

RED FIRE

ISSUE #13

\$2

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!



Above: Philippine soldiers conduct flag raising ceremony in Quezon City. Image from www.upi.com

PHILIPPINES: BOGUS NARRATIVES PUSHED BY WESTERN POWERS

05-10-2018 – The people of the Philippines today are suffering under a tyrannical fascist dictator who terrorises and murders anyone who opposes him – or so the story goes. Who tells this story? Filipino workers enduring a loss of political rights? Filipino trade Unionists having their organisations dispersed by armed gangs? Left-wing anti-war activists? Hardly. The portrayal of Philippine President Rodrigo (“Rody”) Duterte as a “fascist” is

spun most of all by a slew of US backed NGOs, many of whom are inevitably linked to the notorious CIA front the NED (National Endowment for Democracy). Under the 1987 compromise Philippine constitution brought in after the movement against then President Ferdinand Marcos, NGOs were given outrageous entitlements, and even a tax exempt status under Section 30 of the National Internal Revenue Code.

As a consequence, the number of NGOs operating in the Philippines are estimated to number up to 100 000.¹ Today, the activities of a list of them are reduced to fomenting conservative opposition to the administration of President Duterte, who was elected in 2016.

RED FIRE is the publication of the Workers League.

The Workers League is an organisation which seeks to build a vanguard party for working people, which can lead the struggle for socialism and a world without war.

We welcome all enquires and feedback, as well as applications to join. Contact us by:

Mail: PO Box 66 NUNDAH QLD 4012

Email: workersleague@redfireonline.com

Phone: 0421 408 692

www.redfireonline.com

Most popular President ever

The overwhelming majority of the Filipino people, however, certainly do not share Western angst towards their President. Quite the contrary. Rodrigo Duterte is, by far, the most popular President in Philippine history, and his sky-high approval rating has remained above 80% virtually since his election. While there is a history of high approval ratings for Presidents in the Philippines, which some say results from a somewhat deferential Filipino culture, Duterte's approval ratings have officially been significantly higher than any other government since approval ratings first were collected in the 1980s.² A recent poll put Duterte's approval rating at a staggering 88%, which is only marginally down from the 91% approval rating he gained on the assumption of the

Presidency after the 2016 election.³ What is it about Duterte in particular which produces such jolting statistics?

An answer to this question must cover several aspects. Firstly, Rodrigo Duterte is not seen as one of the "trapos" (traditional politicians) that the Filipino people have endured for decades. The former mayor of Davao is genuinely seen as a man of the people, as one of them. He is certainly an outsider, and not at all one of the millionaire Manila elite, like many of his predecessors. He reportedly doesn't wear socks, doesn't know how to tie a necktie, and lives in a modest house rather than a mansion. While he likes fast cars, there are few signs that he cares about making money.⁴ While corruption has played a huge role in the downfall of previous Presidents from Marcos to Estrada to Arroyo, Duterte is thus far untouched by this, and, given his apparent lack of interest in living a high life, it doesn't seem that he will be tempted into it either. In a country with a history of sell-out politicians, Duterte is largely seen as a rebel with a cause.

Defending Filipino sovereignty

Another aspect of Duterte's popularity stems from the fact that he is the first President in the Philippines who has not been ultimately subordinate to Washington. US domination in the Philippines is pervasive given its history of colonisation by them, even taking into account US assistance against Japanese occupation during World War II. No Filipino political leader before Duterte has stood so strongly against US colonialism towards his or her country, even given some of Duterte's later statements indicating a compromise. In October 2016, President Duterte visited Beijing to meet with the People's Republic of China's Premier Li Keqiang. During a speech at

¹ <http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/2014/04/30/philippines-the-ned-the-ngos-and-the-cia/#more-9279> (23-09-18)

² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-duterte/survey-shows-filipinos-more-satisfied-with-duterte-government-than-any-other-idUSKBN1F70XA> (23-09-18)

³ <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/13/18/duterte-approval-rating-rises-to-record-in-second-quarter-pulse-asia> (23-09-18)

⁴ <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/2018/07/07/what-makes-the-philippines-duterte-popular/15308856006512> (23-09-18)

that time, he uttered the following extraordinary statements:

*"I announce my separation from the United States... I have realigned myself in your [China's] ideological flow... I will be dependent on you for all time." "I will not go to America any more. We will just be insulted there. So time to say goodbye my friend." "There are three of us against the world - China, Philippines and Russia. It's the only way."*⁵

No wonder Washington was alarmed !! It's the worst nightmare for a US Empire which is in decline economically, politically and diplomatically. President Duterte's bravery and boldness, expressed with trademark irreverence, is a refreshing relief for many Filipinos, one quarter of whom live from hand to mouth. The Philippines was meant to be cornerstone of Washington's attempts to "contain and roll back communism" in the form of Red China. Yet Duterte's brash-sounding statements above also reflect a reality which the Filipino ruling class is realising, along with other countries in Asia – the US no longer has the economic or political resources to dominate large sections of the planet. It is being overtaken by the gargantuan state-led economic power of socialist China, which has the financial resources to offer mutually beneficial development. The People's Republic of China (PRC), as a non-capitalist power, does not seek to exploit and plunder neighbours and other countries in the manner that we are familiar with from the US, Great Britain and France historically in the Asia-Pacific.

Filipino sovereignty is vitally important, in a country which has been dominated for over 100 years by Spanish and US colonialism. To prosecute sovereignty, President Duterte has indicated that he has an obligation to look outside the traditional

power of the US and its Western adjuncts. At the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Co-Operation) summit in 2017, Duterte met several times with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Russia donated thousands of automatic rifles, 20 trucks and helmets to the Philippines, to assist its anti-terrorist operations in Marawi. Putin stated that Russia and the Philippines has a common enemy in the fight against terrorism. In response Duterte stated that the Philippines will remember Russia for all time.⁶ One can almost hear the jaws dropping in the Pentagon.

The US in Syria suffered arguably its first defeat in war since Vietnam, once Russia somewhat belatedly intervened, at the request of the Syrian government, in 2015. Russia, with its superior military air power, outplayed the US politically. They openly called for the US to join it in a fight against the terrorist death squads in Syria. The US could not intervene on the side of its Al Qaeda and ISIS patrons, and thus was forced to sit back while Syria, Russia, Iran and Hezbollah went on to expel the deranged mercenaries. It was a humiliating defeat for the US, the UK, France, Saudi Arabia, Israel and others including the Australian government, who had been expending resources in a desperate attempt at regime change. President Duterte, along with a whole host of other countries not involved, no doubt noticed how the Russians outfoxed the US, politically as well as militarily. Duterte is not the only leader from a developing country who can see the military rise of Russia, which complements the economic rise of China.

Defying liberals, foreigners, the church

Many progressive minded folk throw up their hands in horror when hearing of President Duterte's war on drugs – especially as "war" is not used by Duterte as a metaphor. Yet it is not as if Filipino drug dealers were not warned. Duterte explicitly made the case that drug addiction is a

⁵ <https://www.marxist.com/filipino-president-rodrigo-duterte-leaning-towards-china-why.htm> (30-09-18)

⁶ <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/161653/philippine-news-updates-vladimir-putin-russia-apec-marawi-siege-terrorism-russian-weapons-terrorism> (30-09-2018)

major problem; other methods used in the past have not worked, so his administration will take matters into its own hands in dealing with drug king-pins. “You destroy our country, I’ll kill you...you destroy our children, I’ll kill you..” Duterte proclaimed as he began his Presidency.⁷ Like this approach or loathe it, it has the support of the overwhelming majority of Filipinos. They agree with Duterte that around 4 million drug users who remain addicts for years represent a significant social problem. Despite the wailing from US linked NGOs, thousands of drug addicts have reportedly surrendered and asked for treatment.

The case of the innocuous sounding Sister Patricia Fox, from Australia, is another issue which tends to alarm those with generally liberal political inclinations. Sister Fox is a 71 year old Catholic Nun who has headed up an order in the Philippines for the past 27 years.⁸ While her work and the work of her order has primarily been based on assisting the many poor, in recent years she became involved in anti-government political actions and movements. In response the Duterte administration has sought to deport her. Yet this is not a case of a unilateral quashing of dissent, for Filipino law forbids foreigners from being involved in domestic Filipino politics. Regardless of the motivations of Sister Fox, by seeking her deportation, the Duterte administration is only applying Filipino law.

In a similar vein, there is also a law against foreigners owning outlets of the Filipino press. The “Rappler” news site has been criticised by Duterte as being US funded. And, despite repeated attempts to deny US funding, Rappler has been shown to be partially funded by the Omidyar Network, set up by Ebay founder and entrepreneur Pierre Omidyar and his wife Pam. As if this was not obvious enough, Rappler is headed by Maria Ressa, who has spent the past 18 years as the bureau

chief for the notorious CNN in both Jakarta and Manila.⁹ Applying Filipino law, there is a case against Rappler by the Duterte administration making its way through the courts.



