



Vanguard

For an Independent and Socialist Australia

May Day Special Edition

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Vanguard expresses the viewpoint of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist - Leninist)

Celebrate May Day with commitment to the struggle

By Nick G.

May Day is revered as the day that workers around the world hold in common as the day of their class.

It is the day on which they renew their conviction that capitalism must be replaced with a system that will abolish the exploitation of people and the environment by the owners of capital.

It is the day on which they put on display their internationalist support for each other's struggles.

It must be the day on which we, in Australia, renew our commitment to the development of a genuinely revolutionary mass movement with the objective of achieving anti-imperialist national independence and socialism.

Serving the corporations Serving capitalism

That commitment must proceed from the reality that these objectives will not be fought for by the Australian Labor Party.

Despite its current status as the more popular of the two major parliamentary parties, it will not implement policies for working people that are fundamentally opposed to the big corporations, both local and from overseas.

Its agenda is framed within limits that accept the permanence of capitalism, and are channeled through the institution designed to serve capitalism – parliament.

The right to strike

This outlook extends to the majority of unions, many of which are affiliated to the ALP and are under pressure from the parliamentary wing not to upset the applecart or in any way, to embarrass the Labor governments, state and Federal.

Some class conscious workers want the unions to win back the right to strike.

They can't understand why the unions are not fighting harder for this,



The workers united can never be defeated!

and whether they would even use it if it were restored.

The unions are important collective organisations of workers.

They have legal status as defensive organisations of the workers, with limited rights to defend, and a recognised right to advocate improvements in wages and conditions.

Even these few rights have been eroded.

Unions operate within a capitalist legal industrial system designed to protect bosses' exploitation of workers and profits.

Experience shows that workers' victories are won through our own collective action on the ground, not by relying on the bosses' courts and the ALP.

Unions are also registered organisations with assets and investments whose officials enjoy high salaries.

Their leaders generally fear the

consequences of crossing the lines of legality.

There is very little evidence of a daring to struggle, very few who are prepared to accept, as did John Cummins of the BLF and CFMEU, that "...it is an occupational hazard for union officials to be arrested and go to gaol."

Cummo, a leader of our Party, walked that walk.

But workers and their militant unions have a long and proud history of fighting and breaking the bosses' laws to defend and advance the interests of the working class.

Independent working class agenda

When we talk about a renewal of commitment on the occasion of May Day, it is a commitment to objectives that are independent of the restraints that the ALP and union officialdom

seek to impose.

It is a commitment to resist the ALP shifting capitalist economic crises and imperialist war onto the shoulders of the working class.

It is a commitment to an independent working class agenda, driven by rank and file workers and controlled by them.

It is a commitment to restore rank and file militant unionism to the union movement.

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As capitalism sweeps disasters aside, women carry unequal burdens

By Louisa L.

Instead of issuing a statement, this year Louisa L sought out women's voices in the lead-up to International Women's Day, using their words to draw conclusions.

One of my neighbours says if women ran things, it would fix "the mess men have made". I think she's wrong.

Patriarchy, despite its many terrible effects on women's lives, is not the primary contradiction here or across the world.

Even Afghanistan carries the legacy of foreign occupation and wars within its brutal semi-tribal patriarchy.

Each one of us has different experiences of what it means to be a woman in Australia.

Women have a double load, capitalism and patriarchy, but they're unevenly carried.

In Australia, 'experiments' try to keep those suffering oppression in silos of silence.



First Peoples' women

The NT Intervention was deliberately organised to allow a land grab for the overwhelmingly foreign-owned mining and gas industry, disguised by false claims against male Elders.

But it was also a 15-year experiment about brutal suppression, largely hidden from the rest of Australia.

Many First Peoples' women tell how the Intervention shamed their men, how women had to take the lead.

They speak of Aboriginal solidarity first, as the defining way to fight ongoing, violent dispossession.

A few high profile First Peoples' women supported the Intervention and the mining industry. They specifically blamed First Peoples' men for problems in communities.

At the 2016 Garma Festival's Key Forum on Corporate Australia and Indigenous Economic Development, which one of these women co-chaired with Business Council CEO Jennifer Westacott, she praised corporations.

More recently though, she expressed discontent with the overwhelming presence of corporate reps at Garma. She condemned mining companies.

The NT Emergency "experiment" flowed seamlessly into other community closures, first at Oomboolgarri in remote WA, site of a 1920s massacre remembered in Jack Davis's play, *No Sugar*.

But, also to Redfern and other former

inner-city strongholds of First Peoples' organisation and strength.

There, for some, it's a constant cycle of dealing with poverty and police, struggling to keep food on the table, overcrowding, youth suicide, being kicked off Centrelink.

Collective Respect

This educated writer is treated with respect at Centrelink.

But I overheard a telephone conversation on speaker in late 2022. A flood victim was trying to get benefits in Redfern where he was temporarily living. He was told he had to call rather than speak to the Redfern workers.

He said, "I've lost everything," that he needed to keep his home listed as the flood area to claim a government lump sum, but needed money right now to eat.

The female Centrelink employee said, "So you want to have your cake and eat it too."

When I told two old friends who volunteer with emergency services, it floored them, as it did me.

