyist Platform signs at the demonstration. There again needs to be organised protest pickets at auctions selling-off public housing dwellings and we need to fight for our trade unions to mobilise their power to support these actions.

Trotskyist Platform May Day (International Workers Day) Statement

We Need Militant Class Struggle to Smash All Anti-Union Laws & Win Secure Jobs for All Workers

Below are excerpts of the leaflet that Trotskyist Platform issued for the 1 May 2016 International Workers Day. We distributed the leaflet at May Day rallies and in working class suburbs. Some of the leaflet contents specifically dealing with the recent federal elections have been omitted to focus on the tasks required now. Since the leaflet was written, the union-busting drive of the capitalist rulers has intensified. Alongside their making already draconian laws targeting unions in the construction industry even more extreme through re-introducing the ABCC, the right-wing Turnbull government and the mainstream media have launched a propaganda campaign against the CFMEU construction workers union. This highlights the urgent need for determined class struggle to smash all anti-union laws – a key message of the leaflet.

1 May 2016 – Last month the building industry authority launched legal action in the Federal Court against the NSW Branch of the CFMEU construction workers' union and ten of its officials. Their supposed "crime": organising strike action, necessarily including action to stop scabbing, in order to force the reinstatement of a union delegate who was sacked by the bosses at Sydney's Barangaroo site. In launching the legal action, the Australian state's building industry authority

boasted that it now has 108 CFMEU officials before the courts! All these attacks on workers' rights are being unleashed via anti-worker laws introduced by the openly anti-union Abbott/Turnbull government, right? Well, actually no! This repression against the workers' movement is being conducted under the provisions of the Fair Work Act introduced by the Labor government in 2009. That act formally replaced John Howard's hated Workchoices but retained nearly all its

Melbourne: Construction workers and their supporters march against the atrocious safety conditions at building sites owned by Grocon. The Victorian Supreme Court fined the CFMEU construction workers union a massive \$1.25 million for its August-September 2012 struggle against Grocon. The court ruling followed civil litigation launched by the Fair Work Building and Construction authority – an anti-union body brought in by the Gillard ALP government. Now the Coalition have introduced the still more extreme ABCC authority to target CFMEU workers.





Greece, 6 May 2016: Greek workers march during a 48-hour general strike against pension cuts and other brutal austerity measures implemented by the “left-wing” Syriza government. The anti-working class policies executed by the supposedly “radical socialist” Syriza party prove that any party administering the capitalist state – no matter how ostensibly left-wing – will necessarily act against the interests of working class people.

draconian anti-strike provisions. Meanwhile, the construction sector’s industry “watchdog” that is today feverishly persecuting CFMEU and other union members is the body formed by the previous Labor government: the Fair Work Building and Construction (FWBC) authority. FWBC replaced the Liberals’ notorious ABCC. However, while a few of the most extreme powers of the ABCC were taken away, the FWBC retained the ABCC’s central purpose – to use prosecution to attack struggles for workers’ rights in the construction industry and to obstruct union officials from entering worksites. The FWBC has carried out its anti-worker mandate with crusading zeal, often invoking the star chamber powers that it retained from the ABCC to force trade unionists called before it to answer questions under threat of six months’ jail.

It is not simply that the existence of an openly anti-working class Liberal-National government has given the FWBC and the courts the impetus to attack staunch trade unionists. During the reign of the previous Labor government, authorities were also carrying out legal action against trade unions left, right and centre. In mid-2013, the Federal Court found the CFMEU guilty of contempt of court for its picket lines blockading Grollo construction sites during its August-September 2012 struggle against that company’s atrocious disregard of workers’ safety. It was this court ruling and the civil litigation launched by the FWBC – both enacted during the reign of the Gillard ALP government – that paved the way for

the Victorian Supreme Court fining the CFMEU a massive \$1.25 million the following year.

All this highlights the miserable “choice” that working class people face at the upcoming elections. On one side are the Liberals who would kick working class people in the stomach and then smirk at workers. Their rivals, the ALP, like to whisper sweet words in workers’ ears. But when the capitalists prod ALP leaders in the back signalling that “it’s time,” they will – like obedient little children – turf the toiling masses into the mud and then quickly – with false remorse and fluttering eyelashes all wet with crocodile tears – turn back to these same workers they only just betrayed and beg for forgiveness. This not a “choice” that we need to accept! There is another road! The road of militant industrial action and class struggle to not only stop the return of the Liberal’s ABCC but to smash the ALP’s own FWBC, to demand the repeal of all anti-strike laws and all restrictions on union access to workplaces and to fight to stop bosses retrenching workers. Such a fight must unite with the struggle of all of the downtrodden. It must unite with the struggle against the forced closure of remote Aboriginal communities and must mobilise mass action to defend Aboriginal people against racist police violence and mass incarceration. We must demand free, 24-hour childcare to open the road to women’s full participation in economic life, we must fight for a massive increase in public housing and we must smash all attacks on the poor like cashless welfare and compulsory “income management.”

Social Democracy Is a Dead End. For Militant Class Struggle to Win Gains Now and Prepare for The Future Revolution

There are a few differences between the parliamentary parties. The right wing conservatives launched the union-busting Royal Commission into the unions. The ALP did not support this but it has, treacherously, supported the ensuing legal proceedings against unionists for taking militant action to defend workers’ rights. This is hardly surprising! Victorian ALP leader, Daniel Andrews, hailed the persecution of the CFMEU over the 2012 Grocon dispute, branding the construction workers’ struggle as “appalling.” And, although it has been the Coalition that has plotted for a cut to Sunday penalty rates for workers, the ALP again betrayed working class people when Bill Shorten recently announced that a future ALP government would not try to reverse such a cut if the Fair Work commission ruled in favour of it. Indeed, because it accepts the capitalist system, the ALP shares the Coalition platform on key issues. Both parties are for draconian anti-strike laws, both accept the “right” of capitalists to retrench workers whenever that is necessary to maximise profits, both support the cruel incarceration of asylum seekers. Furthermore, both support the Australian capitalist rulers’ militarisation campaign. This build up is essentially aimed at supporting the international capitalist drive against China, a country which, despite dangerous capitalist inroads, remains a socialistic state dominated by socialistic state-owned enterprises – a huge gain for its people.

Belief in salvation through the ALP is a big part of what is disorienting the union movement right now. Even while they are sometimes personally persecuted by anti-strike laws, the current pro-ALP union leaders are resigned to largely playing by these bosses’ rules and looking to “progressive” parliamentarians for salvation. Accepting the straightjacket of these laws and of the pro-capitalist framework of the ALP, the current outlook dominating our unions is to recoil from the idea of industrial action to prevent bosses from retrenching workers. Instead, many of our unions hope to protect jobs by calling on bosses to favour “Aussie workers” in hiring instead of overseas workers and by proposing schemes to “save Australian jobs” by favouring Australian companies over their overseas rivals. Apart from harmfully pushing workers into an alliance with their own local exploiters, such schemes do not save jobs. As a workers’ movement in one country calls for local bosses to favour them over overseas producers, workers abroad also start demanding the same. In the end all that happens is that workers are divided and greedy capitalists everywhere are laughing all the way to their respective banks. Especially when we are facing ever more draconian attacks, workers’ unity is indispensable. We must be aware that

the capitalist rulers are seeking to divide our side by intensifying racist attacks against Aboriginal people and against Muslim and other coloured ethnic communities. That is why the workers’ movement must mobilise in defence of these embattled communities, must demand freedom for the refugees and must mobilise to decisively crush the violent far right racist groups.

Today is international workers’ day. Basing ourselves on its spirit doesn’t mean just repeating nice sounding platitudes about international workers’ unity on one day of the year only to then put out the call to favour Australian workers over overseas workers the rest of the year! Instead, it means standing as one with our overseas and guest worker sisters and brothers in a common fight for improved wages and jobs for all workers. The way to fight for jobs is to prevent companies from laying off workers and to fight to force wealthy capitalist bosses to increase hiring by accepting lower profits. Of course, they will not do this willingly. We will need to force them and their governments to accept such concessions through militant class struggle. That means we need a union movement that is prepared to build up forces to defy the anti-strike laws and unleash the full power of the united workers’ movement

in the face of the bosses, their governments and their anti-worker laws. The capitalists will scream like bloody murder that any loss of profits that results from being forced to hire more workers will inevitably lead to economic collapse. We must then be ready to reply that if you capitalists are incapable of stably running the economy in a way that provides jobs for all then we workers will take the running of our economy into our own hands by confiscating the industries, mines, banks and communication networks from you and putting it all into the collective hands of the people in a socialist economy under workers' state power.

This is actually the crux of the question – capitalism or socialism? In the end the current parliamentary parties are against the masses' interests not just because of their respective ideologies but because they all accept capitalist rule. The demands of the capitalist system simply require any party administering it to continually seek to increase the rate of profit sweated out of working class people. Look at what has happened in Greece. A radical left-talking, nominally socialist party, Syriza, was elected to government. Yet, once in office, it has proceeded to administer the brutal austerity demanded by the capitalists who still hold the reins of state and economic

power. Whether in Greece, Australia or any other capitalist country, any party no matter how much it pledges commitment to working class people must necessarily betray these same working class people if it assumes office in such a capitalist society. No matter who win elections they will be merely administering state institutions – courts, commissions, police, prisons and the military – that are tied to the wealthy capitalists by a thousand threads. That is why we should be aware, too, that any gains we make today through class struggle will not be secure as long as the capitalists retain state power. Yet the struggles of today are the indispensable preparation for the future revolutionary struggle for the working class seizure of state power. That is, providing today's struggles are waged in such a manner that they always teach our side to trust only our own united power and never any of the parties and state institutions of the capitalist exploiters. Today, that means fighting to convince the most class conscious workers to reject any electoral support for any of the current parliamentary parties and to, instead, organise militant mass struggles based on unity with all of the oppressed and genuine unity with our overseas working class sisters and brothers.

Workplace Safety Now Better in China Than in Australia Australian Rulers' Union Busting Drive against the CFMEU Union Threatens Construction Workers' Lives

22 November 2016: Remember the days when hardly a fortnight would go by without the Australian media reporting a major work accident in China that killed dozens of workers? To be sure, China is the world's most populous country – with about 60 times the population of Australia – so everything both bad and good necessarily happens on a huge scale. Furthermore, the mainstream Western media have always been looking for any means to paint a bad picture of the socialistic Peoples Republic of China (PRC). Nevertheless, it is true that China *did* have poor workplace safety. The country is industrialising and developing so fast that there *was* a period when the technological level and safety systems simply did not keep up – leading to dangerous workplace environments. Furthermore, the late 1980s, 1990s and first couple of years of this century was a period when China's private sector expanded in influence relative to the state-owned sector which, nevertheless, to this day still dominates the pillars of the PRC's economy. But it is in the private sector where workplace safety is at its worst including in the foreign-invested industries owned by Hong Kong, Taiwanese, American, Singaporean, Japanese and Australian bosses.

Thankfully, all this is becoming in significant part **old news**. Through a combination of nationalisation of formerly privately owned mines, the closure of smaller, unsafe private-sector mines, a 2008 pro-worker industrial relations law, increased government emphasis on workplace safety and spirited repression of greedy bosses responsible for workplace accidents, the Peoples Republic of China has dramatically reduced deaths from workplace accidents over the last 15 years. China's workplace safety issue is still serious and, as a gigantic country with often

The emotional torment resulting from the carnage of workers in Australia's construction industry. Left, opposite page, June 2014: Devastated family members of Michael Klanja, a 30 year-old father of two, who died when he was crushed by a toppled brick wall at a Melbourne construction site. His boss later plead guilty to failing to maintain a safe workplace. Below Right, 26 October 2016: Distressed co-workers of Ivica Andrijasevic who fell to his death in an accident at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre expansion project. The killed worker was known for his smiling face and his sense of humour.



large-size operations, when China does have work accidents they are often on a huge scale. Yet, the PRC's achievements in improving workplace safety are so dramatic and the failure of greedy Aussie bosses to provide a safe workplace here so harmful that **it is now safer to be a worker in China than it is to be one in Australia.**

So what are the hard facts on this comparison of workplace safety in Australia and the PRC. There are some complications in comparing statistics because each country lists workplace deaths in different ways. In particular, in China, a death in a traffic accident has long been listed as a 'workplace death.' The inclusion of traffic accidents in workplace accident statistics artificially inflates China's workplace accident figures – especially since China still has a long way to go in solving its traffic safety problems. Although there has been a recent change to classification methods in China that somewhat addresses this issue, the overall classification method used there is still quite different to that used in Australia because non-workers killed in transport accidents involving transport workers are still considered workplace fatalities. Thus, occupants in non-work related cars who die in a collision with a truck or tourist passengers on a bus or a boat/ship/ferry who die in an accident are categorised among workplace accident statistics. So, too, it seems do many transport deaths of workers travelling to and from work. China does, however, additionally collate figures for total deaths in mining, industrial and commercial enterprises in a way that makes it easier to compare with Australian figures. These show that in 2015 there were 1.07 deaths in China per 100,000 employees (*Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on the 2015 National Economic and Social Development*, http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/201602/t20160229_1324019.html). That is considerably less than the death rate in Australian workplaces which was 1.6 per 100,000 employees in 2014 (*Safe Work Australia, Table 2.3 – number and incidence rate of injury-related fatalities by industry [2010 to 2014]*, [http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/Statistics/Documents/Table-2-3-number-and-incidence-rate-of-injury-related-fatalities-](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/Statistics/Documents/Table-2-3-number-and-incidence-rate-of-injury-related-fatalities-by-industry-2010-2014.pdf)

[by-industry-2010-2014.pdf](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/Statistics/Documents/Table-2-3-number-and-incidence-rate-of-injury-related-fatalities-by-industry-2010-2014.pdf)) which at the time of writing was the latest year at which these statistics were collated for Australia. Since the Chinese figures appear to exclude deaths in the public administration sector and in most agricultural and fishing industries, we should exclude deaths in these sectors (and the total number of workers in these sectors) from the Australian figures to ensure that they form an equivalent comparison to the Chinese statistics. This drops the death rate at Australian workplaces to 1.29 per 100,000 employees (there was a high rate of deaths in the agricultural and fishery industry and, thus, excluding this industry from the figures brings down Australia's average death rate in workplaces). However, that is still significantly higher than the comparable figure in China. Put in plain terms: **when an average worker in Australia goes to work in a mining, industrial or commercial enterprise and an average worker in China does the same, the worker in Australia is 21% more likely to get killed in a work accident that day than the worker in China.** In future it will be harder to make such comparisons between workplace safety in Australia and China due to new differences in statistical methods. Starting from 2016, the calculated death rate for work accidents in industrial, mining and commercial enterprises calculated in China will exclude workers employed in non-production areas in these sectors (like, say, clerical support staff and other office staff). This is unlike the figures reported in Australia where death rates per 100,000 employees include these staff. Since the death rate amongst these latter type of workers is much lower than production and maintenance workers, the new statistical method in China will in future tend to over-report their workplace death rate relative to the method used in Australia.

Due to the scale of enterprises in China, China's biggest workplace accidents still tend to kill many more people than the biggest accidents in Australia. However, Australia has, proportionate to its workforce, so many more, smaller fatal workplace accidents than China does that overall it is now more dangerous to be a worker in Australia than in China.

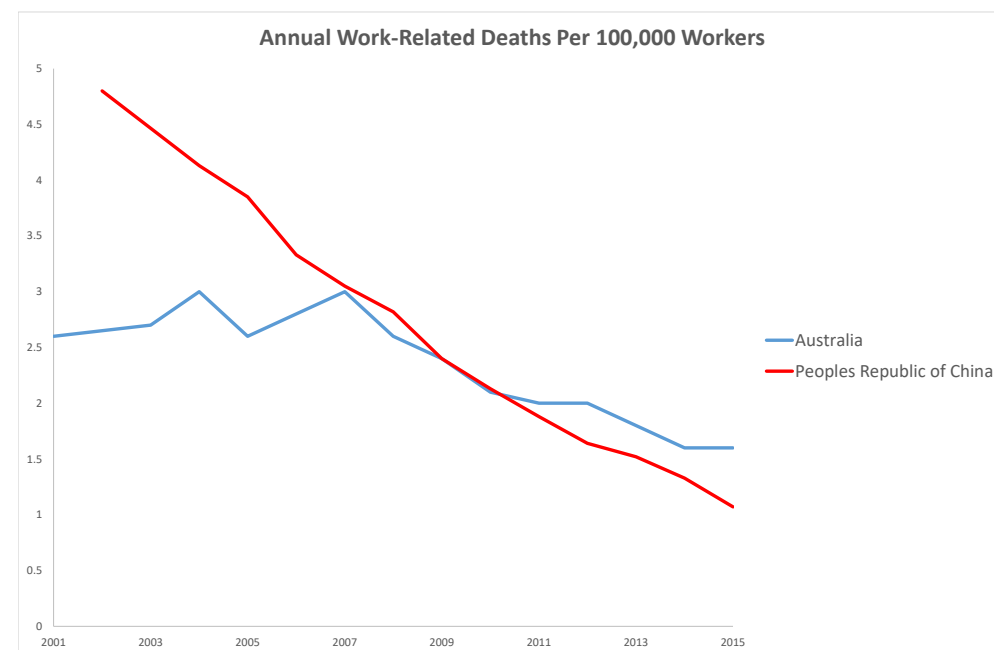
Bottom opposite page: Despite technological improvements that improve workplace safety and despite the shift in employment in Australia from heavy industry and manufacturing to less hazardous jobs in the service and IT/digital sectors, reduction in workplace deaths have been relatively modest here. In contrast, socialistic China has dramatically improved workplace safety over the last fifteen years.

Capitalist Rule in Australia Endangers Workers Lives

The rate of workplace deaths in both Australia and China are too high. No worker should ever be killed in a workplace accident! Nevertheless, the fact that the death rate for workers in China is now lower than that in Australia is remarkable for several reasons. For one, per person Australia is by several times still a richer country than China which has much fewer resources per person than Australia and is still pulling itself up from its pre-1949 capitalist days when it was a brutally exploited neo-colony of Western and Japanese imperial powers. As a much richer country, Australia is thus theoretically able to offer higher technology systems and safety devices to ensure worker safety. Secondly, China has a greater proportion of its workforce employed in more dangerous industries – like heavy industry, construction and mining – than Australia. Thus, the Australian economy is dominated by the service sector with just 32% of its GDP coming from the more dangerous (for workers) primary and secondary industries. By contrast, nearly 50% of China's GDP comes from her primary and secondary industries.

So why, then, are workers still more likely to die on the job in Australia than in China? The answer lies in the fact that in Australia the economy is owned and controlled by a class of wealthy capitalists who operate enterprises solely according to what makes them the most profit. As much as they can get away with it, these greedy bosses will compromise safety in order to increase profits – for example, by refusing to purchase safety or protective equipment or by ordering/pressuring workers to skip safe work procedures in order to minimise employee numbers or increase output per employee. Furthermore, in the capitalist system which we live under in Australia, workers

are in constant fear of being sacked by bosses and this lets bosses put undue pressure on workers to speed up production. Any worker who has worked in the industrial, transportation/warehousing or construction sectors knows that it is when one is rushed or tired that accidents are most likely to occur. Meanwhile, capitalist bosses dismiss safety concerns raised by workers knowing that workers' fear of being sacked by them is often sufficient enough to force workers into hesitating in pursuing their concerns. Thus, for example, when a worker was killed in mid-2013 as part of a series of accidents at Fortescue Metals Group's Christmas Creek Mine that saw two workers killed



and several injured in the space of a few months, Electrical Trade Union leader Les McLaughlan explained how workers on the site had flagged safety concerns to their bosses long before the death but were ignored (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-01-17/fortescue-metals-group-pilbara-mine-deaths,-mother-wants-answers/5205758>):

Safety concerns were regularly getting raised and nothing was happening about it ...

If someone persisted they were seen as being a stirrer, there was this clear perception that if you speak up too many times you get a window seat, by a window seat I mean you get laid off. You get put on the plane and you don't come back.

ABC News website, 18 January 2014

In capitalist Australia, the one means that workers have to defend their lives at work is through organising collectively – principally through building trade unions – to demand of their bosses decent safety equipment and work procedures and to put a stop to dangerous demands by the bosses for reckless speed ups in production. It is through union struggle – especially in the form of industrial action or threatened action – that workers here have been able to win certain work practices and mandatory safety regulations that have reduced workplace fatalities from what they would otherwise have been. However, our unions have been under concerted attack for over three decades and this has led to the rate of union membership falling. As a result, even as technological advances and the growing importance of the less dangerous tertiary sector should rapidly drive down the number of workplace fatalities, the number of workplace fatalities in Australia has barely declined in recent years.

The escalation of Australian ruling class attacks on our unions now threatens to make Australian workplaces even more unsafe. Former Liberal prime minister John Howard's *Workchoices* industrial relations laws – the bulk of which were retained by the subsequent Rudd/Gillard/Rudd ALP government's *Fair Work Act* – restricted union right of entry to workplaces and workers'

right to strike. This weakens the main means that workers have to not only fight for their wages and conditions but to protect workplace safety and hence their very lives. Again aping the former Howard regime, the former Labor government brought in the Fair Work Building and Construction (FWBC) authority to especially attack unions in the construction industry – particularly the CFMEU. Now Turnbull's right-wing Liberal-National Coalition want to go further and introduce a still more draconian ABCC (Australian Building and Construction Commission) – replicating the full extent of the anti-CFMEU body that the former Howard government had put in place.

The reintroduction of the ABCC (or the retention of the barely less severe FWBC) and the maintenance of the Fair Work Act will cause more deaths of workers in the construction industry. Already the construction industry is a very dangerous one. In the first three weeks of last month alone, five workers were killed on Australian construction sites. In one heartbreaking incident, 34 year-old father of two, Ashley Morris, and his 55 year-old workmate were crushed to death when two 9-tonne concrete slabs fell down in a pit they were standing in (ABC News Site, 10 October 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-08/workers-walked-off-job-before-eagle-farm-construction-deaths/7915804>). The fatal accident occurred at a Brisbane construction site run by the Australian-owned company, Criscon.

It is not only governments that stand in the way of union organising – and, thus, workplace safety – in Australia. The police and courts have been up to their necks in the persecution of dozens upon dozens of union officials and union activists – especially from the CFMEU – for the “crime” of defending workers' rights. Yet how many greedy capitalist bosses have been prosecuted for their culpability in the deaths of workers in workplace accidents? In capitalist Australia bosses are able to commit industrial manslaughter with immunity but standing on a picket line can get you a huge fine or even the threat of jail time.

Alongside the whole state machine being built up and replenished for serving the interests of the big business owners, in Australia the media also mobilise against workers' rights. Thus, the media seek to demonise trade unions and never miss an opportunity to sensationalise any negative story about our unions. Right now in concert with the entire ruling class they are especially targeting the CFMEU. Yet, how many times have they ran a story attacking a boss responsible for the death of workers in a workplace accident? Are these callous, selfish bosses ever denounced in the media as they should be?

Consider this too: official statistics from Safe Work Australia for the last five years that figures are available for show that 1070 people were killed in Australian workplaces in that period. And how many people in the last five years have been killed in terrorist attacks in Australia? Well, by the ruling class establishment's definition of terrorism (they don't consider Aboriginal people killed in custody by racist cops and screws nor the murdering firebombing of an Indian-origin bus driver by a racist redneck as terrorist attacks), four people have died in terrorist attacks in Australia in the last five years. In other words, nearly 270 times more people have been killed in workplace accidents in this country in a five year period than in terrorist attacks. However, does that mean that the mainstream media and government give 270 times more coverage and emphasis to the greed-caused carnage we are seeing in our workplaces than they do to the issue of terrorism? No way! Indeed we all know it is the other way around. The mainstream media and government go on endlessly about terrorism but bury the extent of the industrial terror that capitalist bosses are inflicting on their workers through cruelly neglecting workplace safety and dangerously forcing workers into accident causing speed ups and corner cutting. They do, however, emphasise news about workplace accidents **overseas** – especially those in China – in order to try and make us workers here feel like we are “lucky.” However, the Australian mainstream

media and government relegate coverage of fatal workplace accidents here at home to small snippets of news. Why do they do this? Because in the current social order here, the media – like the government and the entire state machine – ultimately serve the capitalist business owners. In the case of the mainstream media this is because the major outlets are either owned by the bosses' state – like the ABC and SBS – or are more often directly owned by billionaire tycoons like Rupert and Lachlan Murdoch, Gina Rinehart, Bruce Gordon and Kerry Stokes. The main media outlets naturally serve the interests of the class – the capitalist class – which their owners are members of. That means covering up the mass industrial manslaughter that their fellow capitalists are responsible for. In the meantime they seek to whip up irrational fears and misinformation about terrorism because by portraying Muslims, people from the Middle East and South Asians as the enemy, the capitalist media hope that they can direct the economic insecurity and frustrations of the masses onto a false target, thus diverting the masses from rightly directing their fire at their actual enemy: the greedy capitalist exploiting class.

The one occupation where work-related deaths in Australia meet with great concern and attention from the mainstream media and governments is those where cops die. This is because police in Australia, while playing a role in sometimes stopping genuine crimes, have a primary political function of enforcing the rule of exploitation of the capitalist class over the working class. They are the guard dogs for the wealth and tyranny of the corporate big wigs and are showered with sympathy and praise by the capitalist establishment. Yet, in the five year period from 2010 to 2014, just 8 cops in Australia have suffered work-related deaths. By contrast, **165 construction workers have been killed in work accidents in the same period.** Yet, the deaths of construction workers get scant attention and little even pretence of sympathy from the capitalist rulers and their media.



The world's busiest port, the Port of Shanghai. Like all of China's other main ports, this port is operated by a state-owned enterprise. The domination of socialistic state-owned enterprises in key sectors of the Chinese economy including ports, oil and gas, power, telecommunications, banking, insurance, shipping, aviation, mining, heavy industry, whitegoods manufacturing, infrastructure construction and aircraft, train and auto manufacturing has laid the basis for China's striking improvements in workplace safety over the last fifteen years.

Socialistic Ownership of the Economy Saves Workers' Lives

The Peoples Republic of China has been able to resolutely improve workplace safety for the very reverse of the reason why workers continue to be killed at the same high rate in Australia. In the PRC, the commanding heights of the economy are publicly owned – that is, effectively collectively owned by all the people. The PRC's socialistic system means that the state sector exists not to supplement the profit-obsessed private sector and help private sector bosses get richer but actually plays the dominant role in the economy. Unlike the rich shareholder-owned corporations that dominate Australia's economy, China's state-owned enterprises operate not merely to maximise profits but to attain broader social goals – these include maximising employment, developing poorer parts of the country, providing goods and services of vital importance to the community, furthering long-term national economic plans, improving employment of the disabled and boosting workforce technical skills. China's state-owned enterprises will often maintain their workforce at a higher level than it is most profitable to and even in hard times will delay retrenchments – in some cases even putting workers for months on fully paid training programs when work dries up. It also means that these public sector enterprises are often over-staffed by Australian standards, which means that workers are not driven into dangerously trying to speed up their work. The work environment in these state-owned enterprises tends to be relaxed and workers – knowing that their jobs are pretty secure – are not pressured into cutting corners on safety or recklessly speeding up production.

There are conflicting pressures on these PRC state owned enterprises and they do hire profit-driven managers and CEOs. However, these personnel are assessed – unlike in Western capitalist corporations – in part according to how well they have met overall social and national economic goals including improving workplace safety. It would be unthinkable in a PRC state-

owned enterprise for a top manager to get a big bonus if there had been a workplace accident causing loss of life – not like how Ardent Leisure CEO Deborah Thomas got a close to one million dollar bonus soon after four people were killed in the Dreamworld amusement park that the corporation owns! Furthermore, ultimate power in China's publicly-owned enterprises – sitting

above the CEO and board of directors in the organisation chart – are party committees of the ruling Communist Party of China. These committees ensure that the public sector enterprises are ultimately subordinated to overall social goals. If you want to get a small sense of what that means consider your workplace here in Australia and imagine what it would be like, hypothetically, if ultimate and real power rests not with your boss but with a committee of militant, left-wing union representatives who, together with others, also form the government.

Alongside the public sector enterprises that dominate China's economy are numerous, usually smaller scale, privately owned enterprises. Here in lies a problem. Workplace safety is much, much worse in this capitalist, private sector than it is in China's state sector. In the past some of these privately owned operations – especially those owned by Hong Kong, Taiwanese and Western capitalists – have also been notorious for sweatshop style exploitation (although even in this aspect this is starting to become old news as far as China is concerned). Fortunately, as well as thoroughly dominating key service sectors (like banking, insurance, media, telecommunications, tourism, culture, education, health, airlines, railways and shipping) the PRC's state owned enterprises control those economic sectors where the most dangerous occupations occur including sectors like heavy industry, major construction, ports and mining. China's private sector, by contrast, dominates the less dangerous work areas like retail, restaurants, internet/e-commerce and light industry.

Yet, even in the strategic economic sectors that are dominated by China's public sector there are some privately owned businesses. Take, for instance, the coal mining sector – the sector in China which had the worst, most notorious, safety record. This is a huge sector since China produces nearly half of the world's coal. Since its 1949 anti-capitalist revolution, China's coal sector has always been led by state-owned enterprises and especially the biggest of these state firms – like Shenhua – have a pretty good safety record, particularly for

a country whose per capita GDP is still modest. However, alongside these big publicly owned enterprises were many profit-driven, capitalist-owned mines. The latter produced only a minority of China's coal output but are responsible for most of the deaths of Chinese workers from mining accidents.

However, the carnage of mineworkers in Chinese privately-owned coal mines started to be turned around at the start of the 21st century. The Chinese government began aggressively closing down unsafe, smaller privately owned coal mines while increasing output in state-owned mines to compensate. A few years later came a more significant development. The PRC state began forcibly nationalising many of the capitalist owned mines that were not closed down and placing them into the hands of the publicly-owned enterprises. As *The Sydney Morning Herald* China correspondent, John Garnaut, put it in a 2 November 2009 article reporting on developments in China's biggest coal producing region, Shanxi (<http://www.smh.com.au/business/chinas-energy-insecurity-set-to-fuel-exports-20091101-hrns.html>):

Shanxi's Governor, Wang Jun, is in the process of smashing the private mining industry and feeding the carcasses to big state-owned companies.

The Governor has couched his mass nationalisation of small-scale private mines as a safety campaign. Safety is part of his motivation, no doubt, given that Wang Jun's two predecessors lost their jobs after massive coal mining accidents.

The results of these nationalisations and the closure of smaller capitalist mines have been dramatic. Last year, the number of workers killed in coal mine accidents in China was nearly **12 times less** than the year where deaths peaked in 2002. The death rate per million tonnes of coal produced is now **36 times lower** in China than it was 15 years ago. The rate of worker deaths per tonne of coal output is still much higher in China than in Australia because the number of workers required per tonne of coal output in Australia is far, far less than in China – whose coal industry

employed over ten million workers according to last year's figures. This is because the Australian coal industry is much more mechanised and because Australian coal reserves allow for less labour intensive open-cut mines whereas much of China's coal reserves require more labour intensive, underground mines.

The above figure of the number of workers killed in work accidents per million tonnes of coal produced is the safety statistic of most interest to capitalist coal barons because it gives these callous bosses – for whom a dead worker is just a “cost of production” – an indication of how much compensation they may have to pay to killed workers' families per amount of the huge mining profits they reap out. However, the statistic of more interest to workers is the numbers of workers killed per hundred thousand workers employed in the sector. This tells workers how likely they are to be killed in a work accident. And in this measure there were 5.8 workers killed in work accidents last year in China's coal sector for every hundred thousand workers employed in the industry (596 workers killed out of a gigantic coal industry workforce of 10.3 million people) while there was in 2014 (the last year that official Australian government statistics were available at the time this article was written), 8.2 workers killed in Australia for every hundred thousand workers in the coal industry here (<http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/Statistics/Documents/Table-2-3-number-and-incidence-rate-of-injury-related-fatalities-by-industry-2010-2014.pdf>). In other words, **an Australian worker employed in the coal industry here is now 40% more likely to be killed at work than a worker in China in her coal sector.**

This comparison is startling. It is startling not only because China's coal industry had once been so notorious for fatal mine accidents but also because the higher level of technology in Australian mines should make workers' lives much safer here. Furthermore, Australia's mainly open cut mining industry should be much safer than China's deep underground mines. One reason that it is not is because trade union presence in Australia's

mining industry has been greatly weakened from what it once was. Many major mines in Australia were once closed shops – union strength was such that every worker had to be in the union to be allowed to work at a site. However, from the time of the Keating Labor government in the early 1990s onwards, mining bosses – assisted by government laws that restricted solidarity strike action – made a concerted effort to weaken union presence in the mining industry. As a result, even though there have been technological advances in safety equipment that should make mining work very safe in Australia, mining industry workers in Australia continue to die in work accidents at a high rate as greedy mining corporations not constrained by unions cut corners on workplace safety. These problems are further compounded by the fact that in order to undermine union organising, big Australian mining companies (just like big Australian construction companies) have split their workforce into several companies by contracting out key tasks like maintenance and construction. When accidents occur harming workers directly employed by a contractor, the main mining corporation tries to wash its hands of the incident and minimise responsibility.