Above: Maria Ressa, Executive Editor and CEO of the “Rappler” news outlet in the Philippines. Filipino law forbids foreigners owning any section of the press, and yet Rappler is funded by US based companies, and Maria Ressa herself was head of the notorious US news company CNN in Jakarta and Manila for 18 years. In other words, they are paid to criticise not only the Duterte administration, but also others who deviate from the “Washington Consensus”. Image from www.youtube.com

The Catholic Church is deeply ingrained in the Philippines, and yet the popularity of President Duterte is such that he can openly question some of its public positions. For example, Duterte has stated that he will assist a movement in the Philippines which sought to legalise LGBTIQ marriage.¹⁰ This is seemingly at odds with his tough guy image, and it is a stance which is conveniently ignored by his liberal critics.

“Communists” against Duterte

If the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) spruiks its opposition to President Duterte, this

⁷ <https://www.weeklystandard.com/christopher-caldwell/understanding-the-popularity-of-philippines-president-rodrigo-duterte> (30-09-18)

⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/20/patricia-fox-australian-nun-who-angered-duterte-ordered-to-leave-philippines> (30-09-18)

⁹ <https://www.techinasia.com/rappler-funding-omidyar-network> (30-09-18)

¹⁰

<https://www.sbs.com.au/topics/sexuality/agenda/article/2017/12/18/rodrigo-duterte-says-hell-support-same-sex-marriage>

must mean that this is the view of the left – some would assume. In reality, the CPP and its off shoots such as the New People’s Army (NPA) and the NDFP (National Democratic Front of the Philippines), in practice join with the other ranks of liberal outrage – many of whom are linked to the bevy of US backed NGOs. For example, the NDFP strongly criticised President Duterte’s declaration of martial law in Mindanao in May 2017,¹¹ drawing comparisons to the martial law period in the 1980s under Ferdinand Marcos. Yet the declaration of martial law was made to enable military operations against ISIS !! ISIS appeared out of nowhere when President Duterte was in Russia signing trade and other agreements with President Vladimir Putin. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the US pulled the strings on the ISIS marionette in response. Moreover, President Duterte’s military operations against ISIS were overwhelmingly popular amongst Filipinos, as many of his other moves are. A sign of this was the unqualified support for the martial law declaration from world champion Filipino boxing icon Manny Pacquiao, who is also an elected senator. Pacquiao, regarded as a national hero for his boxing feats, said the country should be grateful for the strong leadership of President Duterte.¹²

The CPP/NPA has been waging a 50 year guerrilla war against the Filipino government, which flows from the Maoist theory of “protracted people’s war”. This sounds impressive, but in doing so the politics of Maoism outside the state where it achieved state power (China), means it constantly seeks allies amongst classes other than, and opposed to, the interests of the working class. It imagines that somehow, the capitalists, small proprietors and workers can put aside their class interests and form a bloc which will achieve a “national democracy”. This is of course impossible – there has never, and can never, exist a “democracy” across mutually antagonistic classes.

¹¹ [https://www.ndfp.org/on-dutertes-declaration-of-martial-law-in-mindanao/ \(01-10-18\)](https://www.ndfp.org/on-dutertes-declaration-of-martial-law-in-mindanao/ (01-10-18))

¹² [https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/05/philippines-pacquiao-backs-dutertes-martial-law/ \(01-10-18\)](https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/05/philippines-pacquiao-backs-dutertes-martial-law/ (01-10-18))

All attempts in this direction will thus ultimately fail, and the politics of those prosecuting this strategy can never rise above base level reformism.

Rather than a fruitless struggle for cross class “democracy” in the Philippines, Marxists need to seek to organise and lead the working class in its struggle for the overthrow of capital. Rather than join the swamp of US backed opposition to Duterte, revolutionary minded workers need to recruit to their own banner while engaging in a temporary bloc with the Duterte administration against the encroachment of US imperialism and its intermediaries in NGOs and left-populist parties. The leadership of a Leninist vanguard party is the missing ingredient to the real revolution needed in the Philippines.

WORKERS LEAGUE

www.redfireonline.com

E: workersleague@redfireonline.com

PO Box 66 NUNDAH QLD 4012

The publication of **RED FIRE** involves considerable expense, but it is a task which is willingly undertaken to advance the struggle for socialism.

The Workers League welcomes any donations that all supporters of the workers’ cause are able to contribute. Any donation, no matter how small, is greatly appreciated.

Pay into:

Commonwealth Bank

BSB: 064 105

A/C: 1044 8421



WHAT'S WRONG WITH "SAFE ACCESS ZONES" ?



Above: Labor Party MP Penny Sharpe pushed for "Safe Access Zones", while being backed by the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL). The parliament, an organ of class rule weighed against workers, cannot be the basis for protecting women. In this case, police enforced no-protest zones could easily be extended elsewhere, further restricting elementary political rights. Image from www.dailytelegraph.com.au

By Leo Rose

28-07-2018 - The government passes new legislation which ensures women can enter reproductive health care clinics to access abortion and other services, without harassment by "pro-life" fundamentalists opposed women choosing their life outcomes. Sounds fantastic – or is it?

As with other political issues, the truth is always concrete. While those on the left uphold the right of women to choose whether or not to bear children, the particular political circumstances of the "safe zones" being legislated by the New South Wales (NSW) Australian Labor Party (ALP) government have to be studied closely. Especially as they may be soon followed in Queensland by the current ALP government.

Emma Norton from the left party Socialist Alternative, first raised the problems with "Safe Access Zones" in an article in *Red Flag*.¹³ The author correctly notes that "Safe Access Zones" are areas where any protests are banned within 150 metres of health care clinics where abortion services are provided, and that they have been written into law in Victoria, Tasmania, the Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, and most recently in NSW. While in theory designed to protect women, they conveniently set up yet another restriction on the right to protest – a democratic right which has rapidly been eroded under the impact of the economic decline of capitalism since the "financial" crisis of 2008. Along with the right of workers to strike being effectively outlawed, the left can scarcely afford to flag wave

¹³ <https://redflag.org.au/node/6374> (28-07-2018)

for yet another restriction on the very limited bourgeois democratic rights working people are allowed under “liberal democracy”.

There appears to be debate in Socialist Alternative on this issue, for Daniel Lopez struck back with a comment piece arguing in favour of the “Safe Access Zones” even if they are enforced by the capitalist state. Socialists are not libertarians, he writes, and socialists do not oppose all measures enforced by a state authority.¹⁴ While it is true that socialists do not oppose state authority *per se*, again the truth is concrete. Firstly, what type of state is exercising authority – a capitalist state or a workers state? Secondly, for what reason is this taking place, and how should workers analyse this? The “Safe Access Zones” are being legislated in a parliament which is one of the strongest **ideological** apparatus in the hands of the capitalist ruling class. What is more, “Safe Access Zones” have to be enforced by the most viciously anti-working class arms of the capitalist state – the cops. On all other issues, socialists warn workers to be wary of the police, who are ultimately paid to protect the private property of the wealthy elite classes. If now, on the issue of “Safe Access Zones” the left advises workers to trust the police “just this once” – the political line breaks down.

Despite our sharp political disagreements with Socialist Alternative on other issues, we view Emma Norton’s line as being on point. She correctly highlights the fact that the ALP including “Safe Access Zones” in its legislative efforts are a cover for that party of government’s failure to ensure free, safe abortion on demand as a part of the health care system. The Queensland ALP’s proposed legislation could be described as partial decriminalisation, as it is only allowable up to 22 weeks of gestation. What is more, Labor Party Members of Parliament (MPs) are being given a conscience vote on the issue.¹⁵ This cop-out allows

more conservative Labor Party MPs to oppose the bill, lessening its chances of being passed. The three Katter’s Australia Party (KAP) MPs have stated their opposition, and intention to oppose Liberal and Labor Party MPs to vote against as well.

On occasion, Socialist Alternative grasp the class nature of the capitalist state. The Socialist Alliance, on the other hand, we would argue, consistently struggle to understand this area of Marxist theory. Kamala Emanuel, in response to Emma Norton’s original *Red Flag* article, follows with a *Green Left Weekly* article which appears blind as to just who will enforce the no protest “Safe Access Zones”. She writes:

“Neoliberal governments have been attacking workers and our rights to organise, and we need to defend ourselves from those attacks.

But Norton’s argument against safe zones rests on the absurd notion that we cannot demand the state support our rights — in this case to access health care without harrassment. She misses the signifiacnce of the new law as one more step in the direction of winning abortion access in NSW, and the ripple effects it will have on securing abortion rights in other states.”¹⁶

Emanuel assumes it “absurd” to refrain from calls on the state to protect “our” rights. But it is not just any state – in this case it is a capitalist state, armed to the teeth with cops – who are routinely used against working class and the poor and downtrodden. The “Safe Access Zone” legislation, where it has been used, means no protest, by the left or the right. But the capitalist state is not neutral – this is also in the ABCs of Marxism. For every one step taken against the right, the capitalist state will take ten steps against the left. For the left to endorse swinging cop batons “for now” or “only on this issue”, won’t cut it.

If, as *Green Left Weekly* hopes, this will be used as “one more step in the direction of winning abortion access”, it will also increase political demands by the right for more no protest zones –

¹⁴ <https://redflag.org.au/node/6390> (28-07-2018)

¹⁵ <https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/queensland/queensland-mps-to-be-lobbied-for-their-vote-on-abortion-laws-20180716-p4zrts.html> (28-07-2018)

<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/abortion-access-and-free-speech> (28-07-2018)

even if under the name of “Safe Access”. If the left rallies behind effective no protest zones, under the guise of the protection of women entering reproductive health care clinics, the right will have much more political capital to demand the left allow another no protest zone on other issues, and at other locations. Pretty soon, no protest zones could be in place up and down the length and breadth of the country. In fact, it could lead to no protest zones being declared across entire regions. Needless to say, this would throw back the class struggle of the workers into decades past.