They are respectful and compassionate to disaster victims.

One is a super confident Fire Captain in a Labor electorate recently exposed as denied disaster relief funding by the former Morrison Liberal government,

despite desperate need.

The other tells of her experience in an SES (State Emergency Services) group sent to assist a flooded rural town.

Townfolk were angry that they'd had no earlier help.

If our sunburnt country is a place "of fire and flooding rains" as the climate deniers happily proclaim, why wasn't capitalist Australia ready with help?

Do all those untaxed profits from fossil fuel corporations leave Treasury coffers empty?

Both my friends are in their 60s. How would most young women with families have time for volunteering beyond the home?

And why do so many essential services rely on unpaid work when a handful are making billions upon billions?

Both speak of respect and collective support, especially when mistakes are made.

Collective respect creates strength. It's the opposite to patriarchy, to capitalism. It's the way forward.

Class and poverty, dividers in recovery

Disaster is an equaliser, but class and poverty are the dividers in recovery.

Disaster is an equaliser, but class and poverty are the dividers in recovery

Far more women are poor than men, for many reasons.

While the 2021 NSW mid-north coast floods raged, a single mother from Murwillumbah was interviewed.

She and her children were still living in a caravan, after floods in 2017.

She said, "I feel so ashamed." Ashamed to be poor? What an indictment on this system.

Immediately after floods made her homeless, *Vanguard* reported, "As the emergency unfolded on Friday, local radio announced Victoria's Kinglake residents were finally receiving compensation, eight years after bushfires destroyed their homes.

The announcement provided no comfort in this new disaster zone." New disasters come month after month.

Now in the NT. The biggest disaster is capitalism.

Expose what is deliberately hidden

Everyday Australians have great capacity for compassion and solidarity.

But as time passes, how many of us put others' needs before our own, beyond immediate relationships?

Until it touches us directly, we mostly set aside others' suffering.

There's always been hidden silos of poverty and dispossession here. But never have so many new ones been created so quickly.

The Australian cotton industry



By Duncan B.

Cotton has been grown in Australia since the late nineteenth century. Cotton growing started to take off in the 1960s with trials of cotton growing in the Murrumbidgee area.

Today there are about 1500 cotton farms, mainly in New South Wales and Queensland.

In recent years an increasing amount of cotton has also been grown in the Northern Territory.

Strong concerns have been expressed by First Nations peoples and environmentalists about the amount of land being cleared for cotton growing and the amount of water cotton growing will require.

Ninety per cent of cotton farms are family farms producing eighty per cent of the crop.

The rest are corporate farms owned by Australian and foreign companies, mainly Canadian, Dutch, Singapore and Chinese interests.

The Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) estimates that for 2022-23 the value of Australia's cotton industry will be \$2.6 billion.

While this is a lot less than other industries such as horticulture, grains, beef and wool, the cotton industry is still attractive to investors.

Canadian Superannuation fund PSP has been buying up big in Australian cotton growing farms and processing plants, including a purchase of Austcott's farming and ginning business.

Recently the Chinese shirt manufacturer Smart Shirts Limited, (part of the \$20 billion Youngor Group), paid \$120 million for one of Australia's biggest cotton properties in the Riverina.

In 2022 an investment fund run by the Macquarie bank acquired 100% of Cubbie Station, (Australia's biggest cotton farm), by buying out its Chinese partner in the enterprise.

Cotton is grown from seeds planted in spring. The seeds grow into a bush about one metre high which develops fruit known as *bolls* which contain fluffy white lint and cotton seeds. In summer

these are harvested mechanically and transported to a processing plant known as a *gin*. Here the lint is separated from the seeds and pressed into 227 kg bales.

Because cotton spinning in Australia is almost non-existent, ninety-nine per cent of Australia's cotton is exported to countries such as China, India, Vietnam and Bangladesh to be made into clothing, manchester and other cotton products to be re-exported to Australia.

About three-quarters of Australia's cotton gins are owned by foreign companies such as PSP (Canada), OLAM (Singapore) and Louis Dreyfus (Netherlands). This industry is worth about \$1700 million per year, so it is also very attractive to foreign players.

Cotton and Water Use

Cotton is a thirsty crop, requiring about 6-7 megalitres of water per hectare. (Rice is even thirstier, requiring 11.5 ml/ha. Fruit and nut trees require 5.1 ml/ha.)

It takes about 10,000 litres of water to produce one kilogram of cotton, or 2700 litres to make one T-shirt!

About one third of Australia's crop is rain grown, the rest requires water from irrigation.

Cotton Australia, the peak body for cotton growers in Australia, claims that there has been a 48% increase in water-use productivity by cotton growers since 1992.

Cotton Australia encourages growers to participate in its myBMP (Best Management Practices) programme, which according to Cotton Australia "demonstrates to the community the cotton industry's improved farming practices and careful management of our natural resources." Management of water and pesticides are included in this programme.

On its website Cotton Australia strongly condemns water theft. This is good to hear considering that in the past some large cotton growers were notorious for stealing water by illegal pumping and tampering with water meters.