In contrast, in the PRC's socially-owned mines, workplace safety is just as much if not a greater priority than profits – and a leader of a Chinese state-owned company is more likely to suffer a setback to their career from workplace fatalities than from low profits. Unfortunately, although the presence of privately owned coal mines has been significantly diminished in China over the last ten years, many such capitalist-owned mines still exist which is why large numbers of deaths still occur in the Chinese mining industry – albeit at a now proportionately lower rate than in Australian mines. Late last month, for example, 33 mine workers were killed following an explosion at the privately owned Jinshangou Coal Mine in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality. The total deaths in China's privately owned mines, however, continues to fall as the PRC government closes more of them down. That is why the number of fatalities in China's coal mining industry last year fell by around 35% from the year before.

A Question of State Power

The mass nationalisations of capitalist-owned coal mines that have helped to so dramatically reduce workplace fatalities in China's coal mines are notable because they go against the trend towards privatisation in almost all of the rest of the world. During the time that the PRC was earnestly nationalising private sector mines, Australian governments were busy privatising Telstra, the wharves, electricity generation and supply and many other public sector assets. So how much did it cost the PRC state for its public sector enterprises to buy up privately owned mines? And how much compensation did the PRC state have to pay to private mine bosses in those cases when they simply ordered the latter to shut their operations. The answer to both questions is: *not much!* Putting the safety of mine workers ahead of any concerns for the capitalist coal bosses' “rights” to the property that was built up through the exploitation of mine workers, the PRC government simply ordered many smaller private mines to shut without giving any compensation whatsoever. As one irate capitalist, former coal boss in China put it (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 October 2009):

It's like I buy this cup. It's my cup, but now I'm told I'm not allowed to use it.

Meanwhile, the nationalisations of private coal mines involved the coal bosses being **forced** to sell their mines to state-owned enterprises. The price they were offered was usually at or even below the original price they had purchased the mine for which was often ten or more times less than the market price at the time they were forced to sell. Thus, the nationalisation was in good part a **confiscation** rather than a purchase. This was great for Chinese working class people. It meant that profitable firms – where the wealth created by mine workers' toil had previously been going exclusively to greedy capitalist bosses – were brought into the collective hands of the people without increasing public debt while, at the same time, improved workplace safety

and working conditions in the mines could now be properly implemented. Of course, the dispossessed capitalists complained bitterly. A local government official sympathetic to them winged to *The Sydney Morning Herald* reporters (3 October 2009):

“State-owned enterprises are raping private enterprise.”

“The Government is ignoring the law and violating human rights ...”

However, no matter how much of a sook the coal barons chucked they could not stop the nationalisations/confiscations. This is because the PRC state is quite unlike the state in a capitalist country – whether a rich one like the U.S.A, Australia or Greece or a poorer one like India, Bangladesh, Haiti or Indonesia. In such

The Rizhao steel plant in China's Shandong Province. In 2009 Rizhao was brought into state ownership after its former owner, greedy capitalist billionaire Du Shuanghua, was coerced by China's socialistic state authorities into selling the plant to state-owned Shandong Steel for a tiny fraction of its market price. Right: Members of the Communist Party of China (CPC) branch at Rizhao Steel conduct activities to mark national quality month. In China's state-owned enterprises, the CPC branch is the ultimate power in the company. The nationalisations/part-confiscations of private companies that took place in China in the 2007 to 2010 period, especially in the coal mining sector, has helped to dramatically reduce workplace fatalities in China.



capitalist countries, the state exists to enforce the “right” of capitalist business owners to make profits from the toil of workers and to protect the capital built up from such profits. However, in the PRC, while private enterprise does take place, the state does not in practice guarantee the “human right” of private business owners to exploit workers and does not guarantee their “right” to the property built up from such exploitation! The PRC state was founded in a gigantic anti-capitalist revolution in 1949 when tens of millions of exploited tenant farmers, workers and the poor rose up to take power from the landlords and capitalists. The power that the victorious toiling masses exercise in China is, to be sure, deformed by corruption, bureaucratic privilege and the fact that administrative decision making has been kept in the hands of a narrow layer of bureaucrats. Since the pro-market reforms of the 1980s and 1990s that created a new layer of capitalists, the PRC state has also been distorted by pressure from these capitalists. Nevertheless, despite these problems, the PRC state exists in the main not to protect the profits of private sector bigwigs as the state here does but to protect the dominance of the socialistic public sector. Just ask the capitalist former coal bosses who have had their mines forcibly nationalised/confiscated! In a deformed way to be sure, the PRC state acts to defend the interests of working class people. It is a workers state – **the key factor** that has enabled China to make such improvements in workplace safety over the last 15 years or so.

One simple way in which the class character of the PRC has driven the rapid improvement in workplace safety in China is in the things the government places emphasis on. At the same time that Australian governments rant against “militant unions” and “union thuggery,” the PRC government has been focusing their attacks on bosses who neglect safety and on lax government officials who fail to properly enforce safety regulations. The PRC state holds business owners and bosses **criminally** responsible for fatal work accidents in their firms. This is quite different to Australia where greedy corporate thugs who

have presided over fatal workplace accidents can continue to rule the roost as if they have done nothing wrong. Take one of Australia’s richest people, mining magnate Andrew Forrest. His Fortescue Metals Group (FMG) has a very poor safety record. In just a six-month period three years ago, two workers were killed in separate maintenance accidents at just one of its mines – the Christmas Creek mine in the Pilbara – and several workers suffered major injuries. FMG was so negligent in its procedures that even WA’s official mines regulator, the Department of Mines and Petroleum, gave it a reprimand (<http://www.news.com.au/finance/business/worker-dies-in-wa-mine-accident/story-e6frfkur-1226791840472>). Yet, three years later, Forrest was being awarded the West Australian, Australian of the Year Award! It seems that in this country, a corporate bigwig’s greed-derived negligence that causes the deaths of workers is no obstacle to them being considered a “model citizen.” In contrast, the standard practice in China is that if there is a fatal workplace accident, the business owner (if it is a private firm involved which is often the case in China’s workplace accidents) and key executives are taken into police custody until an investigation into the cause of death is concluded. Bosses who are found to be negligent in such cases can expect to spend years in jail. Just last month, the capitalist owner of a shoe factory in East China’s Zhejiang Province was sentenced to five years jail over the collapse of a workshop building last year that killed several workers. His sentence was actually considered lean by PRC standards for bosses whose negligence causes fatal accidents because he paid out a large amount of compensation to victims and their families.

As a result of the PRC state engaging in such “systematic violations of the human rights” (as the Western mainstream media would put it when talking about China) of greedy private sector bosses, there have been marked improvements in workplace safety even in China’s private sector. Another factor driving these improvements has been the ruling Communist Party of China’s (CPC) campaign to build party committees in

private enterprises – which had previously been a weak area for the party. Although, unlike in state-owned enterprises, these CPC committees are not the ultimate power in private businesses, they act as the eyes and ears of the PRC state within private enterprises. Often the mere presence of a strong committee of the ruling party, especially given the fragile legal environment that capitalist businesses operate in within the socialistic PRC, can be enough to constrain a capitalist to abide by state safety and industrial relations laws.

Meanwhile, in the mid-2000s, the PRC planned the introduction of an overtly pro-worker labour law. This was at a time when here in Australia, the former Howard Liberal government was busy introducing their union-busting *Workchoices* law and the subsequent Labor government was pushing through its also anti-worker *Fair Work Act* – aptly dubbed by many union militants as “Workchoices Lite.” The new Chinese labour law went into force in 2008 – despite strident opposition from Western multinational

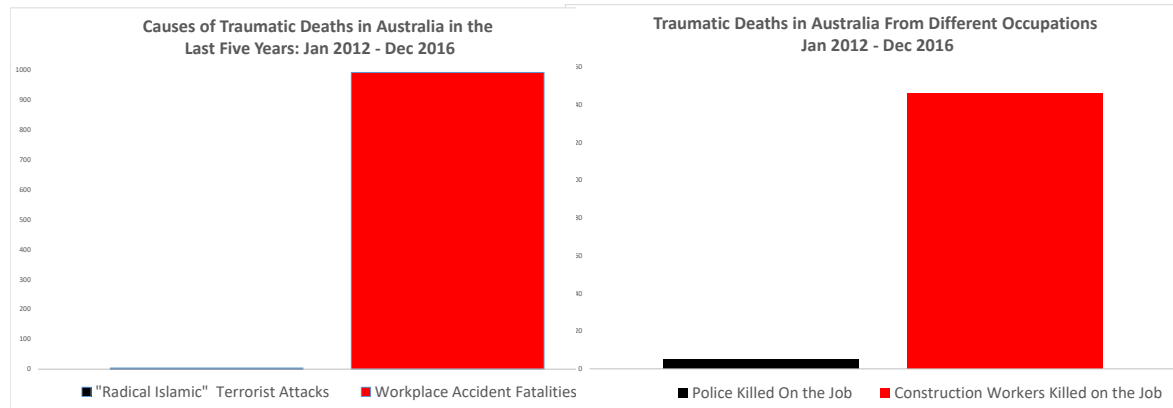
corporations and the American Chamber of Commerce in China. It gives trade unions semi-veto power over any change to workplace rules and working conditions. Importantly, Point 2 of Article 42 of the law states that a worker whose work capacity has been partially (or fully) reduced as a result of an injury or occupational disease contracted at the enterprise can **never** be retrenched by the firm even for incompetence and even if the firm is experiencing business decline. This provision not only protects injured workers but act as a deterrent against bosses neglecting workplace safety.

The provisions of China’s 2008 labour law also encourages the building of trade unions. This was part of a drive openly promoted by then Chinese president, Hu Jintao, to increase the rate of union membership amongst Chinese workers. Today, some 80% of Chinese wage workers are union members. To be sure, China’s trade union federation, the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) in many cases does not

Chongqing, China, October 2014: Hundreds of workers employed by Taiwanese-owned Foxconn Technology Group go on strike for better wages at a factory making smartphones like the iPhone. The company’s attempts to bring capitalist Taiwan’s, military-style regimentation of workers has met with much opposition in China – especially over the last few years. An abundance of workers’ strikes and protests in China, which have been encouraged by the PRC government’s 2008 pro-worker Labour Law and by sometimes tacit government support for workers industrial action, has helped to win better workplace conditions for Chinese workers and improved workplace safety.



Myths and Realities About Fatalities in Australia Caused By Trauma



organise confrontations with the bosses in the fight for workers' rights. This comes from the ACFTU's history when it was built up at a time when socialistic state-owned enterprises not only dominated China's key sectors and played the backbone role in her economy – as they still do now – but comprised almost the entire economy. In that period, while the ACFTU needed to protect against individual abuses of workers in particular enterprises, it also needed to balance workers claims in one sector against the overall interests of the people-owned economy. Today, however, as well as having socialistic public-sector enterprises that dominate the commanding heights of China's economy, there are private-sector enterprises where bosses exploit workers' labour for profit. In this latter sector, the ACFTU needs to move to a class struggle approach (while still ensuring that such struggle does not do harm to the overall workers state). However, while the ACFTU still does not often call strikes against these private sector bosses (it sometimes does), it is nevertheless often able to pressure these bosses into making concessions. It does so by making demands of the bosses who know that behind the ACFTU stands the PRC state – a state that in practice does not guarantee the "right" to capitalist exploitation. When a private sector boss considers rejecting an ACFTU demand on behalf of workers they know that they are risking their business being undermined or even shut down by government regulations or decrees. That is why the rapid growth in union membership in China has improved working conditions there and has

contributed to the improvement in workplace safety in even the profit-driven private sector. Real wages in China have grown by an average of more than 10% per year over a nearly ten year period.

Workers' rights and workplace safety conditions in China have also been defended through workers taking industrial action – usually in the form of wildcat strikes and factory occupations. Contrary to the impression promoted by Western mainstream media, strikes in China are actually more frequent than they are in Australia. The number of these strikes has been quickly increasing – especially since 2014. Most of the workers' actions have been against private enterprise bosses over issues such as wage levels and poor workplace safety. Such strikes often quickly take on a militant character with workers occupying workplaces, blocking roads and sometimes taking bosses hostage. There is a genuine sense of entitlement amongst workers in China – a sense that in Red China, productive property and indeed the law belongs to them. Unlike how the capitalist-owned media often tries to imply, strikes are not illegal in China although they occur in a legal grey area where they are neither illegal nor officially legal. It is true that a few strikes in China have been met with government repression – especially from local governments who are more susceptible to influence from a powerful business (although sometimes higher up governments – especially the central government – then respond by coming down like a ton of bricks on the relevant local

government for not supporting the workers). Yet many strikes and plant occupations in China end up receiving tacit and sometimes even open support from the PRC government – and PRC police and courts – who often pressure bosses into making concessions to workers. Such was the case, for example, during a militant workers' struggle in the capital, Beijing, in June 2013. When workers at a medical devices manufacturer heard that their capitalist boss planned to retrench them, they took the greedy boss hostage for days and gave the boss his own back as they shone lights and banged on his window to deprive the captured exploiter of sleep. When trade union and Chinese government officials intervened to negotiate with the business boss, they too joined with workers in pressuring the capitalist to accede to workers' demands which he was eventually forced to do.

Adding to the support for struggles for workers' rights – which inevitably includes workplace safety – in China and to the drive for improved

safety at work there is the role played by China's media which is almost entirely state-owned. The PRC media often report sympathetically on workers' industrial action and devote a great deal of attention to issues of workplace safety and the reporting of workplace accidents. Indeed, it is worth noting that while the people most vilified by the Australian mainstream media are militant trade unionists, Aboriginal people, Muslims, low income single mothers, the unemployed, oppressed coloured "ethnic" groups prejudicially branded as having a greater propensity to be criminals and public housing tenants – in other words, those at the bottom of this sharply class-divided society – in China the groups most disparaged by the mainstream media are bribe-taking government officials, corrupt business tycoons, bosses whose neglect has caused major workplace accidents and pro-capitalist "dissidents" linked to "NGOs" funded by Western billionaire-serving regimes.

Workers' Lives Depend on the Fate of the Class Struggle

The trend is for the number of deaths in China's workplaces to continue to fall rapidly. In the five years up to the end of 2015, the rate of deaths in China's workplaces has fully halved. However, there are also serious dangers that can reverse this trend. Although they do not hold state power, a capitalist class definitely exists within China. These capitalists are not satisfied with being able to acquire big wealth from operations in certain areas. They want to also dominate the commanding heights of the economy like they are allowed to do in "normal," i.e. capitalist countries. They want to be protected by a state that unreservedly defends their "right" to make profits from exploiting workers just like a "normal," i.e. capitalist state. And backing their quest are many upper middle class professionals who admire these capitalists and aspire to be like them. Currently, China's capitalists and the "civil society" elements backing them do not feel powerful enough, for the most part, to openly call for capitalist counterrevolution. Instead, they push for a strengthening of the capitalist private sector of China's economy at the expense of her socialistic state sector. If that were to happen it would threaten the gains made in workplace safety in China and lead to an all-round increase in the income gap between rich and poor. It would also, by increasing the relative weight and absolute wealth of the capitalist class, increase the power of capitalist restorationist forces. And make no mistake about it: capitalist counterrevolution is what China's capitalists and their yuppy allies ultimately want. They have powerful forces backing their drive internationally: the ethnic Chinese capitalist class that dominates Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, anti-communist Chinese exile organisations that exist in places like the U.S. and Australia and, most of all, the imperialist ruling classes that currently lord over the U.S.A, Britain, Australia and, indeed, nearly all the most powerful countries in the world (other than China). While capitalists within China and their allies seek to white ant the PRC's system from within, the world's capitalist powers are trying to squeeze the socialistic PRC state from the outside so hard that it will begin to disintegrate.



Melbourne, August 2012: Police violently attack CFMEU construction workers participating in a picket line against construction giant Grocon's blatant disregard of worker safety. Australian ruling class repression of militant workers and their unions will weaken workers' ability to stand for workplace safety and, thus, lead to more workplace injury-related fatalities.

If capitalist rule was to be restored in China it would not only lead to massive sweatshop exploitation of workers throughout China but would lead to a major rollback to the improvements made in workplace safety and a drastic reversal of China's stunning achievements in poverty reduction. The effects would be felt worldwide including in Australia. With working conditions in a country with one in five of the world's people being slashed, the capitalists around the world would be able to drive down wages and undercut safety regulations in their own countries in a race to the bottom. And that's not to mention the political effect of capitalists worldwide being emboldened by triumphant capitalist counterrevolution in the world's most populous country. This is why it is in the very interests of the workers' movement in Australia and the whole world to stand in defence of the Chinese workers state against capitalist counterrevolutionary forces.

Of course, it is not just in China where the fate of the class struggle will determine the level of workplace safety and thus the preservation of workers' very lives. The more the capitalist class in this country wins the class war by weakening unions, pushing through anti-union

and anti-strike laws, casualising the workforce and restricting union access to workplaces, the more the bosses will be able to get away with instituting dangerous work practices, ignoring workers' safety concerns and enforcing reckless speed ups. We need militant industrial action to stop the reintroduction of the draconian ABCC laws. There also needs to be a struggle to smash the existing anti-union, Fair Work Building and Construction (FWBC) authority brought in by the former ALP government. Under the FWBC and Labor's Fair Work Act, over a hundred officials of the CFMEU have been brought before the courts for standing up for their members' rights. Let's fight for unrestricted union access to workplaces and let's smash all anti-strike and anti-union laws. Even to wage the struggle necessary to defeat these laws will require unleashing industrial actions in defiance of these self-same laws since the laws themselves criminalise the kind of powerful actions – like industry-wide strikes and secondary strikes – that are needed to consign these Dickensian laws to the dustbin of history.

To win the looming battles, the working class needs above all else unity. That means defeating the attempts by the ruling class to divide and

divert our ranks with racism. Working class people must mobilise to undercut these attempts to divide us by positively mobilising to stand as one with embattled Aboriginal, Muslim and other coloured "ethnic" communities. We need to understand too that the unity we need to defeat the powerful Australian bosses and the state that serves them means unity with all workers – including 457 Visa workers and workers overseas. Let's not get into divisive arguments about which worker should get which job first. The bosses watching will just be laughing at us and rubbing their hands with glee that we local workers are blaming our fellow workers overseas and not fighting against greedy capitalists wherever they and their operations are based. Let's instead stand

as one against the capitalist exploiting class to demand the greatest pay and the best conditions for all workers everywhere, jobs for all and the best possible workplace safety practices. Let's also fight our battles ensuring that every struggle of today advances towards a final goal of the working class seizure of state power. In the PRC, workers' grip on power is tenuous and, indeed, somewhat twisted. Nevertheless, the fact that workers in China, a country that before 1949 was mired in such poverty and colonial oppression, now has safer workplaces than in Australia shows how much can be achieved in a state where workers do hold the power and socialistic public ownership plays the dominant role.

Workers clean a Chinese high-speed train prior to its 32 minute trip from Tianjin to Beijing. Like other state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in socialistic China, China Railways maintains a bloated workforce by capitalist standards in order to boost overall employment. This results in not only a high quality service for patrons but a relatively relaxed workplace environment for workers – especially when one considers the high level of job security for workers in most of China's SOEs. Such a low-stress workplace environment, where workers do not feel under pressure to cut corners on safety or recklessly speed up production, naturally leads to a relatively high level of workplace safety in China's socialistic SOEs. It is these SOEs that dominate the commanding heights of China's economy.

Photo: Trotskyist Platform



Good News:

China's Arrest of Crown Executives Endangers Packer's Barangaroo Project *James Packer's Crown Versus Millers Point Public Housing*

18 November 2016 - Greedy billionaire, James Packer, has been riding high. He was expecting to make an absolute fortune from his Crown Resorts casino and luxury hotel complex which will be built in the Sydney CBD's, Barangaroo site. However, he was brought back down to earth a bit last month when authorities of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) detained 18 of his wealthy executives. Among the high-flying Crown executives that the PRC has arrested are at least three Australian ones including Crown's boss of VIP operations, Jason O'Connor. Those arrested are alleged to have been involved in organising the very activities that Packer's high rollers' casino will in good part depend on: luring high rollers from China to gamble at his casinos and other wealthier Chinese to hold their money in overseas casino accounts. Luring Chinese people to do this is illegal under PRC law. Packer and his executives knew all this. But they were so greedy that they could not help themselves and thought they would get away with it anyway. After all, in capitalist Australia, Packer and his ilk always get away with whatever they want! However, China is a very different story. In socialistic China, the "right" of business tycoons and other rich individuals to ride roughshod over everyone else and make a mockery of state laws is severely "repressed." The PRC, understandably, does not want wealthy individuals depositing money in overseas casino accounts as that could be used to circumvent its strict capital controls which restrict the "rights" of the rich to freely move money about internationally. China also does not want corrupt businessmen and officials to use overseas casinos to launder dirty money or avoid taxes.

If Crown's efforts to lure Chinese high rollers and wealthy individuals are severely curtailed, it could spell doom for Packer's Barangaroo complex. Although the proportion of high rollers in China is tiny, China has such a huge population (60 times that of Australia) that these high rollers are, numerically, a big number. Furthermore, since gambling is outright banned in mainland China and PRC authorities have been cracking down on wealthy mainlanders travelling to Macao to gamble, Chinese high rollers now need to travel abroad to gamble. Similarly, other wealthy Chinese individuals need to deal with casinos located overseas in order to secretly move or launder money. That is why Packer was counting on luring Chinese high rollers to Barangaroo as a main income source for his casino.

One of the many positive aspects of the China arrests for working class people in Australia is that it could help the struggle to save public housing in Sydney's Millers Point area which is right adjacent to the waterside Barangaroo site. Several of the Millers Point tenants who have been staunchest

in resisting the NSW government's drive to sell off public housing in the area are convinced that part of what is driving the government's moves is Packer's, very nearby, casino/hotel project. Their suspicions sound more than plausible. Certainly, it is beyond question that mainstream politicians of all stripes and states are servile to Packer. As *The Saturday Paper* (12 April 2014) put it when describing the way that Packer received official backing for his Barangaroo plan:

State and federal laws and regulations have flexed or melted away in the project's path. Ordinary rules don't seem to apply to James Packer.

Thus, after the cabinet of corrupt then premier Barry O'Farrell openly announced its backing of the Packer plan, it appointed to head the "independent" detailed assessment of the project, David Murray, an ex-banker and a Liberal party supporter who has such close ties to Packer that he attended Packer's first wedding! This "assessment" ended up being even more farcical than expected. The "independent" panel chose to seek their commercial advice about Crown's proposal from

Deloitte which has had a financial relationship with Crown. Meanwhile, it was uncovered that even before the "independent" panel had made its "assessment," the NSW Premier's department prepared it with statements to help it defend the Crown proposal from any negative media questioning! After bowing to a notably low tax rate for the planned casino, the state government then further facilitated Packer's interests by ramming through a 2013 amendment to the Casino Control Act specifically to support Packer's Barangaroo project. This special change to the Act had the support of not just the governing conservative Coalition but also the ALP and the Shooters Party. Even Fred Nile, supposedly a vehement opponent of gambling, campaigned strongly in favour of it. These amendments to the Act are so slavish to Packer that they ensure that Crown must be paid compensation if any future regulatory changes – like tax increases – hurt its profits. The Act even stipulates that the Independent Licensing and Gaming Authority (ILGA) cannot make any changes to a Barangaroo casino license without approval from Packer's Crown! Not that the ILGA is prepared to stand up to Packer anyway. When, the following year, this "independent" authority

conducted its probity check on Crown's suitability to hold a casino license, the ILGA took only three months to pass Crown which, in the own words of the ILGA chief Micheil Brodie, "probably rates as one of the fastest assessments of a casino applicant in history" (<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/james-packers-barangaroo-casino-approval-one-of-the-fastest-in-history-chief-regulator-says-20140811-102qzt.html>). Meanwhile, not only has Packer's complex been infamously excluded from Sydney's controversial lockout laws, it was granted a special exemption from workplace health and safety laws restricting smoking in indoor workplaces. As Australian Institute of Architects NSW president, Shaun Carter, put it after Crown's casino/luxury hotel complex was granted final planning approval this June:

In Sydney you can end up in the Land and Environment Court over a dormer window. But at Barangaroo, you can double your size and replace a public park with a casino with no trouble at all.

<http://architectureau.com/articles/approval-of-crown-barangaroo-tower-disappointing-institute-says/>

Below Left, Australia, 2016: Police harass a homeless Aboriginal family in Sydney's Belmore Park. In Australia, the legal system targets the working class and people on the lowest income. Aboriginal people are hit with severe racist, anti-working class repression with many Aboriginal people being killed in state custody. By contrast, in socialistic China, where the overall rate of imprisonment is much lower than Australia, the system is toughest on rich capitalists and corrupt government officials. Below Right: Xu Ming, one of many billionaires jailed in China. In December 2015, this capitalist exploiter, who was once one of China's richest people, died in state custody at age 44. James Packer is used to Australia's system where his exorbitant wealth and economic power buys great political influence. However, his assumption that things would be the same in the Peoples Republic of China have started to bring him a rude shock.



The Reality of Capitalist “Democracies”

In this capitalist society *money buys influence*. Filthy rich tycoons are able to swing political and bureaucratic decision making through giving hefty donations to political parties, through buying expensive newspaper advertisements (such as the full page ones that Packer’s Crown made promoting its Barangaroo plans) and by having membership in business lobby groups. It is well known that some of the ultra-rich also openly buy out politicians and government officials through open bribery or through purchasing them other favours – like liaisons with high-priced prostitutes. More common, however, are the softer – and yet more insidious – forms of buying influence that almost all capitalist bigwigs engage in. These include inviting politicians and bureaucrats to corporate boxes to watch the cricket or inviting them to exclusive parties and cruises on their luxury yachts. The ultra-rich capitalists also buy political influence through more subtle means – for example, through funding the arts. On 12 November 2013, the very eve of the day that the NSW parliament voted on amendments to facilitate his Barangaroo project, Packer ostentatiously announced a \$60 million donation to various Sydney arts, theatre, opera and orchestra institutions by both his Crown Group and himself personally. This was intended to put pressure on any politicians who may have been considering voting down the amendment with the prospect of gaining the opprobrium of the arts community. Meanwhile, any politicians concerned that open support for Packer’s unpopular Barangaroo project could damage their image would now be re-assured that Packer’s donation would make him be seen by the public in better light. Furthermore, although \$60 million is barely pocket money for a person who has a \$5 billion fortune (“earned” by his and famous late father and grandfather’s ripping off of the labour of workers), it represents a lot of money to underfunded arts institutions. Imagine a talented young artist asking to get funding from a head of one these Packer-donated institutions for a project satirising the Barangaroo complex. It’s a sure bet that they won’t get very far!

We cannot, of course, forget the lobbyists – a big factor in modern-day capitalist “democracies.” It is only the super-rich who can afford to hire skilled lobbyists. Packer, for example, employed former ALP heavies Mark Arbib and Karl Bitar to use their connections to ensure that the ALP backed the casino. In general, business bosses like to employ former – and, if they can get away with it, even current – politicians and high-level bureaucrats to be on their boards in order to use the connections of these individuals to gain them extra influence in the machinery of state. Thus, amongst the board of directors of Packer’s Crown is former Minister of Communications in the Howard government, Helen Coonan. For his part, Crown CEO Rowen Craigie was a General Manager for Gaming at the Victorian TAB and held senior economic policy positions in Treasury and the Department of Industry in Victoria. Another Crown director, former Qantas boss, Geoff Dixon, was head of the Australian government’s main tourism authority, Tourism Australia, from 2009-2015: that is, throughout

the crucial period when Packer was seeking government backing for his Barangaroo project. Big-time capitalists use a similar method to help ensure media support. Thus, the executive deputy chairman of Crown, John Alexander, is a director of Seven West Media – the owner of Channel 7 and its offshoots as well as Yahoo7. He is also a former editor in chief of both *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Australian Financial Review*. Even more effective in ensuring media support is simple, direct ownership. Packer, himself, directly owns a \$28 million stake in the entity that owns Channel 10. So, don’t expect this broadcaster to run any hard-hitting documentaries against Crown’s Barangaroo project anytime soon! Very helpful, too, for capitalist billionaires are the “mates” connections that they develop with media moguls and media high-fliers. James Packer is very close friends with influential, right-wing 2GB shock-jock, Alan Jones, with the 45% owner of Macquarie Media Limited (which owns both 2GB and 2UE) John Singleton and with Lachlan Murdoch, a director of News Corporation



James Packer’s massive, \$105 million luxury yacht and his \$66 million private jet. Like other capitalist tycoons, Packer uses his immense wealth and economic power to gain political influence. Packer is great mates with former prime minister Tony Abbott [Above Right], current prime minister Malcolm Turnbull and most other top politicians.

(owner of *The Australian* and *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper, a host of regional and interstate papers and 50% of Foxtel) who is, of course, the son of its chairman and controlling shareholder, Rupert Murdoch. Then there are the myriad of connections arising from Packer and his father’s former ownership of Channel 9.

Such “mates” connections also cement ties between capitalist bigwigs and the politicians that administer their state. James Packer, for instance, is such close friends with former Liberal prime minister, John Howard, and ex-treasurer, Peter Costello, that they both, once again, attended his first wedding. Packer also played golf with Stephen Conroy when the latter was Communications Minister in the last ALP federal government. Packer is good mates too with Bob Katter and former Victorian premier, Jeff Kennett. Meanwhile, recent ex-Trade Minister, Andrew Robb, had worked for Packer’s PBL company from 1997-2001 (see: <http://www.wendybacon.com/2012/who-is-on-team-packer/>). What gives individual big capitalists political clout is not only their personal wealth and connections but their control of large chunks of the economy. Capitalist politicians and high-level bureaucrats are always on the lookout for lucrative positions in the private sector to move into once their careers in government or the public service are over. Thus,

big business owners can lure these politicians and bureaucrats into doing their bidding precisely because these schmucks hope that this would open up a future career for them hired either directly as executives of or as consultants for their corporations (the way that former Labor powerbrokers Graham Richardson, Karl Bitar and Mark Arbib and prominent Liberal socialite, Ann Peacock, did in getting positions in Packer companies) or by other companies looking to establish links with these corporations. Even less cynical government politicians who actually believe (wrongly!) that they are to some degree representing the people are pulled into the orbit of those with considerable weight in the economy. For in an economic system dominated by private “enterprise,” they are reliant on these firms for providing jobs and for paying taxes into state coffers. The threat of big corporate bosses to withdraw from a major project can be enough to pull government politicians into line.

For those politicians and bureaucrats that still refuse to bow down to a big capitalist’s interests, the latter have nastier means at their disposal. Just as tycoons can build up a loyal politician’s or bureaucrat’s career, the way that the Pratt family industrial capitalists – who are currently second on Australia’s rich list – were the benefactors ensuring ALP Opposition Leader Bill Shorten’s rise

Opposite Page, Sydney, 19 March 2016: Opponents of the sell-off of public housing in the inner-city Millers Point area, including members of the MUA, CFMEU and ETU trade unions, march in protest. China's arrest of 18 wealthy executives of James Packer's Crown empire, including three Australian high-fliers, could undermine Packer's Barangaroo Casino plan – thus aiding the campaign to save public housing in the Millers Point and Rocks area.