The Labor Party are not saviours for the workers – their history over the last 30 years at least should attest to that. They are smart enough to dangle a small reform in front of pro-choice campaigners, to throw dust in the eyes of some, and feed whole swathes of liberals and reformists, shepherding them back into their orbit. The plot has worked. With some pro-choice campaigners now effectively campaigning for the ALP, and even directly with and for Labor Party Members of Parliament, the Labor Party is once again “rehabilitated”. Into the bargain, the Labor Party has strengthened the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state – with the approval of the “left” !! This repressive apparatus will now be freshly oiled and operational in a time where working people will need to resist stupendous economic inequality being generated, not to speak of the threat of imperialist war.

What is more, if the left and pro-choice activists endorse “Safe Access Zones”, it means politically aligning with key parts of the capitalist state – the ALP, the Parliament and, the police. Whenever the left finds itself in this company, alarm bells should start ringing. Wherever the working class, due to a lack of political leadership, demands “safety” and “security” from the capitalist state, it hands itself over bound hand and foot to the very forces it should be confronting with its own collective strength.

Instead of demanding the armed fist of the capitalist state “protect” women, the workers should be demanding that Union officials mobilise workers to guard health care clinics, to drive anti-choice bigots away. This way, workers soon learn to rely on their class power. Relying on the armed state of the class which keeps them in subjection, not only fails to protect working class women. It

politically disarms workers, driving them back once again into the arms of the government which enslaves all wage earners. Yet here we run up, once again, against the conservative Union officials, who have a material interest in restricting and curtailing the political activity of their own members, and workers in general.

The fact that abortion currently remains on the criminal code at all, is a stark reminder of the status of women due to class society. Women’s oppression under capitalism is maintained by the three pillars - the family, private property and the state. Women’s liberation therefore, can only come about through a successful workers’ struggle for its emancipation – via socialist revolution. A prerequisite for women’s liberation – and workers’ emancipation – is the forging of a Leninist vanguard party. A workers’ party which fights for a workers government must be constructed using the most advanced political elements – women and men – of our class. The unfettered right of women to free, safe abortion services will be one of the first acts of the workers in power.



Above: Early Soviet poster which reads: “Emancipated Women – Build Up Socialism”. The 1917 October Revolution brought huge advances for women.
Image from www.socialist.net

Myanmar: Rohingya Manipulated for the West's Drive to War



Above: Map highlighting the Rakhine state in Myanmar, inhabited by Rohingyas. Its location on the Bay of Bengal would make it an ideal “lily-pad” for a forward base of US troops arrayed against China to the North East, which is likely to be one of the motivations for Western support for the narrative of “Save the Rohingya”. Image from www.fox16.com

By Paul Nave

05-09-2018 – If genuine anti-war activists have learnt anything over the last few decades, it is to be supremely skeptical the moment the US Empire and its corporate media apparatchiks start to chant in unison on the latest “human rights” violation which urgently needs attention. It usually means that a “humanitarian intervention”, read – regime change war, is on the way. So it was in Libya, so it was in Syria, and so may be in Myanmar. Some of the actors are the same, some are different, but the effect is familiar – the West poses as the defender of civilisation against Third World barbarians. The hypocrisy becomes immediately apparent to anti-imperialists, but deludes many who should know better.

One year on from the alleged genocide of Rohingya Muslims in the Rakhine state of Myanmar, there

has been a round of demonstrations called by some ex-pat Rohingya community groups throughout Australia, which have been backed by liberal political forces and “NGOs” such as Amnesty International. Some misguided left parties have joined the fray. And this time, these actions have the backing of none other than the Donald Trump administration of the US government ! The US government has seen fit to sanction several Myanmar military commanders for *allegations* of ethnic cleansing, massacres, sexual assaults and extra-judicial killings.¹⁷ It takes one to know one. The US Empire, with its blood drenched history, is itself an exponent of the crimes of which it accuses others.

¹⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya-usa/us-imposes-sanctions-on-myanmar-military-over-rohingya-crackdown-idUSKBN1L21KL> (05-09-18)

What happened in the Rakhine state in August 2017?

A report released several weeks ago in London, titled *Forced Migration of Rohingya: The Untold Experience*, claimed that from August 25, 2017, around 24 000 Rohingya were killed, and 18 000 Rohingya women and girls were raped during the forced migration from the Rakhine state into Bangladesh.¹⁸ The report claims, amongst other things, that 43 000 Rohingyas were shot, 36 000 were thrown into fire, and 116 000 were beaten – all at the hands of the Tatmadaw (Myanmar military). The writers of the report were from Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, the Philippines and Norway. The absence of anyone from Myanmar immediately raises suspicion. And, given that for the last seven years at least, the West's war on Syria was replete with incessant claims from the West that the Syrian government was slaughtering its own civilians wholesale, and given that this turned out to be abject lies – we are entitled to smell a rat. Generally, people do not flee from their homes and attempt to enter a neighbouring country without fearing for their lives, and it seems the estimated 700 000 Rohingya who took flight certainly were motivated by fear. But fear of what, and of whom? The West claims, over and over again, that the Rohingya were fleeing from Myanmar's army. For them, this is a convenient narrative.

In reality, the Rohingya were fleeing from the threatened or actual extreme violence from two sources, neither of which were the armed forces of Myanmar. The first were the ultra-violent and ultra-racist Buddhist “monks”, who were the key protagonists of the “Saffron Revolution” which brought Aung Sung Suu Kyi into government. These “monks” had been whipping up lethal hatred against Rohingya Muslims for years before 2017, which is why there was already Rohingya refugees fleeing Myanmar. The “monks” are the key support base of Aung Sung Suu Kyi, and of her party, the

National League for Democracy – which has in turn been almost wholly funded by the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and billionaire regime change specialist George Soros.¹⁹ These openly imperialist forces knowingly do this despite the leading figure of the “monks” being Ashin Wirathu, known as the “Burmese Bin Laden”. Reportedly in response to a question over whether he was the Burmese (Burma is the previous name for the country of Myanmar) Bin Laden, Wirathu said he would not deny it.²⁰ Fuelling ultra-nationalism, Wirathu has incited and led what are effectively racio-religious purges of Rohingya in Myanmar for years. Yet there are no headlines about Buddhist monks driving Rohingya into the seas.

The second force the Rohingya were also fleeing was the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, or ARSA. Why would a so-called liberation army containing the name “Rohingya” actually turn their guns and swords against Rohingya people themselves? For the same reason that ISIS, with Western governmental funding, gruesomely slaughtered other Muslims (and Christians and other “apostates”) in Syria. That is, ARSA does not represent Rohingya people any more than ISIS represents Muslims. ARSA was originally Harakat Al Yaqin (the “Faith” movement), with many of its fighters having been trained in Pakistan by the notorious Lashkar E-Taiba (LET). Some Rohingya have been jihadists running with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, Chechnya and the Middle East, and have now been encouraged to return to Myanmar to continue an insurgency with the aim of an Islamic state.²¹ It should be stressed that only some Rohingya join terrorist groups such as ARSA, but the precarious state of the Rohingya given their mistreatment at the hands of ultra-nationalists tends to lead to a situation where young Rohingya

¹⁸ <http://www.newagebd.net/article/48675/24000-rohingyas-killed-18000-raped-intl-research> (05-09-18)

¹⁹ <https://journal-neo.org/2015/05/30/who-s-driving-the-rohingya-into-the-sea/> (05-09-18)

²⁰ <https://eurasianimes.com/ashin-wirathu/> (05-09-18)

²¹ <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/geopolitics/article/2109386/myanmar-has-new-insurgency-worry-about> (08-09-18)

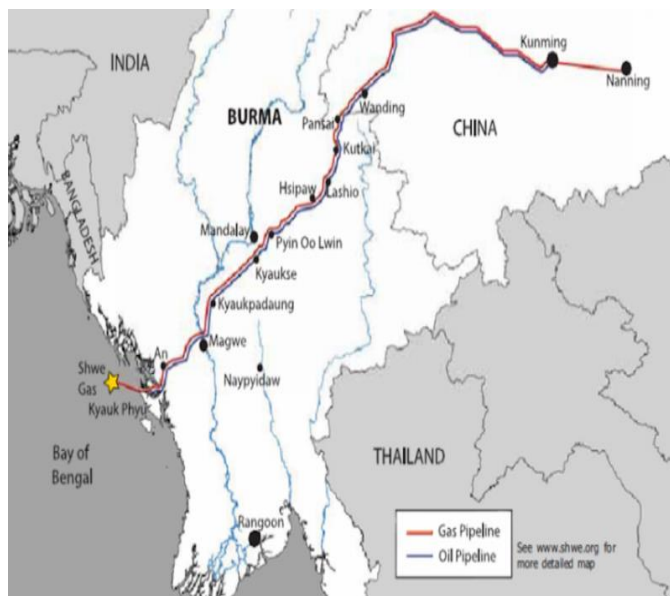
men might be persuaded to take up arms in response.