Then there is the practice of flood plain harvesting, where the big growers at the northern end of the Murray-

Editorial

May Day Message

On May Day we express our solidarity with the international working class in their struggles for a better life.

We think of the oppressed and exploited working people suffering from imperialist wars, poverty, disease and political, religious or ethnic repression.

We think of our comrades in other countries carrying out their revolutionary tasks in difficult, complex and often dangerous circumstances. We salute their victories and their martyrs.

When asked how people in other countries could assist the struggle of the Vietnamese people in the 1966-75 war against US imperialism, Ho Chi Minh replied, "Make revolution in your own country."

Australian socialist revolution

Since our formation in 1964, our Party has taken up that responsibility and, based on intense on-going class analysis of Australian conditions, has developed a political program that sets out a path to socialism.

It targets the ruling class of corporate monopolies, big banks, insurers and finance companies, big miners and landholders, almost all owned or dependent on foreign capital, particularly US capital. They control all key sections of the economy and exert their political influence through subservient politicians and mass media. They are the main pillar of monopoly capitalism in Australia. This is how imperialist domination of Australia operates, supported by the more direct intervention of US government political agendas and bribes. It threatens to drag Australia into another disastrous US-led war, this time with China.

Overcoming the hold this ruling class has over the Australian people requires a powerful mass movement led by the politically conscious working class and embracing the needs of all working people. In the process, the path to genuine anti-imperialist independence and socialism through revolutionary change becomes clearer, as control of key sections of the economy passes to the working class.

If you agree, join us

Our Party is small, but has some influence. And of course, we need more comrades and welcome any enquiries about joining.

The majority of our members are not publically known. We are active in many struggles of the people. It means taking responsibility, taking initiative, collective study, and commitment to working people. We rely on mass work among the people and supporting struggles. We work with and respect all genuine people in the united front and mass movements.

Darling Basin system direct large volumes of flood waters, estimated to be up to 40%, into dams on their properties. (Cubbie Station has built capacity to store 500 gigalitres of water.) This reduces the amount of water making it further down-stream.

Flood plain water is free and unmetered. Plans to regulate flood plain harvesting have been strongly resisted by the big boys.

Cotton and the Environment

There are many environmental concerns about the cotton industry including use of excessive pesticides and fertilisers, water pollution from pesticide and fertiliser run-off into rivers, land degradation and soil erosion, greenhouse gas emissions and the high energy consumption of the

cotton gins.

Australia's environment has suffered from all these problems, but the problems of pollution from the cotton industry are far worse in countries such as India, Egypt and Central Asia.

Here cotton has been grown for decades since cotton growing was established in colonial times.

The main beneficiaries were the owners of the textile mills in Manchester.

In an Australia run by the people, workers and farmers would unite to ensure that agriculture is managed sustainably for the benefit of all Australians, not foreign exploiters.

Planning would ensure that decisions about what crops are grown and where and the allocation of resources such as water would be made to protect the environment, not destroy it.

Marxism Today

Privatisation and the Cost of Living

By Jed J.

Many Australian workers are struggling to make ends meet. What they earn is not keeping up with the steep rise in the cost of living, especially the rise in the cost of electricity and gas which is predicated to go through the roof in the near future.

Electricity and gas are not commodities that consumers can choose to buy or not buy. They are essential. Life without them in this day and age is unimaginable.

Businesses are also feeling the pinch. The higher charges for power could send many small businesses to the wall and the consequences for the economy could be catastrophic.

The provision of these necessities was once under government control. That was before privatisation.

Since then, like many other essentials such as education, health and public transport they have become commodities.

We used to live in a society. Now we live in a market.

Profits before people

Since privatisation the availability of these essential services has been in the hands of private companies whose main aim is to maximise profits. They do this by reducing their costs to the minimum and charging consumers the maximum they can get.

Now consumers are not just paying for the provision of these necessities, they are also contributing to the massive profits the energy companies are making.

Due to the shortages of gas and electricity in the world today these energy companies are profiteering from the situation at the expense of households and businesses who are struggling to pay their bills.

Clearly in the minds of these capitalist enterprises the need to make profits is all that matters.

If they can make higher level of profits by selling Australian gas overseas, they do so even though that means that Australian consumers will pay more.

They treat consumers as cash cows to be milked for every dollar they can get.

Super-profits and rorts

In a report recently released by the Institute of Energy Economics and Financial Analyses and reported on the ABC website, the extent of energy companies' profiteering is exposed.

Journalist Michael West is red hot

summing up solutions to this grand theft.

The report shows that between 2014-2021 households and businesses were charged \$10 billion more than the "normal" level of profit.

According to the report the justifiable level of profit for this period would have been about \$15 billion.

However, the regulator approved charges to customers that allowed for \$25 billion to be milked from the consumers.

Some network companies in the Eastern States and South Australia, the report claims, gained super profits by persistently charging too much for network charges which make up to half of their customers' bills.

This shows how their local customers have been funding super profits for the last eight years.

People before profits

Why should Australian resources developed by Australian labour benefit only the local and overseas capitalist class?

Global inequality grows under Capitalism

By John S.



Wealth inequality has increased dramatically around the world during the pandemic.

The already rich have taken the opportunities provided by the misfortune of COVID to take their wealth to even more obscene levels.

