



# Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

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## Whitlam: lessons for the Australian people

by Nick G.

**The passing of Gough Whitlam is a time for reflection on the rich lessons to be learned from his period of government.**

Those lessons embrace the nature of the Labor Party, the role of the state and imperialist interference in and control of Australia's internal affairs.

The capitalist press keeps alive the myth that Labor is a party of the working class. It is true that it has more support from the working class than its conservative rivals, and that it has enacted reforms that benefit the people.

This was particularly true of Whitlam. He abolished conscription, tertiary fees, capital punishment, imperial honours and the White Australia Policy. He created Medibank, poured the earth of the country through the hands of its original owners and custodians, and recognised the People's Republic of China.

Such reforms always have a dual character. On the one hand, they serve the immediate needs of the people and have a progressive character. On the other hand, they make capitalism more palatable for the working class and help prolong the life of a system that keeps the working class in its precarious and vulnerable existence.

### Capitalist class rule

The state is the apparatus that maintains the rule of the capitalist class. Good people often make the mistake of saying that this or that political party gets into "power" when it wins an election. This is a fundamentally mistaken view. Power is held by the ruling class. Political parties get into "office" and administer and regulate the power of the ruling class.

Whitlam, for all his charisma and vision, essentially kept his reforms within the bounds of a capitalist economy. Marxist historian Humphrey McQueen tellingly noted that Whitlam's "socialism required a larger public sector, never a reallocation of wealth."

Nevertheless, US imperialism was scared by the mere rustle of Whitlam's leaves in the winds.

Whitlam was lifted by a genuinely



*The demand for Land Rights was part of a mighty people's movement for far-reaching change in Australia*

popular wave of demand for real independence from imperialism. Riding that wave, his Christmas 1972 criticism of the US bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong was a shock to the Nixon administration.

He supported proposals for an Indian Ocean "zone of peace" opposed by the US. Whitlam also sought to end the outsourcing of US coup attempts in Cambodia and Chile to the Australian Security Intelligence Service (ASIS), threatened not to extend the agreements covering US bases in Australia, and challenged US corporations with vague plans to "buy back the farm".

In 1973, his Attorney-General Lionel Murphy raided the offices of ASIO through which the US kept the Australian people under surveillance.

### Destabilised by US imperialism

Destabilisation of Whitlam's government became a priority for US imperialism. Experienced coup master Marshall Green was sent as US Ambassador in 1973.

When Whitlam sought funds from the Middle East to finance nationalisation of multinational energy companies, all the tricks in the book were brought into play. A fabricated letter was used to force the sacking of Treasurer Jim Cairns. Various other forgeries were put together and leaked to the press.

Millions of dollars were channelled from the CIA to the Liberal and Country Parties through the Nugan Hand Bank, causing Whitlam to label them as "subsidised by the CIA".

In the end, there was no need for Marshall Green to repeat the slaughter he had visited upon the Indonesian

people when he oversaw Suharto's coup against Sukarno. Whitlam had stupidly appointed Clarrie O'Shea's jailer, Sir John Kerr to the Governor-Generalship despite knowledge of Kerr's ties to various "foundations" financed and controlled by the CIA.

A crisis around the Supply Bills was manufactured and on November 11, 1975, the very day when Whitlam was to inform Parliament everything he knew about the CIA and US bases in Australia, he was sacked by Kerr.

Whitlam had more than once declared proudly that he was bourgeois. Now that class membership and his underlying fear of an independent, organised working class, kicked in. He advised supporters to "maintain their rage", but remained impotent himself, meekly accepting the transition by means of a semi-fascist coup, to the caretaker Prime Ministership of Malcolm Fraser. Future Labor leader and ACTU head Bob Hawke kept the working class from a general strike.

The message was not lost on Labor. As a party of capitalism that had adopted some of the policies and practices of a

social-democratic party, Labor was to refashion itself under Hawke and Keating as an ardent supporter of neo-liberalism. This corresponded with the ascendancy of finance capital over industrial capital and a change from Labor's championing of manufacturing to its embrace of deregulation and privatisation.

Rather than advancing itself as a champion of independent nation-building, Labor's former support for Australia's national development was subsumed by its fundamental support for the US-Australian "alliance", a relationship in which the demands of the stronger partner are willingly enacted by the weaker.

### Working class leadership

The parliamentary process can never buck the power of the ruling class. The Labor Party cannot be the party through which the fundamental interests of the working class are pursued.

Only the development of a revolutionary movement for anti-imperialist independence and socialism, led by the working class through its own independent organisation, can realise the vision that the state and the imperialists conspired to drown when they deposed Whitlam.

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) exists for that reason, and for that reason alone.

Building the Party of the working class is a challenge in Australian conditions, but understanding the significance of the Whitlam era encourages us to redouble our efforts to regroup, to rebuild, to resist and to rebel.

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## Corporations and education

by Alex M.

**In another attempt at being seen to be doing something about the decimation of manufacturing in Geelong with its consequent job losses, the Education Minister Christopher Pyne announced that the city would be the site for a pilot program.**

The program, based on a New York educational initiative sponsored by I.B.M. amongst others, is predicated on greater involvement of corporations in setting curricula.

At first glance there are two obvious ways that this initiative is bound to give rise to cynicism and concern.

The first is that like a number of announcements coming from Federal and State MPs, assorted Ministers and local political identities about trying to help troubled Geelong, it is a band-aid

solution.

There is little or no consultation with the people of Geelong, a substantial number of whom are workers who have lost their jobs or are about to.

No, what has tended to happen, for example, is that a suggestion and sometimes even a decision is made to re-locate a government department making Geelong the headquarters of such and such a bureaucracy.

Some jobs are created, some opportunities are there for local people to find employment, but for the majority of workers employed by the likes of Ford, Shell, Alcoa and QANTAS at Avalon they are not going to get work in public service or administrative jobs; they usually don't have the experience or skill sets.

It is clear that there is little to no long term planning or vision that informs

such suggestions and/or decisions.

Band-aid solutions and superficial tidying up after corporations cut and run is the lot of bourgeois politicians. After all, businesses must be free to go where profits can be maximised.

Local people are quite sceptical about the approaches by the mainstream political parties to the problems facing Geelong, particularly in the run-up to Victorian state elections in November.

Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network chief Anne-Marie Ryan addressing the Coalition and state Labor support for relocating the Victorian WorkCover Authority's head office to Geelong, (which supposedly will bring 550 jobs to the city) said: 'I wonder whether any of that is the answer to our issues. It just kind of feels that there's stuff coming from everywhere, but it's very prescriptive.

'Politics aside, I think there's a real need for some kind of bipartisanship around some of these issues, rather than people competing and upping each other on what they can throw at us.

'The workers themselves don't see that the new things that are coming in are for them.

'They actually think its spin because their actual experience of what it is like in the community at the moment is that they've just been cut loose.'

### Unemployment

Unemployment in Geelong is running at 9.5% according to September ABS figures, with 12,000 out of a job and seeking employment.

Anne-Marie Ryan believes that this underestimates the real situation with many people under-employed.

Even the official figures put in perspective how large the problem is in the region and how inadequate the responses have been including Pyne's trumpeting of a new secondary level education pilot program to be based in Geelong.

How many workers will this program give jobs to? Remarkably few it would be safe to say.

### P-Tech program in Geelong: opportunism and neoliberal ideology

Which leads to the second reason for feeling cynical and concerned about the latest announcement from Education Minister Pyne regarding what is called in the US the 'Pathways to Technology Early College High School' program (P-Tech).

The Federal Government, in partnership with the Victorian Department of Education, has allocated \$500,000 in seed money to set up a P-Tech type program in Geelong.

Under the cover of being seen to be doing something for a city and region which is doing it tough, opportunists like Pyne and Tony Abbott can point to the P-Tech pilot program as proof of their commitment to the city and its future workers.

Abbott paid a visit to the original P-Tech site in a Brooklyn, New York school in June this year after hearing about it through President Obama's touting of the school program two years ago.

Abbott met the school's principal Rashid Davis. Davis defends the program by asserting that it wasn't 'turning over teaching and learning to industry'.

He maintains that despite the involvement of I.B.M. and 65 manufacturing, telecommunications, health and financial companies involved in P-Tech schools across New York, Illinois and Connecticut, the program prepares 'our students to be the best citizens that they can be so that they have viable options.'

However, as Davis points out I.B.M. is involved directly in the student's education: 'They are direct in providing mentors for students; they are direct in providing curriculum for a course, called workplace learning, which helps to prepare students for the mentoring as well as to prepare them for the internships.'

Pyne and Abbott, like Davis see nothing wrong with such direct corporate involvement in education and the influencing of curricula, with Pyne gushing about 'McDonalds or IBM or BHP Billiton or Iluka or Santos or manufacturing businesses involved in their local schools'.

### Indoctrination

Such schools would necessarily lead to the indoctrination of students with a narrow corporate-centric worldview.

Also, the contraction of education to that of mere vocational training for sponsoring corporations speaks volumes for how ideologically driven people like Abbott and Pyne are.

Abbott and Pyne really don't care for the lives and education of working class people in Geelong, the region and the country as a whole.

They are opportunists. Like mainstream politicians of all political persuasions they can see no alternative to capitalism and many of them are committed to neoliberal ideology.

We need to advance an independent working class agenda that addresses job creation, manufacturing and education amongst other things as an integral part of the struggle for an independent socialist Australia.

## Important Notice to Readers

***Vanguard* will not be published as a printed newspaper next year. The final edition will be distributed to subscribers and other readers in December 2014.**

*Vanguard* articles will continue to appear as usual on the internet at [www.cpaml.org](http://www.cpaml.org) together with downloads of leaflets, booklets and other material of interest to our readers.

[www.cpaml.org](http://www.cpaml.org) is updated regularly to provide readers with timely news and analysis of national and international struggles. Your comments and feedback are always welcome and will assist the further development of the website.

The decision to go fully online has been made in recognition of the fact that most young people use the internet as their primary source of news and communication. Computers and tablets are commonly used in schools and by workers in many workplaces, while libraries, councils and clubs conduct basic computer training for older people and others in their communities.

While another factor has been the ever-rising cost of production, with postage particularly expensive even with bulk mailing, the release of human resources will allow us to devote more time to deepening and extending our tasks, both theoretical and practical.

Naturally, there will still be substantial costs. Readers are urged to support this initiative by continuing their donations to *Vanguard*, P.O. Box 196, Fitzroy, Victoria 3065.

*Vanguard* and the CPA (M-L) can be contacted by mail to the above address, or by email at [cpaml@vanguard.net.au](mailto:cpaml@vanguard.net.au)

Your contributed articles, comments and criticisms are all welcomed and carefully considered.

To stay in touch with *Vanguard* and the position of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) bookmark the website:

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

## Crisis and fear plague Australian and World economy

by Max O.

**Local and international financial bodies recently reported that economic catastrophe awaits many major firms in Australia and that financial markets around the world are set to plummet. The intensifying capitalist world economic crisis is also pushing the major imperialist powers towards war.**

The *Certified Public Accountant-Australia* (CPA-Australia) reported in September that, "Nearly a third of ASX-listed companies are fragile, and at risk of financial catastrophe..."

More alarm bells were clanging away now than during the depths of the global financial crisis of 2008-9, the CPA Australia concluded from the analysis of almost 16,000 annual company reports.

### Future financial shocks

Their research stated that these vulnerable companies, "...were exposed to the dual risks of the end of the mining investment boom and an unexpected slowdown in China... It really begs the question how our economy would be placed were we to face another shock like the GFC."

China's economy is slowing down and will more than likely not reach the official growth target of 7.5% in 2014.

The consequence of this can be seen in the fall of the price of iron ore to the five year low of \$US 79 per tonne, drastically reducing the profitability of the mining corporations.

The economic anxiety doesn't just stop at mining and allied industries; the CPA-Australia report stated that non-mining sectors like consumer staples, industrials, health care and utilities were also worried about their financial strength and how they would survive another GFC.

The share markets have acted accordingly, with the Australian share market going on a month-long slide downwards that cost investors more than A\$140 billion.

This crisis of confidence is related to the fear coming out of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Germany.

As Germany suffered its biggest fall in industrial production since 2009, the IMF lowered its forecast for world growth. This immediately wiped A\$13 billion off the Australian share market.

The economic stagnation throughout Europe has hit Germany, which relies heavily on its exports to not only this region but also by Brazil which is also

suffering a recession, and to China whose growth has slowed.