The act which precipitated the armed response from the Tatmadaw was a series of pre-dawn armed attacks by ARSA on **30 police stations**, which took the lives of some 13 police officers, and seems to have been also used to gather weapons. These pre-emptive murderous assaults took place just two days after United Nations (UN) special representative Kofi Annan issued his report on the Myanmar government's actions towards the Rohingya.²² Firstly, it is just too convenient for the proximity of these two actions for it to have been a coincidence. Secondly, if armed attacks by jihadists on police stations sounds familiar, it is because such attacks also took place in Syria, by Western backed terrorists looking to ignite their gruesome insurgency against the Syrian Arab Republic – which was almost universally rejected by Syrians. Just as the Syrian government had little option to respond to an armed attack by terrorists on its infrastructure, the Tatmadaw likewise had no choice but to militarily respond to a terrorist attack on their state. Thus, the Rohingya who fled were fleeing fighting between the terrorist ARSA and the Tatmadaw, NOT the Tatmadaw only, as Western misled refugee rights activists claim.

Humanitarians enlisted for war drive

During the US led war on Syria, imperialism learnt how to skillfully manipulate human sympathy for refugees for its own ends. This has now been replicated in Myanmar in the case of the Rohingya. Most first world refugee rights activists, although motivated by wholesome concerns, unfortunately end up stumping for the very force which creates refugees in the first place. Imperialism with its vast corporate media apparatus can spin the story to fit their aims, but left-leaning activists should have been aware that something was up when tabloid former 60 minutes reporter Ray Martin pops up out of nowhere to fly the flag. In April, Ray Martin

visited Myanmar and returned a shallow report on the work of the Fred Hollows Foundation who were assisting Rohingya with eye operations.²³ Working people of course should not oppose aid offered for any refugees, but the propaganda point was clear – Rohingyas are suffering at the hands of the evil Myanmar government, and “we” (read: Washington and Canberra) need to “help”.



Above: The China-Myanmar oil and gas pipeline, which runs from the Yunnan province in China to a port in Kyauk Phyu in the Rakhine state. This co-operative operation, which benefits both China and Myanmar, is a key abrasive with Washington, which cannot abide by increased trade and investment between the two countries. In an effort to disrupt this, Washington and their liberal international allies opportunistically respond with a “human rights” campaign about the Rohingya. Image from www.mekongeye.com

Of course, the “help” the US Empire is itching to offer is that of sending in its own troops into Myanmar, so as to eventually have troops on the border with the People’s Republic of China (PRC). If it is not able to do this, armed proxy terrorist forces such as ARSA will do for the time being. The chaos and insurgency of terrorist groups in Myanmar can also only benefit Washington, who is seeking to disrupt the growing trade and investment ties between Myanmar and Red China.

²² <https://jamestown.org/program/myanmars-tatmadaw-making-arakan-rohingya-salvation-army/> (08-09-18)

²³ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-04-24/giving-life-back-to-a-people-who-have-no-hope/9682150> (08-09-18)

Washington is furious at this, as China becomes more and more an ally to more and more countries in Asia. In the first eight months of the current financial year, trade between Myanmar and China totaled 7.42 billion in US dollars. Myanmar's rice, peas, sesame seeds, rubber and fishery products were exchanged for machinery, plastic raw materials and electronic devices from China.²⁴ Indeed, Myanmar is a part of the billion dollar New Silk Road (One Belt One Road) infrastructure development plan the Chinese government seeks to enact in order to fulfil its demand for more raw materials to fuel its booming socialist economy, AND economically aid surrounding developing countries.

While not minimising the issues the Rohingya face in Myanmar, Western liberals are almost universally unaware of the role of US and British imperialism inside the country over many decades. Their active empathy is then manipulated by the different arms of Western capital, to further ends which will in effect make things worse for the very people they aim to assist. For example, the notorious National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a US State department entity which claims to be a private entity, is funded by corporations that could hardly be described as "progressive", including Boeing, the Ford Motor Company, McDonalds, Exxon Mobil and Goldman Sachs. The NED has literally created putative "news outlets" in Myanmar such as *The Irrawaddy*, *The New Era Journal* and the *Democratic Voice of Burma* radio.²⁵ These US state backed outlets operating inside Myanmar strongly oppose many infrastructure projects being built with the assistance of China, even if such projects would contribute to the development of Myanmar and the alleviation of pockets of poverty. They then double as "refugee rights activists" when issues such as the situation in the Rakhine state arise. It is no coincidence that China operates a port in Sittwe in the Rakhine

state, as a part of the New Silk Road project linking China, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Myanmar should not be left in a state of underdevelopment just to spite Red China.



Above: A woman reading "The Irrawaddy" newspaper. The Irrawaddy is an important river stretching through Myanmar, but this publication is an outlet of the notorious National Endowment for Democracy (NED), an organisation of the US state department. It constantly streams propaganda almost direct from Washington, to aid its attempts at destabilisation, which thereby undermine Myanmar's co-operation and trade with next door neighbor, the People's Republic of China (PRC). Image from www.mmmtimes.com

Encirclement and lily pads

While not doubting the genuinely humanistic motives of many Western refugee rights activists, their reform oriented politics makes them vulnerable to playing the role of cat's paw for the aims of the US Empire. For decades, the US state has aimed to land US troops on the border with Red China. Now, with the socialist state led economy of China leaving the West in its wake, imperialism is desperate to "contain and roll back communism" to use a phrase from the first Cold War. This means military encirclement of China, and the constant attempts to establish areas which can be used as a stepping stone, or lily pad, for US forces. In Myanmar, this means using any means at its disposal to create chaos, ethnic conflict and even full scale war. As in Syria, the US and the UK

²⁴ http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/22/c_136914463.htm (08-09-18)

²⁵ <https://landdestroyer.blogspot.com/2014/11/us-struggles-to-keep-asia-in-dark-age.html> (09-09-18)

governments will work with and alongside Al Qaeda linked jihadists aiming for a breakaway “Islamic State” – which, if achieved, would be an ideal location for a US military installation. This is what is behind some calls for an “independent” Rohingya ethno-state.

Some Australian left parties have fallen hook, line and sinker for the US/UK orchestrated “Save the Rohingya” psy-op. Socialist Alternative whitewash ARSA’s links to Al Qaeda, by claiming that ARSA is little more than a “poorly armed group of Rohingyas seeking to resist displacement from their land”.²⁶ In reality, ARSA is well funded and armed from amongst the governments of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Pakistan. ARSA even reportedly has a leadership council based in Saudi Arabia.²⁷

The Socialist Alliance appears blind even to the role of ARSA, and last year called on the Australian government (!) to “bring charges of human rights violations against senior Myanmar military officials.....” (!)²⁸ The Australian government, fresh from human rights violations in wars such as those on Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, is hardly a temple of virtue on this front. Moreover, as mentioned previously, the Donald Trump administration in the US has done just this, sanctioning some Tatmadaw personnel over *allegations* of ethnic cleansing. When the Commander in Chief of US imperialism effectively carries out your demands, it should at least be apparent that your politics is off-beam. Meanwhile, both Solidarity²⁹ and the Communist Party of Australia³⁰ join with the US state department in condemning Myanmar for allegations of “ethnic cleansing”. One wonders if they are aware of the company they keep.

²⁶ <https://redflag.org.au/index.php/node/6041> (09-09-18)

²⁷ <http://www.atimes.com/article/foreign-support-gives-rohingya-militants-lethal-edge/> (09-09-18)

²⁸ <https://socialist-alliance.org/news/stop-killing-rohingya-no-cooperation-genocide> (09-09-18)

²⁹

<https://www.solidarity.net.au/mag/back/2017/107/australia-complicit-rohingya-ethnic-cleansing/> (09-09-18)

³⁰ <https://www.cpa.org.au/guardian/2017/1796/11-ethnic-cleansing.html> (09-09-18)

If it is genuinely the aim to assist the Rohingya’s integration into Myanmar, working people need to demand the withdrawal of US and UK government interference in its internal affairs. Myanmar must have the sovereign right to engage in trade and investment deals with whomever they choose, including Red China and its New Silk Road. While the politics of the leadership of the PRC falls way short of a struggle for international revolution, China must be defended, along with the working class internationally, against the West’s moves to ignite a predatory war. Our lives may just depend on it.



WORKERS LEAGUE

NO TO RACISM, XENOPHOBIA, AUSTERITY AND WAR!



Above: Intensive corporate media campaign smears African-Australian youth, implying they are “criminals”. In reality, they endure the same conditions of unemployment and the high cost of living which all youth experience. Image from www.unesco-cdsj.com

By Kurt Unmack

08-09-2018 – According to federal minister Peter Dutton, citizens of Melbourne are too afraid to go out to restaurants at night in public, in fear of “African gang violence”.³¹ Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull weighed in, attempting to whip up extreme racism in an effort to stave off the Labor Party in the lead up to the series of by-elections that took place on “Super Saturday”. Thankfully, voters in these electorates appeared to ignore the racist dog whistling, but neither did they sufficiently rush behind the Labor Party either. The vote for major parties fell, reflecting an ongoing trend in Australian elections going back years. At the same time, several of the MPs who were caught out by a nationalist interpretation of

Section 44 of the Constitution, and found to be dual citizens – were returned to office by their constituents. Both racist and xenophobic attempts to instill over the top nationalism amongst voters failed.