According to Oxfam's "Survival of the Richest" report:

In 2020, the richest 1% of the world's population grabbed 2/3 of the US\$42 trillion in new wealth.

The remaining 99% acquired the remainder. (In the previous 10 years, the richest 1% and the remaining 99% each acquired about half of new wealth, so inequality and the rate of inequality are both increasing.)

Billionaires' fortunes are increasing



Why shouldn't Australian workers who are, after all, responsible for turning raw materials into products, benefit by paying less not more for electricity and gas?

Without the input of their labour there would be no products to sell.

The new Labor government can and should take steps to ensure that all Australians benefit from the money made from selling Australian resources. But will they do it?

Currently they are "talking with business", inviting a hungry fox into the henhouse.

Re-nationalise the energy sector and taking over the development and distribution of electricity and gas on a cost recovery basis is the way to go.

The phasing out of climate damaging

fossil fuels and their export could then be carried out systematically as displaced workers are re-trained.

This won't happen through parliament alone.

There has to be a mass movement led by the organised working class to demand that all Australians, not just a few greedy local and foreign capitalists, benefit from the country's natural resources.

It would be a significant progressive reform and would challenge the grip of multinational corporations. Only the mobilised working class can lead this.

But better still would be a socialist Australia where the working class owned **all** the natural resources and key industries, and had a say in their use and operation.

by some US\$2.7 billion per day.

Meanwhile, 1.7 billion workers live in countries where the inflation rate is outpacing wage growth.

Half the world's billionaires live in countries with no inheritance tax. They are on track to pass on US\$5 trillion to their heirs - more than the Gross National Product of all of Africa.

The *Bloomberg Billionaires Index* reports:

- 131 billionaires more than doubled their wealth during the pandemic.
- Bernard Arnault went from US\$60b in early 2020 to US\$159b in December, 2022.
- Elon Musk, from US\$50b to US\$139b.
- Gautam Adani, from US\$10b to US\$110. (before his dodgy, highly leveraged house of cards started collapsing)

Meanwhile 97 million people were pushed into extreme poverty, earning less than US\$1.90 per day.

Global poverty, by the World Bank's reckoning, increased from 7.8% to 9.1% by late 2021. And inflation has since skyrocketed.

Whenever capitalism lurches into one of its ever-more frequent deeper

crises, central banks pump out money, with the idea of encouraging growth and "saving the economy".

They have pumped out more than US\$11 trillion since 2020. Capitalist governments also provide even greater tax breaks and other financial incentives.

The capitalist class regularly, increasingly, uses this money for speculation on financial markets and dividends for shareholders, rather than investing in increased production.

Through tax havens and tax avoidance, they deprive the people of funds for essential services such as healthcare and housing.

A year into the pandemic, world capital markets had inflated by more the US\$14 trillion, but there had been no increase in economic production. 25 major corporations pocketed 40% of that money.

The increasing investment of capital into capital markets, dutifully serviced by governments and central banks, not only widens already obscene wealth disparity. It is also an indicator of the paralysis of the capitalist system, which can no longer invest in productive enterprise, as money has to chase the highest returns.

NSW Teachers Fight On

By Seb A.

For the past three years, New South Wales public school teachers have been engaged in their biggest campaign in decades.

The *More Than Thanks* campaign waged by the members of the NSW Teachers Federation to secure desperately needed improvements to working conditions and pay, involves a fight for the health and viability of public education in New South Wales.

Teachers have been warning the Coalition NSW Government was deaf to the concerns of teachers, parents and students since the release of the Gallop Inquiry in February 2021.

Decisive action was needed to deal with a looming teacher shortage that is well and truly upon us now in 2023.

Since early last year schools across the state struggled to ensure teachers were in front of every class.

Countless classes have had to be merged with a single teacher supervising because of a lack of teachers.

There are currently 3,300 permanent teacher vacancies in NSW that the government has not been able to fill.

The Gallop Inquiry, the NSW Department of Education's own research and the Sydney University Business School Buchanan Report (released in January 2023 suggests teachers need a pay increase of up to 25.5%) all draw the same conclusions.

What needs to be done?

Raise teacher salaries to attract and retain people and deal with the unsustainable workloads teachers have been increasingly burdened with, workload that takes teacher time away from the classroom and towards ever increasing data collection and administration.

Countless teachers are quitting. Young people are simply not drawn to teaching because of the pay that has flatlined compared to jobs in the private sector.

Three state wide strikes

The campaign saw three 24 hour strikes between late 2021 and mid-2022, along with hundreds of local walkouts in schools.

Each 24-hour strike saw more teachers taking action, and more teacher unionists taking to the streets outside NSW Parliament to show their strength.

The campaign has been strong, united and very well supported, demonstrating the collective power of teachers united in action.

Despite this strong campaign, the NSW Coalition Government and their Department of Education imposed



an Award on teachers through the Industrial Relations Commission in November 2022 that miserably failed to offer any solutions to the crisis.

It imposed a 2.53% increase in line with the state sector wages policy and nothing on workload.

The profoundly conservative, anti-union and anti-public education, Perrottet's Coalition Government seemed determined to allow the deepening crisis in public education to worsen.