The combined issues of the world slump, central bank policies and the military-political pressures in the Middle East and Ukraine have produced volatility in the financial markets across the globe.

Wall Street saw its worst three-day trade loss since 2011. The catalyst for this was the fall in airline shares, resulting from the Ebola disaster and the fall off in energy stocks as the price of oil slumped to an all-time low in four years. These losses saw \$1.5 trillion wiped off the value of global equities.

Presently central bankers and the IMF are in a quandary about what to do, because pumping money into the financial system has not expanded the productive economy through increased investment and production. It has only resulted in financial risk-taking!

To arrest this financial speculation by increasing interest rates contains the fear of pushing economies into recession.

The credit debt policies that were concocted to overcome capitalism's stagnation crisis are now a shambles and demonstrate that the IMF is powerless to do anything about solving it.

### The US, IMF at odds with the ECB

Differences in policies of the major economies have emerged recently at the IMF, which aggravate the troubles of the financial markets.

The European Central Bank (ECB) is at odds with the United States and the IMF who demand that they expand their purchase of government bonds so as to increase financial stimulus to their economy.

The ECB declared it has virtually reached the limit of what it can do. Forestalling the financial crisis of Greece, Spain and other extremely indebted euro countries exhausted the ECB's financial capacity.

Anyway, the only benefactors of such stimulus have been financial houses, banks and filthy-rich speculators. Presently corporations are looking around for how to save their own skin at someone else's expense.

Marx in Volume III of *Capital* sums it up thus: "So long as things go well, competition affects an operating fraternity of the capitalist class ... so that each shares in the common loot in proportion to the size of his respective investment.

"But as soon as it no longer is a question of sharing profits, but of sharing losses, everyone tries to reduce his own share to a minimum and to

## Editorial

### Threat and betrayal

**On October 25, Trade and Investment Minister Andrew Robb hosted ministerial meetings of the 12 countries negotiating the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement, the latest "free trade" deal inspired and orchestrated by US imperialism.**

Countries involved are Australia, the US, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Canada, Mexico, Vietnam, Peru, Chile, Brunei and New Zealand. The meetings were called to finalise negotiations prior to signing formalities scheduled for November 8.

The TPP threatens Australian jobs and living standards, as well as hard-won social benefits such as the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). It allows open slather for foreign corporations to trash laws and regulations protecting the environment and public health, and undermines fundamental democratic rights.

Wikileaks has recently exposed the draft text of the investment chapter and the negotiating positions of the countries involved on the issues of copyright and patents, and no surprise, Australia is in lock-step with US imperialism as other countries are bullied into line.

US imperialism wants to impose criminal penalties for disclosure of 'trade secrets' that lead to "commercial advantage or financial gain" or benefit "a foreign economic entity" or "are detrimental to a (TPP) party's economic interests, international relations or national defence or national security."

This is aimed not just at commercial espionage, but most pointedly at journalists, activists and whistle-blowers who, for example, attempt to expose the taxations rorts and environmental damage of many large corporations.

Even though Robb has promised not to accept "an outcome that would adversely affect the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme", the draft text on copyright allows for the extension of patents for very minor changes to a drug, preventing the introduction of cheaper 'generic' drugs and maintaining the high cost monopoly of the foreign drug companies.

The copyright provisions of the draft text also provide for criminal penalties for non-commercial infringements of "intellectual property" such as downloads of films and music, and even the use of patented medical procedures! It seeks to extend up to 100 years the copyright laws for authors, again with the threat of enforceable penalties.

To make matters worse, the full text of the agreement will be hidden from the people (and even parliament) until after it is signed off by Cabinet.

None of this is in the interests of the Australian people and the people of the Pacific region. It stifles the spread of knowledge and limits the sovereign rights of countries to protect their people and their environment. It only serves US corporate greed and facilitates the further penetration and takeover of the Australian economy by the multinationals.

If the Abbott government goes ahead and signs this trade deal, it will be a major betrayal of the Australian people, comparable to the notorious Brisbane Line of World War 2.

**Support the TPP protest rallies in the capital cities on November 8.**

shove it off upon another. The class, as such, must inevitably lose. How much the individual capitalist must bear of the loss, i.e., to what extent he must share in it at all, is decided by strength and cunning, and competition then becomes a fight among hostile brothers. The antagonism between each individual capitalist's interests and those of the capitalist class as a whole, then comes to the surface ..."

### Battle lines being drawn

Close attention should be paid to the outcome of this failure of global capitalism and the machinations that

are being hatched in the centres of economic power.

The enormous accumulation of capital that occurred in Australia through mining has come to an end.

The export of minerals to China by largely foreign mining corporations on the one hand is offset by Australia's client status entanglement, in particular the 'Asia Pivot', with US economic, political and military control on the other.

As ruptures between the major powers occur resulting from the crisis of global capitalism, battles are sure to arise with severe consequences for the world's peoples including Australians.

# Big Business: The real tax bludgers!

by Max O.

**The largest companies in Australia have been able to dodge \$80 billion in tax between 2004 - 2013, argued the United Voice union and the Tax Justice Network.**

In their joint report, "Who pays for our Common Wealth", it found that of Australia's 200 top stock market listed companies, 84% of them paid less than the company tax rate of 30%.

The story gets worse because almost a third of these companies have an effective tax rate of just 10%. How low can you get? Well 10% of these ASX200 companies paid a tax rate of 5% or less!

21st Century Fox, from the Murdoch stable of companies, effectively paid a tax rate of 1%.

Then there's James Hardy, of the asbestos infamy, which paid virtually zero tax.

If you thought it can't get any worse than this, the mining giant Glencore received a tax rebate of \$8 million!

Overall the report found that the effective tax rate of ASX 200 companies during the last decade was 23%.

Quite a difference from the official statutory rate of 30%!

The proportion of total tax revenue from business, over the past five years has fallen from 23% to 19%.

In stark contrast the proportion of tax paid by individuals, over the same period (2004 - 2013), increased from 37% to 39%.

Add the burden of the regressive Goods and Services Tax, which hits the less well-off, one can see who suffers the tax burden.