Regardless, the hidden or open racism that African-Australians face continues. People born in Sudan and South Sudan account for only 0.14% of Victoria’s population,³² yet these citizens face ongoing criminalisation by association, often being referred to as “gangs” simply for appearing in public with similar friends. As for the alleged tendency for those with Sudanese or South Sudanese background committing more crimes than others, this is abjectly false. The overwhelming majority of crimes committed in

³¹ <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/victorians-scared-to-go-to-restaurants-at-night-because-of-street-gang-violence-peter-dutton-20180103-h0cvu4.html> (08-08-18)

³² <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jan/06/were-not-a-gang-the-pain-of-being-african-australian> (11-08-18)

Australia are carried out by those born in Australia, at over 70%. Other ethnicities, including Sudanese and South Sudanese, usually make up a derisory 1%.³³ Irrespective, the dire economic conditions the “free” market delivers continually results in the creation of more scapegoats by the corporate media. Channel 7’s tabloid racism about supposed “African Gangs” is a demonstration of their loyalty to a wealthy elite who live in luxury while the majority struggle to get by from day to day.

Why South Sudan?

The federal government rails against South Sudanese allegedly running rampant in Melbourne, without of course explaining why some South Sudanese have fled that country to others seeking a safe place to live. In the end, South Sudan today is a construct of yet more nefarious US Empire “creative chaos” which serves only their ends at the expense of countless lives. The US state, to which the Australian political elite are deeply enmeshed, has backed the separation of South Sudan from Sudan not for any romantic notions of “democracy” or “self-determination”, but to drive out the influence of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and disrupt and eventually destroy the massive New Silk Road integrated infrastructure projects it offers on favourable terms. Even though historically the area of South Sudan was cobbled together with Sudan by British colonialism, today’s US led imperialism – with Canberra as a vassal – seeks to Balkanise many African states, in the same way in which it attempted to Balkanise Syria through the arming and funding of barbaric Al Qaeda and ISIS operatives. For example, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir’s signature black cowboy hat was given to him by none other than former US President George W Bush when he visited the White House in 2006.³⁴ The aim is to undermine, and eventually sever the ties that Khartoum (the capital of Sudan) developed with

the Soviet Union in the past, and now it’s increasing trade and infrastructure ties to Red China.



Above: South Sudanese President Salva Kiir, wearing the signature black cowboy hat which was given to him when he met with former US President George W Bush in 2005 (also pictured). The US intervention which enabled the separation of South Sudan from Sudan further fueled the civil war, resulting in many Sudanese fleeing for their lives. The US government was attempting to counteract increasing trade and investment ties between Sudan and the People’s Republic of China (PRC). As a result, some South Sudanese have migrated to Australia, seeking a safe place to live. Unfortunately, they are often then preyed upon by conservative politicians and others. Image from www.quora.com

Oil is a factor in the US Empire’s villainous intervention into South Sudan, with one aim being to open the oil fields of South Sudan to exploitation by Western oil companies. This is easier said than done, as both Sudan and South Sudan already is reliant on the extensive Chinese holdings in their oil facilities, including pipelines. Oil is not the only interest of the US deep state, however. With assistance from pro-US leaders such as Salva Kiir, any US presence in South Sudan could easily be used to prop up AFRICOM (the US military’s Africa command), which has worked with Uganda’s president Yoweri Museveni in the process of waging US proxy wars in Africa for years. US presence through its cultivated allies such as Kiir and Museveni would be another beach head from which they could pressure the Central African

³³ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-22/african-crime-stats-overestimated-victorian-crime-agency-says/9348882> (11-08-18)

³⁴ <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2017/03/15/sudan15.html> (12-08-18)

Republic to the east, Ethiopia to the West, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the south.³⁵ The US Empire would not be averse to unleashing Boko Haram or ISIS or their own troops, for which they have a track record. The loss of countless human lives and destruction through war of parts of Africa does not even register as a concern. They will pay any price – potentially even their own destruction – in an attempt to counter the economic power of China's gigantic state owned enterprises.

Bourgeois and proletarian multiculturalism

Understandably, some South Sudanese flee this violence ultimately created historically by British colonialism, and now by US imperialism – and end up in Australia. There is a certain irony with Canberra backing all the dissolute ends of the US Empire in Africa – and ending up taking in Africans seeking a better life as a result. This is one reason why the racism of Turnbull and Dutton cannot be fought with the multiculturalism of the Labor Party or the Greens, or that of “civil society” NGOs. Turnbull and the Liberal Party *say* they are for multiculturalism – even at the same time as spouting racism. Bill Shorten and the Labor Party, along with the Greens and other liberals also say they are for multiculturalism and, *in words*, state opposition to racism. Yet they are also vociferous backers of the economic base which maintains and sustains the ultimate source of racism: “free market” capitalism, which is generating staggering inequality in Australia, the US and Europe.

Moreover, some forms of multiculturalism imagine they are devoid of any political basis, but in practice end up fueling political reaction. Despite the protestations of some on the left, a person's ethnic or cultural background is no guarantee of progressive politics, let alone being anti-capitalist. Take the example of former Family First and now Liberal Party Senator Lucy Gichuhi, who claimed in an interview that her \$200 000 salary is “not a lot

of money”³⁶ !! The Kenyan born African-Australian had also been a part of a politician's travel expenses rort, as many other federal politicians have been. Any multiculturalism which includes these antics self-evidently cannot be backed by working people.



Above: African-Australians protest in Melbourne against corporate media vilification of them, especially by Channel 7. One placard reads “Channel 7 is the Fox News of AUS”. Image from www.sbs.com.au

As the economic crisis becomes worse, right-wing “opposition” and racism becomes more extreme – which is one reason for the resurgence of One Nation and the racist outbursts of MPs from Katter's Australian Party. Struggle against this racism is essential, but it can only be effective through an independent working class political basis. In other words, the bourgeois multiculturalism of the Labor Party, the Greens, NGOs, Refugee Action Coalitions, etc., must be countered with the proletarian multiculturalism of the working people linked in struggle against the baneful effects of the profit system. For example, a workers' struggle for public ownership of electricity, gas and water to drastically reduce skyrocketing utility costs could garner huge

³⁵ <http://landdestroyer.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-plundering-of-south-sudan.html> (12-08-18)

³⁶

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/national/2018/06/18/lucy-gichuhi-senate-wage/> (28-08-18)

support amongst working people. If this was combined with a Union led struggle for a shorter working week with no loss in pay, in order to undercut high unemployment, as well as lift incomes for those employed, it could spark the desperately needed fightback working people and those struggling have been waiting for. Even if there was, on its own, a large scale movement against the privatisation of education and health care, for more public housing, and decent and affordable public transport, led by workers and their Unions, it would at largely fill the political vacuum which is currently being filled by the far-right. Racism and xenophobia increases in direct proportion to the extent of the crisis of the stock-market economy of the corporate magnates, which affects working people in the form of austerity. Or, more specifically, racism and xenophobia spikes in response to capitalist crises AND the absence of a strong, left-wing workers movement. Not to speak of the absence of a politically sharp workers' party.

The multiculturalism of the “community” or the “society” has no aim to end the hardships facing the masses. This is why the only multiculturalism which is worth a damn is that which emanates from actual labour. Under capitalism, it is only the workplace which is truly integrated. Labour, which has been socialised by the process of generalised commodity production, cannot take place without the co-operation of all workers. Racial, cultural, religious and other differences have to be put to one side in order to enact even the simplest of work processes, let alone more complex ones. This is one reason why it is only the working class which has a **material** interest in the elimination of racism and xenophobia. Racism and xenophobia not only seriously impedes the labour process, it prevents workers from uniting against the real source of economic failure.

Multiculturalists for regime change

The ruling elite, however, do not just deploy racism and xenophobia to divide workers domestically. It is also used to imbue working people in the First

World with the notion that the economic, political and diplomatic plunder and exploitation of the Third World is natural and normal, and that this must occur for “our own” living standards to be upheld. Crucially, it is also used to rally workers behind, or at least not oppose, the heaviest fist of finance capital – imperialist war. Imperialist war simply cannot be waged without hefty doses of racism, regardless of the official justification. Yet many of those who advocate multiculturalism are also some of the strongest backers of the wars of Empire, albeit wrapped up in noble-sounding rhetoric around “democracy”, “human rights”, and the “need” for regime change.



Above: A protest against black slavery in Libya outside the Libyan embassy in London. After NATO bombed and destroyed Libya in 2011, destroying the state, a few years later slavery re-emerged. Unfortunately, some who backed this regime change war are also among those who claim to stand for multiculturalism in Australia. Image from www.vibe.com

For example, when NATO bombed Libya to smithereens in 2011, all bourgeois political parties voiced their approval, as well as some misguided left parties. Black slavery being restored in Libya was one result,³⁷ while many multiculturalists applauded the assassination of Muammar Gaddafi, the leader of green Libya, and the African state which until that time had one of the highest standards of living. Yet this pious First World

³⁷ <https://www.theroot.com/libyan-slavery-is-wrong-and-it-s-partly-america-s-fault-1821863389> (25-08-18)

saviour complex was just a precursor to what was to unfold over the next seven years, when the US Empire launched arguably the dirtiest war in the history of civilisation against the Syrian Arab Republic. From 2011 to the current day, tens of thousands of unhinged ISIS and Al Qaeda lunatics were armed, funded and assisted by the West in an effort to overthrow Syria through barely describable levels of violence. The governments aiding mercenary “Islamic” jihadists included the US, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar and other Gulf Monarchies. NATO allies such as the UK, France, Australia, Canada, Denmark and others joined the slaughter of more than 500 000 innocent Syrians. Iran and Hezbollah intervened, and together with Russia’s superior air power, this ensured the defeat of ISIS and the reversal of the regime change war. And yet political forces which not only failed to oppose this war, but loudly backed it by denouncing the Syrian “regime”, included those who flag wave for multiculturalism. The Liberal Party, the Labor Party, the Greens, NGOs, right through to some “socialist” parties, to a man and woman, cheered on the US backed “moderates”, i.e. Al Qaeda proxies.