NSW teachers, nurses and other unions have worked very hard to ensure that government was turfed out – and rightly so.

But we know that the election of an ALP Government in NSW will not be the end of the struggle. The campaign in the lead up to 25 March was not simply a campaign to have the ALP elected – it was a show of strength to make the Labor Party understand that we are strong and united and will hold them to their commitments. Or look out!

Chris Minns committed to the union that if elected the ALP would:

- scrap the public sector wage cap,
- legislate to restore power of the Industrial Relations Commission,
- rescind the Award imposed in November last year,
- direct the Department of Education to open negotiations for a new Award that considers the union's demands around pay and workload,
- fully fund NSW public schools to the Schooling Resource Standard
- recruit more badly needed school counsellors and
- permanently fund the tutoring program that was introduced during the pandemic.

The Schooling Resources Standard is an estimate of the bare minimum public funding required by a school to provide an appropriate education for its students. Most government schools in NSW operate at 90% of the SRS while all private schools are overfunded in terms of the SRS.

Soldiers trained to deal with protesters

By Nick G.

The Australian Army continues to be trained for use against Australian citizens.

Last year we reported on the training exercises conducted by the 3rd Battalion (3RAR) in "population control and protection".

We explored in depth the history of the military application of population "protection" from its origin in the Spanish-Cuban Ten Years' War (1868-1878) through to the Army's role in the racist NT Intervention.

We said that "increased focus on urban operations including population "protection" and control, should serve as a warning against complacency for Australians seeking changes of substance to the inequalities and injustices of capitalism, and the subordination of Australia to imperialist dictate and influence."

We already have a highly militarised police force.



The training of the army in civilian control provides an extra layer of state machinery in ensuring that capitalism is protected from those it exploits and oppresses.

The current exercise is reported in the privately published *Contact* military newsletter under the heading *Soldiers train to deal with protesters*. Again, it involved the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR), with the support of the 1st Military Police Battalion (1MP), at a camp outside Townsville.

According to the report, the course focused on soldiers' individual PPC training "while ensuring the ready battle group met the qualifications required of the ADF's contingency operational

We will hold you to your word

Chris Minns made the first four commitments in October last year, both in a media release and before the nearly 300 teachers that sit in NSW Teachers Federation State Council.

We will hold him to his words.

Minns is an economic rationalist and would never have made those commitments without seeing the strength and unity of teachers demonstrated in the biggest strikes and rallies we have held in decades.

The campaign in the weeks leading up to the election and the unprecedented teacher and health workers turnout at booths on election day were just as much about sending a very clear message to Minns and the ALP:

We are strong, we have power in numbers, and we are united. We will hold you to your word.

So far, Minns and the ALP seem to have understood the message.

In his victory speech, Minns directly referred to the effect teachers, nurses and other unions had on the 25 March result.

This has been repeated several times in the media since by Minns and by the new Minister for Education, Prue Car.

The NSW Teachers Federation has had major blues with ALP governments in the past and will do so into the future.

The ALP will need to be held to account to keep their promises to the workers of NSW – and that will be done in the same way that the promises were extracted: by preparedness to take strong, united industrial action.

response element."

It included "soldiers with shields, unruly role players and snapping canines".

The unruly role players created "a realistic scenario of aggressive protesters designed to push the soldiers' endurance threshold".

"Infantry sections integrated closely with military police arrest teams, detainee processing capabilities, and military working dogs to enhance security and crowd dispersion."

These are descriptions of the Australian "Defence" Force being trained to suppress Australian citizens engaged in the democratic right of protest in the streets.

Forewarned is indeed forearmed.

Keep your eyes open, ready for the next round

By Louisa L.

Both Coalition and Labor Governments attack unions. They do it to manage the capitalist system for big business.

The Coalition kicks heads, sometimes causing increased militancy.

The ALP supports industrial calm and compromise with workers.

But for both, construction workers and their unions have been the biggest corporate targets for fifty years.

The BLF was deregistered in 1974. Freed from what its leader Norm Gallagher called the “chains” of capitalist courts, the BLF became so strong the Master Builders Association begged for it to be re-registered.

The second deregistration was better planned after huge media attacks and a royal commission by the Fraser Coalition government from 1981.

In 1986 Labor PM Bob Hawke made sure another union would take BLF work. It was a huge blow to workers’ unity.

Each BLF organiser was arrested dozens of times. Rank and file militants



were refused work. Leaders were jailed.

Others, including electricity, mine and dockyard workers, meatworkers and airline pilots, also fought strong but losing battles against giant employers empowered by Hawke policies, secondary boycott laws and lack of union solidarity.

Thugs and balaclavas

But struggle for justice doesn't stay

Workers collective action needed to win changes to industrial laws

By Ned K.

The federal Labor Party promised significant changes to the Fair Work Act when elected in 2022. The promises were due to pressure from workers through their Unions.

One of the major demands from Unions was for the Government to amend the Fair Work Act to enable multi-employer collective agreements and maintaining the right of workers to take industrial action in pursuit of improved wages and conditions in those multi-employer agreements.