(the late Richard Pratt used to let Shorten use his extravagant mansion for fundraising events when Shorten first campaigned for a parliamentary seat and even made his private jet available for Shorten's use <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/mps-woes-pose-dilemma-for-billionaire/news-story/068f701f8d0a6375cf21f576bb105a39>), they can also leverage their wealth to topple the careers of those who are not loyal enough. Look, for instance, at what happened to former ALP prime minister Kevin Rudd in mid-2010. Now, Rudd was an ardent supporter of the capitalist order and, thus, hardly one to make a strong stand against capitalist bigwigs. However, in 2010 he was planning to implement a Resources Super Profits Tax that would have mildly increased the amounts of tax that big mining bosses pay. That was too much for mining tycoons like Gina Rinehart, Andrew Forrest and Clive Palmer who are not prepared to share even a fraction of their fortunes with anyone. They – and other mining capitalists – went on a massive advertising campaign against the tax that saw them spend \$22 million in just six weeks (see: <http://www.smh.com.au/business/a-snip-at-22m-to-get-rid-of-pm-20110201-1acgj.html>). Meanwhile, their friends in the Murdoch and other media outlets backed the campaign against the new tax. All this contributed to a steep fall in popularity for Rudd and enabled his internal ALP rivals to replace him as prime minister. Dancing completely to the tune of Australia's mining billionaires, the new Gillard government then immediately watered down the tax to such a great degree that it hardly collected any money at all! Of course, the mining tycoons' opposition to the Resource Super Profits Tax was not the only reason that Rudd was toppled. Rudd is an arrogant individual and was not liked much by his fellow ALP politicians. However, the decisive factor in

his demise then was the slump in his opinion poll numbers caused by the massive advertising and media campaign against the Resources Super Profits Tax – a campaign conducted at the behest of the filthy rich mining bosses. The Packers, too, are well aware of the power that they have to bring down politicians or top-level public servants who, even in the slightest, get in their way. And they're quite prepared to use it! In 1993 when James Packer and his late father, Kerry, first put in a bid for a Sydney casino, James Packer famously rang a Minister in the then NSW Liberal government and said: "the old man told me to ring... this is the message: If we don't win the casino, you guys are f_cked" (<http://www.gwb.com.au/gwb/news/packer/packer1.html>).

The truth is that in capitalist "democracies" the much vaunted principle of "one person, one vote" is a farce. For it is the small number of ultra-rich capitalists who have the wealth, control of the economy and connections to influence decision making and shape mainstream public opinion. James Packer with his \$5 billion fortune seems to have more influence than at least half of the 5 million or so registered voters in NSW combined. So \$5 billion is equal to at least 2.5 million votes. On average that means: two billion dollars = one million votes. Now that's much more like the true equation describing capitalist "democracy."

To be sure, the capitalist state does not serve one particular bourgeois capitalist. Rather, in the words of the *Communist Manifesto*: "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." However, the relative weight of a handful of tycoons in Australia is so great that the state almost always backs their particular interests.



Save Millers Point Public Housing! Defend China's Crackdown on Packer's Greedy Executives!

So Packer certainly had more than enough influence to instigate a sell-off of public housing in Millers Point if he wanted to. Would he want to? *Yes* would be a very good bet on the right answer to that question. Clearing out Miller's Point public housing would allow the area to be turned into luxury dwellings that can be used by his casino patrons looking for longer-stay, nearby accommodation outside the hotel and for his executives overseeing the casino/hotel complex. All that would help with Packer's project. Furthermore, even if a re-developed Millers Point site ends up not being directly used, in its majority, by patrons and executives of Crown's Barangaroo complex, the planned complex is nevertheless driving wealthy speculators to try and grab hold of this land. Such speculators have no doubt been lobbying the government for the sell-off of public housing in the area too. The boost in property prices driven by Packer's Barangaroo project also gives the NSW government itself more incentive to sell-off the Millers Point public housing as it means they can get higher prices at auctions than they otherwise would.

However, if the Peoples Republic of China follows through with its crackdown on Crown's efforts to lure high rollers and other wealthy Chinese to deposit money in Crown casinos then the whole game would change. Packer's Barangaroo project could be pushed into deep water. And if part of the economic forces that are driving the government's sell-off of Millers Point public housing are stopped then the government will be more prepared to back down if faced with significant opposition from our side. That is why it is in the interest of the fight for public housing that we stand by the PRC's crackdown. Furthermore, although we do not favour bans on gambling in Australia, it can only be a good thing more generally if Packer's Barangaroo project goes splat. The whole philosophy behind the project is offensive to us egalitarians: that is, that scenic, beautiful-looking

public space could be turned into a *members only*, high-rollers casino that only the very wealthy can afford to join and a six-star hotel that only the rich can afford to stay in.

Whether the PRC follows through and prosecutes the rich Crown executives is still a live bet. You can certainly bet that James Packer would be using his economic and political muscle to push the Australian government into pressuring the PRC state as relentlessly as possible. However, the determination of PRC authorities to crack down on Crown's activities was shown when the suspects were first detained. They were detained in meticulously planned and coordinated overnight raids in several cities. PRC authorities also carefully waited for a time when Crown's Australian-based VIP international boss, Jason O'Connor, was on a trip to China to launch the

raids. Under China's legal system, suspects are first detained and questioned and then only after lengthy investigation formally arrested if police believe that there is strong evidence of wrongdoing. The fact that the three Australian crown executives were formally arrested today – five weeks after being initially detained – show that Chinese authorities believe that there is clear evidence that they have committed illegal acts.

In standing by the PRC's crackdown on Packer's seemingly illegal actions in China, we should be ready for a barrage of condemnation of the crackdown from the big business-owned Australian media and ruling class politicians. That's what happened the last time the PRC prosecuted corruption from a major Australia-owned multinational. In 2009, China arrested several high-flying executives from part-Australian owned, mining giant Rio Tinto for corrupt activities. Some of these corrupt activities involved making bribes to get PRC state-owned steel companies to pay higher prices for Rio's iron ore than they would otherwise have paid. Especially as the trial of the Rio Tinto executives took place, then Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd, National Party heavy and now deputy PM Barnaby Joyce and the mainstream media hysterically denounced the PRC's legal procedures. It did little good. The PRC ended up handing the senior Rio executives lengthy jail sentences – including ten years for Australian Stern Hu. Rio Tinto like BHP, Packer's Crown, Gina Rinehart and Andrew Forrest's Fortescue may be above the law here. However, in Red China, where enterprises under socialistic state ownership play the **dominant** role in the economy rather than corporations owned by tycoons, the state does not in general kowtow to the demands of capitalist bigwigs.

One of the things that the Australian mainstream media and politicians may throw out to defend Packer's arrested henchmen is the claim that the arrests are arbitrary and over the top. However, it has now emerged that PRC authorities actually issued a stern warning to Crown last year that it was engaging in illegal activities (see: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-10-18/>

china-said-to-have-warned-crown-others-in-2015-about-marketing). Australian Crown bosses then responded by trying to fly under the radar of PRC authorities by making short business trips to China instead of spending long stays there. They also started formally marketing their casinos to Chinese people as trips to “resorts” rather than casinos as a way to try and deceive PRC authorities.

Another bit of propaganda that Australian media and politicians may assert in support of Packer is the notion that Crown and Australians have been unfairly singled out by Chinese authorities. However, the PRC has already targeted other overseas casino operators. Last year, thirteen executives of two South Korean casino operators, Paradise and Grand Korea, were jailed for similar crimes to what the arrested Crown executives are apparently alleged to be involved in. Meanwhile, in a massive raid a few months ago, police in the south east Chinese province of Guangdong arrested almost 800 local people for economic crimes including “organizing illegal gambling activities overseas.” Furthermore, in the actual Crown arrests, alongside the three Australian nationals, one Malaysian national and 14 local Chinese nationals were also arrested. Furthermore, eight other Chinese people not working for Crown, some of them likely high rollers, were also detained in the October raids.

If the Australian mainstream media try to give the impression that only overseas businesses and their employees have been targeted in China that too can be easily re-butted. These Crown arrests are, in fact, part of a massive anti-corruption campaign that has been running in China for over two years. Although in some cases there is suspicion that Chinese president Xi Jinping has used the campaign to undermine factional rivals within the Communist Party of China, the campaign has truly clamped down on corruption. Hundreds of high-ranking politicians and businessmen have been prosecuted. Furthermore, perhaps the best aspect of the anti-corruption campaign is that it has to some, albeit small, degree also drifted into a campaign against the opulence of the rich. Thus, in early 2014, Communist Party of China authorities in major Chinese cities ordered the closure of high-

end clubs and expensive restaurants near public parks, scenic spots and cultural sites because these venues could not be accessible and affordable to the masses. It is worth noting here that Sydney's Barangaroo area is definitely such a scenic spot. In other words, **if PRC law were applied here, there would be no Crown Barangaroo project (even without the casino)!** By the way, in the PRC's anti-opulence drive, those formerly high-end clubs and restaurants located near public spots that were allowed to stay open were ordered to lower their prices and change their menus to turn them into places affordable to the masses. So, if the PRC law were applied here, Packer at best would see his Barangaroo project being turned into a centre with free entry nightclubs serving cheap drinks, affordable buffet restaurants for the masses enjoying the waterside parks and a three-star hotel providing clean and cheap accommodation for working class tourists from Australia, China and other Asian and overseas countries looking for an affordable place to stay in the heart of the city.

Perhaps the most likely argument that the Australian ruling class and its media will use to oppose any PRC prosecution of Packer's henchmen is to claim that the PRC's legal system is “cruel” and “harsh.” However, actually, **Australia's rate of imprisonment is nearly 30% higher than China's** (see: http://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=All). What is true is that the PRC does jail business tycoons at a much higher rate than Australia. So the difference between Australia's current legal system and the PRC's is a matter of **who** is targeted by the state. In Australia, the state jails disproportionately target Aboriginal people, people from Middle Eastern and Asian derived ethnic communities and the poor. In contrast, in the PRC workers state – despite suffering from plenty of bureaucratic deformations and the distortions caused by capitalist intrusion – it is wealthy private sector businessmen and the corrupt politicians and bureaucrats who are bribed by them who are disproportionately jailed. Australia's capitalist ruling class, of course, finds such a system “harsh” and “cruel.” However, from the point of view of

the working classes of both China and Australia such a system is exactly what is needed. We should defend it! And we should defend the crackdown on Packer's and his executives' illegal activities in China. Let's weaken the economic forces driving the push out of public housing tenants from Millers Point! Stop the social cleansing of working class people from Sydney CBD! It is rail workers, bus drivers, ferry drivers and their ground staff, cleaners, warehouse workers, chefs, liquor and hospitality workers, construction workers, maintenance workers, fire brigade employees, ambulance staff, sales assistants, IT support staff and other workers who together make the Sydney CBD run. Yet the overwhelming majority of these workers cannot afford to live in the area. Let's turn this around! Let's turn the public space that was seized for Packer's Barangaroo project into a big public housing block for working class people! Let's fight for a massive increase in public housing throughout Australia! Fittingly, that is exactly what the PRC is doing – having provided around 40 million new public housing dwellings over the last six years.

China's crackdown on Crown is not only good for the Millers Point public housing struggle, it is also more broadly in the interests of the working class. James Packer is such a powerful – and in Australia seemingly untouchable – capitalist that many here are resigned to him getting his way on everything. The fact that his executives could be called to account in the Peoples Republic of China should be used to give Australian workers confidence that the filthy rich bosses of this and other corporate giants are not invincible. Every fighter against oppression and every Australian trade union activist worth their salt ought to be seizing on this setback for Packer's Crown to challenge, right here, the greedy exploitation by all the billionaires and the corporations that they own: including the likes of Crown, BHP, Rio Tinto, Visy, Seven West, Westfarmers, Woolworths and the banks. They should be saying to their proud and strong working class base: **China is cracking down on corporate greed and corruption – we need to start to do that here too!**

***Free All the Victims of Australia's Racist Torture!
Jail the Cops and Prison Guards Who Killed David Dungay,
Ms Dhu, Rebecca Maher, Wayne Morrison, TJ Hickey, Mulrunji
& the Many Other Victims of the Racist, Rich People's State!***

29 December 2016: It was a display of incredible bravery. After being tortured by sadistic prison guards for years on end from the age of thirteen, 19 year old Dylan Voller calmly and with great dignity testified about his ordeal to the Royal Commission into Northern Territory's youth detention system. It took extreme courage to do this for Voller is still in prison – now in Darwin's adult prison. He is still being abused by the same prison system and guards that have tortured this Aboriginal youth over the last six years! His mother understandably fears for Dylan Voller's life. In the lead up to giving his testimony, guards threatened him with violence. Yet he still gave his evidence in a composed and articulate manner. This has – for many Aboriginal people and other opponents of racist violence – made Dylan Voller a hero.

Voller described how he felt when he was tied by his neck, hooded and left shackled to a chair for up to three hours at a time. It was the image of this torture at Darwin's Don Dale youth prison that triggered outrage from all decent people in this country. It caused worldwide anger too. The torture, shown on the ABC *Four Corners* program of 25 July 2016, was reminiscent of the invading U.S. forces' torture of Iraqi prisoners at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison. Dylan Voller testified how he would get "dizzy from panicking" and vomited and wetted himself while hooded and restrained. He also gave new details of the abuse that he and other detainees suffered at the hands of prison guards. Often the guards would starve the prisoners and deny them water. Although the media and ruling class would like to pretend that there was only a problem at the Don Dale detention centre, Voller described similarly horrific treatment when he was in the Alice Springs youth lock up. There guards would humiliate youth by preventing them from going to the toilet, forcing many of the children to urinate into water bottles and then throw them out the next day. Voller described his own experiences:

"I'd been asking to go to the toilet for four or five hours and they kept saying no, and I ended up having to defecate into a pillowcase because they wouldn't let me go to the toilet," Voller said.

"There's been other times I had to urinate out the door or back windows because they wouldn't

come down."

ABC News Online, 13 December 2016

The July *Four Corners* program showed that the terrifying abuse of young, mainly Aboriginal boys, in NT youth prisons was not just a matter of isolated cases of torture but one of systematic brutality. Boys as young as 13 were locked up in a solitary confinement regime in Don Dale's "Behavioural Management Unit" for weeks upon weeks for all but a single half hour of every day. They were confined to hot, dark cells that stunk of faeces and urine. The cells had not only minimal air flow and little natural light but no running water. With guards often cruelly denying water to the imprisoned youth, that meant that the boys sometimes had to drink the urine from their own toilet bowls to survive.

The *Four Corners* documentary showed actual footage of prison guards using extreme violence against the imprisoned boys. Guards are not only caught on camera subjecting Dylan Voller to the Abu Ghraib-style hood and shackle torture but are shown repeatedly, over a five-year period, stripping Voller naked to humiliate him, aggressively holding the child down with their full body weight and brutally kicking and punching him. One former youth detainee even told how guards pressured other detainees to bash Dylan Voller, throw hot water and spit at him. No wonder he ended up attempting self-harm several



Aboriginal teenager, Dylan Voller, is tortured by prison guards at a Northern Territory youth prison. Guards in more than one Australian youth prison cruelly bashed, abused and tortured him on many occasions over a six year period. They unleashed the same sort of heinous violence against other Aboriginal detainees.

times! Yet after all this, Voller remains imprisoned today. This despite his being due for parole release over a year ago! His mother, Joanne Voller, is leading a call for Dylan's immediate release. This demand has understandably won much support from humane people nationwide. We add our voice to this just and urgent campaign. **Free Dylan Voller immediately! Free all those who have been tortured in Australia's hell-hole youth prisons!**

The prison system's torture of Dylan Voller was just part of the cruel terror campaign that has been unleashed on many detainees. The *Four Corners* documentary shows August 2014 footage of how guards at the Don Dale detention centre responded when 14 year-old, Jake Roper, became agitated. The young boy was spending his 15th straight day in solitary confinement in a hot, stinking cell in the prison's infamous Behavioural Management Unit. Roper got out of his individual cell and, with a broken light fitting, banged on the locked door, pleading with the guards to tell him when he was going to get out of solitary confinement. The prison guards first laugh at the boy's distress and then unleash several rounds of tear gas at close range over an eight minute period. Using the Nazi policy of "collective punishment," the guards gas not only Roper but all six of the

boys inside the isolation unit. Video shows the guards laughing and cheering at the suffering that they have caused to the terrified children. This proved that the prison authorities and the Territory government lied when they announced to the media that six boys had "escaped" and rioted when, in fact, they had always remained locked inside the Unit. Video footage proves that the closest to ever actually rioting that the boys came was when they screamed out, "I can't breathe" after the guards gassed them! It also casts serious doubt upon the mainstream media and government narrative concerning more recent so-called "riots" around the country such as at the Victorian youth detention centres in Malmsbury and Parkville. In the Parkville facility, 80% of the locked up children have been languishing on remand, that is they haven't even been convicted of any crime yet, and are forced to endure cramped conditions "packed in like sardines" as a former Victorian commissioner for children has described their plight (*The Age*, 14 November 2016).

The footage of the gassing incident at Don Dale also confirms that the barbaric abuse of Aboriginal detainees was not just caused by a few rogue prison guards but was directed and encouraged from the

very top of the racist state administration. NT Corrections Commissioner Ken Middlebrook is shown at the prison approving the use of the tear gas. Furthermore, he is caught on video footage responding to a question from a prison officer about whether they should “Gas the lot of them?” with an incitement to terrorise the children with an extremely large dose of gas. “Mate, I don’t mind how much chemical you use,” exclaims the Corrections Commissioner.

Any half decent person in this country who saw all this footage was completely outraged at this vision. The Turnbull government knows this and that is why they were quick to call a Royal Commission into NT youth detention centres following the *Four Corners* documentary. However, how insincere the Turnbull government are about actually ending the torture is illustrated by the fact

Racist State Brutality All Throughout Australia

Nearly all Aboriginal people who saw the Don Dale torture footage were furious. Yet receiving accounts of violent abuse of people in their community is something that Aboriginal people are often burdened with. They know all too well that authorities are meting out cruelty against their family and friends in custody – both children and adults – all throughout this country. One of the purposes of Turnbull’s Royal Commission is to obscure this by portraying the abuse seen in the revealed footage as an exclusively NT issue. That is why they restricted the terms of the Royal Commission to only look at youth detention centres in the Northern Territory.

The August 2014 death of 22 year-old, Julieka Dhu, in police custody in WA highlights the murderous oppression that Aboriginal people right across Australia face. She died of a severe bacterial infection and pneumonia because police – and later medical staff - criminally prevented her from getting the medical care that she so desperately cried out for. When it comes down to it: they murdered her! To hide the cops’ brutal abuse of Ms Dhu, WA courts initially suppressed video footage of her imprisonment. When the footage was finally released two days ago – but with much of the sound and part of the video still censored – it showed police brutally handling her even while she was groaning in extreme pain and on the verge of death. In one taped incident a policewoman – supposedly checking on her health – yanks Ms Dhu violently by the arm and then cruelly leaves her to flop down and smash

that they consulted the then NT Chief Minister, Adam Giles, the man ultimately responsible for overseeing the abuse at NT youth detention centres, about what the terms of reference for the Royal Commission should be. That’s like the judges at the post-World War II war crimes trial asking Hermann Göring (the highest ranking surviving Nazi leader) what the terms of reference should be into their deliberations in Nuremburg! What the Liberal/National government, the ALP Opposition and other parliamentary parties mainly want from this Royal Commission is for the Australian state machine “to be seen to be” doing something in order to divert Aboriginal activists and other anti-racists from launching staunch militant protest action against the racist torture.

her head on the concrete cell floor. The cop does not even then check to see if Ms Dhu has been further injured. Later, when police finally take the dying woman to hospital, the footage shows the police handcuffing Ms Dhu and then dragging her along the floor. They treated her with far more disrespect than most humans treat animals! What police had done earlier was, however, even more harmful. The night before, Ms Dhu had cried out in terrible pain for help but police refused to take her to hospital claiming she was “faking it.” The next morning when the cop on duty told another detainee that, “she is trying to get out,” after the detainee confirmed that Ms Dhu had been screaming all night, the detainee retorted, “she’s really in pain.” Still police refused Ms Dhu medical attention. They continued to do so even after she vomited repeatedly for over an hour. Instead the cop in charge, Sergeant Rick Bond,

bent near her and according to the other officer present, Shelly Burgess, whispered in Ms Dhu’s ear: “You are a fucking junkie, you have been to the hospital twice before, and this is not fucking on... you will fucking sit this out.” Burgess further testified that this officer in charge whispered so as not to be recorded (*The Guardian*, 21 March 2016). After all this, two of the officers centrally responsible for Ms Dhu’s death ended up being promoted!

As is all too typical, the coroner’s report into Ms Dhu’s death was a whitewash. Even while admitting that the police acted in an “unprofessional and inhumane manner,” the coroner’s report, released this month, recommended no charges be laid against any of the officers. In other words, cops’ inhumanity can cause a death of a young Aboriginal woman but still they will face no consequences for it ... apart from being promoted! Consider the contrast with another case. In 2010, a doctor practising in Queensland, Dr Jayant Patel, was jailed for alleged negligence causing the deaths of patients. He was later cleared of causing the deaths on appeal and re-trial. We are not qualified to comment on whether there actually was any negligence or not on the part of Dr Patel. However, it is clear that his initial trial occurred before the backdrop of a witch-hunt style atmosphere full of racist undertones about an Indian-origin doctor causing the deaths of mainly white patients. Yet even if the allegations of incompetence were indeed true, the fact is that Dr Patel was initially sentenced to seven years jail (of which he served two years before winning on appeal) for causing deaths to patients that no one claimed were a result of any malice or hostility to any of the patients on his part. The crimes Dr Patel had been accused of were not allegedly caused by ill-will towards patients clouding his judgement but merely allegedly caused by incompetence and negligence. For that he copped a seven year sentence. In stark contrast, the cops

who so roughly treated Ms Dhu and murderously prevented her from receiving urgently needed medical treatment – not to mention the medical staff who earlier twice sent Ms Dhu back to the police lock-up - caused Ms Dhu’s death not merely because of incompetence but because of their prejudice, contempt and naked hostility towards her. For that they have received no criminal punishment at all! Such is the way that the scales of “justice” work in racist, capitalist Australia.

To add insult to a horrifying death, the WA coroner even found that: “I do not find that any of the HHC (Hedland Health Campus) staff or police were motivated by conscious deliberations of racism in connection with their treatment of Ms Dhu.” What rubbish! Outrageously, the coroner only recommended competency training of police officers in Aboriginal culture. Of course, it is fine for all officials to be educated about the rich culture of Aboriginal people. However, for such a “solution” to be highlighted in this and other cases where cops and screws get away without any accountability for causing a death in custody, is simply a quite deliberate diversion. How much does one need to know about a person’s culture to know that one should not deny a human being medical care when they are in terrible agony? Or to know that one should not allow a person’s head to fall onto concrete and if that happens one should at least check on their condition? Does a policeman need to know about Aboriginal culture to know that they should not beat a human being to death the way that the cop Chris Hurley murdered Palm Island Aboriginal man Mulrunji Doomadgee in 2004? In cases where racist brutality has caused the deaths of people, to talk about “incompetence” or lack of cultural knowledge being the cause whitewashes the truth that **these were murderous acts of racist cruelty** – crimes that must be punished or else they become a green light for further racist state violence.

Racist Terror in Australia Is Getting Worse

WA premier Colin Barnett responded to the coroner's report on Ms Dhu's death by outrageously making excuses for the cops' cruelty. He claimed that they faced "a difficult situation." Barnett even argued that the police were "facing a lot of aggression" at the time even though none of the police themselves even tried to claim that Ms Dhu was ever aggressive (*The Guardian*, 18 December 2016). Going one step further in defending racist state brutality, the prime minister's indigenous adviser, Warren Mundine, defended the torture of Dylan Voller: "It's a tough job to go out every day and have people abuse you and spit on you - you've got to be able to restrain people." He also had the hide to attack Dylan Voller himself: "Let's not pretend he is innocent." The truth is that Dylan Voller is the victim of a barbaric and racist "justice" system. He was thrown into youth detention at the age of eleven for relatively minor offences but was so brutalised and demoralised by years of being horrifically tortured, assaulted and humiliated that he was conditioned to commit more serious offences. This, in turn, became the pretext for the state authorities to ever more savagely abuse him. The dishonest narrative promoted by Warren Mundine and his co-thinkers, like Noel Pearson and Marcia Langton, is that Aboriginal people are the main cause of their own disadvantage and suffering: in other words, blame the victim. However, this is impossible to even pretend to do in the case of Ms Dhu. She committed no crimes against anyone. She was to be held in custody for four days because she was too poor to afford to pay fines from very minor alleged "offences" that she committed several years earlier. That she should even be fined for these alleged offences – such as "swearing" and "waving her finger in a police officer's face" – let alone jailed is itself a reflection of the racist and anti-poor people bias in Australia's "justice" system. However, even though the narrative promoted by the Warren Mundines, Noel Pearsons and Marcia Langtons simply does not stack up against the facts it is given huge airplay by the mainstream media. The big business and government-owned Australian media love such Aboriginal "leaders" because they play a major role in "justifying" the ruling class' ongoing brutal oppression of Aboriginal people.

Sydney, 29 December 2016: Rally against state killing in custody of 26 year-old Aboriginal man, David Dungay. Crucially, a contingent of MUA (Maritime Workers Union of Australia) members participated in the protest. The power of the trade union movement must be mobilised to support the struggle against racist state terror.



Indeed, if one only listened to the mainstream media, one would almost think that most Aboriginal people have the same outlook as Warren Mundine and Noel Pearson! Yet these people only represent a rather small section of the Aboriginal community – those few Aboriginal people who have managed to make it into privileged economic and social circles and are, thus, so loyal to the current social order that they share the same contempt for the Aboriginal masses as the racist white ruling class. You would not know this from the mainstream media but there are Aboriginal spokespeople with a million times more support amongst grassroots Aboriginal people than the Mundines and Pearsons. These are the new crop of feisty and eloquent Aboriginal rights activists. What is driving their emergence is the fact that **the racist oppression of Aboriginal people is actually getting worse and worse**. Over the last year alone, for example, the number of Aboriginal people imprisoned in Australian jails has increased by over 700 (<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4517.0~2016~Main%20Features~Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20prisoner%20characteristics~5>). Meanwhile, more Aboriginal children are being stolen from their families by "community services" authorities, there is an increase in redneck violence against Aboriginal people and the rate at which Aboriginal prisoners are being outright murdered - or otherwise dying due to the brutality of police or prison guards - is growing.

On 29 December last year, Aboriginal man David Dungay died at Sydney's Long Bay jail after guards brutally acted towards him on the pretext that Dungay – a diabetic – was eating a biscuit! A large number of guards violently wrestled him to the ground and held him face down on a mattress. Even though he told guards that he couldn't breathe, prison staff then injected Dungay with a strong sedative without even assessing his vital signs or checking his airwaves. They also violated standard procedures by failing to have any resuscitation equipment or antidote to the treatment present at the scene ([\[sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/indigenous-man-dies-after-being-restrained-by-nsw-prison-guards/\]\(http://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/indigenous-man-dies-after-being-restrained-by-nsw-prison-guards/\)\). Shortly afterwards, Dungay turned purple and stopped breathing. As Mr Dungay's mother, Leetona Dungay, described it:](http://www.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

"Straight out murder. They murdered my son..."

"They've got to be accountable for it."

Hawkesbury Gazette, 8 September 2016

The NSW authorities moved into cover up mode. Corrective Services NSW rushed to immediately declare that police were not treating Dungay's death as suspicious. They are so used to getting away with murdering Aboriginal people that they don't even think that they need to even pretend to be fair. Meanwhile, only two of the four health staff involved in administering the sedative documented their role in the health records.

The murder of David Dungay has left his family devastated. However, they are courageously standing firm and demanding justice. David Dungay was only 26 years-old when he was killed and just three weeks away from being eligible for parole.

Seven months after Dungay was killed, Wiradjuri woman Rebecca Maher died in the Maitland police station less than six hours after being taken into police custody. Police detained Maher in the early hours of July 19 after she was walking the streets of Cessnock. They claimed that they believed Maher was intoxicated. Police did not arrest Maher but claimed that they took her into custody due to "concerns for her welfare." Yet Maher's family have now showed ABC media a report that indicates that Rebecca Maher had neither illegal drugs nor alcohol in her system!

Rebecca Maher's death is more than highly suspicious. A person who is just 36 years-old and healthy enough to be walking along the street just six hours earlier does not suddenly drop dead due to natural causes! What points the finger at the police even more is their violation of a long-established procedure called the Custody Notification Service whereby, under NSW law, the police must notify the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) as soon as they take an Aboriginal

person into custody. Not only did the police break the law by not immediately notifying the ALS of Rebecca Maher's detainment, they did not do so until 24 hours after her death! Indeed, they did not even notify Maher's family of her death until six hours after her passing. What were they covering up? And why did police even take Maher into "protective custody" in the first place when she was sober and by the police's own admission had committed no offence warranting arrest? Over the last 228 years, police and prison guards have been notorious for raping Aboriginal women in custody – just as heads of Aboriginal reserves, masters of Aboriginal domestic servants and rural capitalist bosses of Aboriginal families toiling in agricultural industries were known to do the same to black women out of custody. The events surrounding the tragic death of Rebecca Maher are surrounded by uncertainty. But what is absolutely clear is that key questions remain unanswered about how Rebecca Maher died while in police custody.

Then on September 26 of this year, Aboriginal man, Wayne "Fella" Morrison died in hospital after being bashed by five prison guards at Adelaide's Yatala Labour Prison three days earlier. By the time he was taken to hospital, Morrison had serious brain injuries. His sister reported that "he has bruises all over him" (NITV, 26 September 2016). He was not convicted of a crime but was about to face a court appearance through video link for charges he faced. The Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement has said that, after being bashed, Morrison was not breathing for "some 50 minutes before ambulance officers resuscitated him" (*The Advertiser*, 26 September 2016).

The murderous mentality of the prison guards was shown up earlier by their denial of medical treatment for Morrison's previous injuries. He sustained those injuries when assaulted shortly before his arrest. Furthermore, the information that the South Australian Correctional Services Department initially provided the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement shows that Morrison did not even receive medical treatment immediately after being bashed by the guards. However, the

Department did a U-turn and is now claiming that Morrison was given immediate medical treatment by prison staff - even while admitting that an ambulance was not called straight away. Yet Morrison's family and the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement were neither informed of the incident, nor of the fact that Morrison was taken to hospital until some seven to ten hours afterwards. Indeed, the South Australian state officials and Labour premier Jay Weatherill have moved into overdrive mode to whitewash Morrison's killing. For one, they have claimed that it was Morrison who first attacked guards and that the incident was a "violent altercation," as if the clash between a single inmate and five guards is some kind of even fight. Meanwhile, the ALP's Weatherill and the Murdoch media in particular have sought to demonise Morrison as a "dangerous" man in order to lessen community anger over his killing. Yet Morrison had never been in custody previously and those who know him describe him as a much loved fisherman and community man who liked to paint and weave and who loved playing the guitar. He was just 29 years-old when killed and the father of a young daughter.

These are the recent cases that are most well-known of Aboriginal people being murdered by Australian authorities or otherwise killed due to the criminal neglect of cops or prison guards. How many other similar deaths have occurred recently that are less known? How many other killings have been so well covered up that the perpetrators have gotten away with ensuring that the incidents escape the public eye? Unfortunately, we can expect that there are likely several such cases.

Increasing state violence against Aboriginal people is fuelled by government policies that attack Aboriginal people and those receiving low incomes. Such policies include the continuation of the racist Northern Territory Intervention, the extension of compulsory "income management" to other areas of the country and the introduction of ever more draconian measures restricting the rights of those receiving unemployment benefits. These policies help generate within society disgusting stereotypes that Aboriginal people

and the poor are somehow inferior citizens in need of special measures to keep them in line. Such racist sentiments and hostility to the poor are then naturally reflected in the behaviour of cops and prison guards. However, the outlook of police, prison guards, prosecutors and judges does not simply reflect the **average** of ideas and attitudes prevalent within society. Rather, these repressive personnel of the state take on in an **especially concentrated form the most racist and anti-working class** attitudes. This flows naturally from the role of these authorities. They are the henchmen of the ruling class who enforce the dispossession of the dispossessed, they are the direct implementers of racist and anti-poor government policies and they are the state officials who punish those who lash out when ground down by these policies.