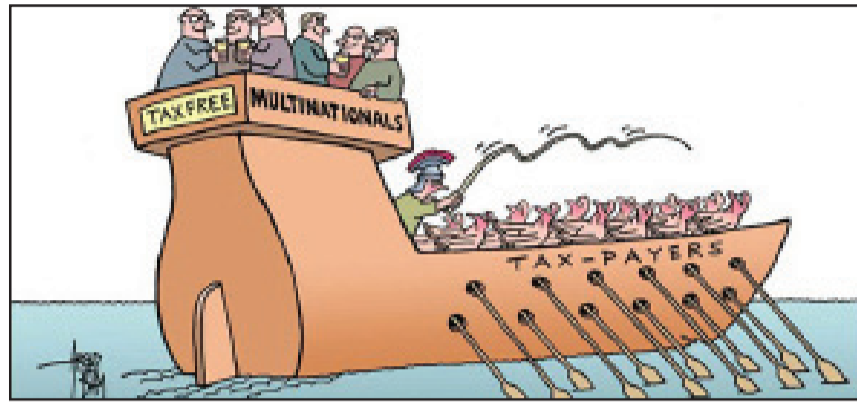
But as the big end of town continually reminds us, avoiding tax is not illegal. Australia's taxation system makes it completely legitimate.

## How business gets away with it

By using tax havens, big business establishes subsidiaries who carry out transfer price fixing (these subsidiaries overcharge the parent company for goods and services) thus transferring their profits to the offshore haven.

Of the 2,156 companies listed on the ASX, who have a reported 26,096 subsidiaries, 524 of these companies acknowledged 15,564 subsidiaries were located in secrecy jurisdictions.

The most common tax havens are Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, the Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Mauritius, Luxembourg, Singapore, and Switzerland.



It is known that 119 ASX200 listed companies are registered in Bermuda and Jersey, where their tax rate is zero.

The "Who pays for our Common Wealth" report disclosed that at least 60% of the ASX200 companies declared debt levels of over 75%, indicative of tax avoidance scams.

These companies as well borrow from their subsidiaries, where tax deductible payments are made in Australia, but the interest goes to the zero tax rate tax haven.

BHP Billiton, Commonwealth Bank, Rio Tinto, Telstra Toll Holdings and Westfield carry out this type of tax evasion practice.

Their business ethics demand that the bigger their profits are the lower the taxes should be.

Another tax evader culprit is Apple

Computer.

Since 2002 Apple sold \$27 billion of products in Australia.

However they have paid just \$193 million in tax, suggesting their profit was around \$500 million. Estimates have put Apple's actual profit at \$9 billion, which no doubt was shifted to a tax haven.

## Subsidies for corporations

Another method of tax evasion is the iniquity of government subsidies, especially to the mining corporations.

The August *Vanguard* article, "The age of entitlement keeps getting bigger for mining corporations" details the enormous amount of corporate welfare that is handed over to the mining giants.

## Action hots up to defend the ABC

by Louisa L.

**Mark Scott, head of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) appointed in 2006 by John Howard, has impeccable Liberal links.**

He worked for NSW Greiner Liberal government as chief of staff to the Education Minister Virginia Chadwick and as a senior advisor to notorious Education Minister Terry Metherell.

Metherell was roundly defeated when 80,000 teachers and supporters overflowed Sydney's Domain in August 1988, the high point of protest against attacks Metherell orchestrated on every facet of the public education system.

Mr Scott then became Editorial Director of John Fairfax media group before his ABC appointment.

So when he comes out swinging against attacks on the ABC, rather than mildly excusing it all, either the cuts are too crippling to excuse or implement (as most top public service managers seem to do), he's copping pressure from elsewhere, or both.

## Gobsmacking fantasy

Despite promises of no cuts to the ABC and SBS, the Abbott Government

quickly announced a 1% cut to the ABC's budget.

A review conducted by former Chanel 7 finance boss Peter Lewis was given to the ABC and SBS boards in confidentiality, but between \$50 and \$100 million in cuts is rumoured.

The government also gifted the ABC's overseas broadcasting to US multinational Sky, controlled by Murdoch's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fox.

Senator Mitch Fifield, the Government's communications spokesman in the Senate, Communication Minister Malcolm Turnbull and even backbencher Andrew Laming all ridiculed claims programs will have to be axed because of the cuts.

Fifield, Turnbull and Laming's statements that it will all be back room efficiencies, easily dealt with imaginatively but not impacting on programming, are gobsmacking fantasy.

Turnbull said the ABC could cut \$200 million and maintain quality broadcasting, perhaps mistakenly thinking people would be relieved if it were less.

The aim is to cripple the public

Other subsidies are the corporate health insurance company rebate, where the Commonwealth government gives the 30% subsidy towards insurance premiums – a \$6 billion bonanza to the insurance industry and private hospitals.

Then there is the fossil fuel subsidy which costs the Commonwealth government over \$10 billion each year.

Consequently the government loses many billions of dollars in revenue by subsidising the corporate sector, then uses the lack of revenue to carry out austerity attacks on social welfare.

The Australian Council of Social Service reports that one in seven Australians or 2.5 million people are living below the poverty line.

In recent decades there has been a massive transfer of wealth from the 'have nots' to the 'have mores'.

For example the seven richest people in Australia hold more wealth than 1.73 million households in the bottom 20%.

It cannot be said enough, that the profits and wealth that capital accumulates comes from workers' labour power.

The above facts and figures demonstrate the point that the major purpose of capitalist governments is to ensure that corporations can maximise their profits.

broadcasters' ability to develop Australian culture and tell the truth. Voices against the corporations that run Australia must be silenced.

## Over 57,000 sign in 40 hours

But in late September, in less than 40 hours, over 57,000 people signed an online petition organised by GetUp and Friends of the ABC calling on the Board to fight the cuts. Many emailed or phoned the Board.

On October 1, with just 24 hours' notice, 400 determined people turned up outside ABC headquarters in Sydney to deliver the petition.

Quentin Dempster and Jonathan Holmes gave powerful speeches, and people roared for the Board to listen.

When the Board, which had indicated it would briefly meet Jonathan Holmes, refused to do so or accept the petition, saying they were too busy the waiting crowd gasped. It didn't look good.

But Mark Scott has come out fighting and mass action helped ensure it.

Scott is likely to compromise, but there's a fighting mood amongst supporters of the ABC, and that isn't going away any time soon.

# Super exploitation of migrant workers in the hotel industry

-Contributed-

**Super exploitation of migrant workers in Australia is nothing new. It has existed almost as long as the super exploitation of indigenous people in Australia.**

All workers under capitalism are exploited in that they sell their labour power and create surplus value for the capitalist, from which profit is derived.