The Fair Work Act has been amended to enable multi-employer agreements with the new laws taking effect in mid-2023. No doubt the employers as a class will do all they can to oppose workers’ claims that reduce employer power in the workplace and threaten their profits. Time will tell how successful workers are in winning significant concessions from the capitalists through multi-employer collective agreements.

In 2023 the federal Labor Government has committed to workers through their Unions to introduce Bills in Parliament to make further changes to the Fair Work Act.

These include a “Same Job, Same Pay” Bill to require labour hire companies to pay the “shop rate” of the host employer. Labor hire companies have become an industry in themselves and provide casual, unorganised labour in most industries of the economy.

If such a Bill gets through parliament

to become law, the risk to employers and labour hire companies who do not pay the “shop rate” to labour hire employees will be greater.

No doubt some sections of the capitalist class will still use labour hire workers on starvation wages and take their chances. However such a Bill may also result in workers who are organised in their Union to force their employer to take the next step and directly employ all workers, including casuals needed for busy times.

The Labor Government has also committed to workers through their Unions to introduce Bills to safeguard minimum pay and conditions in the Gig economy. The detail of these safeguards is yet to be revealed. Given this is a growing trend in the economy of capitalism extending far beyond Uber drivers, this is likely to get through parliament in some form as big companies using the Gig economy want some regulation to assist their competitive position against smaller operators.

The Minister for Industrial Relations Tony Burke has also mentioned that he is aware that there is also a need for new laws against sham contracting which can take many different forms apart from use of registered labour hire companies. For example, an employer demanding that a worker applying for a job has to have an ABN and then paying them as little amount of pay as the employer thinks they can get away

down forever. As more workers were attacked, they rose to fight again.

In 1998 Howard and Co colluded to send dogs and thugs in balaclavas into militant MUA strongholds on wharves around the country.

The massive and magnificent Patricks’ dispute became an outburst of worker and union anger, unity, organisation with action outside every port in Australia.

Then a third Royal Commission, this time in 2001 into the CFMEU.

By 2005 corporations backed John Howard’s so-called Work Choices against all workers, the same year his government set up set up the Office of the Australian Building and Construction Commissioner, and ongoing royal commission with far bigger powers.

Protests grew until Howard was dumped in 2007. Then many unions demobilised their members.

Either leaderships didn’t know or didn’t care that the ALP still managed capitalism for multi-billion-dollar corporations.

Labor’s UnFair Work Australia and

with. If such anti-sham contracting laws are made, they will be ineffective in many sectors of the economy where capitalists use migrant workers on temporary visas or workers whose visas have expired.

Workers’ Right To Organise

As important as the above issues for workers are, arguably the most important changes that a Labor Government makes for workers are laws about their right to organise in the workplace and their sector. Workload or work intensification have increased astronomically as workers’ rights to organize collectively have declined.

Taking industrial action has never been a right in law in Australia except for the limited right to protected action during a collective bargaining period. Industrial action during the life of an Agreement or where there is no Agreement, only the Award, is illegal under bosses’ law.

The Labor Government is not likely to change this state of affairs at all. However, workers through their Unions do expect Labor to include in the Fair Work Act laws about the rights of elected Union delegates to represent their members in the workplace and for paid training leave.

This will be an assistance in organising the unorganised and building workers’ collective strength in the workplaces more generally.

a renamed ABCC still chained workers and unions, and threatened to jail construction worker Ark Tribe.

The ABCC knew the Eureka flag embodied 160 years of working class unity in struggle, that it has the potential to unify and clarify thousands of smaller battles into a united front.

Disunity means defeat

Fast forward to 2018. ABCC inspectors marched onto sites, and there it flew, a silent ‘Up yours!’ to all their threats. They pretended the flags weren’t there.

Instead, they threatened construction companies relying on government contracts.

The now collapsed Probuild copped abuse from Coalition Minister Michaelia Cash, for telling her it wouldn’t pick a fight with its workers over a construction code.

The Commission switched tactics again. It charged eight rank and file workers for refusing to take down “banned” Eureka flags from cranes.

As *Vanguard* said at the time, “Instead of repressing the flag, it had the opposite reaction. Suddenly the Eureka flag was flying on cranes all across the country.

“Eureka flags, hard hats and t-shirts multiplied on building sites. The Queensland branch of the Australian Education Union issued Eureka stickers to its members and refused orders from the government to withdraw them ... 120,000 workers on Melbourne streets put the nail in the dispute’s coffin. They had many grievances, including the flag ban.

“The ruling class wanted Eureka’s message taken out of this fiery mix,” *Vanguard* stated.

The workers won in UnFair Work, and Lendlease eventually took the ABCC to court over the flag, to win peace to make mega profits.

Now Labor governments settle some of the uproar the Coalition created in its dirty time in government.

Labor compromises on many things. But how is it keeping a promise, when the ABCC leaders have set up in the Fair Work Ombudsman?

If you think it won’t affect you, because you aren’t in the CFMEU, think again. An attack on one union, on one group of workers, is an attack on all of us.

Of all history’s lesson, that’s the biggest. Disunity means defeat.

It’s time to stick together, take a breather, celebrate hard won victories, but with all eyes open for the next round.

Australian government sinks to a new low

By Bill F.