Racist behaviour of state officials against Aboriginal people is further inflamed by ruling class attacks on other people of colour. Draconian anti-terror laws targeting Muslims, brutal repression against asylum seekers and racist politicians' speeches and media slanders against Muslims, Chinese, refugees and guest workers fuel the flames of white supremacist ideology amongst police, prison guards, prosecutors and judges. Such raging white supremacist sentiments – whether conscious and open or hidden within paternalistic standpoints – **inevitably end up**

scorching Aboriginal people too regardless of which ethnic community was directly targeted when these attitudes were first incited. Similarly, racist state attacks on Aboriginal people end up also rebounding against the most oppressed of other non-white coloured communities. The abuse and even torture of Aboriginal prisoners by cops and prison guards is mirrored in the bashing and abuse of refugees and migrants by detention centre guards in Manus Island, Nauru, Christmas Island and the likes of southwestern Sydney's Villawood detention centre.

All this racist violence being unleashed by cops, prison guards and detention centre guards against Aboriginal people and refugees is encouraging bigoted rednecks and organised fascists to commit their own racist terror attacks. In late August, a 55 year-old white man murdered a 14-year-old Aboriginal youth, Elijah Doughty, by deliberately driving his ute into the boy. This chilling murder in Boulder, just south of the Western Australia town of Kalgoorlie, was preceded by extreme racists making violent threats on social media against Aboriginal youth in the area. Then in late October, an extreme right-wing terrorist of white Anglo-Saxon appearance, Anthony O'Donohue, murdered Indian-origin bus driver, Manmeet Alisher, by barbarically setting him alight with a fire bomb while Manmeet was busy at work driving a bus in suburban Brisbane.

Kalgoorlie, August 2016: Hundreds of Aboriginal people courageously defy heavily armed police to oppose blatant state racism. The community were responding to the fact that police only charged the 55 year-old white killer of 14-year-old Aboriginal youth, Elijah Doughty, with manslaughter rather than murder. The racist redneck murdered Elijah Doughty by deliberately driving his ute into the boy.



Do Not Trust Any Inquiries or Commissions Under the Patronage of the Racist, Anti-Poor People Australian State

The intensifying oppression of Aboriginal people has driven a new layer of Aboriginal people into political activism. Some of these determined new activists are relatives or close friends of people who have been killed or tortured in custody at the hands of the state authorities. Many of these young black activists are knowledgeable about international issues and see the need for solidarity with other oppressed groups in society – like refugees. They are also militant in their political perspective. At the 11 October 2016 Sydney march against the war on Aboriginal children, which was led by young black activists, protesters showed a healthy distrust of the Royal Commission into Northern Territory's Youth Detention System. Demonstrators chanted, "Justice for Children – Not Royal Commission!" Meanwhile, those addressing the rally, including Dylan Voller's mother, Joanne Voller, spoke dubiously of the Royal Commission and stressed that commissions, inquiries and reports in the past had failed to produce anything good. Very true!

Most notably, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody which released its final report in 1991 was a complete whitewash. That Royal Commission investigated 99 Aboriginal deaths and out of it there was not a single charge – or even disciplinary action – recommended against a police officer or prison guard. This was despite the fact that in many of the deaths – including those of Eddie Murray, John Pat, Lloyd Boney and David Gundy to name but a few – it was obvious to all who studied the cases without prejudice that those who died had been simply murdered by police or prison guards. However, that Royal Commission outrageously concluded that, "... Commissioners did not find that the deaths were the product of deliberate violence or brutality by police or prison officers." Instead, the Royal Commission disgustingly blamed "the very high level of alcohol use by most of those who died in custody," even while its own findings showed that less than 10% of the cases investigated were caused by substance or drug misuse. This Royal Commission did admit that 23 of the deaths came from "external trauma" (including four by gunshot) – of which only six it claimed were self-inflicted or by accident, two inflicted by other prisoners and two by civilians outside of custody. Even if one believes the deceitful Royal Commission's analysis, this leaves another 13 deaths by "external trauma" that could only have been caused by cops or prison guards. The Royal Commission tried to minimise this truth by reporting seven of those deaths as being

of "unknown" cause and one – the murdering bashing to death of John Pat in Roeburne, WA by redneck cops – as the result of a "fight" with police officers in a street outside a hotel. It did, however, concede that five of the deaths were the result of actions by cops or prison guards. Clearly these deaths have got nothing to do with alcohol use by the victims! In these cases, even the biased Royal Commission is admitting that it was the actions of cops or prison guards that caused the deaths. **And still that Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody insisted on recommending no charges against the cops and prison guards responsible!**

As much as it whitewashed these killings from "external trauma," the 1989-1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody also whitewashed the deaths by hanging. It incredibly claimed that of the 30 Aboriginal deaths in custody by hanging that it investigated, all were suicides (<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/rciadic/national/vol1/67.html>). To see what an outrageous lie this is, consider this: the Royal Commission itself found that 22 of the hangings occurred in police rather than prison custody and that "the substantial majority of the hangings occurred within two hours of entering into custody, or even less" (<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/rciadic/national/vol1/61.html>). **So, they want people to believe that 22 Aboriginal people had the desire, means and**

lack of supervision to kill themselves in separate incidents in police cells less than two hours after being detained!

The 1989-1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody did make 339 recommendations, some of which if implemented would reduce deaths in custody by lowering the rate of Aboriginal imprisonment. However, the better recommendations were in good part not implemented. Furthermore, the main effect of the Royal Commission were not its recommendations but the fact that it whitewashed the murders of Aboriginal people in custody by cops and prison guards. This has given a **green light** to state forces to commit yet more racist terror against Aboriginal people. In the 25 year period since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 340 indigenous people have died in state custody (<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/apr/15/aboriginal-deaths-in-custody-25-years-on-the-vicious-cycle-remains>). That means that **the rate of deaths of Aboriginal people in custody has been on average 30% higher since the Royal Commission than in the nine and a half year period that the Royal Commission investigated.**

In the lead up to the 1989-1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal activists opposed to state brutality sincerely hoped that the inquiry would lead to the prosecution of murdering cops and prison guards and a reduction in deaths in custody. That, today, many families of victims of state terror and many young activists against racist violence show little confidence in the Royal Commission into Northern Territory's Youth Detention System indicates that the movement has learnt – at least partially – from past disappointments. Crucially, **the fewer illusions that opponents of racist terror have that justice will come through the Royal Commission, the more willing they will be to mobilise in action against racist murder and torture in custody.** That fewer such illusions exist than did 25 years ago is a promising sign for the movement. However, for this promise to be fully realised and a movement

built that relies entirely on the power of the masses and is strong enough to force the racist rulers into concessions, activists must be won to the understanding that no trust should be given not only to this particular Royal Commission but to any Royal Commission – even one with better sounding terms of reference and with more credible commissioners – and that no confidence can, indeed, be placed in any inquiry conducted under the auspices – and/or with the financing – of the current Australian state machine. No trust should be given to any inquiry conducted by the Australian state – no matter how "independent" in form it claims to be – because it will simply be one organ of the state investigating other organs of the same state, that is the police and prisons. The judiciary, police, prisons and commissions are all organs of the same brutal beast and, surely, one cannot expect a beast to use its arms to injure its own heart.

In Australia, the beast that the legal and physical repressive organs belong to is the capitalist state – a body that was conceived, fed and trained to be the enforcer of the interests of the ultra-rich, capitalist class. This body inevitably acts against the interests of Aboriginal people because the economic interests of the greedy big business owning class lies in perpetuating the intense subjugation of Aboriginal people. This is the case for three related reasons. Firstly, for Australia's mining, pastoral and other big landowning capitalists (and, as we see with mining magnate Gina Rinehart's recent purchase of Australia's biggest cattle station, these are often one and the same people) to continue to reap fabulous profits, the Australian state must brutally oppress Aboriginal people to the point that Australia's first peoples will be so impoverished, so shackled by the claws of the "justice" system and so demoralised that they will be unable to challenge their dispossession from the land that they once occupied or even win a decent share of the wealth derived from it. Secondly, and just as importantly, crushing Aboriginal people helps the white capitalist rulers to deceive the non-Aboriginal masses into feeling that they are part of the "chosen people" and the "in-crowd"

because at least they live in a better condition than Aboriginal people. This enables the capitalist rulers to obscure white working class people from the truth that they too are exploited by the greedy capitalists and thus obstructs the non-Aboriginal masses from joining with their Aboriginal sisters and brothers in a united struggle against their common capitalist oppressors. Thirdly, by vilifying Aboriginal people and disgustingly portraying Australia's subjugated first peoples as "freeloaders" with a high propensity to commit crimes, the exploiting class seeks to divert the anger of the white masses at all the social evils created by the ruling class' own decrepit system – like under-resourced public health care, public education and social services – away from the ruling class itself, who are the people actually responsible for this situation, and onto Aboriginal people as well as other convenient though utterly unwarranted scapegoats such as refugees and migrant workers. This is why the capitalist ruling class and *all* the organs of its state will never be allies in the Aboriginal people's struggle for justice. Indeed – they are this struggle's very enemy!

It is true that the capitalist rulers could, theoretically, completely oppress Aboriginal people without their state forces murdering and torturing Aboriginal people to the extreme extent that they currently do. However, in order for their hired enforcers to physically keep down the working class masses and subjugate Aboriginal people to the degree that the capitalist bigwigs need them to do, the ruling class must ideologically school these cops and prison guards in such contempt for the poor and such a white supremacist outlook that they inevitably commit acts of racist terror of even greater severity than some of their capitalist masters may require. However, this does not mean that the capitalist rulers have any desire to reign in their hired thugs. Far from it! These ultra-rich capitalists are only interested in maximising profits. That means, for starters, they simply cannot be bothered to put any effort into restricting even the most extreme of the cruelty of their state forces.

More importantly, **the capitalist exploiters do not want to risk losing the absolute loyalty of the henchmen who enforce their rule by reigning in even some of their worst excesses.** Furthermore, some key sections of the Australian capitalist class actually share the desire for Aboriginal genocide of the most rabid rednecks of the cops and prison guards. Dead mining magnate Lang Hancock – from whom his daughter Gina Rinehart inherited her massive wealth – infamously proposed that: "no-good half-castes" should collect their welfare checks from a centralized location, adding that "when they had gravitated there, I would dope the water up so that they were sterile and would breed themselves out in the future" (<http://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/couldnt-be-fairer/clip2/>). Hancock's daughter, Gina Rinehart, who is one of Australia's richest and most influential capitalists – with strong links in particular to the Cory Bernardi/Tony Abbott/Eric Abetz extreme right-wing of the Liberal party and to the National's leader and deputy PM Barnaby Joyce – no doubt shares these same genocidal views. Rinehart is a rabid supporter of extreme racist U.S. president-elect Donald Trump and in her recent book rails against any regulations that restrict corporations from disturbing Aboriginal heritage sites. We need to put the Rineharts, the Andrew Forrests, the Packers, Murdochs and all of their ilk out of business for good by sweeping away capitalist rule in a socialist revolution. That is what it will ultimately take to emancipate Aboriginal people from the worsening horrors that they are facing today, to liberate the working class from job insecurity, bullying bosses and deteriorating social services, to free women from the daily subjugation that the capitalist system engenders and to liberate all other downtrodden groups. A new, working class state power based on elected councils of workers, Aboriginal people and representatives of all the other currently oppressed sections of society would literally turn Australian society upside down. It would lay the basis for a future classless, truly egalitarian, communist society.



Photo: Trotskyist Platform

Redfern, Sydney, 14 February 2017: "The Maritime Union really has your back and will always have your back" declares a young, Aboriginal member of the MUA union at the end of his speech at the start of the 13th anniversary rally to commemorate the death in custody in 2004 of 17-year-old Aboriginal boy, TJ Hickey, at the hands of brutal NSW police. The spirited crowd – who had braved stormy Sydney weather to once again demonstrate their commitment to the pursuit of justice for TJ – then burst into chanting "MUA Here to Stay! MUA Here to Stay!" Proud, unionised, Aboriginal workers are the lightning rod that will fuse the struggles for workers' and Aboriginal people's rights into a single, unstoppable force that will one day shake the racist, capitalist Australian state down to its core.

Mobilise Working Class Power Behind the Struggle Against Racist State Terror

Just as it is in the interests of the capitalist exploiting class to perpetuate the subjugation of Aboriginal people it is in the interests of the working class of all colours to support Aboriginal people's struggle for justice. The same capitalist ruling class that brutally oppresses Aboriginal people is the one that steals the fruits of workers' labour. It is true that most white workers are relatively privileged in comparison to most Aboriginal people and they do not face the intense racist oppression that black people in Australia are subjected to. However, overall, white workers are still part of the downtrodden mass of society as they form part of the class whose labour is exploited by the ruling class. The same Australian police, courts and prisons who, in a most extreme way, discriminate against, torture and kill Aboriginal people are also the ones that violently attack workers' picket lines and persecute militant trade unionists. This is all too evident in the recent spate of prosecutions of CFMEU construction worker union activists. That is why the organised workers movement must stand with Aboriginal people in a united struggle against state violence targeting Aboriginal people, the working class, refugees and all the downtrodden. Furthermore, only by standing with Aboriginal people, refugees and embattled coloured "ethnic" communities can the working class defeat the capitalist ruling class' efforts to divide the exploited masses with racism and thus allow the working class to build the unity it needs to fight for its rights and those of all the oppressed.



Melbourne, 26 January 2017: Part of a huge Invasion Day march protesting against the continuing brutal oppression of Aboriginal people. In the lead up to what is officially known as "Australia Day," many people expressed their anger that the dispossession of Aboriginal people was being celebrated. Sensing this growing sentiment, many small-l liberals, Greens, soft-leftists and even conservatives called for the date of Australia Day to be changed. However, the staunchest, most insightful Aboriginal activists rejected such a cosmetic fix. They rightly understood that "Changing the Date" would just mean another celebration of Australian nationalism – which necessarily means legitimising, among other things, the continued severe subjugation of Aboriginal people. As these young women in the photo proclaimed, what is needed is to do away with the entire racist state.

There have been some encouraging signs that sections of the workers movement are - to some extent - joining the fight to defend Aboriginal people against racist brutality. At today's Sydney rally demanding justice for the murder in custody victim, David Dungay, there was a contingent of Maritime Workers Union of Australia (MUA) members. Trade union mobilisation in support of Aboriginal people's struggle is not only helpful but is vitally necessary. Since it is in the interests of the ruling exploiting class to reinforce the racist oppression of Aboriginal people, no amount of appeals to their sense of justice and no amount of clever legal manoeuvres are going to make this ruthless class ameliorate the suffering that they are causing Aboriginal people. The only thing that can make this ruling class back down is an opposing power: power that can harm their interests or at least threaten to harm their interests. The organised workers movement has the power to do

such harm. Since it is workers' labour that is the source of the tremendous wealth of the capitalist ruling class, when our trade unions threaten to withdraw their labour through industrial action, the capitalist bosses become scared and panicky. Thus, trade union action against racist state violence, or even the threat of it, can force the capitalist bigwigs – fearful of a huge blow to their profits – to reign in their henchmen in the government, police and prisons.

An example of the kind of the power that the workers movement can bring to the struggle for Aboriginal rights was seen in the campaign in defence of Palm Island Aboriginal hero Lex Wotton. Wotton was the leader of the hundreds strong, November 2004 uprising by the Palm Island community in response to the horrific police murder of Aboriginal man, Mulrunji Doomadgee, and the subsequent state whitewash of this murder. After being arrested following

the heroic November 2004 resistance struggle, Wotton was charged and faced the prospect of more than a dozen years in prison. However, as part of a series of demonstrations in support of Lex Wotton on the day he was being sentenced by a Townsville Court on 7 November 2008, Sydney MUA port workers ostentatiously took industrial action in defence of Lex. They stopped work for a brief period during the middle of the sentencing hearing after announcing their intention to do so at the start of the day. Although this action was not powerful enough to stop Lex being jailed, the burgeoning movement and the MUA stopwork compelled the authorities to give Lex Wotton a notably lighter sentence than the ten years plus sentence that they had been planning. As a postscript, it should be noted that since Lex Wotton has completed his sentence he has continued to speak out strongly for Aboriginal rights and – despite attempts to entice him to "semi-apologise" for his actions – he has, **completely correctly**, insisted that his actions were 100% justified. With Lex Wotton standing strong, earlier this month he partially won a lawsuit against the Queensland government and police over their racist response to both the murder of Mulrunji and the Aboriginal resistance struggle that followed it. Wotton and family members were awarded \$220,000 in damages in the class action that they launched on behalf of the Palm Island community. Such an outcome would have been **impossible** through mere testimony and court litigation alone. Rather, the partial victory was a testament to the ongoing political impact of, in the first place, the heroic Palm Island resistance struggle led by Lex and, secondly, of the subsequent Aboriginal/trade union/leftist campaign in defence of him. The authorities feared that making their usual racist and unfair verdict on this class action case could have re-ignited militant opposition to their racist actions, further built support for a man who proudly continues to stand 100% behind the militant struggle that he led and potentially pushed the trade union movement into renewing its participation in this fight for justice.

The trade union industrial action that was taken in defence of Lex Wotton must become the norm

rather than the exception. But how to make it so? It is helpful to look back briefly on the campaign in defence of Lex to see how the movement built up towards this action. The active struggle to defend Lex Wotton and the other arrested Palm Islanders from the November 2004 uprising began with a demonstration in Sydney in Redfern's The Block on 8 July 2005. That rally demanded the dropping of all charges against the Palm Island defendants and the freeing of all those jailed following the February 2004 Redfern resistance struggle that responded to the horrific police murder of 17 year-old Aboriginal youth, TJ Hickey. This July 2005 demonstration, which Lex Wotton was present at, was initiated and built by staunch Sydney-based Aboriginal activists Jenny Munro and Lyall Munro, Townsville-based Aboriginal activist Gracelyn Smallwood and Trotskyist Platform and drew in Aboriginal people – including some of the heroes who participated in the February 2004 Redfern resistance struggle – trade unionists and leftists. Following on from this rally, those involved in organising it built more similar actions and the movement also spread to Melbourne where the ISJA - Melbourne Supporters Group actively built the solidarity campaign. A crucial effect of these rallies is that they energised the individual trade unionists who participated in them and popularised the struggle in defence of Lex Wotton amongst the most class conscious workers who heard about these demonstrations – including activists within the Sydney Branch of the MUA and others with links to the MUA. Shortly after a 150 strong rally in solidarity with Lex Wotton on 22 September 2007 in Redfern, the Sydney branch of the MUA contacted organisers of the rally announcing that they were throwing their weight behind the campaign. The MUA gave their endorsement to the demand for the dropping of all charges against Lex Wotton as well as material support to the campaign. This included producing, "Proud to be Union – Proud to Support Lex Wotton" badges designed by activists involved with the campaign from the start. Later, the MUA organised a charter bus to take supporters from Sydney to Brisbane to join solidarity actions during Lex's trial in

Brisbane in October 2008. From there, the Sydney Branch of the MUA's support leapt to carrying out the crucial industrial action on 7 November 2008.

Key to the Defend Lex Wotton movement ultimately winning the trade union support that was so vital to it was the fact that the Sydney-based campaign never, in its action call outs, made any appeals to any state institution whatsoever to be a vehicle for justice. Instead, the action call outs simply demanded that the enemy drop all charges against Lex Wotton. This was important as it informed opponents of racist state brutality that they must look entirely to the power of the masses to advance the struggle. Furthermore, the movement openly appealed to the class interest that the working class has in defending Lex Wotton and in opposing state oppression of Aboriginal people. Thus, the calls for the rally in the lead up to Lex's trial emphasised that:

The subjugation of Aboriginal people is an extreme form of the repression that the authorities are also unleashing against trade unionists who stand up for workers' rights. The ABCC construction industry police are spying on and intimidating CFMEU construction union members and continue to initiate jail-carrying charges against individual union activists.

Of course, by appealing in this way to the class interests of the working class it could have put off the tiny number of small-l liberals who, through some contradiction, were willing to oppose the persecution of Lex Wotton while still being thoroughly loyal to the capitalist establishment that is subjugating Aboriginal people. Yet it is not a handful of small-l liberals but the working class that can be the reliable force that can fight against and ultimately defeat racist state brutality because unlike members of the capitalist class - including their small-l liberal variety - **the fight against racist state terror actually coincides with workers' class interests.** Thus, campaign

organisers made a choice to appeal to workers' class interests rather than making the action call outs acceptable to pro-capitalist liberals. And a choice really had to be made! It is not possible to appeal simultaneously to both the working class and small-l liberal members of the capitalist class as their class interests are mutually conflicting. By making this choice to appeal to the working class, the Sydney-based movement in defence of Lex Wotton was able to allow more politically conscious trade union activists to mobilise their fellow union members behind the campaign by explaining how the fight against racist state brutality is, indeed, union work.

Today, the struggle against racist state brutality must again openly appeal to the class interests of the working class in order to lay the basis for badly needed joint trade union/Aboriginal/coloured migrant people's action against racist oppression. In a promising development, for the recent December 10 "International Human Rights Day" march in Sydney which focussed on opposition to the torture and killing of Aboriginal people in custody, the action call out stated opposition to not only the persecution of other marginalised peoples - including Muslims and refugees - but also insisted that the same Australian government committing brutal abuses against Aboriginal people is "trying to criminalise trade union activism in the building industry and beyond." In this way the struggle to defend Aboriginal people against racist state oppression was united in common action with the demands of the working class and other oppressed groups. The large demonstration was addressed by Aboriginal activists, a representative of the MUA and speakers representing refugees and other downtrodden peoples.

How to Turn Our Unions into Uncompromising Supporters of the Struggle Against Racist Brutality

The ability to mobilise trade union power in defence of Aboriginal people depends not just on the strategy of the anti-racist movement but also on the political struggles within the workers movement itself. Some of the best, most politically conscious trade unionists do understand the need to stand by Aboriginal people's fight for justice. However, trade union solidarity action is currently held back by the union movement's ties to the ALP and by its present, losing, strategy of trying to make capitalist rule less oppressive to the masses through electing "progressive" ALP governments to administer the capitalist state. Thus, even when the most politically aware unionists want to take a stand against racist state brutality they are held back by a fear that going too far would put them smack bang against ALP policy or otherwise harm the prospects of the ALP winning/retaining office. As part of this outlook that accepts, rather than opposes, capitalist state power, the union movement chooses to incorporate within its ranks the hired henchmen of the capitalist ruling class: cops and prison guards. In NSW, for example, the so-called "union" representing cops, the Police Association of NSW, is allowed to be part of both the Unions NSW federation of trade unions and the peak national union organisation, the ACTU. Prison guards, meanwhile, are part of the Public Service Association of NSW, a union that while including prison guards mostly consists of legitimate workers like support staff in schools and TAFE and road and traffic workers. The presence of cops and prison guards - the brutal enforcers of capitalist interests - in our unions both corrupts our unions and undermines any struggle to mobilise them against state terror. Imagine trying to promote a cross-union action against racist state violence when representatives of the cops and prison guards - the very people the action is aimed against - are in the very meeting where the prospective action is being considered! Of course, having representatives of the cops, who would try to herd scabs through union picket lines, or the prison guards, who would keep militant trade unionists imprisoned, at a union meeting harms union organising for workers' economic struggles too.



On Christmas Eve 2016 yet another refugee imprisoned in Australia's hellhole detention camps died as a result of the negligence and cruelty of the racist authorities. Faysal Ishak Ahmed died after suffering a seizure. The 27 year-old Sudanese refugee had been detained on Manus Island for over three years. He had suffered heart and breathing problems and high blood pressure for over six months. Ten days before his death, 60 of his fellow refugees signed a petition protesting the fact that he had been denied proper medical treatment. Faysal's death has eerie similarities to the August 2014 death of imprisoned Aboriginal woman, Julieka Dhu. The 22 year-old woman died of a severe bacterial infection after racist WA police murderously refused her medical treatment. The abuse and torture of Aboriginal prisoners by Australian cops and prison guards and the abuse of refugees and migrants by detention centre guards feed into each other in a most sinister - and very real - way.



Alice Springs, 13 March 2017: Torture victim, Dylan Voller, joins a protest against the brutal treatment of detainees outside a hearing of the Royal Commission into NT Detention of Children. Voller who was very recently, finally, released from custody, explained to the media his participation in the protest in his characteristically dignified manner: "Everyone else around the country and around the world supported me, so it is my time to give back while I have an open voice."

There is also the most obvious problem that we face in trying to mobilise trade union action against racist brutality. That is the reality that even though it is in the working class' very interests to stand by oppressed Aboriginal people, many workers – though certainly not all – themselves imbibe backward racist ideas to varying degrees. Workers, like other classes, are influenced by the racist mainstream media, by the divisive speeches of ruling class politicians and by the racist nature of the capitalist Australian society that they inhabit. Furthermore, current union leaders end up reinforcing White Australian chauvinist consciousness within the workers movement through pushing divisive calls to favour local workers over overseas workers in hiring and to deter imports of overseas produced goods. Such protectionist "Aussie workers first" slogans are promoted by even the most left-wing union leaders – including those who have done most to mobilise their members in support of Aboriginal rights struggles. Although the immediate targets of such protectionist demands are overseas and guest workers rather than Aboriginal people, these demands necessarily breed White Australia

nationalist consciousness – sentiments that inevitably lead to hostility, or at best indifference, toward Aboriginal people's plight. There urgently needs to be a political struggle within our unions to replace this protectionist perspective with a strategy that unites local and overseas workers in a common fight for their rights. We also need to remove from our unions all cops, prison guards and prosecutors. This would occur as part of a struggle to turn our unions away from the ALP and its bankrupt program for a more humane-run capitalism and onto a path that is guided by the understanding that only the power of the united working class and all of the oppressed can be relied on to win gains for the toilers and downtrodden. All this is needed not only to build trade union action against racist terror but to unleash union power to defend workers' immediate economic interests as well. For example, to powerfully wage strikes to fight for jobs for all workers we need a working class united by internationalist ideology, not one divided by protectionism. That is why the struggle to build the leadership and political perspective that can turn our unions into the force needed to effectively fight for their own members'

interests is one and the same fight as the struggle to win our unions to the perspective of mass action against racist brutality. It is the struggle to infuse our unions with a revolutionary, internationalist program: a program of militant class struggle guided by the understanding that the capitalist state, no matter who is administering it, is the enemy of workers and all the oppressed. A union leadership fighting on such a class struggle program would be linked to a revolutionary socialist party that unites the working class with all the other oppressed sections of society.

We need to work extremely hard to turn our unions into revolutionary-minded organisations that will support the cause of Aboriginal people and all the downtrodden. Racist oppression of Aboriginal

people is getting more and more terrifying every day. **Families of murder in custody victims and the talented and tenacious young Aboriginal activists coming to the fore need the power of the union movement behind their struggles. When our unions join this battle, they will find that Aboriginal peoples' determination and healthy distrust of the racist, rich peoples' state will, in turn, rub off onto union activists. This can only advance the badly needed transformation of our unions into instruments of militant class struggle.** A transformation that is vital not only for unleashing union power in defence of Aboriginal people and refugees but is essential for making our unions capable of turning back the tide of attacks that the entire working class is facing today.



Aborigines Are Feted In China

Peking. — A group of nine Australian Aborigines here as guests of the Chinese said they were being treated like human beings "for the first time in our lives."

The group, who arrived in China for a month's visit a week ago, said they had taken every opportunity during their stay to tell their Chinese hosts "about the plight of the Aboriginal people in Australia."

Miss Cheryl Buchanan, an attractive 16-year-old student from Brisbane, said: "It's all so marvelous, there's just so much to see and do. We are being treated as human beings for the first time in our lives. At home we are treated like animals or inferior beings."

Another member of the group, Miss Lina Watson, said this is her first trip out of Australia and it makes you realize what a racist country Australia is.

Leader of the group, Mr. Charles Dixon, of Sydney, has been asking for Chinese help in forming an international lobby to pressure the Australian Government into recognizing Aborigines' needs.

The group, whose expenses here are being met by Chinese hosts, are staying at the Peking Hotel, the most comfortable in the capital and reserved for specially honored guests.

The visitors have been dining round in the city

In 1972, the Communist Party of China government sponsored a group of ten staunch Aboriginal activists to visit China as a gesture of solidarity. Above Left: The Aboriginal delegation (sitting at the left of the photo) view a performance at the Children's Cultural Palace. Above Right: The Aboriginal activists with their Chinese friends at the birth place of Chairman Mao in Shaoshan in China's Hunan Province. Left: Mainstream Australian media reluctantly reported that the Aboriginal activists said that, whilst in China, they were being treated like human beings for the "first time in our lives." As discussed in the following pages, the PRC government's excellent act of international solidarity in sponsoring the Aboriginal delegation should become its norm rather than the exception.

Photos: The Koori History Website, <http://www.kooriweb.org>

Long Live China's 1949 Anticapitalist Revolution!

Protect the Great Benefits for Workers & the Rural Masses

Won through the Revolution:

*Stop Imperialist Funding for Those NGOs that Seek to Overthrow
Socialistic Rule in China*

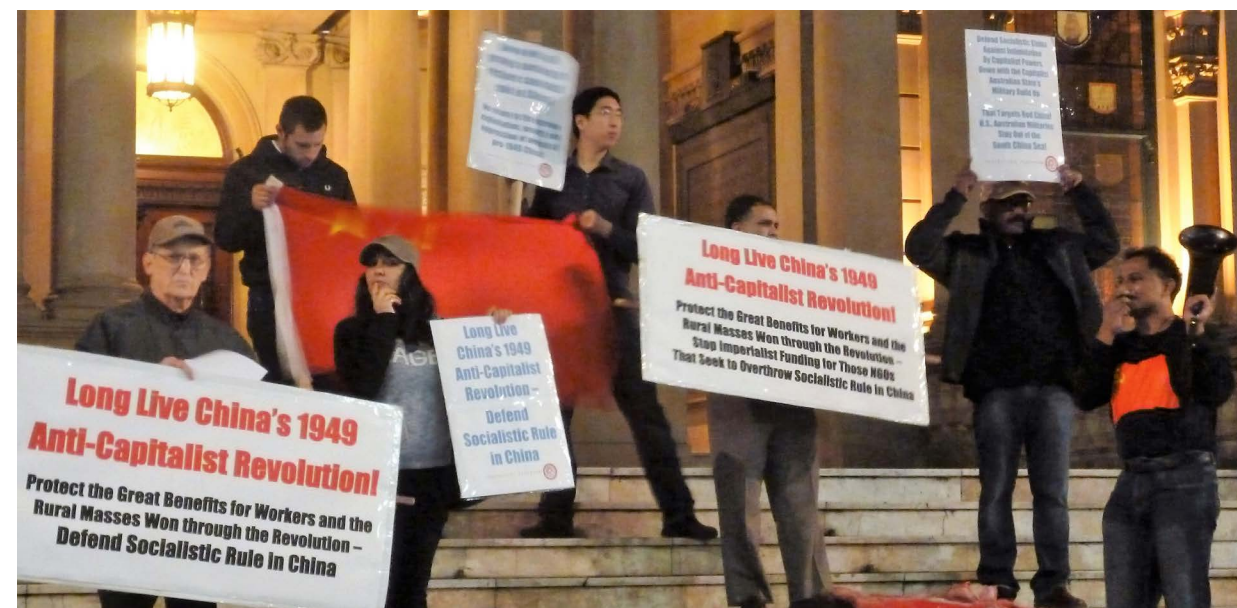
6th September 2016: Determined supporters of socialistic rule in China rallied this evening on the steps at the entrance to Sydney Town Hall. In this demonstration called at short notice, participants hailed the gains of China's 1949 anticapitalist revolution and opposed the U.S. and Australian-backed anti-communist Chinese exile groups seeking to promote capitalist restoration in China.

The 1949 Chinese Revolution was one of the most momentous events in humanity's entire history. The long-suffering Chinese masses overthrew their exploiters and took power. Tens of millions of downtrodden people participated in this heroic struggle. They achieved victory after a bitter three year civil war. On one side of the war stood the oppressed tenant farmers, workers, working-class women and idealistic students. They were organized by the Communist Party of China (CPC) which was led by Mao Ze Dong. On the other side were the brutal landlords and capitalists. These oppressor classes were served by the Kuomintang (KMT) government of Chiang Kai-Shek. The KMT was heavily armed, trained and advised by the U.S. regime. But still they lost to the Communist-led revolutionaries.