Through collective struggle since 1788, workers in Australia have won minimum standards enshrined in the capitalists' industrial laws to prevent being thrown in to a state which Marx called "miserable wretches".

However alongside these minimum standards of engagement by the capitalists, there have been many instances of capitalists ignoring their own laws and 'super exploiting' workers.

Migrant workers in particular are often the victims of this.

The other day I met some Nepalese migrants who worked cleaning rooms in a large multinational owned hotel. Some were overseas students; some were partners of overseas students.

Their working goal in Australia is to work continuously for two years to improve their chances of a successful application for permanent residency status. They said they had checked to find out that they were being paid the minimum award rate of about \$18 per hour.

The problem was that they were only paid for four hours a day and the work they had to do took eight hours!

They were expected to clean and tidy 16 rooms in four hours, one room per 15 minutes! They were effectively working for \$9 per hour!

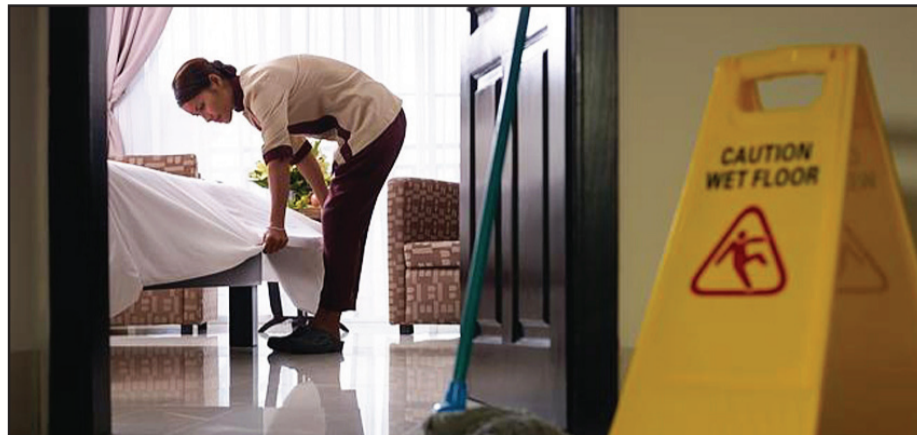
On a few occasions some of them stopped working at the four hour mark and went home, rather than working in unpaid time.

However the company they worked for, a large overseas owned labour hire firm, deducted a couple of hours pay from their pay packet for not cleaning all the rooms. So even though they worked four hours on these days, they were paid less than four hours for not completing all the work.

They were told by the manager they had to finish the work in four hours, that was the job. The industry standard, itself too demanding, is half an hour cleaning time per room.

## Modern forms of slavery still exist right here in Australia

When I heard their story, I thought that this was outrageous, but nothing



new in the hotel industry.

What they then told me was even more outrageous. In fact, a modern form of slavery.

They said their supervisor and some other hotel workers they knew were in Australia on what were called "sponsorships". I asked them what did that mean?

They said the "sponsors" are business people who agree to provide work for a new migrant worker for two years, provided the new migrant pays the sponsor an amount of money equivalent to the wages being performed for the sponsor.

Once the money is paid to the sponsor in advance of work performed,

the sponsor then pays back the money to the worker in the form of a wage, including a gross and net pay after tax.

So on the surface, it looks like a normal capitalist-wage labour relationship, but in fact the worker gets nothing, except two years' guaranteed 'employment' and a hoped for 'passport' to permanent residency.

What does such a migrant worker live on if their 'wage' is paid back in full to the boss or so-called 'sponsor'?

The Nepalese people I met said that these workers have to work a second job, usually cash in hand, in order to survive.

They said they wanted to get out of their situation but knew that the odds are stacked against them.

With great courage, they said they were going to contact the relevant union as a first step to improving their situation.

## Defend Australia's public postal services!

by Alice M.

**A broad alliance of unions, postal workers, small business and communities has come together to fight Australia Post's CEO and government plans to gut the public mail delivery services and thousands of jobs along with it.**

The Coalition of Mail Service Stakeholders is growing, and so far represents Communication Workers' Union, Printing Division of AMWU, Communication and Public Services Union; Printing Industries Association of Australia (PIAA) which represents printers and mail houses; and licensed Post Offices (franchisees).

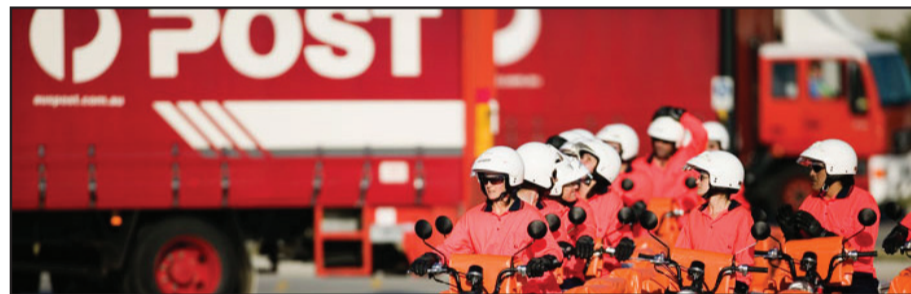
The coalition states, "We have come together to ensure that the future of Postal services in this country continue to be delivered in an equitable and sustainable manner."

There is strong support from parliamentary independents Bob Katter, Nick Xenophon, John Maddigan, and some members of the National Party.

Australia Post is embarking on a far reaching restructure that clearly serves the interests of the big business parcels and transport monopolies. The public funds and people's taxes used to provide a cheap, efficient and accessible mail service by the government-owned postal service for 205 years will be syphoned into big business private profit making.

Foreign and local big corporations are greedily eyeing the growing and highly profitable Australia Post parcels processing centres, national infrastructure and transportation networks.

They demand the government abolish



the legislated Community Service Obligation that requires Australia Post to provide a 5-day reliable, low cost uniform letter delivery service to all parts of Australia.

Australia Post CEO, Ahmed Fahour, who sits on \$4.8 million a year salary, is pushing hard to reduce the letter delivery services to 3 days per week and raise the cost of stamps. A two class letter delivery system will be set up, with an increased cost to continue 5 day a week letter deliveries and an inferior 3 day delivery.