Just when many people thought that the AUKUS deal and nuclear submarines was the limit to Australia's subservience to US imperialism!

Now the Albanese Labor government has not only agreed to the US 'neither confirm or nor deny' policy for nuclear weapons on its visiting B-52 bombers and nuclear submarines, they have also agreed to "manage" the nuclear waste from "our" submarines at the end of their use-by date.

So, in addition to the proposed nuclear medicine waste dump in Kimba, South Australia, which is hotly opposed by the Barngarla people and local farmers, there will be another site on Defence land somewhere not yet declared.

Safe storage of high grade radioactive waste for hundreds of years, let alone hundreds of thousands of years, is totally unimaginable and can never be proven..

But the huge risks of removing and transporting this material are well known and will alarm the workers, towns and farming and indigenous communities that have to cop this environmental crime.

By Nick G.

A month ago, the far north Queensland town of Mareeba witnessed the latest police execution of an Indigenous person.

Whilst some of the details are contested, it appears that police were called to a family disturbance.

There is some confusion in the reports we have accessed for this article as to whether a woman was being held hostage by a man called Aubrey Donahue, or whether Donahue was threatening self-harm, or maybe a mixture of both.

In any case, Aubrey Donahue was shot four times by police as he left a house.

The police claimed he approached them with a knife.

Family and community members dispute this and say he was carrying a mobile phone.

It is impossible to verify the police story as none of the special unit officers who attended wore body video cameras.

The justification offered by the police for their killing of Donahue has similarities with the murder of Kumanjayi Walker at Yuendumu by racist cop Zac Rolfe.

Rolfe said that he shot Walker in self-defence after Walker had stabbed him with scissors. That worked in the media



Already the Western Australian and South Australian state governments are blueing with each other and the federal government over this.

And it's not as though Australia will have the necessary skills and expertise to do this, possibly within the next ten

or twenty years.

Nuclear submarines are the thin edge of the wedge for the corporations to line up and lobby for a full nuclear industry, complete with uranium mining and export, nuclear power stations and contracted international nuclear 'waste

management'.

This is the essence of US imperialism – the military hand and the corporate monopoly industrial hand clapping over the prospect of new profits and new missile bases for their hegemony over the Indo-Pacific.

They don't give a damn for the millions of people threatened by their war plans, or for the environment polluted by their chemicals and fossil fuel emissions, or for the cruel loss of biodiversity they cause across the planet.

Their class rule is enforced by the US government which bullies, sanctions and bribes other governments/leaders to cower before it, in pursuit of "US interests".

In the immediate term, there will be struggles to oppose AUKUS, to oppose the money diverted from social needs to nuclear submarines, to demand Australia sign and ratify the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and to resist the establishment of a nuclear industry.

Ultimately, however, the working people will take the lead in breaking free from US imperialism and its collaborators and apologists, and build an independent socialist republic.

Justice for Aubrey Donahue



for a while, but it was soon revealed that the scissors were not sharp pointed scissors, but round-ended and left a tiny surface scratch a couple of millimetres long on Rolfe's upper arm.

We do not say that police should not defend themselves if attacked; but a trained police officer (and Rolfe was not alone) should have had recourse to a number of options for dealing with this, short of killing an unwell and upset person.

In the case of Aubrey Donahue, there was not one, but at least 15 officers in attendance.

If they felt there was a threat, they could have either overcome the alleged offender with numbers, or used a taser.

It seems inconceivable that there was any need to shoot to kill.

It appears given the above that an agitated Black man was unjustly and inexcusably executed by police.

Already First Peoples and their supporters have taken to the streets.

Rallies have been held in Mareeba and Brisbane, where the Supreme and District Courts were temporarily closed as protesters gathered outside.

The death is the latest of many killings of First Peoples by Queensland cops.

The Queensland government's Indigenous adviser, Professor Gracelyn Smallwood, quit her job in protest.

She has been advocating for changes

in the way police restrain people, particularly in the wake of the death of Townsville Indigenous man Noomba in 2018.

This latest police execution shows force and violence, systematically used against First Peoples since the arrival of European settlers, cannot be wished away by words.

Not just in Queensland, but across Australia, police must be disarmed before responding to incidents involving emotionally disturbed persons of any colour.

Negotiation and support, not violence nor murder, are basic demands.

It seems this "civilised" country still can't provide them.

Anti-AUKUS rally and march in Melbourne

By *Bill F.*

In Melbourne on Saturday 18th March, twenty years after the criminal invasion of Iraq and in fierce summer heat, about 600 people gathered at the State Library with banners and leaflets denouncing the AUKUS deal and the gutless Australian government.

There were impressive speakers, and it was important to build the anti-war movement by encouraging broad representation of ideas as well as bringing information and analysis from well-regarded experts:

Dave Sweeny (Australian Conservation Foundation), Margaret Beavis (Medical Association for the Prevention of War), John Lander (former Assistant Ambassador to China), Richard Tanter (Nautilus Foundation Melbourne University) Alexia Fuentes (Bayan Melbourne) and Kevin Bracken (MUA). Key points made during the speeches ...