The 1949 anti-capitalist revolution freed the peasants from the tyranny of the landlords, made headway in liberating workers from capitalist exploitation and freed the Chinese people from humiliating subjugation by imperial powers. The revolution greatly uplifted women's status from the horrific reality they faced under the previous Kuomintang regime – when many women were subjected to forced marriage and the barbaric practice of foot-binding. The new revolutionary power ripped the key industries away from the capitalists and placed them into the collective hands of all the people. This new economy

dominated by public ownership enabled China's rapid industrial and social development. The life expectancy of Chinese people was lifted from only 34 years at the time of the 1949 revolution to 66 years at the time of Mao's death in 1976. This was a truly stunning achievement in uplifting human welfare. No society has ever seen such a great accomplishment in social progress which was all the more impressive since it occurred in a country with such a massive population – where one in five of the world's people live. Since then, the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) has continued to uplift hundreds of millions of its people from the terrible poverty inherited from the pre-1949, capitalist-feudal times. Indeed, over the last 35 years the entire net poverty reduction in the world is due to the poverty reduction in socialistic China.

The Chinese Revolution not only liberated the Chinese masses, it shook the whole world. Those fighting capitalism around the globe, including in Australia, were given a fresh burst of confidence by the revolution's triumph. The capitalist rulers around the world were terrified, especially in the Eastern Pacific rim. Around the world, there were many progressive struggles that took part of their inspiration from the Chinese Revolution including the victorious anticapitalist revolutions in Cuba and Vietnam and the militant wing of the Black liberation movement in the U.S.A.



Sydney, 6 September 2016: Determined supporters of socialistic rule in China rally at short notice to oppose the U.S. and Australian-backed anti-communist forces seeking to promote capitalist restoration in China. The Trotskyist Platform organised rally, held on the steps at the entrance to the Town Hall, protested against Sydney City Council's decision to ban a pro-PRC, Mao commemoration concert arranged by pro-Communist Chinese immigrants that was to be held at the Town Hall.

Pro-Capitalist Forces Working Feverishly to Destroy Socialistic Rule in China

The timing and venue for tonight's pro-PRC demonstration was chosen for a specific reason. Pro-communist Chinese performing art groups, reflecting the sentiments of many working class Chinese migrants, had planned a Red Songs concert tonight at Sydney Town Hall. The concert organised by the International Cultural Exchange Association Australia (ICEAA) was to be held in honour of Mao Ze Dong and was to coincide with the 40th anniversary of his death. A similar concert had also been scheduled to be held in Melbourne on September 9.

Mao was the leader of the 1949 revolution that brought the Chinese masses such great benefits and it is, thus, understandable why the Chinese masses and indeed millions of leftists around the world adore him. Many trade union activists today may not be aware that the key slogans of the militant sections of the Australian trade union movement – like "Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win" – are, in fact, quotations taken from Chairman Mao. To be sure, Mao also did make some serious political errors. However, Mao is today rightly remembered most for his most significant act – leading the 1949 anti-capitalist revolution. Furthermore, in China today, Mao is seen (although not completely historically correctly) as a symbol of egalitarianism and consistent socialism. Those who sing the praises

of Mao most strongly in China today are often the most determined communists. They are often opponents of the pro-market reforms introduced by post-Mao Chinese leaders that have led to greater inequality and a degree of capitalist exploitation. In commemorating Mao, those set to participate in the planned concert were expressing support for the 1949 Revolution and solidarity with socialistic rule in the PRC.

The planned concert, however, met with shrill opposition from a coalition of anti-communist groups. These included Chinese exile groups devoted to overthrowing socialistic rule in the PRC as well as Australian anti-communist groups built up during the Cold War against the socialistic, former USSR. They called their coalition the

“Embrace Australian Values Alliance” – a name that would make far-right nationalists proud! The Alliance put out statements and a petition full of outrageous lies about Mao – even claiming he was “one of the most cold-blooded dictators in human history, surpassing the cruelty of Hitler...” This hysterical anticommunist campaign was not mainly about presenting a particular assessment of a historical figure. Rather, it was about the present and the future. In attacking Mao, the leader of the 1949 Revolution that gave birth to the Chinese workers state, the opponents of the concert were attacking the 1949 Revolution and socialistic rule in China. This became even clearer later as the Alliance vowed to make war on “Communist soft power.” A spokesman for the Alliance complained about alleged Chinese government influence in Chinese-language media in Australia and railed against the emergence of pro-China groups in Sydney and Melbourne.

The anti-PRC alliance held daily rallies outside Sydney Town Hall. Christina Wang, chief executive of the ICEAA – the group organising the Red Songs concert – had her car vandalised. However, what made the anti-communist movement influential was the massive support that they received from the mainstream Australian media. The media churned out a series of articles lauding the anticommunist Alliance and reporting as a fact its lurid claims about Mao and communism. Even for a media notorious for bias and anticommunist hostility, the coverage of this dispute was notable for the shamelessness of its one-sidedness. This hostility to the Mao Commemoration concert from the media was a reflection of the Australian capitalist rulers’ stance on the matter. After all, it is they who own and control the media. Thus, the newspapers leading the charge against the concert were The Australian/The Daily Telegraph – owned by the influential, billionaire Murdoch family – and the The Sydney Morning Herald, belonging to Fairfax Media which is owned by a range of wealthy capitalist investors and which also owns the right-wing radio station 2GB – notorious for the racist rantings of Alan Jones. SBS and the ABC, both of

which are government owned, were also at the forefront of the campaign against the Red Songs concert.

So why were the Australian capitalist rulers – as shown by the behaviour of the media that they control – so hostile to the Red Songs concert? Why are they so hostile to socialistic rule in China? After all, it is Red China – especially its booming socialistic state-owned enterprises - that is holding up the Australian economy by buying approximately one-third of all Australian exports. Well, in the cold calculation of the capitalist exploiting class, any loss of sales that they would suffer from a Chinese economy weakened by capitalist restoration pales in comparison to the fabulous profits they could reap if they succeeded in restoring capitalism in China and turning it into one gigantic cheap labour sweatshop. Although, as a country still pulling itself up from the extreme poverty of its pre-socialist days, the per capita GDP and hence wages in China are comparatively low compared to Australia, the wages there are rather high for a country of its per capita wealth. This means capitalists investing in China make far less profit than they otherwise would. Furthermore, wages in socialistic China are growing at amongst the fastest rate of any country in the world – having grown at over 10% a year for the last decade! Additionally, bosses must pay to Chinese workers, in addition to the regular wage, a high social wage that goes into funds accessible by workers in times of specific need. This includes unemployment insurance, a maternity leave fund, a superannuation-type pension fund but where the bosses must pay into it with an amount equal to around 20% of the regular wage rather than the 9% here and a health insurance fund for the worker that the bosses must pay into with an additional amount equal to approximately 10% of the regular wage. Then there is a fund to be used by workers to buy a house/apartment which the boss must pay into with another 10% on top of the regular wage. Western capitalists seeking to exploit workers in China also have to deal with a pro-worker Labour Law. This law, which was introduced in 2008 in the face of vociferous

dissent from Western investors, encourages unions and collective bargaining, mandates that unions must be consulted before any change to working conditions, strongly curbs casualisation of the workforce and restricts the bosses ability to retrench workers – for example, banning the laying off of long-term workers within five years of retirement or workers who have previously been injured at the workplace. Consequently, sweatshop-type factories – owned mainly by Taiwanese, Hong Kong, Western and Japanese bosses – that arose to some degree in China after pro-market reforms were introduced in the 1980s and 1990s, are being squeezed out. Nike and Adidas, who are amongst the big companies most notorious for sweatshop exploitation, have long ago packed up their factories in China and moved them to lower wage countries, despite China having much higher quality infrastructure.

Add to this a PRC state machine that is suspicious of capitalist exploiters (and with a propensity to – with little warning – come down on them hard and confiscate their capital) and a working class that has a tendency to not only go on strike but to

rebel by blocking roads, by occupying workplaces and even taking bosses hostage – all because they have a healthy sense of entitlement in what is their workers state – and you can see why the Western, Japanese and overseas Chinese capitalists are obsessed with trying to smash socialistic rule in China. They know that if they can overthrow the workers state, they could turn China into a huge version of the cheap labour factory belts of Indonesia, Bangladesh or the Philippines.

There is another reason why the world’s capitalist powers are intent on overthrowing the PRC. Although the Beijing government goes out of its way to appease the imperialist powers, the U.S., Australian, Japanese and other capitalists understand that the most populous country in the world remaining under any form of socialistic rule is still a potential threat to capitalist domination of the globe. Furthermore, the mere existence of a workers state in China provokes fears among the capitalist ruling classes around the world that, one day, the toiling masses in their own countries will also make an anti-capitalist revolution and boot them out of power.

Anti-PRC Chinese Exile Groups Unite With Australian Fascists

Among the forces promoting the anti-communist crusade against China are Australian fascist groups. One such group, the Party For Freedom, held a May 2014 racist and anti-communist protest outside Sydney’s Chinese consulate. Anticommunist Chinese exile groups are happy to co-operate with such Australian fascist groups even though the latter are extreme white supremacists who seek to incite violence against Asians. On 14 May 2014, Falun Gong joined former One Nation NSW Chairman, Bob Vinnicombe, as guest speakers at a Party For Freedom film night devoted to attacking the PRC government.



The Trotskyist Platform organised rally, held on the steps at the entrance to the Town Hall, protesting against Sydney City Council's decision to ban a pro-PRC, Mao commemoration concert arranged by pro-Communist Chinese immigrants that was to be held at the Town Hall on the same day, 6 September.

Refusing to Accept the Silencing of Pro-Red China Voices

In the end, the anticommunist groups and the Australian ruling class, through its hounds in the media, succeeded in their campaign against the Red Songs concert. Just a few days before the event, the City of Sydney, in an undemocratic act of censorship, cancelled access to the Town Hall venue for the concert. This cancellation was ordered despite the fact that the event itself had nothing to do with the City of Sydney and was never in any way endorsed by them. The concert organisers merely paid to hire the venue like other members of the public hiring a venue for an event. The City of Sydney claimed that their reason for cancelling the venue access was the fear of violence between concert goers and opponents and cited advice from the police. Yet, it is telling that when racist bigot Pauline Hanson two months ago spoke at the ABC's Q & A program, the police mobilised huge forces to prevent anti-racist protesters from disrupting the event. Similarly, when the filthy white supremacists in the "Reclaim Australia" movement held violence-inciting rallies against Muslims and non-white "ethnic" people over the course of the last 18 months, the authorities also massively mobilised to protect these fascists amid the spectre of determined anti-racist counter-demonstrations. Yet, when people wanted to attend a concert honouring the leader of a great socialistic revolution, the authorities say it must be cancelled to prevent violence. Of course, we expect nothing better from the organs of the Australian capitalist state: a machine that has been built up and is being constantly renovated to enforce the rule of the capitalist exploiting class over the exploited masses. However, it is important to diligently expose the role of the capitalist authorities to the masses.

In the face of the City of Sydney's cancellation of the venue access to the Sydney event and intimidated by the mainstream media and anti-communist groups' vicious campaign, the concert organisers then themselves cancelled the Melbourne event.

Emboldened, the anti-communists groups stated their intention to carry out still more aggressive actions to demonise the Chinese workers state. Leaders of the Embrace Australian Values Alliance vowed to "organize more events to raise

awareness among Australians of the 'dangers of Mao poison and red poison.'"

The nasty campaign to censor the pro-Red China concert and the campaign of lies against socialistic China and Mao is part of a conscious plan by the capitalist media and the anti-PRC NGOs to ensure that the Australian public will support the Washington-Canberra drive to destroy socialistic rule in China. They want to justify to the Australian population, the Australian government's participation in the U.S.-led campaign of military and diplomatic intimidation of the PRC over the South China Sea. They want to win public support for the Australian capitalist state's military build up and its hosting of 1,500 U.S. troops in Darwin, both of which are clearly aimed against socialistic China. Indeed, the anticommunist propaganda campaign aims to push "public opinion" to support a still more aggressive policy towards the PRC. It aims to justify a further increase in U.S. and Australian financial, media and diplomatic support for the various anti-communist NGOs – both within China and in exile – which seek to overturn socialistic rule in China.

Therefore, we in Trotskyist Platform could not sit idly by and allow those pushing for capitalist counterrevolution to use intimidation to silence those who stand by socialistic rule in China. We could not allow them to spread their anti-Red China lies unanswered. Therefore, we organised at short notice a rally outside what was to be the concert venue, at the very time the concert was to begin, to condemn the anti-communist campaign against Red China and to hail the terrific gains of China's 1949 anti-capitalist revolution. As well as Trotskyist Platform (TP) supporters, other

staunch anti-fascists also participated in the action. Among the placards we carried on the day included: "Defend Socialistic China Against Intimidation By Capitalist Powers. Down with the Capitalist Australian State's Military Build Up That Targets Red China! U.S., Australian Militaries: Stay Out of the South China Sea" and "Down with all groups seeking to restore capitalist rule in China! No return to the extreme exploitation, poverty and oppression of women of pre-1949 China!" As we emphasised in the call out for the rally, it is in the interests of the working class and all the oppressed in this country to stand in defence of the Chinese workers state:

... if counterrevolution overwhelmed the PRC, it would not only mean terrible suffering for the Chinese masses but would embolden Australia's capitalist rulers to unleash yet more vicious anti-union laws, yet more attacks on social welfare, yet more racist state brutality against Aboriginal people and still more racist scapegoating of Middle Eastern, Asian and African communities. On the other hand, if insurgent Chinese capitalists, the anti-communist NGOs that serve their interests and their imperialist godfathers are defeated, it would greatly invigorate the worldwide struggle against capitalism.

This evening's demonstration received much interest from passers-by with many ethnic Chinese people, in particular, stopping to take photos, listen to speeches and pick up rally leaflets. There were also a few dozen people who came to Town Hall because they had not been informed that the concert had been cancelled. Many of them expressed anger that the City of Sydney had cancelled the event.

Left, China, December 2013: Students in Taiyuan in Shanxi Province at an event leading up to the 120th anniversary of the birth of Mao Tse Tung that saw large crowds gather to honour Mao throughout China, including (Right) at his birthplace in Shaoshan, Hunnan Province.





The quality of anti-PRC forces: Anti-PRC, anti-communist activist Shan Ju Lin with arch-racist bigot Pauline Hanson. Shan was appointed a candidate for Hanson's One Nation party in a Queensland state seat. The Taiwanese-born woman disgustingly defended Hanson's claim that "Australia was in danger of being swamped by Asians." A former editor of The Epoch Times, the free Australian newspaper of the U.S. government-funded Falun Gong group, Shan rails that "the Chinese Communist Party is a great threat to Australia" and finds much common ground with One Nation's extreme hostility to socialistic China. One Nation Queensland

campaign manager, Jim Savage, stated that: "Is China an evil communist dictatorship? Absolutely, communism is the diametric opposite to what One Nation stands for." Indeed, it is the opposite! And One Nation's hatred of China's "communist dictatorship" shows socialistic rule in China in a very good light. Shan was eventually dumped as a One Nation candidate only because she made a homophobic comment – reflecting the extreme homophobia of Falun Gong – that was so blatant that it was an embarrassment even to the fascist One Nation filth.

The Threat of Counterrevolution from China's Insurgent Capitalist Class

Socialistic rule in China not only faces the threat from world capitalist powers and the anti-communist NGOs that they sponsor. In China today, alongside the socialistic state-owned enterprises that dominate her economy, are a layer of capitalists owning private businesses. Fortunately these capitalists do not yet rule China. But they are doing what they can to prepare to grab the one thing that could expand their "right" to exploitation: state power. Regardless of their pretensions of standing for "democracy," it is these fledgling Chinese capitalists - and their godfathers in the West - whom the anti-Red China dissidents (and the exile organisations that back them) actually serve.

As Trotskyist Platform (TP) spokesman Samuel Kim explained at the rally, these Chinese capitalists re-emerged in the late 1970s when, under the pressure of imperialist encirclement, the Chinese Communist Party allowed the development of small private sectors under a "Reform and Opening Up" policy. Although the "Reform and Opening Up" policy has within limits achieved its stated goal of contributing to increased economic development in some areas, it has also led to greater inequality and increased corruption. The new layer of capitalists that emerged used the influence that wealth buys to push for further openings for the private sector. Today in China there are - although in a far lower percentage of the population than in the U.S. or Australia - capitalist billionaires. To be sure, the PRC state still maintains the key sectors of the economy under socialistic public ownership

- including all the major banks, ports, oil/gas companies, big mines, airlines, most heavy industry and all the major aircraft, rail and car manufacturers - and thus administers a form of workers' control over society. Yet the layer of Chinese capitalists is restive and ambitious and is being nurtured at every level by the overseas Chinese capitalist ruling classes in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore as well as by the imperialist rulers of the U.S., Western Europe and Australia. The wealth of these private business bosses - and of the more numerous managers and high-flying professionals serving them - certainly brings with it some influence. There is today in China a layer of academics, economists, journalists, lawyers and politicians promoting the interests of China's capitalists. Such elements are to be found even within the Communist Party of China (the CPC) and governing departments. Meanwhile, the

mainstream of the ruling CPC bureaucracy itself partially bends to this pro-capitalist layer. Today, for example, the Beijing government is giving special incentives to new private companies, pushing for sell-offs of minority stakes in some state-owned enterprises to capitalist shareholders and cutting overcapacity in the coal and steel sectors in a way that will downsize some state-owned enterprises. PRC leaders are not, at the moment, at all calling for any major privatisations and the proposed measures do not in any sense spell capitalist restoration. However, although there are other trends acting to actually strengthen the socialistic public sector, if the slated reforms are implemented (there is much resistance to these measures) they will - other things being equal - increase the size and weight of the capitalist exploiting class and, thus, give this layer greater political influence and ability to organise for a future capitalist counterrevolution.

The working class under the leadership of consistent, resolute communists is the only force within China that can be relied on to resolutely defeat the political influence of the capitalists and curb their economic influence. It is the force that can smash capitalist restorationist forces in a way that will re-invigorate China's drive to socialism. We saw the Chinese working class playing that role in July 2009 at the Tonghua Steel enterprise in North-East China's Jilin Province. After the factory was privatised and workers threatened with job and pension cuts, tens of thousands of workers occupied the plant - some even beating the new capitalist boss to the death - and demanded the enterprise revert to state ownership. Within hours the privatisation was reversed and the factory returned to socialistic public ownership. Today, among the demands that true communists within the Chinese working class and CPC must fight for include:

- Stop all partial (and of course all full) privatizations of state-owned enterprises.
- In the necessary cuts to overcapacity in the steel and coal sectors, all cuts should come by closing down the often unsafe and polluting

private enterprises in the sector and not from any cuts to state-owned enterprises. All workers in the closed down enterprises should be guaranteed transfer to good paying jobs in state-owned enterprises.

- Extend to the private sector the anti-corruption, austerity drive (that has seen the arrest of many corrupt government officials over the last few years). For all the wealth and enterprises owned by private businessmen who offer a bribe, however small, to be immediately confiscated and turned into public property.
- For all capitalists, that is all private enterprise owners using hired labour, to be barred from being legislators in China's national and local peoples congresses (parliaments).

The top priority for the work of Australian socialists with regards to China, however, is not what we think should be done by Chinese communists but what should be done right here to help defend the conquests of the 1949 anti-capitalist revolution. If there is a movement of leftist and worker activists in places like the U.S. and Australia publicly mobilising actions in defence of the PRC workers state it will boost the morale of the many Chinese workers and leftist intellectuals - including leftist elements within the CPC - who are truly committed to socialism. It will, thereby, encourage them to intensify their efforts to defeat capitalist restorationist forces and renew the PRC's course towards socialism.

Making it much harder to build actions here in defence of Red China is the fact that most socialist groups in Australia are actually on the other side of the fence on this key issue. That is, they line up behind the imperialist drive to destroy the PRC workers state. Not wanting to stand firm in the face of the intense anti-communist propaganda against the PRC, they try to justify this position by concocting the theory that the Peoples Republic of China is actually just another capitalist country (rather strange then why the PRC's biggest capitalist trading partners are still intent on overthrowing



January 2013: Face-off in Guangzhou, southern China. After government censors curbed an editorial from the rightist Southern Weekly newspaper which called for political reforms that would serve to give greater political openings for pro-capitalist forces, the rightist journalists and their liberal and anti-communist supporters held protest rallies (Right). However, staunch communists held counter-demonstrations (Left) bearing placards which correctly called to "Strike Against Traitor (Pro-Western) Media" and to "Support the Path of Equality of Wealth!"

the state there!) and that, therefore in opposing the PRC, they are simply opposing just another capitalist state. The most rabid in pushing this line are the Solidarity group and Socialist Alternative (SAlt). The latter even wrote in solidarity with "dissident" Liu Xiaobo (see Socialist Alternative, 19 November 2012, <http://sa.org.au/node/74>), a right-wing neo-con who was jailed in China for trying to organise a movement to overthrow China's socialistic state and institute a system where privatisation of state-owned enterprises and land would take place. This "dissident," who is defended by SAlt, is funded by the U.S. government's notorious National Endowment for Democracy and openly supported the U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, supports Israel's genocidal oppression of Palestinian people whom he calls "provocateurs" and calls for China to be brought under Western colonial rule for hundreds of years (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/dec/15/nobel-winner-liu-xiaobo-chinese-dissident>).

Albeit in a less rabid fashion, the Socialist Alliance group also takes a similar stance on China as Solidarity and SAlt – despite having a small number of members who courageously take a pro-PRC position. This was seen most starkly in April 2008 during a period of especially sharp division within Australia between supporters of socialistic rule in the PRC and enemies of the PRC. This battle took place over an Olympic torch relay

in Canberra for the Beijing Olympics. Socialist Alliance had then joined in with mainstream anti-communists, descendants of the former serf-slave owning ruling class of the old feudal Tibet, hard-line Vietnamese anti-communists who hate the PRC as much as they hate the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the neo-Nazi "National Anarchist" group in an anti-PRC protest that sought to disrupt the torch relay. However, their efforts that day were drowned by a 30,000 strong counter-rally by pro-communist Chinese people which we in TP joined in solidarity.

One bona fide left group, other than TP, that does not take an anti-PRC position is the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). However, unfortunately, despite a few members being determined to take a strong stand on this question, the CPA seems to be embarrassed by its position. It bends to the prevailing winds of mainstream sentiment by swaying away from taking an activist stance in defence of the Chinese workers state. What all this means is that those of us who do understand the need to actually campaign in defence of socialistic China must work triply hard to expose anti-communist lies against the PRC (including those being parroted by nominal socialists), promote solidarity with the PRC within the broader Left and the workers movement and organise further actual actions in support of the PRC workers state.

Anti-PRC Frenzy Hits Cold War Proportions

Tonight's rally was held at a time when anticommunist hostility to the PRC from the Australian establishment has hit Cold War proportions. The last few weeks have seen yet more hostile rhetoric against the PRC from Australian politicians and the mainstream media over the South China Sea issue. Thousands upon thousands of kilometres away from Australia's shores, the Australian and U.S. capitalist rulers' "concern" over the South China Sea issue is just a way to torment the PRC with military and diplomatic pressure. Meanwhile, the last few days have seen the right-wing Liberal/National Party government and the media hounds run a witch-hunting campaign against Labor senator, Sam Dastyari over a \$1,671 travel bill of his that was paid for by a private Chinese company which they have claimed has links (which seem rather tenuous) to the Chinese government. Those attacking Dastyari claim he took the money in exchange for making comments favourable to China. They cite a statement that he once made, in a moment of honesty, that, "the South China Sea is China's own affair." In the face of the conservatives' attack, Dastyari completely renounced his earlier statement on the South China Sea issue and slavishly and repeatedly professed his loyalty to the ALP's hawkish anti-PRC stance on the question. As a Laborite social democrat, it is a given that Dastyari does not have any consistent commitment to the interests of the working class which his ALP claims to stand for. Yet, the attack on Dastyari is completely unfair and can only feed into anti-PRC hostility. The amount he received from this Chinese company was tiny compared to the high income that politicians receive and hardly likely to sway his opinion on such a key issue. Furthermore, the size of the donation is a pittance compared to the donations that local capitalists give to politicians. For example, Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce had once received a donation from Australian billionaire, Gina Rinehart, that was 30 times greater than what Dastyari got. Even if in the hypothetical case, Dastyari did take the money in exchange for a commitment to not buy into the aggressive campaign against China over the South China Sea, he would only be guilty of taking the right stance on the issue (albeit very briefly) for the wrong reason. From the standpoint of the working class and oppressed – whose interests reside with defence of the PRC workers state – this is hardly a crime. His real crime is that he then completely reversed this correct position for the sake of his lucrative career as a parliamentary politician. However, that only puts him on a par with all the other parliamentarians out there.



Left: Deputy prime minister Barnaby Joyce with his great mate and benefactor, Gina Rinehart. Rinehart once gave Joyce a \$50,000 gift. Yet Joyce received no blowback for it. In contrast, Laborite Sam Dastyari (Right) was witch-hunted for receiving a payment from a Chinese company that was 30 times smaller than the Rinehart donation to Joyce. The witchhunt, which eventually forced Dastyari to resign from his Shadow Ministry position, took place mainly because he had once made the true statement (which he later cowardly retracted) that "the South China Sea is China's own affair."

Although the government and Murdoch media witch hunt of Dastyari was partly a way to score points against the ALP Opposition they were also using the campaign to whip up further anticommunist hostility to China. Indeed, the campaign against Dastyari comes on the heels of the ABC network running a supposed exposé of donations to political parties made by Chinese businessmen, some of whom they claim have “links” to the Chinese government. Notwithstanding such ABC efforts to outdo the Murdoch media in fearmongering about the PRC, the fact is that given that China is by far Australia’s biggest trading partner it is unsurprising that many Australian businesses – and hence a proportion of the businesses making political donations - have some links to China. Indeed, many of the donations “exposed” are simply by businessmen who happen to be Chinese migrants living in Australia who, like all other capitalists, seek to further their interests by bringing political parties under their sway through donations. Moreover, the total of the “China-linked” donations reported by the ABC pale in comparison to the massive amounts paid by non-Chinese Australian corporate bigwigs, something which the ABC conveniently manages to forget to tell its audience. Thus, according to the ABC, businesses “with Chinese connections” gave donations to Australian political parties that totalled \$5.5 million over the last three years up to 2015. Yet go to the Australian Electoral Commission’s website and if you total up all the donations in the same period they come to over \$85 million. In other words what the ABC claims are “China-connected” donations come to just 6% of total listed political donations ... which is barely greater than the proportion of Chinese-origin people living in Australia! The fact is that in capitalist Australia, the whole political system and electoral politics is based on patronage by wealthy businessmen. This involves not only the massive

donations necessary for things like political advertising, hiring of venues for meetings and payment of full-time activists but through the capitalist tycoons who own the media being able to so significantly shape electoral debates and public opinion. The reality of democracy in capitalist countries is not one person one vote but, in reality, something more like one thousand dollars one thousand votes.

Ominously, the ABC-created furore about “China-connected” political donations targeted not only the PRC but Chinese immigrants in Australia too. So too did an article in the Fairfax-owned Australian Financial Review last weekend which hysterically claimed that Chinese tourists visiting Australia and Chinese migrants living here form a huge army of “citizen spies” that “act as a giant human vacuum cleaner, sucking up intelligence to be digested in Beijing” (<http://www.afr.com/news/world/asia/australia-is-losing-the-battle-against-chinas-citizen-spies-20160831-gr5rfq#ixzz4K9x9dNM9>). Such nutty, conspiracy theories are not only designed to ramp up hostility to Red China but end up intensifying a racist climate that has nurtured not only further attacks on Aboriginal people and Muslims but attacks on Asians too. Propaganda targeting Chinese migrants and visitors will lead to yet more violent racist assaults on the streets and in public transport and will put further wind in the sails of Pauline Hanson’s bigoted One Nation Party and even more extreme white supremacist outfits. Yet the mixing of anti-communist hostility to the PRC and anti-Asian prejudice is hardly new in Australia. When the 1949 Chinese Revolution took place there was a near hysterical mood amongst the Australian capitalist establishment as their yellow peril, white racist fear of Asians now mixed with their horror at the world’s most populous country going towards communism.



Successive U.S. capitalist administrations have used military pressure against China to enhance their efforts to squeeze China into abandoning her socialistic system. Already under the previous Obama administration, the U.S. was sailing fearsome firepower through the South China Sea as part of this policy – especially in 2015 and 2016. Left: Part of the US Navy’s Seventh Fleet, including the aircraft carrier USS John S. Stennis and two guided-missile destroyers, has formed the force sailing provocatively through or near Chinese waters. Now, the new Trump administration has already started ratcheting up these threats against China even further. During his election campaign, Trump accused China of “raping our country” (Right). Since being inaugurated, Trump has continued with this open China-bashing and his Secretary of State even threatened U.S. military action to blockade China’s access to its artificial islands in the South China Sea – a measure which if implemented would be tantamount to an act of war!

Unpicking the Tangled Web of Anti-PRC Lies

In our struggle to mobilise working class solidarity with the PRC we need to pick apart the various lies that are used to slander socialistic rule in China. One set of lies that was used much in the campaign against the Red Songs concert involved greatly exaggerating the loss of life from malnourishment during the 1959 to 1961 period in China known as the Great Leap Forward; and then to outrageously claim that what happened was equivalent to Mao’s CPC directly killing all those who died. The Great Leap Forward was a basically well-intentioned plan to rapidly industrialise China and increase agricultural production. The backdrop to it was the then recent split between the USSR and the PRC - a disastrous falling out between the two socialistic giants for which the leaderships of both states share blame. In the first few years after the 1949 Revolution, Soviet technical aid had been invaluable to increasing agricultural and industrial production in China especially given that the PRC faced sanctions and intense hostile pressure from the capitalist world. However, with the withdrawal of Soviet assistance, the CPC now attempted to industrialise China by bringing the farmers into industrial production through constructing a huge number of small-scale industrial plants and to increase agricultural production through infrastructure construction by large mobilisations of farmers. The need to achieve rapid industrialisation was given greater urgency by the growing U.S. presence in Vietnam and Asia more generally – the PRC needed to build up its industrial strength to the extent necessary to deter a U.S. attack and it needed to now be able to do this without Soviet assistance.

The problem, however, was that the technical level of the Chinese masses, who before the 1949 Revolution had been largely consigned to illiteracy and a lack of education, was not then sufficient for the scale of the industrial and agricultural leap being envisaged. Furthermore,

the small scale steel and other furnaces were inefficient and the breakneck speed being proposed meant that resources were misallocated in the rush. Meanwhile, positive aspects of the Great Leap Forward program were implemented in a too hurried manner to be successful. As a



Photo: Trotskyist Platform

Left: The Shanghai building where the Communist Party of China (CPC) began its founding congress in 1921. The building now holds a party history museum. The museum shows how China's communist movement developed alongside the communist movement's growth worldwide and was inspired by the 1917 October Socialist Revolution in Russia. One exhibit (Right) hails the 1919 founding of the Communist International. Communists in China must again stand on the fierce internationalism and proudly working class outlook that animated the CPC in its early years.

result, production actually fell during the Great Leap Forward period and agricultural production especially suffered due to farmers being shifted into industrial production and large-scale public works. What compounded the problem was that the PRC leaders did not, in time, listen to the feedback from cadre in the field who were telling them that the Plan was running into serious problems and in some areas outright failing. This was due to the bureaucratically deformed nature of the Chinese workers state. Although, since the 1949 Revolution, the Chinese toilers held state power and the decisive means of production has been in their collective hands – a tremendous step forward – the actual political administration is concentrated in a bureaucratic layer aloof from the masses. Why this is the case goes back to the Chinese Revolution itself. Unlike the 1917 Russian Revolution, which was spearheaded by urban wage workers, the main forces in the 1949 Chinese Revolution were poor tenant farmers and rural workers. What did this difference between these two great revolutions mean? Well, in Russia the urban working class that made the 1917 Revolution could truly be welded together so as to be unbreakable. Not only were the proletariat assembled together in large numbers in big factories but these wage workers knew they'd make no economic headway unless they were united and thus collectively strong enough to take on the capitalist boss. To be sure, it still took the tireless efforts of a determined communist party to solidify the workers together. However, the point is that it was possible to unite the revolutionary

class through its own organizations, the factory committees and soviets, and it was these elected workers organizations that exercised power in a truly sovereign way immediately after the 1917 Revolution. This administration lasted in Soviet Russia for several years until the pressure of hostile encirclement by foreign powers led to a bureaucratic degeneration of the workers state (from that point on until its collapse in 1991-92, the USSR remained a workers state but its administration was no longer based on workers democracy). In China, the poor farmers who there played the key role in the 1949 Revolution also had to show great unity. Without this they could not have triumphed in the Civil War. However, because the tenant farmers worked as individuals (albeit handing a big chunk of their produce to their landlords) they operated separately from and even in direct market competition with each other. This mode of production inevitably had its reflection in the way the farmers related to each other. Thus, at times the tenant farmers had to be held together somewhat artificially from above by the more politically aware communist cadres. During the Civil War the burning necessity to defeat the landlords kept the poor farmers together but afterwards, especially, the CPC cadres were required to smother centrifugal tendencies that would otherwise have torn the unity of the tenant farmers apart. As a result, unfortunately, the workers state produced by the 1949 Revolution was bureaucratically deformed from its very inception.