Rural communities, people on low incomes, benefits, pensions and welfare will be disadvantaged.

Thousands of jobs will be axed from Australia Post over next few years. In the first phase, between September 2014 and March 2015 more than 1,000 jobs will go. Hundreds of these jobs will be contracted out or sent off shore.

Combined, all these measures are priming Australia Post for privatisation.

The Business Council of Australia, through its Commission of Audit, spelled out the big foreign and local corporations' agenda to privatise Australia Post and open it up to free market profiteering.

It's no coincidence that Ahmed Fahour's public announcement of

Australia Post's plans was made at this year's May gathering of the American Chamber of Commerce in Australia.

Fahour was sending a message to his masters, US corporations, that restructure and deregulation of Australia's Postal services is under way for future privatisation.

The unions and the small business and community alliance is gathering wide support. Postal workers are organising in their communities; the County Women's Association of Australia, country service clubs and members and supporters of the National Party are angry and organising local community protest meetings and rallies.

Welfare, community and pensioners' groups are sending strong messages to parliamentarians and mobilising their communities.

The CWU Postal Division has warned the government, "The prospect of a well-organised, grass roots fightback that bridges traditional political divisions is a nightmare in the making for the government."

The unity and broadness of this fightback is not often seen. It gives a glimpse of the enormous potential and capacity for a people's movement to toss out the parasites and shape Australia into an independent and socialist country run by the working people.

# Aged care workers demand a better deal – for themselves and the residents

-Contributed-

**In the last week of September, aged care sector nurses resolved to cease work at a Warrnambool aged care facility due to the crisis state of the sector, particularly in relation to the suitability of care of residents whose mental condition caused them to act violently towards staff.**

The nurses had made about 200 formal complaints about violence towards staff by one particular resident but the management of the private-for-profit aged care did not resolve the problem.

Nurses demanded removal of the resident from the facility or face a cessation of work by nurses on health and safety grounds.

For any staff in the aged care sector to collectively resolve to stop work is extremely rare and indicative of the crisis in the aged care sector faced by both residents and staff.

The aged care system is funded in such a way that owners of a facility may be reluctant to move a violent resident because that resident has paid a substantial amount of money (up to \$550,000) on entry to the facility and the owner profits from the interest on this resident bond money.

Or the owner knows that there is

nowhere else for the resident to go because staffing levels and special needs trained staff are so inadequate in the aged care sector, due to inadequate government funding and the profit motive being the driving force in a growing privately owned proportion of the sector

## Government funding cuts

The level of care for residents with special needs received a recent setback when the Abbott Government cut the 'Dementia Supplement' payment of about \$18 per resident per day.

The implications of this seemingly small budget cut by the government were brought home to me the other day when I visited an aged care place to meet some staff.

They were not nurses but Carers, the people who do most of the 'hands on' care duties such as toileting, showering, making beds, feeding of residents.

One of them said she was on light duties. A resident with dementia had grabbed her by the hand and when she tried to withdraw from his grasp, he twisted her arm causing severe ligament and shoulder damage. She was working by herself in a single resident room and by the time other staff heard her calls for help the damage had been done.



The resident had no idea that he was inflicting pain and no idea of his own personal strength. As with most dementia residents, their behaviour becomes more unpredictable as their condition advances.

Yet staffing levels determined by the owners do not increase to take account of residents' changing needs and the health and safety needs of the staff.

## Solidarity of aged care staff

What heartened me about this situation was the high level of support from other staff for their injured co-Carer.

They asked what else they could do to accommodate her light duties and they discussed what they could do as a

group to ensure adequate staffing levels of care for residents with deteriorating mental conditions. They discussed how each other was coping with the demands of the job generally. They made suggestions as to what to do to overcome specific problems caused by short staffing and high workloads.

Their conversation was one of caring for each other and residents in a very difficult and financially unrewarding occupation.

As they moved away to resume the last part of their shifts or in some cases clock off after a 'short shift', I wondered how long it would be before they too took the 'road less travelled' and like the Warrnambool nurses, took action – in their case for more staffing.

# 'Arms dealers to the social media firms' disrupt the ability to learn

by Louisa L.

**A while back I was whinging that students were distracted from work by their new laptops. Two younger, tech savvy teachers told me there was ample research to show that kids effectively multi-tasked.**

Technology clearly provides us with huge opportunities to teach and learn, and relying on research seemed better than relying on my limited observations. Assuming their evidence to be sound, I didn't follow it up.

Turns out my teaching mates were wrong; well-publicised philosophical writings in favour of multi-tasking are disproved by research.

The *Washington Post* recently republished, 'Why a leading professor of new media just banned technology use from class' from medium.com by Professor Clay Shirky of New York University, summing up that research. Key conclusions, though not the methodology, are presented below.

"We've known for some time that multi-tasking is bad for the quality of cognitive work, and is especially punishing of the kind of cognitive work

we ask of college students," writes Professor Shirky.

"Even when multi-tasking doesn't significantly degrade immediate performance, it can have negative long-term effects on 'declarative memory', the kind of focused recall that lets people characterise and use what they learned from earlier studying."

"On top of this, multi-tasking doesn't even exercise task-switching as a skill." He cites Professor Cliff Nass's Stanford University research which reports that heavy multi-taskers are *worse* at choosing which task to focus on. Nass calls them "suckers for irrelevancy".

## "If it's me against Apple and Facebook, I lose"

Shirky describes the designers of operating systems as "arms dealers to the social media firms," attacking the sustained attention essential to effective learning.

"Beeps and pings and pop-ups and icons, contemporary interfaces provide an extraordinary array of attention-getting devices, emphasis on 'getting.' Humans are incapable of ignoring

surprising new information in our visual field, an effect that is strongest when the visual cue is slightly above and beside the area we're focusing on."

"The form and content of a Facebook update may be almost irresistible, but when combined with a visual alert in your immediate peripheral vision, it is – really, actually, biologically – impossible to resist. Our visual and emotional systems are faster and more powerful than our intellect; we are given to automatic responses when either system receives stimulus, much less both."

"The industry has committed itself to an arms race for my students' attention, and if it's me against Facebook and Apple, I lose," writes Professor Shirky. "Computers are not inherent sources of distraction – they can in fact be powerful engines of focus – but latter-day versions have been designed to be, because attention is the substance which makes the whole consumer internet go."