Dismissing the elected government, whatever its form, of a country targeted by the US Empire, contains inherent racism, even if not couched in those terms. It is not only in relation to Libya and Syria where liberal multiculturalists display their own form of xenophobia – this also occurs in relation to heavy hitting opponents of Western imperialism, specifically Russia and China. Mainstream parties, Greens, NGOs and pro-war “socialists” oppose racism in their own minds, yet practice a distorted form of it when they rally behind Washington and Canberra provoking potential nuclear war with Russia, China, Iran and the DPRK (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea – “North Korea”). The latent racism contained within Russophobia is generated at extreme levels, due largely to Russia’s effective defeat of US imperialism in Syria. Liberals and the pro-war left swear blind that they are not Sinophobic, and yet chime in with a hysterical and irrational corporate

media and government furphy about “Chinese influence”.

For working class integration

It scarcely needs to be said that one cannot be for multiculturalism and anti-racist, while applauding imperialist war in the Asia-Pacific or internationally. In addition, the multiculturalism of the cross-class “community” can only serve the forces of capital which are not only preparing for, but waging, imperialist wars. The only multiculturalism which is worth anything is that which involves the multiracial working class waging a struggle for their liberation from the banks, the stock exchange and the mega-corporations which grind living standards into the dust. This struggle for socialism can only be waged effectively if led by an integrated Marxist vanguard party, combining the most committed and class conscious workers from all cultural, ethnic and national backgrounds. Racism and xenophobia will barely stand a chance against a revolutionary government with workers at the helm.



YOU OPENED THE WRONG DOOR USA!

Above: Cartoon showing the grim reaper of US imperialism wreaking death and destruction in Serbia, Iraq, Libya and Syria, before being halted by Russia in Ukraine. In fact, US imperialism was halted in Syria, and there was only the threat of being halted by Russia in Ukraine. Some who favour multiculturalism in Australia unfortunately did not oppose any of these wars. Image from me.me

REPEAL THE “ESPIONAGE” AND “INTERFERENCE” ACT! NO WAR ON CHINA!



Above: The Espionage and Foreign Interference Bill 2018, passed by the Australian federal parliament in three days, could make attending or organising a protest against the Adani Coal Mine punishable by up to 20 years in jail. www.thefifthstate.com.au

By Tim Stanton

07-07-2018 – Chilling. There are few other words for it. The passage through federal parliament of the “National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Bill 2018” re-sets the framework, yet again, of the shredding of elementary democratic rights by the Australian government. Under the false guise of combatting “foreign interference”, the federal government is close to outlawing political opinion, political activity and journalism. The key targets are anyone who is suspected of calling attention to the danger of imperialist war, let alone opposing it. Canberra, in concert with Washington, is preparing for what could be a world war involving nuclear weapons. It

is imperative that working people prepare to organise now in an attempt to avoid a global catastrophe.

Working people have been subjected to a bombardment of hysterical anti-China venom from politicians and the subservient corporate media for years. It is reaching fever pitch because the US and Australian ruling classes know their for-profit economies are in dire straits, and are being rapidly out-performed, many times over, by China’s powerhouse economic mountain. The further behind the US, Australia and Japan fall, the more shrill do the cries from these governments sound. While the US, Australia and Japan are mired in a privatised, private-profit seeking dead end, the

largely nationalized and planned economy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) strides ahead in leaps and bounds. On almost every indicator, be it GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth, infrastructure development, technological advances, the development of science, you name it – the PRC is way ahead of the capitalist West.

Dire threat to journalism and political expression

The Espionage and Foreign Interference Bill³⁸, passed within three days by the Labor and Liberal parties in federal parliament, seriously threatens the very act of journalism. The bill potentially means jail terms of up to 20 years for a journalist reporting a story in the public interest. Even before researching and writing a story, the very act of “receiving” information which could “harm” Australia, could be deemed a criminal act. Actually reporting and letting the public know about a potential breach of international law by the Australian government, could result in 25 years, or life, in prison. The Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA), the Union covering journalists, have warned that journalists could be jailed for doing their job.³⁹ The MEAA officials, it should be noted, have not lifted a finger to defend Julian Assange, the founder of Wikileaks, who is still detained in London, fearing deportation to the United States. Assange is defending the civil and political rights of all, including the MEAA. But now the “foreign interference” laws could snare even the journalists that the MEAA officials seek to represent, and potentially their entire membership. They must now join with those willing to defend what remains of our rights.

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) linked GetUp!, who have also abandoned Julian Assange, are nonetheless also crying foul, correctly pointing out that legitimate political protest could be targeted under the Espionage/Interference laws. The

section of the Bill which refers to “damage to public infrastructure” could mean that those intentionally blocking access to the Adani Coal Mine, in an attempt to prevent incalculable damage to the environment through carbon emissions, may be imprisoned for decades.⁴⁰ The Bill also contains a 7 year jail term for **planning** such a protest action. In addition, the Bill contains Orwellian redefinitions of “treason”, “treachery”, “mutiny” and “sabotage”, while creating new ones such as “foreign interference”. Any group or individual that, for example, organises a rally to “influence” government positions, without revealing supposed coordination with a foreign organisation, could be jailed for 20 years.⁴¹ It is doubtful whether Nazi Germany would have conceived such arbitrary power.

Just who is “interfering” ?

The Espionage and Interference Bill was not given wide mainstream media coverage within Australia. But working people are constantly bombarded with anti-China hysteria, from all sides of the corporate media, from some academics, and politicians themselves. They falsely claim that “China” is attempting to “interfere” with Australia’s political system, and its “national sovereignty”. This is simply breathtaking hypocrisy from Labor and Liberal politicians, with both political parties receiving large and regular donations from Chinese owned businesses.⁴² One Chinese businessman, Dr Chau Chak Wing, has hosted former Liberal Prime Minister John Howard, former Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, and former Labor Treasurer Wayne Swan at his luxurious estate north of Guangzhou in China.⁴³ If China is “interfering”, they are doing so with the express co-operation of Labor

³⁸

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_LEGislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bld=r6022 (06-07-2018)

³⁹ <https://pressfreedom.org.au/espionage-and-foreign-influence-bills-5943e87e8228> (06-07-2018)

⁴⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jun/26/espionage-bill-could-make-some-protests-criminal-acts-getup-says> (06-07-2018)

⁴¹ <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2018/06/29/inte-j29.html> (06-07-2018)

⁴² <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-08-21/china-australia-political-donations/7766654> (06-07-2018)

⁴³ <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/foreign-minister-julie-bishops-links-to-chinese-political-donors-20160823-gqzauy.html> (06-07-2018)

However, there are huge dangers in the reporting of exactly what is “Chinese interference”. For one thing, to directly link Chinese owned businesses, whether based in Australia or China, to the Chinese government, is stretching the bounds of reality. To do so also invokes both racism and anti-communism. It also stands reality on its head. The Australian military is being consistently urged by Washington to provoke China by sailing warships and jet fighters within 12 nautical miles of islands under Chinese sovereignty – so called “Freedom of Navigation” exercises. And the Australian government is obliging, absurdly claiming even the right to overflight. It is estimated that US \$trillion in trade sails through the South China Sea annually.⁴⁴ The aim of the US and its allies including Canberra, is to choke off this trade route to China in the event of war, starving China of provisions. It has nothing to do with “freedom” of anything. There were no “disputed” islands in the South China Sea, until the US sent its warships in there, and exerted significant pressure on the governments of Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan to claim islands from China. The government of Vietnam should be ashamed at siding with the US, which waged a genocidal war against it, to score points against China in the South China Sea. The “interference” in this case, is carried out by Washington and Canberra, not by Beijing.

Socialism vs Capitalism

For decades, working people have been told the lie that socialism equals poverty, and capitalism equals prosperity. Now that China is definitively putting that canard to rest, and in fact demonstrating that socialism can mean economic, developmental, scientific and cultural advancement, imperialism is close to panic. To prevent capitalism falling further behind,

⁴⁴ <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/australianz/china-challenged-australian-warships-in-south-china-sea-australian-media> (06-07-2018)

imperialism is willing to risk nuclear war with China – such is its level of desperation. It is yet another sure sign that capitalism is historically outmoded, and needs to be cast aside by working people in favour of socialism.