During the start of the Great Leap Forward, with the bureaucratic PRC administration not making a corrective in good time, the collapse in agricultural production led to serious malnourishment in some areas and for the first year or so a sharp dive in China's life expectancy at birth. This was compounded by a series of natural disasters. However, contrary to the vile anticommunist propaganda which equates the CPC's responsibility for the loss of life during this period to Hitler's responsibility for putting millions of people in gas chambers, the fact is that even in the worst year of the Great Leap Forward, China's life expectancy never dropped to what it was before the 1949 Revolution. And this is the point. Yes, the first period of the Great Leap

Forward was a disaster and there was bad famine in some areas. However, the fact is that the reason it was so noticeable was that the anticapitalist Revolution had made such progress in feeding the Chinese masses in the previous ten years that the malnourishment now stood out. Prior to the 1949 Revolution, large parts of the Chinese population lived in frequent danger of dying from malnourishment and had little access to any decent health care at all. In the capitalist-feudal times, tens upon tens of millions of Chinese people perished in the famines of 1907, 1911, 1920-21, 1928-1930, 1936 and 1942-43 not to mention those who were dying **all the time** due to malnourishment. Millions more died in regular flooding like the nearly four million people who



Children in the ethnic minority Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China sing during a Children's Day 2012 event. In the 2006 to 2010 period, the PRC government gradually rolled out measures to make the nine years of compulsory school education completely free in all areas of China. Today, all Chinese students in the first nine years of schooling pay no tuition and administrative fees and are provided with workbooks, textbooks, stationery, school uniforms and other items for free. In poorer rural areas, school students are also given a free school lunch and students from low-income families also receive a stipend for living allowance. In the Tibetan Autonomous Region, the southern heavily ethnic Uyghur part of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and ethnic minority areas of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and of Gansu and Qinghai provinces, in addition to the free nine years of compulsory schooling, students also receive for free three years of pre-school and kindergarten and three years of upper high school education.

died in China's 1931 floods. The overturning of capitalist rule and the subsequent allocation of resources to peoples' needs not only meant that the Chinese masses could be largely properly fed but that measures were taken to greatly reduce the death toll from flooding.

Furthermore, recovery from the hardest times of the Great Leap Forward was swift. By 1960, the CPC pulled back from the most failed methods. Moreover, some of the better aspects of the Great Leap Forward, like the mass irrigation construction program, began to bear fruit, while other programs that were at first clumsily implemented were now organised in a more effective manner. As a result, not only did the average life expectancy and overall economic production quickly recover to pre-1959 levels, they actually quickly skyrocketed way above pre-1959 levels and have continued to grow at a solid rate ever since. And this is the overall picture. The fact is that because of the 1949 anti-capitalist Revolution, hundreds of millions of Chinese people who would have died at childbirth, or would have died while giving birth or would have died from malnourishment or lack of proper medical care, were able to live basically full lives because of the achievements of socialistic rule and a collectivised economy. That is why even elderly Chinese workers and farmers who lived through the hardest times of the Great Leap Forward are overwhelmingly still sympathetic to Mao and the CPC – which makes a mockery of the fanciful claims of the anti-communists that Mao was responsible for killing tens of millions of people.

The improvements that the 1949 revolution brought in the cultural field to the Chinese masses is just as impressive as the gains brought in nourishment and health care. Notwithstanding setbacks resulting from certain excesses during the Cultural Revolution period, socialistic rule opened up incredible cultural opportunities for the Chinese masses. Prior to the 1949 revolution, less than 20% of the population was literate. The

exploited masses endured lives that were not only hard but dreary – they had little opportunity to engage in cultural pursuits. This was especially true for women from the rural masses – who were mostly prevented from leaving the house like many rural and poor urban women in capitalist South Asia still are today. Today, however, literacy for Chinese youth is basically 100% and women outnumber men in Chinese universities. Chinese youth flock to take part in various cultural and leisure activities from tourism, sport and music to opera, calligraphy, painting, dance and acrobatics. In contrast, before the 1949 Revolution, folk dancing was banned as the capitalist KMT regime wanted to ensure that the masses were submissive and disunited. In response, Mao's Communist forces insisted on the masses' right to dance and promoted people being able to express themselves by doing the popular Yangko folk dance in the streets. The victory of the Communist forces saw an explosion in Yangko and other folk dancing. Today, public dancing is so much a part of PRC society that China is famous for its “dancing grandparents” who hold late night dance parties on the streets – some of which are so loud that younger neighbours have complained about the rowdy pensioners!

Looking at this big picture, it was not wrong for the organisers of the Red Songs concert to refer to Mao as a great “humanitarian.” However, as Marxists, we understand that the influence (whether for positive or negative) of leaders should not be exaggerated. We understand that the decisive elements in shaping history are the clash of competing social forces and the collective struggle of the toiling masses. Thus, the way we would put it is that the heroic struggle of the exploited masses of China – who were led by the CPC that was led by Mao – overthrew the capitalist-landlord ruling class in 1949. This led to the establishment of a workers state that, despite its bureaucratic deformation, brought terrific improvements to the human rights of the worker and farmer masses and to the position of women.



March 2016: Women and men soldiers of a communications unit of China's Peoples Liberation Army do physical training together. China's 1949 anti-capitalist revolution greatly uplifted the social position of Chinese women.

The True Nature of Anti-PRC NGOs That Talk about “Human Rights”

The real reason for the hostility to Red China and Mao of the anti-communist local and Chinese NGO groups that campaigned against the Red Songs concert had nothing to do with the hardships during the Great Leap Forward. Their real reason is apparent within the misnamed, “Joint Statement of the Chinese Community in Australia on Protest against Maoist Concert.” There, the anti-communist Chinese groups rail against what they say was: “landlords slaughtered in the Land Reform Movement in the period from 1950 to 1952.” What they are objecting to was the fact that after the 1949 Revolution, agricultural land that had hitherto been owned by greedy and brutal landlords was divided up amongst the formerly exploited peasants who had worked the land. The landlord holdings were then reduced to an equal share with the liberated peasants. The anti-communist groups hate this, because they reflect the interests of – and in many cases actually themselves directly are – those descendants of the former capitalist and landlord exploiting class who cannot bear to live merely as equals with the formerly exploited masses. They are seething with rage at having had their privileged position taken away and would not stop at anything to once again lord it over the Chinese masses the way their forefathers once did. Of course, there are many descendants of the deposed exploiting class of China who today are content to live and work as ordinary citizens. However, other descendants, because they see the support given to them by the Western imperialist rulers, still hold the dream of once again becoming the rich rulers of China. Alongside them are people linked to those sections of China's new, private business-owning strata who are not satisfied with the partial openings given to them by China's post-1978 market reforms – they want actual capitalist counterrevolution to “freely” realise their “full potential” to exploit Chinese workers. Then there are former capitalist businessmen from China's post-1978 period who later lost their investments. Since the right to capitalist exploitation is not in practice guaranteed in China and PRC authorities – sometimes quite arbitrarily – often come down against private businesses in disputes with publicly-owned enterprises, many a post-1978 capitalist has lost out big time. These greedy jilted capitalists, like the unrepentant descendants of the deposed capitalist-landlord ruling class, are very embittered against socialistic rule and seek revenge.

For these anti-PRC forces to claim to stand for “human rights” is the vilest hypocrisy. The pre-1949 ruling class of China that they hark back to was - alongside its Western imperialist patrons - infamous for its savagery against the Chinese masses. American journalist, Jack Belden, in his book *China Shakes the World* (a fascinating eyewitness account of the Chinese Revolution), described how the landlords totally subjugated the families of their tenants in those days:

A rich peasant or landlord merely had to wait until a farmer was in the fields and go around to his home and force the farmer’s wife to his wishes. Short of murder, which was difficult because of the landlord’s guards and because the landlord controlled most of the spears in the village, the farmer had no recourse, especially since the landlord or his henchman was village chief and hence the police power too....

During the to and fro of the 1946-1949 Civil War, in formerly Communist-controlled areas that were seized back by the KMT capitalist forces, the KMT and landlords would publicly execute farmer activists who had participated in redistributing land from the landlord to the farmers. Those tenant farmers that participated in land reform that were not finished off by the KMT would often be buried alive by the landlords themselves. If the landlords could not find the tenant in question they would bury the farmer’s family - throwing women and children into ditches, pits and wells and covering them with earth.

Standing by such cruel right-wing terror, it is little surprise then that the anti-PRC groups that opposed the Red Songs concert themselves uphold the most reactionary politics. Thus, one of the groups that campaigned against the concert is the local-based Australian Family Association (AFA) created by fanatical anti-communist Bob Santamaria’s National Civic Council (NCC). The AFA are extreme opponents of feminism, women’s right to abortion and LGBTI rights. The NCC was Tony Abbott’s political inspiration and strongly backed him in the leadership contest he lost last year to Malcolm Turnbull. Hard right Liberal Party senator, Eric Abetz, is closely linked to the AFA and NCC. Another prominent

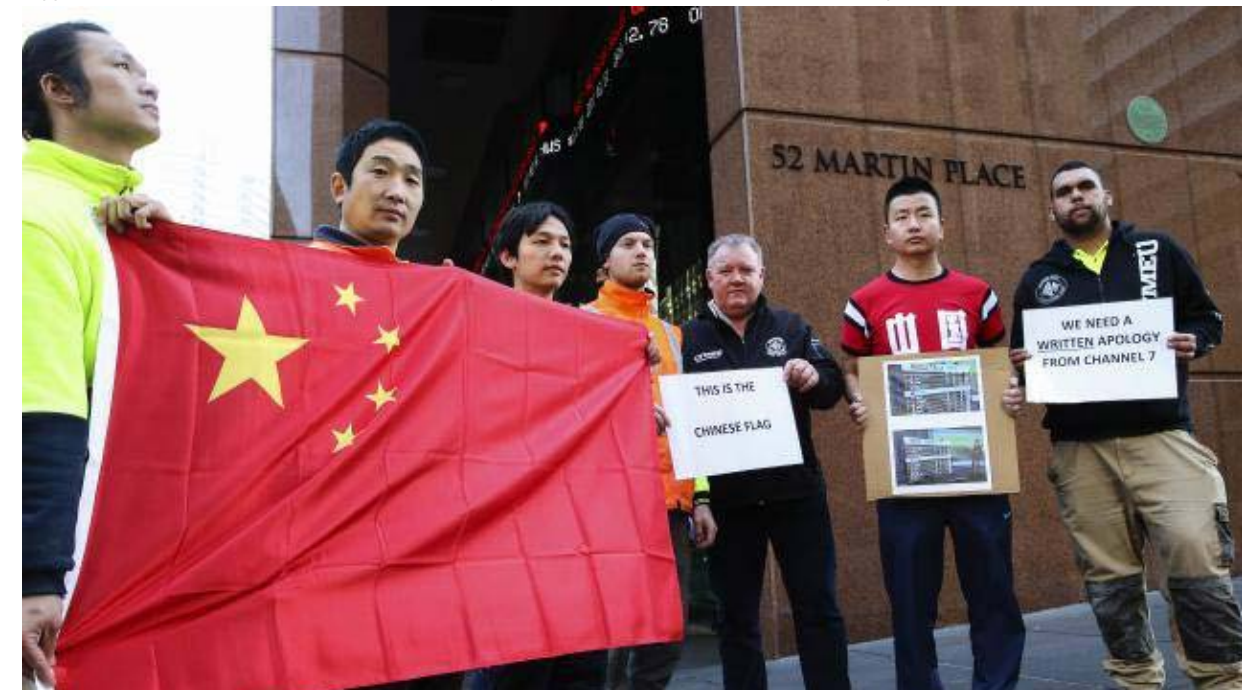
group that campaigned against the Red Songs concert is the Falun Gong (or Falun Dafa) group. Falun Gong are a right-wing political group that operates under the cover of being a religious organisation. As well as espousing extreme opposition to communism and to the land-redistribution to poor farmers that took place with the 1949 Chinese Revolution, Falun Gong are also notable for their rabid homophobia and their extreme patriarchal conservatism on all social issues. Thus, Falun Gong bemoans that the Chinese Revolution destroyed the old Confucian family resulting in wives becoming disobedient to their husbands and children disobedient to their parents. Falun Gong leader Li Hongzhi also advocates inflammatory ideas on racial “purity” and describes children born of mixed-race relationships as “defective persons.” When he toured Australia in 1996, he even claimed in a speech in Sydney that heaven itself is segregated: “the yellow people, the white people, and the black people have the corresponding places in heaven. Anybody who does not belong to his race will not be cared for. This is the truth, and it is not that I’m making up something here. What I am telling everyone are heavenly secrets.” It is little wonder that Falun Gong hold joint meetings and actions with the extreme white supremacist, Party For Freedom (see for example this one: <https://www.partyforfreedom.org.au/2014/05/06/film-night-on-chinese-government-harvesting-organs/>).

Perhaps the most telling expression of the reactionary nature of the groups that campaigned against the Red Songs concert is their decision to call themselves the “Embrace Australian Values Alliance.” By this they, of course, don’t mean the values of the trade union movement when at its best - which expresses values like workers’ solidarity - or the values of integrity and anti-racism of the Aboriginal resistance movements. Rather, they mean the values that dominate Australian society - which means the values of the capitalist rulers that run this country. And what are these values? The values that see over 500 Aboriginal people killed in state custody over the last 30 years while not a single policeman or prison guard is ever convicted over the scores of Aboriginal people

who were simply murdered by the state forces. The values that see desperate refugees locked up in hell-hole detention centres. The values, emanating from ruling class propaganda, that drive some people to physically attack, harass and insult Aboriginal, Asian, African and Middle Eastern people on the streets, in public transport and at entertainment and sporting venues. The values that saw the Australian military take part in the genocidal, U.S.-led war against the heroic Vietnamese Revolution and later the brutal, colonial wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and now Iraq/Syria. The values that see tens of thousands of people sleeping rough in the streets and hundreds of thousands more with no stable accommodation in this fabulously resource-rich country where the richest 200 people hoard nearly \$200 billion in assets. The values that drive the mainstream

media - the same ones that campaigned against the Red Songs concert - to vilify low-income single mothers and the unemployed as “free-loaders” while never blaming the greedy bosses who retrench workers at will in order to boost their profits for causing this very unemployment. These are the “values” that the anti-PRC NGOs and the Australian ruling class want to impose on the PRC. In the process they hope to subvert the PRC’s own values - socialistic values which see **the number one campaign in China right now being the one to uplift every single person above the poverty line by 2020**. The Chinese workers and farmers do not need any amount of the values that currently rule capitalist Australia - and neither do the Australian working class, Aboriginal people and any of the other downtrodden sections of this country.

Sydney, August 2016: CFMEU construction workers union protests against Channel 7’s blatantly anti-China bias in its coverage of the 2016 Olympics. Channel 7 cut away from China’s athletes during the opening ceremony, ostentatiously did not play several high-profile medal ceremonies that involved Chinese victories and even used the wrong flag for China. Channel 7 is owned by filthy rich, capitalist tycoon Kerry Stokes. The rally did not openly state the class character of China as a socialistic workers state and identify this as the reason for the anti-China bias of Australia’s capitalist media. Nevertheless, by slamming the “ignorant and discriminatory” media coverage of China, the CFMEU’s action objectively took a stand with Red China. It was also welcome solidarity with discriminated against, Chinese-Australian workers who are being harassed by the anti-Chinese bigotry that is, in part, driven by the Australian capitalists’ hostility to the Peoples Republic of China. Many Chinese Australians are workers in the construction industry. The CFMEU protest included CFMEU officials, ethnic Chinese members and delegates and other construction workers. It was a breath of fresh air that flies in the face of the putrid economic nationalism and anti-communist China-bashing associated with certain other campaigns supported by its leadership - including the campaign against the China-Australia Free-Trade Agreement and the ALP’s campaign against China’s state-owned State Grid enterprise being an investor (which did not even happen) in electricity assets being sold off by the NSW state government. Completely unlike those previous campaigns, the CFMEU’s pro-China demonstration outside Channel 7’s office - both by opposing divisive anti-Chinese bigotry and by supporting the world’s biggest socialistic state - was an act in the interests of CFMEU members and the entire working class.



For An Internationalist Perspective to Fight for World Socialist Revolution

Having refuted the slanders against the PRC and Mao made by the anti-communists, we should say that we do recognise that Mao and the CPC did make some serious political blunders. These are, however, not the ones that the opponents of the PRC consider mistakes and are in the opposite direction to what they attack the CPC for. The errors that Mao's CPC did make arose centrally from their perspective of subordinating the interests of the exploited and oppressed around the world to the quest for friendly coexistence with the imperialist powers. They did - and continue to do this - in the hope that this would provide a benign environment for the building of socialism in China. This was not always the CPC's outlook. When first formed in 1921, the CPC was genuinely and proudly internationalist. However, after the CPC suffered a terrible defeat in 1927 when Chiang Kai-Shek's KMT massacred tens of thousands of communists and worker activists in Shanghai, Changsha and Guangzhou (ironically because the CPC was terribly misled by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which had itself gone down the ultimately failed path of seeking friendly "coexistence with imperialism"), the party began to turn its back on internationalism and took on a national-centred approach. Where this played out most harmfully was when in the early 1970s Mao made a pact with the U.S. that saw the PRC line up with imperialism against the socialistic USSR. This treachery not only contributed to the eventual defeat of the USSR but for over a decade and a half saw China line up alongside imperialism on the wrong side of many key international issues – for example, by opposing the Cuban and Soviet-backed Angolan anti-colonial struggle.



24 April 2008, Face-off in Canberra: Tens of thousands of Chinese youth, bearing the pro-communist PRC flag rally to defend the Beijing Olympics Torch relay from sabotage by a much smaller number of anti-communists. The anti-communists (shown on the left of the photo) ranged from Falun Gong to Australian conservative anti-communists to ignorant middle-class liberal supporters of the former Dalai Lama feudal regime in Tibet to hardline Vietnamese anti-communists bearing the yellow with red-stripes flag of the defeated former South Vietnamese regime (again on the left of the above photo). We in Trotskyist Platform proudly joined with the pro-Red China forces on the day but the Socialist Alliance group joined the Vietnamese anti-communists/"Free-Tibet"/right-wing bloc.

A New Storm Against Imperialism

[SOURCE: Peking Review, April 19, 1968, pp. 5-6.]

Statement by Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, in Support of the Afro-American Struggle Against Violent Repression" (April 16, 1968)

Some days ago, Martin Luther King, the Afro-American clergyman, was suddenly assassinated by the U.S. imperialists. Martin Luther King was an exponent of nonviolence. Nevertheless, the U.S. imperialists did not on that account show any tolerance toward him, but used counter-revolutionary violence and killed him in cold blood. This has taught the broad masses of the Black people in the United States a profound lesson. It has touched off a new storm in their struggle against violent repression sweeping well over a hundred cities in the United States, a storm such as has never taken place before in the history of that country. It shows that an extremely powerful revolutionary force is latent in the more than twenty million Black Americans.

The storm of Afro-American struggle taking place within the United States is a striking manifestation of the comprehensive political and economic crisis now gripping U.S. imperialism. It is dealing a telling blow to U.S. imperialism, which is beset with difficulties at home and abroad.

The Afro-American struggle is not only a struggle waged by the exploited and oppressed Black people for freedom and emancipation, it is also a new clarion call to all the exploited and oppressed people of the United States to fight against the barbarous rule of the monopoly capitalist class. It is a tremendous aid and inspiration to the struggle of the people throughout the world against U.S. imperialism and to the struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism. On behalf of the Chinese people, I hereby express resolute support for the just struggle of the Black people in the United States.

Racial discrimination in the United States is a product of the colonialist and imperialist system. The contradiction between the Black masses in the United States and the U.S. ruling circles is a class contradiction. Only by overthrowing the reactionary rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class and destroying the colonialist and imperialist system can the Black people in the United States win complete emancipation. The Black masses and the masses of white working people in the United States have common interests and common objectives to struggle for. Therefore, the Afro-American struggle is winning sympathy and support from increasing numbers of white working people and progressives in the United States. The struggle of the Black people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers' movement, and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class.

In 1963, in the "Statement Supporting the Afro-Americans in Their Just Struggle Against Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism," I said that the "the evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and thrived with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the Black people." I still maintain this view.

At present, the world revolution has entered a great new era. The struggle of the Black people in the United States for emancipation is a component part of the general struggle of all the people of the world against U.S. imperialism, a component part of the contemporary world revolution. I call on the workers, peasants, and revolutionary intellectuals of all countries and all who are willing to fight against U.S. imperialism to take action and extend strong support to the struggle of the Black people in the United States! People of the whole world, unite still more closely and launch a sustained and vigorous offensive against our common enemy, U.S. imperialism, and its accomplices! It can be said with certainty that the complete collapse of colonialism, imperialism, and all systems of exploitation, and the complete emancipation of all the oppressed peoples and nations of the world are not far off.

Although Mao generally adhered to the revisionist program of subordinating the struggle for international revolution to the [vain] quest for "peaceful coexistence with imperialism" in order to allow for the unhindered building of socialism in one's own country, Mao did sometimes break out from this conservative foreign policy. He made some powerful statements in support of the American black liberation struggle. As a result militant American black activists in the 1950s and 1960s showed great adulation for Mao and the PRC.

After Mao's death, the subsequent, less left-wing, CPC leaders deepened the PRC's pursuit of "coexistence with imperialism" and shied away from the powerful statements that Mao sometimes made in support of the struggles of the world's oppressed (for example, in solidarity with the black liberation struggle in the U.S).

To be sure, since the collapse of the USSR, the PRC has become the number one enemy of the capitalist powers and this has sometimes pushed the PRC to take a decent stand on important questions: for example, by stating a commitment to defend Cuba against external intervention and against any threats to its socialistic system. However, what is needed is for the PRC to **consistently** follow a policy of using its resources to campaign for a socialist transformation throughout the world. This alone can ensure the preservation of socialistic rule in China and its eventual transformation into authentic communism. Such a foreign policy means, for example, that PRC leaders would proudly assert in international forums that China's economic and development success are due to the socialistic character of its economy, rather than trying to re-assure the capitalists that they are not that different to each other. It would mean that the PRC much more strongly defends her socialistic sister North Korea

against the threats and sanctions that she faces. Most importantly, the PRC would strongly state its solidarity with struggles of the exploited and oppressed in the capitalist countries. A glimpse of this happened when China, in Mao's time, feted two delegations of staunch Aboriginal activists in the early 1970s (<http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/images/history/1970s/china/chinadx.html>). Such acts of solidarity, however, must become the norm rather than the exception.

In order to encourage the Chinese working class to insist that the PRC turns down this path of solidarity with the class struggle in the capitalist world, we need to show them that the exploited classes in the capitalist world can, indeed, be their true allies. The socialist movement in the West must do this by fighting to blunt all the daggers that imperialism has lined up against the socialistic heart of the PRC. What is needed in Australia are protest actions to oppose the anti-PRC U.S./Australia/Japan military alliance. We need to oppose Canberra's and the Liberal/Labor/Greens politicians' support for counterrevolutionary exile forces – the same forces that together with the might of the capitalist media managed to force the cancellation of today's planned Mao Commemoration concert. We must also solidarise with key pro-working class acts by the

Below Left: Mao meets prominent American black liberation activist, W. E. B. Du Bois during the latter's trip to China in 1959. Below Right: American Black Panther Party founder Huey Newton meets first Premier of the People's Republic of China, Zhou Enlai, during a 1971 trip to China at the invitation of the PRC government.



Photo: Trotskyist Platform

Chinese youth photograph the giant portrait of Chairman Mao that hangs over Beijing's huge central square, Tiananmen. Although Mao was not only a great revolutionary but a leader whose inconsistent program led him to make capitulations to imperialism – most seriously the promulgation of an early 1970s alliance with U.S. imperialism – solidarity for Mao amongst the Chinese masses is a reflection (albeit an imperfect one) of support for communism and a longing for the greater equality and friendship amongst people of the Mao era.

PRC state – like its ongoing massive campaign to provide low-rent public housing to its masses and its spectacular crackdown some five years ago against the Rio Tinto corporate thugs who were deviously eroding China's socially owned assets.

As the fate of the Red Songs concert showed, trying to reduce hostility to the PRC through promoting the richness of Chinese culture and even of pro-PRC culture is wholly insufficient. There is, of course, no harm at all in doing this – it is a good thing. However, the capitalist ruling class in Australia is not going to let cultural "soft power" means undercut support for their drive to overturn socialistic rule in China. The only way to build dependable and solid support for defence of the PRC is to appeal to the class interests of the working class and oppressed in Australia. That is, to explain how, on the one hand, socialistic rule

in China is a massive step forward for its working class and poor and, on the other hand, how the maintenance and rejuvenation of this socialistic rule is very much in the interests of the working class and downtrodden in Australia and our struggle for our own liberation.

At tonight's rally, Trotskyist Platform spokesman, Samuel Kim, concluded his speech by emphasising the fight for the ultimate act of solidarity that the working class and oppressed can give to the PRC workers state:

... the working class in Australia must go about waging working class struggles at home - to eventually create a socialist society. Doing so will provide the badly needed solidarity with the working class of China and help resist all capitalist exploiters threatening the workers state of China.

Defend the Dominance of Socialistic, State-Ownership in China's Economy!

China: Pro-Worker and Pro-Private Sector Forces Lock Horns

2 December 2016 – Last week, Fidel Castro passed away at age 90. Fidel led the 1959 Revolution that would end up overthrowing capitalism in Cuba and bringing terrific improvements to the lives of the Cuban masses. In response to his death, Chinese president, Xi Jinping lauded Fidel's achievements. Here are some excerpts of Xi Jinping's message of condolences to Raul Castro, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba:

Fidel Castro, founder of the Communist Party of Cuba and Cuba's socialist cause, is a great leader of the Cuban people. He has devoted all his life to Cuban people's great cause of struggling for national liberation, safeguarding state sovereignty and building socialism.

He has made immortal historic contributions to the Cuban people and to the world socialism development.

The Cuban and Latin American people lost an excellent son, and the Chinese people lost a close comrade and sincere friend. His glorious image and great achievements will go down in history.

I believe that under the strong leadership of Comrade Raul Castro, the Communist Party of Cuba, the Cuban government and its people will carry on the unfinished lifework of Comrade Fidel Castro, turn sorrow into strength and keep making new achievements in the cause of socialist construction.

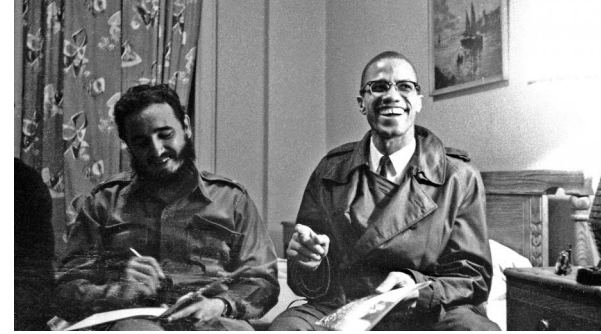
Xinhua, 26 November 2016

President Xi's fulsome praise for Fidel and Cuba's socialistic path reflects the fact that China itself is under socialistic rule. While Cuba's revolution came in 1959 and was the first – and to date – only decisively anti-capitalist revolution in the Western Hemisphere, China's anti-capitalist revolution came ten years earlier. It brought the long suffering toiling masses to power in the world's most populous country and freed China from over a hundred years of humiliating, colonial servitude at the hands of Western and Japanese imperial overlords.

However, the Australian media did their best to hide the substance of the Chinese president's letter of condolence over the death of Fidel. They reported very briefly that Xi had sent his

condolences but made sure they did not report on Xi's praise for Cuba's socialist system. Why? Because to do so would highlight the continued socialistic character of the Peoples Republic of China. The mainstream Western media don't want to do this. In fact, they sometimes even try to make you believe that China has simply "gone capitalist." To admit otherwise poses a very inconvenient fact for the capitalist media: the fact that the country with the world's fastest growing economy that has managed to lift hundreds of millions of its people out of poverty – i.e. China – has done so while based on a socialistic system. To admit this blows sky high out of the water the main anti-communist argument that people in the capitalist world are taught from the time they go to school and start watching documentaries: socialism may sound like a fair system but it just does not work in practice.

Of course, the capitalist media do very often contradict their own, sometimes used, "gone capitalist" narrative about China. They, indeed, start talking about "communist China" whenever they manage to find an area that they can attack the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) over and exaggerate a problem – like pollution – or when they misrepresent events to accuse the PRC of "human rights violations." The lying capitalists, actually, know very well that the PRC is not a capitalist entity but a socialistic state. That is why the capitalist-owned media look for any opportunity possible to demonise China, why the U.S. and Australian regimes support anti-PRC NGOs and dissidents within China and why investment from PRC state-owned companies are especially scrutinised by Australian government authorities. Most notably, it is why the



Top, Harlem, U.S.A, 1960: Fidel Castro meets American black revolutionary leader Malcolm X. Fidel led the 1959 Revolution that would end up overthrowing capitalism in Cuba and bring terrific improvements to the lives of the Cuban masses. When he visited New York for a UN meeting the year after the revolution, he was ostracised by the American establishment. However, in an act of solidarity with the oppressed black peoples of the U.S., Castro then chose to stay at a hotel in the black neighbourhood of Harlem reinforcing his hero status with supporters of black liberation and anti-imperialism. When Castro passed away in November 2016, Red China's leader Xi Jinping hailed Castro's "immortal historic contributions to the Cuban people and to the world socialism development." However, Xi did not attend the funeral for Castro, only sending his vice president Li Yuanchao, seen at the Bottom laying a wreath for Castro at the Jose Marti Memorial in Havana, Cuba. Xi's choice not to attend Castro's memorial was no doubt an attempt to placate the far-right, U.S. president elect Donald Trump. Fat good that did the Peoples Republic of China! Trump and Co. wasted no time in attacking China. They even broke with decades of diplomatic protocol by provocatively giving legitimacy to the renegade, capitalist Chinese province of Taiwan. The policy of severely downgrading solidarity with the international struggle for socialism in the name of "peaceful co-existence" with imperialism that is practiced by China's leaders – as was also practiced by the post-1924 leaders of the former Soviet Union and largely by Castro too after the initial period following the Cuban revolution – harms not only the global socialist struggle but socialistic rule in China itself.

Australian military is openly being built up to join the U.S.-led crusade against China even though the PRC is this country's biggest export market and the main reason the Australian economy has not yet fallen into a new, deep recession.

Just like the Cuban Revolution, the 1949 Chinese Revolution led to tremendous improvements for the masses in life expectancy, literacy, health care and the position of women. Socialistic rule has lifted hundreds of millions of Chinese people out of the dire poverty of its pre-1949 days with a speed and depth that is completely unprecedented in human history. However, like in, Cuba these accomplishments are not guaranteed because socialistic rule itself remains fragile in China. It is fragile because at the moment the richest and most powerful countries in the world are under capitalist rule. As the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 showed, even a socialistic state that is a superpower can be destroyed by sustained capitalist military, economic and political pressure.