Shirky cites further research which shows that multi-tasking on laptops also disrupts other students.

Decades back tobacco corporations

said smoking was good for people. Then they fought bitterly against the overwhelming evidence that it destroyed health and killed millions.

Today the myth of effective multi-tasking has invaded the thinking of intelligent and articulate educators. The work of N Katherine Hayles starts from the simple and absolutely true premise guiding all effective teaching, to start where the kids are. It means developing a deep understanding of each student, engaging them, building on their strengths, minimising their weaknesses and challenging their misconceptions. This enables them to broaden their understanding of the world and how to act in it.

But when Hayes' suggestion is to start with students' attachment to a social media mega-industry, controlled and manipulated for profit by giant corporations, there's a big problem. Getting the truth out is a first step.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2014/09/25/why-a-leading-professor-of-new-media-just-banned-technology-use-in-class/>

# ILPS statement on Kurdish people's resistance to ISIS

Support the Kurdish people's resistance to ISIS, condemn US and Turkey for creating and using ISIS

by Prof Jose Maria Sison

We, the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), salute the heroic resistance of the Kurdish people and their army in Rojava, the YPG/YPJ – People's Protection Units – against the criminal gangs of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) in Kobane, one of the self-governing cantons of West Kurdistan (Rojava) in Syria.

We call on all the more than 300 ILPS member-organizations in 38 countries around the globe to take initiative and express their solidarity and support to the Kurdish people's resistance in Kobane and the whole of Rojava, or join the demonstrations being organized by the Kurdish liberation movement in different parts of the world.

The ILPS condemns the super-terrorist US for creating the ISIS monster that has rampaged through parts of Syria and Iraq, committing hideous crimes against the people in areas that they have overrun.

We condemn Turkey for collaborating with the US in creating, arming and coddling this horde of terrorists.

ISIS and similar extremist Islamist terrorist groups like the Al Qaeda and Al-Nusra have been created by the US as part of its over-all scheme to remake the Middle-East, by carrying out regime change in such countries as Libya and Syria that have dared to assert their national sovereignty against imperialist plunder and war.

For its part, the Turkish government is using ISIS to attack the Kurdish liberation struggle led by the PKK.

ISIS terrorists have been trained by US Special Forces in secret NATO bases inside Turkey and Jordan. For the last year and a half, the US has been developing what the world has now come to know as ISIS.

Turkey has allowed safe passage through its borders of jihadists from different parts of the world to join ISIS, and has facilitated the transport of wounded ISIS terrorists to be treated in hospitals in the Turkish province of Urfa and other cities in Turkey.

The US is remaking the Middle-East in order to consolidate its hegemony in this oil-rich region. It is using the ISIS in the same manner as it has used Neo-Nazi gangs in the Ukraine to stir up trouble and force regime change, toppling the duly-elected president, and replacing him with a pro-Western president and a fascist military junta as part of US-NATO strategy to encircle and pressure Russia.



Kobane YPG women fighters

In the wake of the hideous crimes of the ISIS, including the massacre of Shiites and Christians, and the beheading of Western journalists, the US has pretended to adopt a policy of opposing ISIS and carrying out bombing raids against ISIS.

In fact, the US is still thereby using the ISIS as the pretext to violate the national sovereignty of Syria.

The US war planes are actually bombing food granaries and buildings in Syria which are away from ISIS

positions. They are now in a position to attack the forces of the Syrian government.

Turkey has also exposed its real dirty agenda to attack the Kurdish liberation struggle by bombing PKK forces in Oramar (Daglica) near the border with Iraq, relieving ISIS from the successful counter-attacks of the Kurdish fighters and allowing the ISIS to block humanitarian aid from Iraqi Kurdistan.

The Kurdish resistance forces in Kobane have said that they can defeat

the ISIS without any need for foreign intervention such as that falsely offered by the US and Turkey.

All they need from Iraqi Kurdistan are sufficient weapons and ammunition against the tanks and vehicles mounted with big guns of the ISIS terrorists.

The terrible crimes being perpetrated by the ISIS and the support given them by the US and Turkey have aroused the anger of freedom-loving people throughout the world.

At the same time, the heroic resistance of the YPG/YPJ – the People's Protection Units – composed of Kurdish men and women, has inspired the people of the world to rally in support of the Kurdish liberation struggle.

The acknowledged leader of the Kurdish liberation struggle, Abdullah Ocalan, has called on the entire Kurdish nation to mobilize in support of the resistance in Kobane.

Kurds throughout the world have responded by organizing demonstrations in many countries calling for international support.

We must show our solidarity to the Kurdish people in their hour of need and give them all-out support until victory.

## China's 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary and events in Hong Kong

*Statement by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)*

**The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) salutes the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949.**

Led by Chairman Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China, the Chinese people stood up.

After long years of struggling against feudal landlords, against colonialism, against Japanese imperialism, against the agents of imperialist trading corporations and finance houses, and against the vicious Kuomintang reactionaries, the Chinese nation regained its self-esteem, the Chinese people reclaimed their dignity and became, for the first time, the masters of their own destiny.

The Communist Party vested state power in the hands of the workers and peasants of China.

A socialist economy began to meet people's basic needs for food, shelter, health care and education. On every front there was a massive upsurge of enthusiasm for the creation of a new society.

A collective morality based on service to the people and putting self-interest last became a motivation for hard work and a simple, unostentatious lifestyle.

Regrettably, the momentum towards socialism has been lost as sections of the economy have been transferred to new capitalist elements through a "reform" movement.

Ostentatious displays of personal wealth, criminal activity, corruption and individualism have emerged in the wake of these changes.

While there are avenues for some contest over the future direction of China, state power is by and large in the hands of oligarchs within and without the Communist Party.

### Hong Kong

The 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary is also witness to a student-led protest movement in Hong Kong.

The former British colony once enjoyed a privileged economic position as the entrepot through which capitalist governments (particularly those that refused to recognise the PRC) did business with the mainland of China.

Hong Kong has since lost that monopoly position. A number of new

Hong Kongs have been built in recent years within China itself, most notably nearby Shenzhen.

This has caused some grief to the old power-holders in Hong Kong capitalist society who cling to the belief that a British or US-style political system would restore the opportunities they feel have been overtaken by China.