Above: The US guided missile destroyer USS Higgins, which sailed within 12 nautical miles of the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea earlier this year. The US government has repeatedly urged Canberra to join these hostile provocations against the People’s Republic of China (PRC), which risk nuclear war. Despite this, the Australian government accuses China of “foreign interference”. One wonders what would be the reaction if China sailed armed missile destroyers within 12 nautical miles of the Australian coast. Image from www.presstv.com

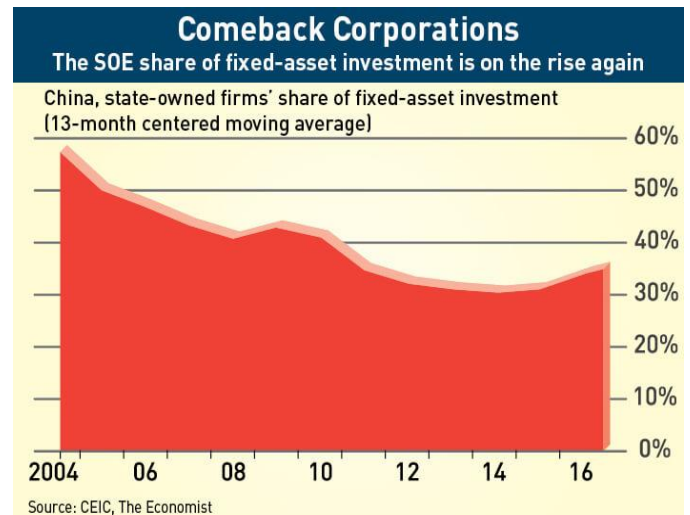
Yet the imperialists will try the full gamut of deceptive tactics to prevent working people from seeing what is before their eyes – China’s socialism is vastly superior to the collapsing stock market casino capitalism in the US, Europe, Japan and Australia. Imperialism’s vast propaganda machines, for which they are prepared to fund to the tune of billions of dollars, works overtime on China – but in two directions. On the one hand, the corporate media claim that China is a “communist dictatorship” where workers have no rights, and constantly suffer under extreme repression. On the other hand, the corporate media claim that China’s massive economic success, the lifting of hundreds of millions out of poverty, is due to the PRC having restored “capitalism”. According to them, workers have no rights in China, but their wealth is

increasing year by year.

Unfortunately, some on the left accept this false precept. In the face of a New Cold War, which is arguably closer to nuclear conflict than at any time during the first Cold War, any faltering by the left on the question of China undermines the very struggles which may soon be upon us. No one is claiming that China today is a classless society with no state and no government – the final aim of socialism. China is only socialist to the extent that it has a predominantly collectivised economy, where the major means of production are state owned, and these are guarded by a workers' state. To give just one example, the 102 largest State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in China are supervised by the State Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC). These SOEs are valued at around 50 trillion yuan. This is wealth NOT in the hands of private capitalists, but in the hands of the workers' state. What is more, out of the 40 million employees of the SOEs, around 10 million are members of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), who take part in around 800 000 party committees. In addition, on SOE boards, the chair is invariably the highest ranked party member.⁴⁵ To say the least, this is hardly "capitalism" !

What may be understandable confusion about the mode of production existing in China is contributed to by the political leadership of the CPC. The CPC never makes any announcement addressing the workers of the world, heralding China's socialist system, and urging workers internationally to join them in a struggle to rid the world of capitalism. This has to do with the ultimately national limitations of Maoism, despite the largely positive role it has played within China. A genuinely international socialist leadership, would seek ways to reach out and connect with workers across Asia and internationally. It would seek to work with

neighbouring socialist states extensively, up to and including regional economic planning. But the CPC as it is currently constituted does not have this perspective. And for that matter, neither does the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), nor the Workers Party of Korea (WPK).



Above: Graph showing the percentage of State Owned Enterprise (SOE) share of fixed asset investment in the People's Republic of China (PRC) economy. As of 2016, the state share had climbed back up to near 40%. It is fixed asset investment which largely drives the huge economic growth in China's predominantly socialist economy. It is the concern over the economic rise of China, rather than "foreign interference" from China, which is the concern for the Australian ruling class, which is chained to the US ruling class by a thousand threads. Image from www.ckgsb.edu.cn

Halt the war drive through workers' power

Despite the political limitations of its leadership, working people need to defend China against the gathering war drive spearheaded by Washington and Canberra. Given such semi-fascist measures as the Espionage and Interference Bill, this could be a risky path. But working people will lose a lot more by allowing such unbridled totalitarianism to go unchallenged. If the imperialists launch the war, there will scarcely be opportunities to launch a "peace" movement, calling for calm and rational negotiations between the US Empire and its targets. Working people will need to take measures into their own hands, even just to prevent people being rounded up as "collaborators", working for

⁴⁵

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/economy/article/2098755/how-communist-party-controls-chinas-state-owned-industrial-titans> (08-07-2018)

the “enemy” and so on. It should be noted that the Espionage and Interference Bill does not just target Red China, although that appears to be the main perverse rationale. Incredibly, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, in his introductory speech to the bill, claimed that it was not only China which was engaged in “interference” activities, but also Russia, Iran and North Korea (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea – DPRK) !!⁴⁶.



Above: Part of an anti-war rally against the Iraq war in 2003. A government which attempts to suppress protest against imperialist war is clearly not one which is in any sense a government for working people. The Espionage and Foreign Interference Bill of the Australian parliament has many provisions which could be used against the expression of elementary democratic rights. Image from www.takver.com

Working people need a struggle to repeal the Espionage and Interference Bill, and take immediate action the moment that any journalist or activist is jailed – up to and including general political strikes. Only significant mass working class pressure will have the possibility of forcing the release of those jailed, before or during the outbreak of war. A significant barrier to the type of action required are the invariably conservative and

pro-capitalist Union officials, who can only maintain their well-paid careers by seeking to line up workers behind “their own” government. But any government which openly threatens to jail workers *for life* for questioning their actions at home, let alone opposing their predatory wars, is clearly not “our” government. It is an arm of the banks and the stock exchange, tied through a thousand threads to Wall Street and the Pentagon.

Well-heeled Union officials also seek to line workers up behind the foreign policy of Canberra and Washington, hence their complete silence in the face of prospective nuclear war against Russia, Iran, China and the DPRK. Riding on their coat tails, consciously or unconsciously, are a whole host of left parties and other groups who found themselves on the side of the governments waging the imperialist wars on Libya and Syria. The state of the working class is a question of the leadership of the working class. What is urgently needed is a genuine Leninist vanguard party, which can lead the struggle against vast inequality at home, and the linked threat of a global war launched against the non-imperialist states. The approach of dangerous times means an opportunity for workers to take the reins of power.



⁴⁶ <https://www.malcolmturbull.com.au/media/speech-introducing-the-national-security-legislation-amendment-espionage-an> (08-07-2018)

SHUT DOWN THE NAURU AND MANUS ISLAND HELL HOLES – ONCE AND FOR ALL!



Above: The Gosford Anglican Church appeals to the Labor Party to abandon its backing of the mandatory indefinite detention of refugees on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. Unions should not leave leadership on vital issues to the remit of the churches. Union leaders must speak out and mobilise workers against government abuse, lest it be used against them. www.overland.org.au

By Adam Radek

20-07-2018 – Five years ago yesterday, former Australian Labor Party (ALP) Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced that his government had come to an arrangement with the government of Papua New Guinea (PNG). All refugees and asylum seekers arriving by boat would be transferred to PNG, and would be settled in PNG or another third country, and would never be resettled in Australia ever again. This act of base inhumanity would also be arranged with Nauru.⁴⁷ The announcement was a shock for those who briefly thought that some progress was being made against the barbarous treatment of refugees over the previous 15 years. Yet in fact, the previous ALP Prime Minister Julia Gillard had begun the transferring of refugees to

Manus Island in PNG, and Nauru, from the end of 2012. At the time the Australian Greens were in a coalition government federally with the ALP. Despite their strong words against offshore processing, the Greens nonetheless remained in the government which carried it out.

The Liberal Party governments of Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull have continued the barbarity, with the “Minister for Everything” Peter Dutton now displaying a cold ruthlessness which would make Howard era detention minister Philip Ruddock blush. Time and time again, bodies of the United Nations (UN) have condemned the Australian government for its illegal detention of refugees and asylum seekers – desperate people fleeing war and economic privation in countries ravaged by the imperialist powers themselves. Just last week, the UN working group on arbitrary detention condemned the Australian government

⁴⁷

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getfacts/seekingsafety/asylum/offshore-processing/briefing/> (09-07-2018)

for the practice of indefinite detention of refugees and asylum seekers. This working group is part of the UN Human Rights Council, which in bitter irony, Australia now sits.⁴⁸ Some refugees have been detained – without charge – since 2009. Words cannot describe the injustice perpetrated by Australia’s “leaders”, and neither can words describe the depth of the torment inflicted on innocents.

“Unionists” oppose refugee rights

Over 20 years, the refugee rights movement in this country has attempted, largely in vain, to gain Union backing over a critical social justice issue. If Union officials do not lead Unions in strong combat against racism, in whatever form, their ability to defend workers’ rights on any issue is seriously undermined. Yet time and time again, Union officials who may in some ways defend workers’ rights, also come down on the side of capital – whether politically led by the “Labor” or “Liberal” faction of the united party of the ruling class. To the dismay of refugee rights activists, at the Victorian state Australian Labor Party (ALP) conference in May earlier this year, a motion to discuss the closure of off-shore detention centres did not make it onto the agenda. Officials of the Construction Forestry Mining Maritime Energy Union (CFMMEU) joined with officials of the Australian Workers Union (AWU) to form a bloc which closed the conference early. This meant that not only a motion to close off-shore detention centres could not be discussed, but also urgency motions on gender inequality in superannuation, the right to strike, raising the rate of Newstart (unemployment benefits), live exports and the recognition of Palestine.⁴⁹ As important as the accompanying issues are, it appears the CFMMEU and AWU officials sought to squash any possibility

of half-way humane refugee policy being put to ALP members.