Furthermore, the ability of the Chinese workers state to withstand external capitalist pressure is

weakened by its own bureaucratic deformations – by the fact that the administration of socialistic rule is restricted to a narrow, somewhat privileged bureaucratic layer rather than being run by democratic mass organisations of working class people. This structural deformity arose from the nature of the Chinese Revolution itself. This great revolution was made largely by tens of millions of tenant farmers led by idealistic students, teachers and other intellectuals. Awakened and led by Mao's Communist Party of China, the tenant farmers fought with immense heroism to make the revolution. However, tenant farmers, while brutally exploited by the landlords, were still infused with the individualistic strivings that one day they would produce enough to free themselves from landlord domination and make a good income from selling their produce on the market – perhaps even becoming landlords themselves. Therefore, unlike wage workers who are united by their collective labour at the workplace and thus – when under revolutionary political guidance – could self-organise through democratically elected workers councils, the individual tenant farmers could only be fully united *from above*. This requirement and the practicalities of waging



Moscow, August 1991: Western-backed capitalist counterrevolutionaries led by Boris Yeltsin make their grab for power in the former USSR. The social layers driving the counterrevolution were the small-scale capitalists and speculators bred by then Soviet leader Gorbachev's pro-market, perestroika reforms as well as the pro-capitalist students and professionals whose appetites for making it big time in a future "free market" society were whetted by pro-market reforms. In today's China, capitalists are bigger than they were in the USSR at the time of counterrevolution there. This shows the danger that socialistic rule in China is under today.

a long, guerrilla war meant that the victorious revolutionary forces and the ensuing workers state that they created had a bureaucratic – rather than a workers' democratic structure.

In the late 1970s, the Chinese leadership, unable to use the driving and motivating influence of workers' democracy to push forward production, turned to market reforms to further stimulate economic activity. These reforms would come to include the creation of a capitalist, private sector. In the complicated transition from capitalism to genuine socialism it can be useful to allow a limited private sector. This is especially the case given that before the 1949 Revolution, China was an extremely poor and backward country where the capitalism that existed was intermingled with elements of feudalism. However, the introduction of a private sector and market reforms to China necessarily brought with it greater inequality, increased corruption, some degree of unemployment and a reduction in solidarity between people. Moreover, the new class of, at first small, capitalists created by the reforms used their influence and wealth to lobby for greater and greater openings for the private sector. This influence was amplified because many of these new capitalists had family or other personal ties to the administrative/party bureaucracy. Today, the degree of private sector operation in China is

much in excess of what is needed or desirable for the Chinese workers state. To be sure, the private sector bosses do not control the key sectors of the economy which remain under socialistic state ownership and they do not hold state power. However, the danger that the capitalists that do exist in China could organise a capitalist counterrevolution is a very real one. We only have to look at what happened in the former USSR. It was there that market reforms in the mid-1980s, dubbed *perestroika* (restructuring), created a class of petty capitalists and speculators. Then Soviet leader Gorbachev did not initially intend these reforms to actually lead to a capitalist takeover and at first that is not what *perestroika* meant. However, the layer of capitalists that Gorbachev's *perestroika* created, with backing from a section of the middle-class professionals and student intellectuals – who expected that they would be amongst those who would strike it rich if capitalism was restored – became a powerful lobby force for further *perestroika*. They shoved Gorbachev and Co. further and further to the right. Each new set of *perestroika* reforms that Gorbachev implemented strengthened the economic weight and political influence of the new capitalists and whetted the appetite of pro-capitalist students and professionals. Eventually, with the crucial backing of Western imperialism, the new capitalists and their middle class allies were strong enough to grab back state power in the ex-USSR. The forces that made this counterrevolution were actually small in number. Most Soviet workers and collective farmers were not sympathetic to the counterrevolutionary course and many were downright suspicious of the pro-capitalists. However, in the absence of decisive levels of actual struggle to defend the Soviet workers state, the counterrevolutionaries triumphed.

Today, in China, the capitalists do not yet feel strong enough to openly call for capitalist restoration. They leave that to a rather small layer of Western-funded dissidents and NGOs. Indeed some of China's capitalists even, rather disingenuously, sing the praises of the ruling

Communist Party of China (CPC). They hope that this will save them from having their businesses shutdown – as has happened to many of their capitalist compatriots. But what these Chinese capitalists do a lot of is to use their wealth and political influence – through bodies like the private sector All China Federation of Industry and Commerce – to push for ever greater openings for the capitalist economic sector. They are assisted in this lobbying by a whole swathe of academics, economists, lawyers and journalists sympathetic to capitalism or at least to a greater role for the capitalist sector. This lobbying is indeed powerful especially when one considers

that the relative weight of China's capitalist class is far in excess of that of the capitalists in the former USSR at the time of the counterrevolution there. Fortunately, however, the resistance of the Chinese working class and staunch subjective communists to pro-capitalist measures – like privatisation – is also far greater than existed in the last period of the USSR. However, it is far from guaranteed that the political consciousness of the working class will always be sufficient to ensure that their resistance can hold back capitalist restorationist forces. The struggle in China between insurgent pro-capitalist forces and those resisting them is a finely balanced battle.

See-Sawing Contest

In the mid and late 2000s, the insurgent pro-capitalist forces in China were pushed back to some extent. China's political climate in that period was shaped by increased activity of leftist tendencies within the CPC, the manifest weakness of capitalism worldwide as seen in the Great Recession and – most crucially – militant workers struggles for improved wages and conditions and against the few attempts made at privatisation during this period. The period from 2008 to 2011 in particular was the most left-wing period in China in over three decades. This period saw the nationalisation/confiscation of not only many formerly privately owned coal mines but nationalisations across a range of sectors from steel to milk processing to solar cell manufacturing.

However, from about 2012 the political climate in China swung back to the right – at least on economic issues. China's capitalist class and the host of economists, academics, lawyers and even CPC politicians loyal to them re-asserted themselves. This was reflected in some of the agenda of China's new number two leader (ranking below president Xi), premier Li Keqiang. Li implemented special measures and tax incentives to help new private businesses. He also pushed for allowing private enterprises access to several areas like oil/gas, infrastructure construction, health care etc which had previously been restricted almost exclusively to publicly owned enterprises. Although the strength of pro-socialist forces is such that no CPC leader openly calls for privatisation of any of China's major state-owned enterprises, the CPC leadership – including both premier Li and president Xi – have pushed for the sell-off of minority stakes in state-owned enterprises to private investors.

Developments over recent years in China have, of course, not all been in one direction. President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign has genuinely reduced corruption even though there is a suspicion that it has also been used against Xi's political rivals – including those from the left of the CPC. Importantly, the anti-corruption campaign has protected the assets of state-owned enterprises from being squandered by corrupt state enterprise managers handing contracts to bribe-paying, private business bosses. In a small number of cases, the CPC's drive against corruption and privilege in government officials has spilled over into healthy moves against opulence in the broader Chinese society. In early 2014, authorities in major Chinese cities ordered the closure of high-end clubs and expensive restaurants in public parks, scenic spots and cultural sites because these venues could not be accessible and affordable to the masses. Those high-end clubs and restaurants that were not closed were ordered to lower their

prices and change their menus to turn them into places affordable by the masses. Meanwhile, formerly members-only clubs that were allowed to stay open were ordered to turn into open access venues. Alongside the anti-corruption, anti-opulence campaign, the ruling Communist Party of China has toughened its membership rules to ensure that all party members believe in the party's stated ideology. On the one hand, this drive for ideological consistency has been, in part, used to silence leftist critics of pro-market reforms within the party. Nevertheless, it has also had positive effects. It has weeded out some ambitious professionals with little solid sympathy for communism who joined the party for merely career reasons and it has deterred capitalist businessmen from joining the party purely to enhance their connections with government. The most important positive developments in PRC politics in recent years is the continuation – and in some cases the deepening – of some of the progressive policies of the previous Hu Jintao government. This includes the moves back to universal public health care, a massive campaign to build and renovate affordable public housing, an increase in social security and pension payments and the enforcement of the drive to improve workplace safety. Most crucially, the new Xi Jinping government has re-committed to the previous Chinese government's drive to bring every single resident in China above the national poverty line by 2020; and has moved to achieve this goal with renewed vigour.

Furthermore, many of the right-wing economic measures proposed have not been implemented much. Nevertheless, there has been a change in the political discourse from a few years ago. The suspicion of private business bosses that was sometimes seen from CPC officials and Chinese media during the Hu Jintao period, itself a reflection of healthy hostility to capitalists amongst the Chinese working class, is now more and more replaced with praise of their “innovative” capacities and their “entrepreneurship.” Sensing the mood, in March on live TV, China's then finance minister, Lou Jiwei, ranted against the

PRC's 2008 labour law for being too pro-worker saying that it was contributing to unreasonable wage rises and making it too hard for bosses to sack workers. Although the strongly pro-worker law was not amended, Lou Jiwei's attack on it represented a clear drive by the most pro-market wing of the Chinese bureaucracy to curb wage rises and slash employment regulations imposed on bosses.

Rightist elements of the CPC leadership – and the academic/economist circles backing them – are also using moves to cut over-capacity in China's steel and coal sectors as a way to weaken the influence of socialistic state enterprises – state-owned enterprises being dominant in these sectors. Additionally, they are trying to use these cuts as a way to change the culture of PRC state enterprises. They want to prod these socialistic enterprises to retreat from their previous reluctance to lay-off workers and push them into operating more according to “market principles” (i.e. solely according to the profit motive). There is, indeed, over-capacity in China's steel and coal sectors – the latter because China is moving intensively away from coal and onto renewable energy sources like hydro, wind and solar. However, not only should these cuts to overall capacity be done in a way that guarantees equivalent paying jobs for all workers moved out of these sectors but it should be done by forcibly closing the, often, poor safety and high polluting private enterprises that are part of these sectors. That would not only ensure that the tens of millions of workers remaining in these sectors have the best possible working conditions but would also make a huge boost to workplace safety in the dangerous coal sector in particular. Yet, thus far, the cuts to overcapacity seem to be roughly in proportion to the relative weights of socialistic and private enterprises in these sectors.

However, these recent pro-market measures have met with mass resistance. In March, thousands upon thousands of coal mine workers employed by state-owned Longmay Group marched through the northeastern Chinese city of Shuangyashan to



Qitaihe, Heilongjiang Province, China, April 2015: Thousands of coal miners working for the Longmay Mining Group go on strike in protest at wage arrears. Plummeting coal prices in China – caused in part by the country transitioning from coal to renewable energy – sent Longmay into big losses. As a state-owned enterprise (SOE) in the PRC, Longmay initially tried to minimise layoffs of workers. However, while PRC governments and state-owned banks would normally provide funds to keep the SOE operational, the drive of premier Li Keqiang and other rightists in the PRC government to make SOEs operate more according to “market principles” (i.e. the profit motive, which means sacking workers or closing down when unprofitable), meant that adequate funds were prevented from flowing to Longmay to enable it to keep up with payments to workers. However, in March 2016 a huge march by Longmay workers through the northeastern Chinese city of Shuangyashan prompted the provincial government to back down and ensure funds were given to the SOE to pay back workers their owed wages. Workers' struggle – as it has powerfully done in the past – can defend China's socialistic SOEs from privatisation attempts or attempts to weaken their socialistic mode of operation. However, Western government funded “NGOs”, like the Hong-Kong based China Labour Bulletin, are working overtime to channel workers' grievances into opposition to the PRC workers state. This highlights the need for genuine communists to lead workers' legitimate aspirations into a program for defending and strengthening SOEs and their socialist character.

protest against wage arrears resulting from the provincial government holding back support to the struggling company in order to push it into slashing the size of its workforce. A large number of similar workers' protests and strikes have taken place throughout China in state enterprises facing similar predicaments. Meanwhile, Chinese people used social media to bitterly attack then finance minister Lou Jiwei's criticism of China's pro-worker labour laws. A comment made by Weibo (China's popular social media platform) user, Se Kong Se Kong, typified the reaction to the ex-finance minister's tirade:

Have him investigated

He's no good if he's speaking on behalf of the capitalists!

Financial Times, 10 March 2016.

All this protest and defiance from Chinese

workers and leftists has had an impact. For instance, two weeks ago, rightist Lou Jiwei, was unceremoniously dumped as China's finance minister two years before his term was due to end (he has since been given a much lower-ranking post). This was, no doubt, at least partially related to his anti-working class comments attacking China's Labour Law and to the spirited mass opposition to his tirade. It was also reportedly connected to his pro-“free market” opposition to large state investment in infrastructure and fixed assets by local governments. Meanwhile, the huge Shuangyashan city protest by Longmay Group workers led the Heilongjiang provincial government to back down within hours of the workers' action. The provincial government and its Governor, Lu Hao, apologised to the workers and arranged to fund the struggling state-owned company so that it could pay the workers the

wages owed to them. More broadly, the PRC government has responded to workers' concerns by stepping up efforts to ensure that workers laid off from steel and coal enterprises will be re-hired in state infrastructure projects, state-owned farms and state forestry projects immediately after – or in some cases even before – losing their previous jobs. Meanwhile, some state-owned firms cutting capacity in the steel and coal sectors have started up operations – even loss making ones – in often very different industries in order to avoid laying off workers. State owned coal companies in China's main coal producing province, Shanxi, have set up pharmacies, solar power stations, restaurants, supermarkets and vegetable and fruit planting to move their workers into. One state-owned coal company, Qianhe Coal Industry, that had to cut its capacity, started organising its workers into production of food products – including tofu and potato noodles – in order to pacify its workforce. It is now even going to move its operations entirely from coal producing to the food products industry – even though its new area of operation is not currently profitable (Quartz, 31 March 2016).

Such moves by state-owned enterprises are significant as they undercut the agenda of rightists within the CPC and Chinese and Western “experts” who all hoped that downsizing in China's state-owned coal and steel enterprises would help wean China's state-owned enterprises away from their devotion to preserving workers'

jobs and push them onto the profit first path. For his part, premier Li has been forced into a partial back down in two key areas by the workers protest and leftist agitation. Firstly, Li and the rightist advisors and economists influencing him, were pushing for more unprofitable state-owned enterprises – dubbed “zombie industries” – to be forced into bankruptcy and, thus, into retrenching their workers. Although this plan is partially still going ahead, last month the PRC government announced a scheme whereby those holding the debts of enterprises would be able to swap them for equity. In other words, the mainly state-owned banks owed money by indebted companies will end up taking stakes in these companies allowing the companies to wipe out their debts and continue operation. The companies that will mainly benefit are state-owned enterprises as struggling private companies usually simply shut down and retrench all their workers when in financial trouble rather than maintaining major unpayable debts for long periods. For those private companies that are indebted the scheme will facilitate them to be effectively part-nationalised, since state-owned banks will end up owning significant equity stakes in them. Secondly, Li has, in practice, been forced to retreat from his promise to refrain from using large-scale state investment to stimulate the economy. The angry protests by state enterprise employees threatened with unemployment forced premier Li to boost state spending on infrastructure and development projects in order to create jobs for displaced former coal and steel

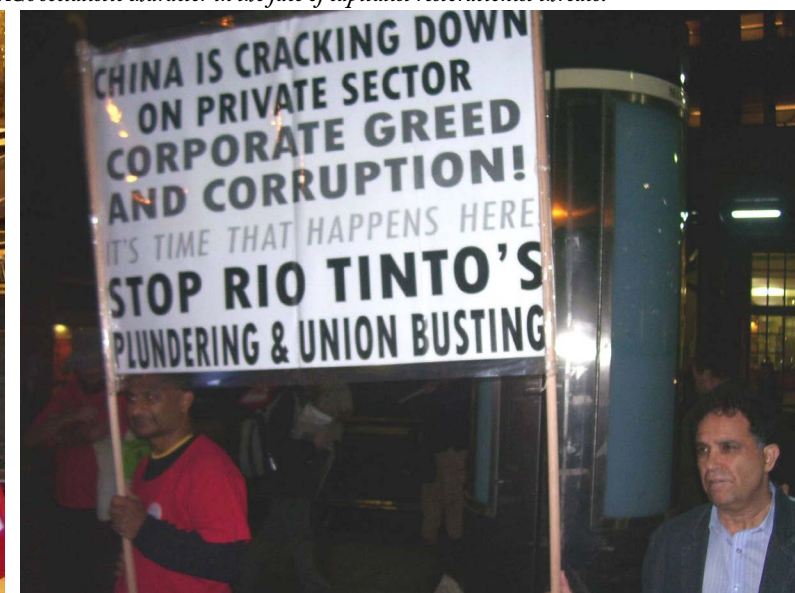
sector workers to be moved into. For example, three months ago, the Chinese government announced an over \$A300 billion plan to fund 130 projects in the north-eastern region of China – the part of the country with a disproportionately large concentration of enterprises in the steel and coal sectors.

The PRC government's return to emphasis on state investment is driven not only by the imperative to respond to workers' concerns but also, in part, by pure economic reality. The fact is that with the world capitalist economy – and thus demand for Chinese exports – in the doldrums and with profit-driven, Chinese private sector bosses less willing to make productive investments in the real economy because their ability to make profits has been curtailed by rising workers' wages in China and the 2008 pro-worker Labour Law, the PRC government needs state-owned enterprises to drive growth. To put it simply: capitalism doesn't work but socialism does and thus the PRC government, regardless of the political leanings of some of its key personnel, must once again rely on the socialistic state sector to shore up the economy. That is why despite all the special tax concessions and other incentives given to private

enterprises, Chinese private investment in fixed assets grew by less than 3% in the first ten months of this year while investment by the state sector surged by over 20%.

A similar story can be seen if we look at the issue of administrative measures imposed on the housing market. During the period of Hu Jintao's presidency from 2002 to 2012, Chinese governments imposed a series of measures to reduce housing speculation in key areas in order to make house prices more affordable to the masses and to ensure that housing construction was geared towards the needs of low and middle income earners. These measures included requirements for developers to meet certain minimum proportions of smaller housing, restrictions on the number of houses that people could own and regulations that made banks charge higher interest rates – and require higher down payments – for those buying second homes as opposed to those buying first ones. As part of these measures many major Chinese cities banned people from owning more than two homes. However, private sector housing developers and pro-“free market” economists, journalists and other “experts” complained bitterly that

Sydney, 20 May 2010: United-front demonstration bails China's jailing of rich executives of part-Australian owned multinational mining giant Rio Tinto. Among those jailed by the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) authorities was high-flying Australian executive, Stern Hu. Although Rio Tinto operates largely above the law in capitalist countries, socialistic China cracked down on Rio for using bribery to rip-off her big state-owned steel companies. The Trotskyist Platform-initiated rally called to use China's crackdown as an encouragement for class struggle opposition within Australia to Rio Tinto and other capitalist corporations. The Australian Left must build solidarity actions with other progressive deeds by the PRC workers state – both in order to advance the struggle for working class rule in Australia and as a way to boost the morale of pro-communist forces within China seeking to strengthen the PRC's socialistic character in the face of capitalist restorationist threats.



the measures were “distorting the market” and undermining the “healthy development of housing supply.” These voices obtained a bigger hearing from Chinese leaders in the post-Hu period and as a result in the 2013 to 2015 period some of the administrative restrictions on speculation were relaxed. However, that led to a rebound in speculation and opulent purchases of multiple houses by the wealthy. Though this squeezed many lower-income people out of the private housing market, fortunately China has massively built public rental housing to enable lower income people to still get stable accommodation. In the last few months, however, the Chinese government has again returned to anti-market, administrative measures to curtail housing speculation and restrict the wealthy from buying up multiple houses.

The clearest sign that the political winds blowing to the Right in China are starting to recede was seen last month at a high profile meeting of government leaders and state enterprise heads about the direction of state-owned enterprises. The main theme of the meeting was president Xi Jinping’s insistence that it is imperative to: “unswervingly uphold the party’s leadership in state-owned enterprises, and fully play the role of party organs in leadership and political affairs (*South China Morning Post*, 12 October 2016, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/economy/article/2027407/communist-party-top-boss-chinas-state-firms-xi-jinping-asserts>). Xi insisted that any “weakening, fading, blurring or marginalisation” of party leadership in state firms would not be tolerated.” The meeting vowed to turn around the situation whereby the party’s presence in state-owned enterprises had started to gradually fade into the background over recent decades as these public sector companies became influenced by Western corporations. At the conference, which was notably held when pro-private sector prime minister Li Keqiang was away on an overseas trip, Xi also insisted that China’s state-owned enterprises are an important material and political basis for socialism and called to make these public enterprises stronger, bigger

and better (*Xinhua*, 11 October 2016, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-10/11/c_135746608.htm). This was a clear statement in defence of state-owned enterprises from China’s top leader and a slap in the face to others within and around the CPC trying to weaken them. Furthermore, by insisting on strengthening Communist Party control of state-owned enterprises Xi also contradicted statements by some Chinese leaders – including, to some extent, his own previous statements – calling to turn these state-owned enterprises into more profit-driven corporations. Thus, Xi’s speech at the conference ordered that state-owned enterprises should become important forces to implement decisions of the CPC Central Committee as well as to enhance overall national power, economic and social development and people’s wellbeing. This means that, at least according to the speech, the PRC state-enterprises would re-commit to maximising employment and protecting working conditions as a goal in itself, rebuffing the drive by some within the PRC bureaucracy to push the public sector enterprises into slashing their workforces. Notably, the *Xinhua* article on the state-owned enterprise work conference reported that Xi stressed the importance of protecting state owned enterprise workers’ rights to know, participate, express and supervise within the enterprises. He added that important matters concerning the immediate interests of workers must be submitted to workers’ congresses for deliberation and the system to ensure workers’ representation as the directors and supervisors of state-owned enterprises should also be improved.

An important positive consequence of this PRC government drive to increase Communist Party control of state-owned enterprises is that it will undercut their own plan to allow private investors to take minority stakes in state-owned enterprises. After all, if Communists are to be running these enterprises and if they are not going to be subordinated to the profit motive but also be directed to meet national and social goals – like maximising employment, improving workplace safety, developing poorer parts of the country and

Profile of China’s Pro-Capitalist Advocates



Like the Western-funded NGOs seeking to undermine socialistic rule in China, locally emerged pro-capitalist voices in China shroud their agenda with calls for “democracy.” Billionaire venture capitalist Wang Gongquan (Left) is among China’s best known “pro-democracy” dissidents. He wants a Western-style (i.e. bourgeois) “democracy” so that the wealthy will be able to use their financial resources and connections to dominate the political agenda. A fan of Wang is Chinese property tycoon Ren Zhiqiang (Right), himself a very prominent “pro-democracy” advocate who opposes the Communist Party censoring publications that call for Western-style “democracy.” Ren is also an ardent critic of the PRC government’s administrative measures that restrict the rich from dominating the housing market. Showing his contempt for the poor, Ren once said that commercial residential housing is meant to be for the rich not the poor.

spearheading the development of new industries—then what money-grubbing, capitalist investor in their right mind would want to put their money into them! This is especially the case when one considers that the rate of profit return on PRC state-owned enterprises is already only around half that of capitalist enterprises. These public sector enterprises – despite the often monopoly position they hold in Chinese markets – are simply not geared to the blind drive for profits and *that is a good thing!* Consequently, premier Li Keqiang’s “mixed ownership reform” – to bring private investment into state-owned enterprises – has often not led to the intended consequences. The most touted example of a “mixed-ownership

reform” in recent years was Chinese state-owned oil refining giant Sinopec’s decision to sell-off a 30% stake in its distribution and marketing business to “private” investors. However, in the end it was other state-owned companies that bought up nearly two-thirds of this stake. A similar story occurred when China’s main oil producer, state-owned Petrochina, decided to sell-off half of its Central Asian pipelines. The announcement caused considerable excitement amongst Chinese capitalists and pro-“free market” economists and amongst Western “experts” and business journals. Yet, in the end, the entire stake simply went to another PRC state-owned company!

Smash the Political Influence of the Capitalist Class!

Despite what appears to be the first signs of a possible tilt back to the left in China in recent months, as long as there is a capitalist class in the PRC able to wield some political influence then the danger of capitalist counterrevolution is acute. Especially when capitalists within China have family, personal and cultural ties to the ethnic Chinese capitalists who rule Taiwan and Singapore, enjoy economic dominance in Hong Kong and Macao and also form a component of the capitalist ruling classes in places like Malaysia and the Philippines. Moreover, the U.S., British, Japanese, Australian and other imperialist ruling classes are working feverishly to undermine socialistic rule in China.

The response of China's ruling bureaucracy to the threat of counterrevolution is not to organise for a struggle to outright smash the capitalist threat. Instead, they seek a balance – a truce – between, on the one hand, socialistic rule in China and, on the other, the out of power capitalists within China and the capitalist classes that rule most of the rest of the world. However, such a strategy is in the long run untenable. Socialism and capitalism cannot, ultimately, co-exist. We should remember that from the mid-1920s onwards – when the leadership of the former Soviet workers state started to move away from the truly revolutionary internationalist perspective that guided the 1917 socialist revolution – the USSR's leaders tried a variant of the policy currently pursued by Beijing. And look what happened there!

The force that has a clear interest in waging a struggle against the capitalists to the end is the Chinese working class. Time and again, as China's capitalists looked to be set to gain the economic weight, momentum and popular acceptance necessary to make an open bid for power, struggles of the Chinese working class and agitation by leftist elements within the CPC have intervened to push the capitalists back. Today, these forces must resist any sell-offs of minority stakes in state-owned enterprises to private investors. They must breathe life into the workers' congresses in these enterprises and use them as a force to defend working conditions for workers and to ensure that the state-owned enterprises stay committed to overall social goals and maximising employment rather than to the blind drive to maximise profit. The Chinese working class and leftists must also defend the 2008 Labour Law against any attempt to weaken its pro-worker provisions and must, instead, fight for the strengthening of these laws. They should build workers' committees – drawing into them staunchly pro-communist officials, police and Peoples Liberation Army soldiers – to investigate enterprises and ensure strict enforcement of the Labour Law's pro-worker provisions. Such committees would fight for a policy whereby any private business that violates the Labour Law or

any safety regulation is immediately confiscated by the PRC state and turned into a publicly owned enterprise. All these struggles should be part of a fight to smash the political influence of the capitalists and restrict the private sector to the level that is actually needed in the transition stage to socialism. Of course, the capitalists, their allies within the upper middle class and their imperialist backers would furiously oppose such a struggle. In the resulting decisive clash between the politically conscious working class and pro-capitalist forces the tightrope balancing act played by the current ruling bureaucracy would be shaken out of existence. The different elements of the bureaucracy would be flung onto two opposing sides. Those types, like pro-capitalist ex-finance minister, Lou Jiwei, who are closest to the capitalists would fall squarely on the capitalist their side. On the other hand, more subjectively communist elements and those closest to the masses would end up on the side of the working class (as would, inevitably, some careerist elements who see the inevitability of a workers' victory). Thus, a workers struggle to smash the capitalists' political influence and curb their economic power would not only fortify the PRC workers state but would also lead to the political administration of the PRC passing from the wavering hands of the bureaucracy and on to the control of the councils of workers and their allies that had just organised the defeat of the insurgent capitalists. The genuine communists who would guide such a struggle by the pro-socialist working class would understand that such a victory cannot be truly secure while the capitalists hold state power in nearly all the most powerful countries in the world. That is why they would link the struggle to defeat the insurgent capitalists within China to a perspective of solidarity with the workers and oppressed all around the globe in their struggles against their capitalist rulers.

The biggest impediment to such an outcome is that, currently, the international factors weighing on the class contest in China are almost entirely on the side of the insurgent capitalists. We workers and leftists in the imperialist countries

need to change this and change this fast! The workers movement here should oppose political attacks on the PRC workers state from Australia's capitalist regime (including those made under the pretext of "human rights") and must oppose the anti-PRC Chinese exile organisations. We must build solidarity actions with progressive actions by the PRC workers state such as the implementation of pro-worker labour laws and the massive increase of public housing. The Australian working class and its allies must also stand against the U.S./Australian capitalist rulers' military build up against China and must oppose their anti-PRC provocations in the South China Sea as the capitalist powers want all this military pressure to add to the all-round political squeeze that they are subjecting the PRC workers state to.

The incoming Trump regime in the U.S. has promised a still more aggressive posture towards China as well as a massive military build up. Today, as a blatant provocation against Red China, president-elect Trump broke with

diplomatic protocol and held a phone call with the president of Taiwan, the part of China that the defeated capitalists seized when they were booted out of power by the 1949 anti-capitalist revolution. This is the first known contact between a U.S. president or president-elect and a leader of the rogue province of Taiwan since the United States broke diplomatic relations with Taiwan 37 years ago. The U.S. backs and massively arms Taiwan but adopted the diplomatic position of not recognising Taiwan as a way to way to maintain diplomatic and, hence, trade relations with the PRC while simultaneously undertaking its anti-PRC machinations. Trump's phone call with the Taiwanese leader and their discussion about how to boost Taiwan's military strength – inevitably against the PRC – is a signal that U.S. imperialism is going to unleash a more openly confrontational policy against socialistic China. Genuine communists living in the U.S. and its imperialist allies like Australia have got our work cut out. Let's get to it!



Photo: Trotskyist Platform

A common site in China: youth wearing the communist hammer and sickle emblem. Mass support for communism in China has thus far constrained capitalist restorationist tendencies within sections of the ruling bureaucracy.

Racist Atrocities in Kalgoorlie



August 2016, Kalgoorlie, WA: Aboriginal youth bravely protest (Right) after police outrageously refused to charge the racist killer of 14-year-old Elijah Doughty (Left) with murder.

3 September 2016: Five days ago, a 55 year-old white man murdered a 14-year-old Aboriginal youth, Elijah Doughty in Boulder, just south of the Western Australia town of Kalgoorlie. The horrific murder was followed by a racist outpouring by rednecks on social media celebrating the killing and threatening Aboriginal people with murder and rape.

Outrageously, police only charged the killer with manslaughter rather than murder. Hundreds of Aboriginal people responded to this blatant state racism by courageously marching on the courthouse and carrying out staunch acts of defiance against symbols of the racist authorities – including police cars, the courthouse entrance and the heavily armed police who were confronting them. Police responded with typical brutality unleashing their batons against the Aboriginal marchers and making several arrests. Meanwhile, the WA Police Minister and Attorney General have rushed to viciously condemn the brave stand taken by Aboriginal people in Kalgoorlie.

The whole series of events highlights the murderous racist oppression that Aboriginal people face throughout the country.

The trade union movement and all anti-racists must stand by the Aboriginal community of Kalgoorlie – and indeed the whole country – at this critical time. We must condemn the downgraded charge that the killer of Elijah Doughty received and must call for the immediate dropping of all charges against the Aboriginal people arrested for their brave acts of resistance on Tuesday.

*Force Profitable Companies to Increase Hiring –
Make Them Wear the Resulting Lower Profits*

Stop Billionaire Bosses from Retrenching Workers!

No to Slave Wage Internships and Work for the Dole!

For Fully Paid, Permanent Jobs for All!

2 July 2016 – Today, on federal Election Day, the Liberals, ALP, Greens and others were frantically seeking your vote. They were in furious competition with each other. Yet all these parties uphold the same capitalist order. There are some differences between the parties. The ALP's base is mostly the working class and small-l liberal intellectuals while the Liberal party is dominated by actual capitalist bigwigs and upper middle-class yuppies. However, the ALP sells out its working class base by advocating a program to basically keep the current, terribly unfair, status quo. The Liberals, for their part, seek to make the rich even richer by gouging even more from the poor. One key issue that highlights the truth that none of these parliamentary parties deserve any support from working class people is the fact that all the parliamentary parties uphold the “right” of greedy bosses to retrench workers at will. Even when big business owners are making huge profits they do not hesitate to lay off workers if that can allow them to make still bigger profits. Yet all the current parliamentary parties protect the big end of town by variously shifting the blame for unemployment onto refugees, guest workers, overseas producers or all of the above.