- AUKUS entrenches loss of sovereignty to the US
- AUKUS makes Pine Gap (Alice Springs) and Darwin targets in any US-China war
- US wants Australia as a base and launching pad for nuclear ships and bombers
- More US troops, ships and planes – here, and in the Philippines and Guam
- Enormous costs will come at the expense of social needs, housing, healthcare, disability supports, pensions
- Union and community alarm at the war talk, with long-standing opposition to nuclear

The rally then marched through the main city streets, attracting a lot of attention with the many banners, placards and chants, such as “1-2-3-4, We don’t want another war! 5-6-7-8, We are not a US state!” and “No to AUKUS! No to war! No to nuclear on our shore!”

Free Julian Assange!

Other chants called for the release of Australian citizen Julian Assange, whistle-blower of the US Iraq War crimes. A short stop outside the British Consulate in Collins Street gave them the message also.

At Treasury Gardens the march joined more supporters of Julian Assange for further speeches by Iraq War journalist Dean Yates, military whistle-blower David McBride, Greens Senator Peter Whish-Wilson and a student activist.



Peace Roundtable

Shirley Winton, one of organisers of the rally for the Peace Roundtable, summed up the sentiments of the anti-AUKUS campaign in her short speech.

“It is impossible to overstate the ongoing devastation that the US-led invasion of Iraq has inflicted on the people of that country. Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and other U.S. led wars across the world are a constant reminder to us that we must never give up to build and expand the people’s movement for peace and justice. We must unite, organise and mobilise in our hundreds of thousands to push back the new march to another US led war. This time in our region, and potentially a nuclear war.

“Nuclear submarines and the AUKUS war pact is accelerating the march to war between U.S. and China with devastating consequences for the people and the environment in Asia-Pacific.

“The US-led invasion of Iraq started as a big lie of weapons of “mass destruction”. Today, like 20 years ago, the media and their masters in the weapons and fossil fuel corporations, are carpet bombing us with lies that AUKUS and nuclear submarines will defend Australia and prevent war in the region.

“It couldn’t be further from truth. AUKUS war pact and nuclear submarines are instruments of wars of aggression against other countries. It will not defend Australia, but are making us a military target in the event of war breaking out between U.S. and China. AUKUS, nuclear submarines, B52 bombers carrying nuclear weapons, US and UK warships (more than likely carrying nuclear weapons) will be in Australian ports permanently.

“The U.S. is turning Australia into a US military base, a launching pad for US wars. It has nothing to do with defending Australia, but only to protect and promote America’s economic hegemony in Asia-Pacific. China’s

economic rise is threatening US global hegemony.

“AUKUS, nuclear submarines and the Force Posture Agreement allows the US to turn Australia into its major military base, a proxy in a war with China.

“AUKUS and the \$368 billion for nuclear submarines that the Albanese government is buying with people’s taxes will only speed up the war preparations.

“It’s a blatant lie that \$368 billion of people’s taxes is for the defence of Australia and to deter war. The Australian government is marching in lock step with the US preparing to provoke and start war with China.

“It is incomprehensible that at a time of ongoing major crises in our chronically underfunded public health and education, rising homelessness, rents, the rising cost of housing for the majority, aged care, child care, social services, the cost of living: at a time of plunging wages and climate devastation, a so called progressive Labor government is throwing \$400 billion of people’s taxes into helping to start a war on behalf of the U.S. against safety and security of people of Australia and the region. \$368 billion of people’s taxes to prop up ailing US and UK economies, and fill the coffers of weapons and fossil fuel corporations with record profits.

“\$368 billion used to throwing the people into an imperialist war.

“And to top it off, conscription is now being floated!

“There’s nothing new in any of this. In 1914 hundreds of thousands of Australian workers were marched off thousands of miles away to fight for our masters, the plundering British colonial empire that colonised and slaughtered millions across the world.

“Little has changed today as Australian governments continue to sacrifice the people and national sovereignty, this time to the US.

“Paul Keating said the Australian government doesn’t have a foreign

policy. What he really means is that Australia’s foreign policy is indistinguishable from US foreign policy.

“Australia needs an independent and peaceful foreign policy that’s not tied and subservient to any super power; not US, not Britain, not China.

“The same forces that cooked up the US led invasion of Iraq have not gone away, they continue to push the world into another war, this time in our region.

“The weapons corporations US Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Boeing, the British BAE, and the fossil fuel monopolies Exxon Mobil, Chevron, Shell are the main architects and profiteers from these wars. They make \$trillions in profit from massive destruction, death and suffering by the people and environmental devastation.

“Soldiers, workers, the ordinary people and our environment pay a heavy price with lives, health, livelihood and destroyed environment. We are the casualties and collateral damage of big powers’ imperialist wars.

“And as long as these monopolies continue to stride the world, imperialist wars with all their devastation will continue to break out.

“And that is why we must build a long term and powerful people’s mass movement for peace, for justice, for a clean and safe environment. As long as these forces continue to push for war the people must build and strengthen our forces for peace and justice.”

Meet the CPA (M-L)

Whether you’re interested in joining or just want to discuss ideological and political issues, we welcome your enquiries.

Email: info@cpaml.org

with name, location and a contact mobile phone number, to arrange a discussion with one of our comrades.