US imperialism is particularly adept at using civil disturbances to its own advantage and manipulating events through bodies like the CIA and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

We call for the peaceful resolution of contradictions between the holders of state power in China and the pro-Western elements in Hong Kong on the basis of "one country, two systems" and the Basic Law of Hong Kong.

Genuine causes for complaint among the broader sections of Hong Kong society should be investigated and addressed.

But Chinese sovereignty must be upheld because behind all disruptions in Hong Kong, Tibet, Xinjiang and Taiwan are the US imperialists who desperately want to prevent the further strengthening of China as a competitor and rival.

# Power struggle builds in NSW

by *Louisa L.*

## Community groups led by unions are gearing up to stop the NSW power sell-off.

State budget papers prove electricity poles and wires are the biggest income generating assets in NSW Government hands, bringing in up to \$2.5 billion per year.

With an Ernst and Young study showing 60% of NSW residents are failing to pay electricity bills on time, and support for the sale in four National-held areas at just 14%, people are ready to say no.

In mid-October, a community meeting in suburban Mortdale saw over 70 locals determined to fight back.

United Services Union General Secretary, Graeme Kelly told the meeting that job losses amongst the 13,000 NSW electricity workers would be enormous.

“Why on earth would a government wish to sell an asset which brought in \$1.7 billion last year and paid for thousands of teachers, nurses and cops?” he said.

“This massive revenue stream is likely to end up in the hands of foreign corporations and governments.”



## 99 year lease is a con

Steve Butler, General Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, described himself as “an old power line worker”, like his father and grandfather.

He said, “The infrastructure is an essential service, a strategic asset. It’s not important; it’s critical!”

He reckoned the \$20 billion for a 99 year ‘lease’ would see a foreign multinational corporation taking profit offshore.

“In 99 years everyone in this room will be dead,” he said, calling it privatisation pure and simple. He debunked the government figures,

saying it was relying on a delusional \$5 billion in interest on a price of \$13-15 billion, to be spent on non-profit-generating infrastructure.

“NSW has just spent \$16 billion updating the electricity network,” he said. It’s more than the expected price!

## Victorian disasters

Job losses would be ‘collateral damage’, according to Mr Butler, with 80 per cent of jobs (8,000 in total) disappearing in the ten years after Victorian privatisation.

“NSW has the largest, most remote electricity network in the country, yet it’s the cheapest,” Mr Kelly stated.

In Victoria prices rose 79% in ten years. A Consumer Action Law Centre report reveals that power companies are accused of advising some desperate customers to borrow from family and friends to pay off their bills and a 77-year-old woman with a sick husband struggling to pay \$1500 who was told to switch off the gas heater and rug up.

(<http://stoptheselloff.org.au/chilling-reality-privatised-electricity-made-clear-victorian-experience/>)

Mr Butler said not one apprentice has been trained in Victoria since privatisation. Additionally, safety has been compromised. The Inquiry into the Black Friday fires at Kinglake was scathing of the private electricity contractors. “\$20 parts could have stopped some of the fires,” he said.

## Corporate power behind the throne

Questions from the floor pointed to the culpability of previous ALP governments, derided for handing over assets to foreign corporations, despite bitter struggle. These corporations run the joint, the power behind shaky thrones, and are key.

The campaign to defeat the NSW Coalition in the March election will alert the public and derail the corporate

agenda, but only temporarily. Keeping it off the tracks completely will be harder still, and require much more than manoeuvres at ALP conferences.

But for now, the fight will build on forces created through initial meetings.

“They don’t want us to campaign,” Mr Butler said, pointing to new laws limiting how much union or related organisations could spend on political campaigning.

Mr Butler concluded, “We can’t match the coin [of corporate opponents]. The only way we can fight back are the arms and legs we can put on the ground.”

## Power to the people

by *Louisa L.*

**Oatley, a tiny Sydney suburb, more like a country town tucked in a bend of the Georges River, has an electricity depot with 30 engineers employed, of 500 statewide.**

Many of the local engineers backed a meeting in the neighbouring suburb of Mortdale to stop electricity privatisation.

Nick Gotsis, of Professionals Australia which represents engineers and other technical professionals, is convinced most of these jobs would go if poles and wires are privatised, saying the reduction in numbers would lead to greater stress and increased intensity workload.

He said outsourcing was already increasing, imposing cost savings “off the backs of the workers.”

Contractors, he stated, make mistakes, because they don’t have expertise or local knowledge. Meanwhile boards lack engineers, and only focus on profits.

He expressed concern that while engineers currently plan for long term safety and reliability, “decreasing maintenance is a great way to reduce costs.”

“It’s a rock solid network and it would be a tragedy to see it run down ... Our members are proud to have designed our (electricity) network ... They are community focussed and oppose privatisation.”

## No justice for workers

by *Ned K.*

**On October 16 2014 the Daily Mercury and Australian Financial Review reported that the High Court upheld a Federal Court Decision that a CFMEU shop steward’s dismissal by BHP-Mitsubishi Coal was fair and legal.**

The miners’ shop steward, Henk Doevendans was sacked for ‘misconduct’ by BHP weeks after a strike by miners the Dystart coal mine.

The ‘misconduct’ alleged by BHP and upheld by the ‘independent’ High Court was that he stood on a picket line holding a sign which said “No Principles – Scabs – No Guts”.

The sacking took place several weeks after the dispute with the company had finished.

It was a calculated move by BHP to attack the miners’ organisation on the ground by chopping off their workplace leader.

The mine manager, Mr Brick, said that the word ‘scab’ was ‘unacceptable in the workplace’, yet CFMEU members have to put up with daily, hourly verbal tirades against them by employers, the

media and parliament under the guise of ‘fighting corruption’.

What happened to Henk Doevendans is a good lesson for workers everywhere in this country.

When workers unite and get organised, the employers, especially the biggest like BHP, will try all and any means to break up workers’ collective power.

Sacking workers’ leaders has always been a tactic in their bag of tricks.

That’s why for every worker who is the declared shop steward or delegate under capitalism’s industrial laws, there needs to be a network of leaders surrounding them, some visible to the boss and some not.

These networks need to extend across industries and have links with communities.

This is the seed of organisation and people’s power that the likes of BHP are haunted by every day, the seeds of a new society where the mines and other industries are owned and controlled by the people themselves.

BHP got rid of one ‘nightmare’ in their eyes, but there are thousands more ‘nightmares’ awaiting them.

### Vanguard Blog

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