Despite this, many leftists actually spent today campaigning for either Greens or ALP candidates. In other words they backed either the small-l liberal or social democratic party vying to run racist Australian capitalism. Even the Socialist Alternative group, who between elections makes valid attacks on the ALP and Greens, ended up advocating a vote for these parties even while admitting that they provide no road forward for the masses and stressing that it is a socialist alternative that needs to be built. To give such support to the Greens or to the ALP when it is running on a platform of largely maintaining the status quo – no matter how much such support is accompanied by talk of “building a socialist alternative” – can only breed defeatism amongst the masses. For it is telling working class people that they must support one of the pro-capitalist agendas. This is, after all, also what the capitalist media and politicians themselves – and indeed the education system too – tells the masses: that they must “choose” to accept one of the alternate visions of capitalist rule on offer. Furthermore, by giving electoral support to one of the pro-

capitalist parties – no matter how critically – the Left groups that do this are pushing the people that they influence to accept that the agenda of these parties is worth at least some level of support. However, for the class struggle to take off – and class struggle is the only effective means to defend the interests of the exploited and oppressed – the masses need to understand exactly the opposite. For the masses to choose the road of class struggle they need to be convinced that *no* pro-capitalist program – even if it is not as openly reactionary as that of the Liberals – is worthy of *any* support and, instead, the working class must rely *entirely* on its own power united with all other oppressed groups.

At the same time that most other Left groups were going about advocating support for the ALP or the Greens – and in some cases spending today literally handing out election material for these parties – the Sydney Branch of the Australian Unemployed Workers Union (AUWU) and ourselves in Trotskyist Platform (TP) were busy doing something very different. The AUWU and

TP held an election day rally in the multiracial, working class Sydney suburb of Auburn calling to “Stop Billionaire Bosses From Retrenching Workers!” and to “Force Profitable Companies to Increase Hiring – Make Them Wear the Resulting Lower Profits.” The action also demanded, “No to Slave Wage Internships and Work For the Dole – For Fully Paid, Permanent Jobs For All.”

The thrust of the rally was summarised in the conclusion of the callout for the action:

... we don't have to accept the 'choice' that this election offers. Let's get united and build actions on the streets and in our workplaces. That is how working class people and our allies won whatever rights that we have today. What better way to start to get organised to resist the new government that will be installed to run the bosses system than by rallying to fight for the right of permanent, fully paid jobs for all workers on Election Day itself.

Among those addressing the rally was a representative of the Sydney Branch of the AUWU, Samuel Russell. He spoke powerfully about the irrationality of unemployment under the capitalist system noting that while there are so many people willing to work without jobs there also so many jobs that need to be done that are not being done: including maintenance and building of infrastructure, caring for people who need care, etc. He also strongly criticised all the current parliamentary parties – the Liberals, ALP and Greens – for their attacks on the unemployed. Russell stressed that the fruit of workers' labour and what working class people actually need are tantalizingly and visibly within reach if only we can get organised to reach out for this juicy, low hanging fruit and fight for it.

Also addressing the demonstration were representatives of Trotskyist Platform (TP): rally M.C. Samuel Kim, TP chairwoman Sarah Fitzenmeyer and editor of *The Spark* (the journal of TP) Yuri Gromov. Below are their speeches, which have been edited for publication.



Tweedledum and Tweedledee: The two people bidding to head the government administering Australian capitalism. The only choice for working class people is to reject all the would-be administrators of this incredibly unfair system and to instead unite with all the oppressed in militant class struggle.

Rally M.C., Samuel Kim, introductory speech:

Let me initiate this rally with some news about how workers have been unfairly sacked due to greed. For example, one latest round of sackings was from the ANZ bank. The ANZ Bank is the 8th largest corporation in Australia by revenue. They announced a profit of 7.2 billion dollars for last year. But despite being one of the richest and most profitable companies in Australia, six weeks ago, the ANZ bank announced that they would be cutting 200 jobs of people working in back office operations. No, these jobs are NOT being off-shored but they are simply being cut to boost profits for bank bosses and billionaire shareholders. In addition, in the last 16 months, ANZ has slashed nearly one and a half thousand jobs.

It seems the wealthy bank owners just keep wanting even more money at the expense of ordinary workers. You see, the terrible axing of workers' jobs amounts to a small 2% increase in profit. Yet still, the company bigwigs for the sake of 2% higher profits is prepared to make one and a half thousand of its employees suffer poverty and unemployment. Indeed, in the last year, the four big banks, of which all four are in the top ten most profitable companies in Australia, have together shed over 4,200 jobs – that's after they made a combined profit in just half a year of nearly 15 billion dollars!

It is not just the banks that are guilty. All big business owners are guilty. Mining magnate Clive Palmer was found to have siphoned off 20 million dollars of his Queensland Nickel company for his political campaigning and then said he had no money to pay 800 retrenched workers their due entitlements. 74 million dollars is how much he owes workers. This figure is almost nothing compared to his current fortune of nearly \$600 million. Clive should be forced to run the company at a loss when it's made a profit over all these years and Clive should pay workers from his own bank account, brimming over with the wealth which was created by the very workers he took so much from.

But what Clive Palmer has done is just the tip of the iceberg. Everywhere around this country, business owners have ripped so much money from their workers and then sacked these workers. They often perform these mass sackings when one division of the firm makes a slight loss. Although, in many cases, their overall company is still making massive profits they want to make even more so they slash the workforce and make those remaining work faster.

We need to stop these billionaire bosses from retrenching workers. We call for a resistance of the working class to stop job losses. After all, the magnificent riches that capitalists have acquired have all been created by workers. So even when corporations are running at a loss for a while, they should be forced to retain their staff and the shortfall be paid out of the personal wealth of the business owners.

However, all the parties and so-called independents sitting in parliament, without exception, uphold the supposed “right” of business to sack their workers whenever they want to maximise their profits. At today's elections, all these parties are vying for your vote by promising to be the ones that can deliver jobs. Yet, these parties ignore the main cause of unemployment and that is the capitalist rich and the bosses' drive for profit while these rich people ignore the public and community.

It is not just their refusal to stop billionaires slashing jobs. Parliamentary parties are responsible for laws that restrict workplace industrial action. In other words these parties are restricting the very method that has the most power to compel business owners to retain jobs. We all know that the Liberals want to bring yet more severe laws against struggle by construction workers by reintroducing the ABCC. However, in 2012, it was the Labor-Greens de facto coalition government that brought in the Fair Work Building and Construction authority under which 108 construction worker officials are today before the courts.

As they make it harder for workers to speak out to improve their conditions at work, the current Liberal and Labor parliamentarians seek to, in various ways, shift the blame on to others or distract us from real concerns. The Liberals and ALP have blamed refugees, these powerless refugees. It was the ALP's Keating in the 90s that introduced mandatory detention, literally imprisonment of children, and Labor's Kevin Rudd a few years ago introduced blanket offshore detention for every single refugee arriving by sea. The Greens also join with the ALP in blaming 457 Visa guest workers or imported goods for local workers not getting jobs. Blaming foreign workers and ignoring billionaire bosses, we say, do not save jobs at all. Not one bit! Instead, these slogans serves to distract the masses from the real cause of unemployment: the greed of the wealthy business owners and the crumbling character of their capitalist system. Furthermore, the nationalist slogans of Labor, the Greens and the Liberals whip up dangerous growth in far right fascist forces and potential hate crimes. Instead of irrationally blaming powerless foreigners and ignoring what rich billionaires are doing, we should be uniting with these potentially radical, underpaid workers and we should blame the billionaires.

The current parliamentary parties that administer this system seek to blame the unemployed and poor for their own plight. Their policies are based on the savage idea that the unemployed need to

be pressured through draconian measures to seek work. The Liberal government is currently rolling out compulsory “income management” where unemployed people are being allowed to only freely use 20% of their welfare income. This follows on from the racist policy of the Howard government which was then continued by Labor and the Labor-Greens government to forcibly “income manage” welfare payments to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. In probably the cruellest measure against unemployed and poor people, the former Labor and Greens government slashed payments to low income single parents. This has driven tens of thousands of single mothers and their children into further terrible poverty.

So this is the nature of the parliamentary, capitalist beast. Whatever party or independent is in government, they are part of this system that hurts the working class. They allow greedy bosses to cut jobs at will, make it harder for workers to take industrial action to resist such cuts and, when

workers become unemployed, we get blamed for it and are hit with punitive measures. We should not be voting for any of these parties or independents at today’s elections. The only way we can fight to defend workers’ rights and jobs is through united mass struggle especially workplace strike action and mass struggle on the streets. To help build such struggle is why we are demonstrating here today. We are fighting for the right to have jobs for all workers through action that forces company owners to retain jobs and increase hiring at the expense of their profits.

If the capitalist bosses oppose our demands and whip up lies against us, we should say: If capitalist bigwigs are not capable of running the economy in a way that guarantees fully paid, secure jobs for all workers, then the economy should not be in their hands. It should be ripped out of their hands and placed into the collective hands of the people who actually generate the wealth of society: the working class people.



Top Left, April 2015: Workers retrenched from Fortescue Metals Group’s (FMG) Cloudbreak mine in the Pilbara gather their luggage at Perth Airport. Evident are the green, clear plastic bags that the workers were insultingly made to immediately pack their belongings into and clear out when the company axed their jobs. The company cried poor as its excuse for sacking the workers but in that financial year still made a profit of \$435 million! However, its greedy owner, the filthy rich slime bag Andrew Forrest, wanted even more profit. So he cruelly got rid of hundreds of the workers who made him his fortune and made the remaining workers toil longer hours for the same pay. Only months after sacking hundreds of his workers, Forrest bought a \$21 million mansion (Top Right) in the Perth seaside suburb of Cottesloe just metres away from another mansion that he owns. Lower Right: Forrest also owns a \$53 million private jet!

Sarah Fitzenmeyer (Trotskyist Platform chairwoman):

In Australia nearly three-quarters of a million people are officially unemployed. Hundreds of thousands more people are actually unemployed.

Additionally, over a million people are forced to work less hours than they want to.

35% of the workforce are either casual or on short term contract with virtually no job security.

Capitalist businesses spit out workers whenever their filthy profits might take a fall. The dole is a pathetic slap in the face to workers who have toiled for the profits of others – it is hardly enough to survive on let alone pay a mortgage.

Under capitalism this country will go nowhere forwards... it is a society that I don’t want my children growing up into... it is a society that doesn’t care about anything except the making of money for the few who make up the ruling class. A society based upon the profit motive for the very few doesn’t sound like a system that creates equality for all.

Most oppressed groups suffer most from unemployment and casualization of work. Due to discrimination, women have higher unemployment and a greater proportion of women work as casuals. Aboriginal people have a much higher rate of unemployment due to intense racist discrimination. People with Asian, African or Muslim names often don’t get to the interview stage of job applications when their prospective employers read their names on their CVs.

Those of us who are lucky enough to have a permanent job can be thrown out of work if our boss decides that cutting our job is what is needed to maximise profit. Furthermore, the threat of unemployment is used to undermine workers’ demands for better wages and conditions.

Therefore, the struggle for jobs and the struggle against this brutal class system is in the interests of the entire working class and especially for women, Aboriginal people and other coloured people who are hardest hit by unemployment and discrimination.

All the current parliamentary parties from the openly pro-boss Liberals, Palmer United, Family First and Nick Xenophon group to the ALP and Greens uphold the bosses’ “right” to retrench workers whenever that helps them boost profits.

Furthermore, all these parties have brought in laws to criminalise militant industrial action – the working class’ main weapon to fight back against the job slashing bosses. Everyone knows about the Coalition’s drive to introduce ever more stricter, anti-strike laws. Yet, in the time of the previous Labor-Greens government, authorities were also carrying out legal action against trade unions left, right and centre.

The backing of bosses who slash jobs combined with the criminalising of workers’ resistance is part of all the current parliamentary parties backing of the capitalist system in general. A system which means brutal racist oppression of Aboriginal people, predatory wars against the peoples of the ex-colonial countries, cruel incarceration of refugees ...and the list of oppressive travesties goes on.

At today’s election we should not be backing any of the parties that back this exploitative and racist system. That means no vote either directly or by preferences to any of the current parliamentary parties.

They won’t and they can’t ever give us what the masses of this country so desperately need.

It is the capitalists who run this country while parliamentarians are simply the administrators of this capitalist system in its current form. No elected politician in Australia’s bourgeois parliament can or will start to massively redistribute the sickening amount of wealth that the very few have, let alone start to redress the systematic oppression of Aboriginal people. I am furious that I bring up children in a country that has so many gaping infected wounds that must be addressed. It angers me that the oldest living culture on earth still suffers the worst systematic oppression... and once you open up your eyes and actually see how capitalism works you know that these wounds certainly won’t be healed under a capitalist state. For it is the capitalists like

Gina Reinhardt and Andrew Forrest whom the capitalist state serves and it is they who steal and get fat from Australia's many natural resources.

Elections do not represent the will of the people. Elections are shaped heavily by a media that is capitalist-owned. The richer you are the more ads you can pay for and the more lies you can spread.

In any case whoever wins elections only administers a state – that is a police force, courts, bureaucracy and army – that has been built up to serve the interests of the big business owners. Thus, no matter who wins elections, it is the interests of the capitalists who will be served. In France, the Socialist Party came to office promising redistribution of wealth. Now it has brought in John Howard style, anti-worker laws that greatly increased the work week, provoking angry strikes and demonstrations by workers. In Greece, the even more left-talking Syriza party was elected to office but now institutes a capitalist austerity program more severe than the conservatives.

Government elections in capitalist countries serve to breed illusions in the working class and oppressed that change can come through parliament. This demobilises them and diverts them from the only path that can help us defend our rights – the path of class struggle. It is only through mass struggle including, importantly, industrial action that workers and the downtrodden have won all the rights that we have today. Even when progressive measures have been introduced in parliament, the state merely certifies what was already won through struggle in the streets or the workplace. At other times capitalist parliaments have granted reforms when the ruling class was scared into trying to pacify radicalising masses with a crumb or two or when they have been weakened by defeats in the international arena and sought to shore up their rule.

I am both enlightened and at the same time burdened by my knowledge that here in Australia we live under a capitalist “democracy.” Once you understand how this capitalist system works, you are compelled to expose its brutal mechanisms in

order to prepare the future workers’ uprising that will fundamentally destroy this capitalist state and create a society that is based upon equality and not upon the profit motive. A workers state would ensure that every person mattered, that every person had a part to play in the creation of a society... A massive redistribution of wealth would lead to a society where no one ever needed to go without. Everyone would play a valuable part in building a society that cared about how we were going to start to right the wrongs of over 200 years of white colonisation.

Once you understand how the capitalist system works, why everything bad that is happening in this country makes sense. And once you see the blatant exploitation of workers’ labour you can only believe in one thing and that thing is a revolution. A revolution that is possible with the united might of the working class, Aboriginal people and anyone who hopes that one day a better society can exist.

No matter who wins the election today, it certainly won't help advance towards the revolution that is needed to make this country right. Only the might of a united working class alongside the first peoples of this land will ever bring about the revolution that is so desperately needed.

Today, it is class struggle that we need to stop the capitalist bosses when they try to sack workers. We should also demand a reduction in the full-time work week with no loss in pay in order to spread the available work around. What all these demands are doing is fighting to force the bosses to maintain a larger workforce than they want to and thus forcing them to wear the resulting lower profits.

As an example of how gains are won through class struggle: two years ago at the Ausreo manufacturing site in Western Sydney workers, members of the AMWU manufacturing workers union, picketed the site for 10 weeks after the bullying bosses locked out the workers and refused to negotiate a pay rise. However, the workers remained defiant on the picket line and, thus, forced the company to grant them a real wage increase.



Marseille, France, 31 March 2016: Workers at a strike rally to oppose the French “Socialist Party” government’s planned labour reforms. The reforms will make it easier for bosses to sack workers and allows for capitalists to make workers do long overtime hours at the standard pay rate. Whoever administers capitalist states, no matter how “left-wing” they claim to be, will necessarily act against the interests of working class people.

To make this the norm rather than the exception we need a political struggle within the workers movement to root out one of the key things holding back militant workers’ struggle – We must get rid of the illusion that salvation may come through elections and the parliament. To contribute to this struggle is what today’s demonstration aims to do.

The other key barrier to workers struggle is economic nationalism within our union movement. Consider this: nine days ago leaders of two of the biggest unions – the AMWU and the Australian Workers Union – held a rally for jobs. However, in total contrast to today’s rally for jobs the slogans were not to demand that the bosses be forced to increase hiring and be forced to wear the resulting lower profits. Instead, demands were made to help the bosses make more profits: through calling for infrastructure projects to use only steel and other products made by Australian corporations. But such protectionism does not save jobs. For just as demands are made here that local corporations be favoured, demands will then also be made abroad that local corporations there are favoured ahead of Australian ones. In the end

all that happens is that workers are divided across national lines and the bosses are laughing all the way to the bank – because divided workers are less able to resist the bosses who exploit them. So we say *down with divisive economic nationalism*. Let’s truly respect the slogan that is often chanted – *the workers united will never be defeated* – by rejecting all demands that call for favouring one lot of workers over another. Let the workers of the world unite.

So, sisters and brothers, we actually do need a party of the exploited and oppressed. But not one like the ALP which seeks to win elections to run the bosses’ state. What we need, instead, is a party that places its trust entirely in the class struggle. It fights to break illusions that change can come from within the parliament through the capitalist state organs. Such a party fights to build the strongest unity of workers across national, racial and gender lines in the struggle to win jobs and improved pay and conditions for all workers everywhere. It does this, in part, by mobilising the working class to support antiracist struggles, the struggles



The Western Sydney suburb of Auburn. In heavily multi-racial, working class areas like Fairfield, Auburn and Villawood a sizeable proportion of the population deliberately cast informal votes in elections because those individuals understand that none of the current parliamentary parties serve their interests.

of people oppressed by Australian imperialism abroad and the cause of women's liberation. When the capitalists scream that moves to force them to maintain a larger workforce will cause an economic collapse, this revolutionary workers' party will explain to workers that this only proves the need for the working class to seize the means of production from the capitalists and create, by any means necessary, a workers state.

In a workers state, every person will have the right to work in secure, fully paid jobs. The talents of humans will no longer be wasted and every person will have their most basic human rights satisfied – the right to a decent means of existence and the right to contribute to society through their labour and creativity. All the current parliamentary parties in practice spit on that right. Don't campaign or vote for any of them. Let's instead organise mass struggles to resist the anti-working class program of whichever party is elected today to administer the racist, rich people's system.

A society where every person is respected and every person is as valuable as their neighbour is possible. A better society based on so much more than making money for the few. The capitalist system is so putrid in so many ways we must all do all that we can to fight for a fundamentally different society. Once you understand how

capitalism works you can also understand how it can be destroyed. The united working class alongside Aboriginal people and all others that are oppressed can bring this rotten system to its knees and kill it, hailing in a society that I want to bring up my kids in.

Rally M.C., Samuel Kim, mid-rally remarks:

I would just like to add that in my parent's country, South Korea, 1.5 years ago they actually banned a party with relative size similar to the Greens, called the Unified Progressive Party... they had about 10-15% of the vote and stood as the 3rd largest party. They stated this party was too radical and tried to start a revolution/insurrection. In reality, the party was unfortunately, not revolutionary. However, it was very critical of billionaires and of the pro-billionaire president. This banning of a leftist party comes from a so-called "democratic society". I'll assure you, if any political party in capitalist Australia in parliament was too critical of the rich, they would deregister or ban the party and horribly spread lies to defend billionaires just like in capitalist South Korea.

Before I hand over to our next speaker, I want to give yet another example of a corporate boss sacking workers. Last year, the company owned by the slimy Australian billionaire, Andrew Forrest, slashed hundreds of jobs. The company

owned by this supposed philanthropist is the iron ore mining company, Fortescue Metals Group. In many cases when the workers were sacked, they were herded into a recreation room and made to immediately pack their belongings into clear plastic bags. The company wanted to get rid of the workers as soon as possible. The remaining workers now have to work longer hours for the same pay. Andrew Forrest cried poor, citing a drop in iron ore prices. However, the company earlier this year announced a still massive profit of over 400 million dollars! Meanwhile, Andrew Forrest still has a personal fortune of 3.3 billion dollars! And this despicably greedy billionaire cries poor when throwing onto the scrapheap the very workers whose toil made him his fortune!

One reason why we are holding this rally in Auburn is that there is a high percentage of people here who vote informal. In the nearest polling booth in the church in East Auburn, 20% cast an informal vote. This is people who turned up to avoid a fine and then voted informal. Now right-wingers, small-l liberals and social democrats patronisingly say there's a language barrier or that there is a low level of education here... But, actually, people have a healthy scepticism towards all the mainstream parties as, time after time, people have been sold lies and empty promises. The informal vote has been markedly increasing. In the election 18 years ago, the informal vote for the seat of Blaxland was just over 5%. But at the last elections it was nearly 14%. In this working class area, because of discrimination against women workers by bosses, female workforce participation is one of the lowest in the country and many face racist discrimination in employment – so people rightly feel disenfranchised. In contrast, in wealthier seats like North Sydney, the informal vote is nearly three times less – you see, the upper class knows that the system serves them and that they have a stake in it.

To the good working class people of Auburn, we say well done to those who are savvy enough to understand that the system does not serve you and that you have no stake in choosing which gang will administer this capitalist system.

Let us ignore those pretentious, pseudo-enlightened snobs who sneer and patronise you.

It is good that some slaves do not elect their own master. So we call for us slaves to arise. We call for mass action – including and especially militant working class industrial action. We don't have the media, we don't have the money, the parliamentary machine does not serve us, we only have our bodies to utilise in our resistance against the bosses. Our power comes through mass action, through the fact that it is the toil of our working class that makes the ruling class its profits and, most crucially, our power comes through our unity across racial, national and gender lines. That is what today is all about! It is about the fight for the right to secure fully paid jobs for all workers won through our own struggle united with all the downtrodden.

Yuri Gromov (editor of Trotskyist Platform journal, *The Spark*):

IBM – whose workers over many decades have played no small part in helping create our modern digital world – IBM last year made a massive profit of 13 billion dollars – a billion more than the year before. So why – after utilising all the sweat and labour – all of the abilities and effort of its workforce to generate such enormous profits and, what's more, after being awarded a renewed, nearly half a billion dollar contract by the Department of Human Services, why then has IBM a few months ago started slashing hundreds of jobs in Australia? After helping create such massive profits, you'd think that the least a big company like IBM could give its workers would be a guaranteed job. But, instead, they throw their workers onto the scrapheap of redundancy, out onto the demeaning dole lines at Centrelink where some of the 2000 former IBM workers already sacked over the last three years in Australia must already have endured the experience of being treated like bludgers by brash young bureaucrats just because – no thanks to IBM – they now rely upon a paltry dole payment that's nearly impossible to actually live on. These job cuts are not about offshoring – IBM, true to form, is also slashing tens of thousands of jobs internationally.

IBM's biggest shareholder is America's Berkshire Hathaway which is owned by Warren Buffett, one of the world's richest people with a net worth of 66 billion US dollars! Buffett is a small-l liberal who supports Obama and claims to be concerned about the poor. He would probably fund the Greens if he lived here. However, as IBM's record demonstrates, he is also a greedy corporate thug whose small-l liberal concerns for human rights amount to so much trite waffle because workers for Warren Buffet, just as for every other capitalist, amount to mere figures on the company ledger, labour costs to write off and quickly forget about.

Australian billionaires are just as bad or worse like, for instance, that smug, absolutely appalling racist Andrew "Twiggy" Forrest of Fortescue Metals FMG, one of whose laid off workers in the Pilbara was last year quoted in WA Today saying, ""They [FMG] seriously don't give a f__k about the people that have made the company successful." [<http://www.watoday.com.au/wa-news/fmg-sacks-workers-at-christmas-creek-cloudbreakmine-sites-20150429-1mvvaw.html>]

But smaller bosses are no better. In February, the Australian-owned Lion Group announced that it was making 39 workers at its Launceston brewery in Tasmania redundant. Yet a week later it announced a rise in its underlying profit to almost \$700 million. So whether foreign owned or locally owned, whether huge or small, whether owned by right-wingers or small-l liberals, all the capitalist bosses have no hesitation in slashing jobs and throwing dozens or hundreds or thousands or even tens and hundreds of thousands of working people into a life of uncertainty: uncertainty about how they are going to support themselves and their families, uncertainty about how they will pay their bills and where their next meal will come from, uncertainty about how they will pay their mortgage or rent and the bleak possibility of joining the 100,000 people who are homeless on the cold winter streets of Australia today. All this misery is the lot of so many sacked workers – not through any fault of their own but simply because they are human collateral damage in the ruling class' reckless pursuit of ever bigger profits.

This is the normal, everyday kind of rule that our parliamentary democracy holds fast to. This is what all the millions of Australians have been effectively coming out to vote in support of today. Today, the dice is rolled once again to decide which party will continue to enforce the right of the rich to hold the lives of working class people balanced precariously on a tightrope, a tightrope called personal profit under which yawns the desolate abyss of unemployment. In Australia's kind of democracy the dice is loaded so that the rich are always going to win whichever party in the end forms government. All the current parliamentary parties uphold a capitalist constitution that places the nominal rights of a few to private property and private profit so far above the right of thousands and ultimately millions of workers to a living wage. In fact, all the parties make a virtue out of punishing the unemployed. Just two weeks ago, the ALP – in whom so many working class people so tragically place their precious trust – announced a policy where people on social security benefits who have defaulted on paying the fines which the Coalition government imposed on job seekers who fail to turn up to all those pointless job agency interviews and activities – the ALP has had the bright idea that they'll help out these unemployed people pay off their fines by slashing their benefits accordingly. Yet another punitive measure against the poor and unemployed dressed up as "income management."

Do these people who are so desperate for your vote really have no shame: they uphold the bosses' supposed "right" to slash jobs while punishing the victims of this very job slashing. No, we should not be giving our vote to any of these parties at today's elections.

In the polling booth at multiracial, working class Villawood East, over 26% of people at the last federal election did, in fact, only turn up to vote to avoid being fined and then cast an informal vote. When you take into account those who simply risked a fine to not show up at all, that was well over one in three people in this part of western Sydney who refused to vote for any candidate. This effect has actually nearly doubled since the

2004 elections. So, we say, well done to a growing number of those working class people in areas like Villawood, Fairfield and here in Auburn who are clever enough to understand that they should not be supporting any of the current lot. However, it is important that this healthy distrust of the system does not lead to despondency.

It is time to test the strength, to rattle the shackles that bind the working class to the will of their capitalist masters. It is time to flex the physical and intellectual muscles of the Australian working class on the street, in the workplace and on the picket line struggles for rights at work. This struggle will hold no illusions at all in the goodwill of either the Liberal Party or the ALP. For they are simply the right and left wing props of the capitalist order, a pair of tired old second hand car salesmen who've set up their seedy dealerships on opposite corners of the street of capital so they can lure innocent passer-by's into buying their dubious democratic bombs. But buyers beware: you can be sure that your vote will count for nothing, even if you place your mistaken trust in relative newcomers to this democratic hustle like the Greens who notoriously sold refugees down the river in a deal with the ALP in 2010 and have been quick to flag this same policy as a non-core promise ready to be negotiated out this time around too. None of these parties will guarantee jobs for all.

So let us fight for the right to work, for the right of our children to a high quality free education, for our families' right to the best free health care available, for the right of the homeless to a safe and secure roof over their heads, the rights of the so long embattled and yet still so proud and powerful Aboriginal people, the rights of our LGBTI communities and not least of all the rights of the ordinary men, women and children so cruelly imprisoned in the Nazi hellhole immigration detention centres of Christmas Island, Nauru and Manus Island. Once so many other sections of society have united around us the fight to stop job slashing by the bosses will be so much more powerful.

Don't Get Conned into Voting for Any of the Anti-Working Class Parliamentary Parties

They All Uphold the "Right" of the Greedy Bosses to Retrench Workers at Will

Let's Get Organised to Stand Up to the Bosses and Win the Right to Secure Jobs for All

Force Profitable Companies to Increase Hiring and Let Them Cop the Resulting Lower Profits

No to Slave Wage Internships and Work for the Dole

For Fully Paid, Permanent Jobs for All

It is time to show once again that – unlike the Liberals or the ALP or the rest of them – working class men and women in this country are nobody's lackeys. It is time for the organized working class to flex its industrial muscle. It is time for workers to trust in our own collective power. Only then will all the other oppressed layers of society see that it is working class women and men who are ready to lead the masses away from a cruel and unfair system towards a society where everyone's needs are met and everyone's abilities are valued. A society that can realise the principle of: from each according to their ability to each according to their need.

This famous formula dating back to the 1870s from the pen of the great German philosopher Karl Marx – the founder of the modern communist movement – still remains the best way to describe the communist future that my comrades and I struggle in our own modest way to help bring about. If a bunch of people found themselves alone and thrust together on this green and blue planet and determined that they would try to pull together for the sake of their mutual survival then surely they wouldn't find any better advice than to follow this creed: from each according to their ability to each according to their need.

Marx wished that these words and the idea they encapsulate which is almost childlike in its innocent simplicity would be inscribed on the banner of the working women and men of the world. A banner to be unfurled as they rose to their historical calling and wrenched the reins of industry and government into their strong and able working hands and away from the greedy paws of the ruling capitalists.

Rally M.C., Samuel Kim, concluding remarks:

In closing let me summarise our message to both people at this rally and the good working class people of multiracial Auburn passing by.

The insecure, temporary jobs that more and more workers are forced into are not good enough. Unemployment is not good. No to Work for the Dole! No to low-waged internships!

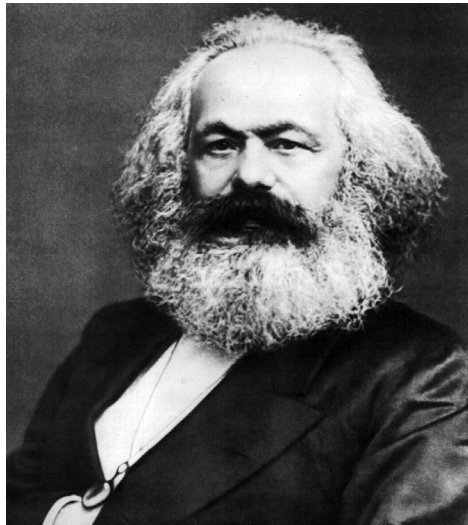
The reason there is unemployment is because of the capitalist system and because of the greed of the big business owners whom this system serves. These bosses do not hesitate to slash jobs if that is what it takes to maximise profits. This is what Clive Palmer, Andrew Forrest, Warren Buffett, the owners of the big banks, BHP, Rio Tinto and countless other exploiters have been doing over the last 18 months. All those who blame 457 Visa guest workers, refugees, migrants or international workers for causing unemployment are not only whipping up poisonous nationalism but are acting to get the real people responsible for unemployment – these capitalist exploiters – off the hook.

All the current parliamentary parties and independents do exactly this when in office. They seek to blame others for unemployment or they ignore the real contributors to unemployment in capitalism because they uphold the capitalist system. They all uphold the right of the corporate bosses to sack workers whenever they need to increase their profits. Meanwhile, whether it is the right-wing Liberals in government, the ALP or the ALP and Greens in coalition, all these parties have overseen measures punishing the unemployed and the poor for their own plight.

That is part of why we should not be voting for any of these parties at today's elections. Many people in multiracial, working class Auburn and neighbouring suburbs already understand this. That is why the informal vote is very high here. However, we need to be more than disenchanted with the current system – we need to fight against it. And we have the power! Our power is not through elections. Working class people have never won anything significant through the ballot box. Our power is our unity in mass struggle – through industrial action at the workplace and mass action on the streets. That is how we won every right that we still have today – from annual leave and sick leave to workplace safety regulations and greater access to education, these were the concessions capitalists threw to us when they got a little bit scared. Today, we badly need to unleash this power to stop the greedy bosses slashing jobs. We need to force profitable companies to increase hiring and make them wear lower profits.

We are here to fight for the right to secure fully paid jobs. Permanent jobs and that no one should be sacked.

Today is a small but important step in building a movement to fight for this perspective. If we can unleash such a movement against job slashing backed by the unions then when the capitalist bosses complain that they cannot hire more workers without inducing an economic collapse we will say to them: Since you cannot guarantee a livelihood to all workers without causing economic collapse, we are going to rip the economy out of your hands and place it into our collective hands in a system based on working class rule.



Karl Marx outlined the program for united workers struggle leading to the overturn of capitalism and the creation of a communist society based on collective ownership of the means of production. In such a society not only would jobs for all be guaranteed but each would give to society according to their ability and would receive back according to their needs.

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