Yet again this incident highlights the futility of workers attempting to achieve any progress through the ALP. In addition, it reveals once more the road block of the Labor Party in the struggle for basic social justice, let alone basic workers’ rights, e.g. the right to strike. ALP leader Bill Shorten has been at pains to emphasise that the Liberal Party government’s current refugee policy - indefinite detention, off-shore hell holes – will continue if the ALP wins the next federal election. The Greens have been vocal in opposing off-shore detention, but they are not prepared to lead a struggle outside parliament for this, and neither are they willing to help organise workers in their Unions to this end. Their focus on parliament renders them a captive to the Labor and Liberal parties they otherwise rightly criticise.

Pro-refugee or anti-Trump?

In the United States of America (US), there were widespread protests against US President Trump’s practice of separating migrant families of those at the US/Mexico border, and detaining them in wire cages. The national and international outcry soon forced Trump to back down, and sign an executive order that families would now be detained, albeit together.⁵⁰ Yet the politics of the much needed actions, from all reports, were more about channeling electoral support back into the Democratic party of former President Obama and the outright war-monger Hilary Clinton. Many liberals leapt into action against Trump for deporting migrants, whereas for years they had not uttered a peep when Obama deported migrants. President Obama was the “deporter-in-Chief”, and there is no questioning his record. How many migrants were ejected from the US under Obama?

⁴⁸ <https://www.msn.com/en-au/news/australia/un-body-condemns-australia-for-illegal-detention-of-asylum-seekers-and-refugees/ar-AAzJOVc?li=AAgflYZ&OCID=ansmsnnews11> (09-07-2018)

⁴⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/28/bill-shorten-defends-shutdown-of-refugee-debate-at-victorian-labor-conference> (14-07-2018)

⁵⁰ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-migrant-family-separation-border-executive-order-immigration-signs-a8408891.html> (14-07-2018)

Try **3.1 million**.⁵¹ Two years into his term, Trump pales in comparison.

Of course, Trump could be on track for something similar. Yet the silence of much of the left over Obama's crimes against migrants mirrors the silence of much of the left over the imperialist wars waged by Obama – with the assistance of Hilary Clinton. Clinton and Obama did not just separate families – they bombed them to death, and otherwise organised the slaughter of them in the most vicious manner possible. In fact, the Obama administration ordered **ten times** the amount of drone strikes than his Republican predecessor George W Bush.⁵² Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen and Afghanistan were drone bombed repeatedly. It is a matter of historical record that the US state under Obama also simultaneously armed and funded terror death squads in Libya and Syria, including ISIS.⁵³

There is no doubt Trump fuels racism and energises the far-right by deporting migrants and using them as scapegoats. Yet not only did the Obama administration do the same, it launched and maintained deadly imperialist wars in the Middle East and North Africa – causing huge numbers of refugees to flee to Europe, in whichever way they could. Some of them make their way south, and end up seeking refuge in Australia. Yet much of the refugee rights movement in Australia, led by the Refugee Action Coalition or Refugee Action Collective, has in practice mobilized refugee rights supporters behind the imperialist wars waged by Obama and Clinton. This has critically undermined the refugee rights movements' ability to actually free the refugees. One would have to *break with* the criminal foreign policy of Australian and US imperialism, in order to have a chance at forcing a

political break with the Australian ruling class policy of psychological and physical torture through the plainly illegal detention of refugees.



Above: The Obama administration in the US ordered ten times as many drone strikes than that of his Republican predecessor George W Bush. Unfortunately, much of the refugee rights movement in the West was silent about this, and even came behind wars launched by the Obama/Clinton administration in Libya and Syria. Image from www.sayyidali.com

Rohingyas used to derail the New Silk Road

In recent times, the respective Refugee Action Collectives/Coalitions have been willing captives of the plaintive cries to “Save the Rohingya”. Imperialism is very well versed at manipulating the first world saviour complex, and the plight of the Rohingya is yet another. What appears to be a straight forward case of a third world military junta persecuting a minority is anything but. Washington could very well be planning a “south-east Asian Kosovo”,⁵⁴ whereby an international outcry of claimed persecution is used to declare a US backed “independence”. The “independence” is then totally dependent on Washington, or London, which has its claws in its former colony.

Short of an actual military intervention by the US and UK, their aims might also be saved by the creation of violent chaos in Myanmar – which would disrupt a section of the vast infrastructure

⁵¹ <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/whats-the-difference-between-trump-obama-immigration-orders-2017-2?r=US&IR=T> (14-07-2018)

⁵² <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2017-01-17/obamas-covert-drone-war-in-numbers-ten-times-more-strikes-than-bush> (14-07-2018)

⁵³ <https://medium.com/insurge-intelligence/isis-was-state-sponsored-by-us-allies-says-former-government-intelligence-analyst-exclusive-51a9e999c437> (14-07-2018)

⁵⁴ <https://orientalreview.org/2015/06/09/american-plan-for-a-south-asian-kosovo-in-rohingyaland-i/> (15-07-2018)

development project launched by Beijing, the New Silk Road (One Belt, One Road). In the early stages of last year, the China-Myanmar oil and gas pipeline began operation, which runs from China's south-western province of Yunnan to the Rakhine state in Myanmar. China's National Petroleum Corp holds a 50.9% stake, with 49.1% being owned by the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise.⁵⁵ Washington is furious with the increased cooperation and trade between Myanmar and Red China, especially considering the millions of dollars it spent funding the National League for Democracy of Aung Sung Suu Kyi, which installed her in a power sharing arrangement with the Tatmadaw (Myanmar military).

Anything which can be done to break Myanmar-China ties is thus carried out by Washington, London, and their international army of NGOs, the "human rights" industrial complex, and, waylaid refugee rights activists. When the so-called Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) launched armed attacks on Myanmar military and police installations, the Tatmadaw responded – as any national security force would do. Western backed NGOs and some refugee rights campaigners threw up their hands and shrieked in horror, at the alleged actions of the Myanmar military. ARSA claims it must take action to protect the Rohingya community, but ARSA does not represent Rohingyas per se. ARSA is the rebranded name of Harakat Al-Yaqin, which reportedly has a leadership council based in Saudi Arabia, and is funded by Saudi and Pakistani business linked to the Rohingya diaspora.⁵⁶ Even the compromised Amnesty International admits that ARSA has carried out massacres of Hindus in the region.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2017-04/12/content_28886175.htm (15-07-2018)

⁵⁶ <http://www.atimes.com/article/foreign-support-gives-rohingya-militants-lethal-edge/> (15-07-2018)

⁵⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/05/myanmar-new-evidence-reveals-rohingya-armed-group-massacred-scores-in-rakhine-state/> (15-07-2018)

Despite ARSA claiming it has no links with Al Qaeda or ISIS, its origins are certainly similar.⁵⁸



Above: Ata Ullah, the leader of the "Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army" (ARSA). Ullah was raised in Karachi in Pakistan, and studied and taught in Saudi Arabia. ARSA no more represents Rohingya muslims any more than ISIS represents Sunni muslims. Most Rohingyas reject terrorist violence as a way to address their plight. Image from www.freemalaysiatoday.com

For an anti-imperialist refugee rights movement

Some of the Australian government's actions rival the barbarism of Al Qaeda like execution squads. Take the example of the town of Biloela, which Tamil refugees Priya and Nades had made their home for the last four years.⁵⁹ The couple, fleeing the Sri Lankan government's war against the Tamil minority, have had two daughters born in the central Queensland town. They are now in a Melbourne detention centre, with the father Nades likely to be deported to Sri Lanka, and hit with a \$30 000 fee for "removal" – which he has to pay in order to re-enter Australia to see his family again. To forcibly traumatise a family with two daughters under the age of 3, who are seeking a safe place to live, condemns the government carrying out such depravity.

The top leadership of Australia's Unions also share the responsibility for the ongoing international

⁵⁸ <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/arsa-linked-foreign-extremist-groups-bertil-lintner.html> (15-07-2018)

⁵⁹ <https://www.gladstoneobserver.com.au/news/biloela-asylum-seeker-mum-tears-ahead-life-changin/3404591/> (17-07-2018)

condemnation of the federal government's abuse of refugees and asylum seekers. These highly paid Union officials have the power to mobilise workers behind the movement for humane refugee practices, but instead they value their careers and dollars in their own pocket. The foreign policy they imbue in their members unfortunately mirrors that of the left parties prominent in the Refugee Action Collectives/Coalitions who otherwise play a good organisational role in mobilising opposition to refugee and asylum seeker persecution. Namely, the two wings basically agree with the Australian ruling class that China, Russia and Iran are "our" enemies, and we have to band together against them.

refugees, are at the same time at one with the Liberal Party when it comes to imperialist war. This is why steering the refugee rights movement in their political direction, even inadvertently, cannot free the refugees. What is needed is a sharp political break with the essentially pro-war Union officials and parliamentary parties. "Unity" with such elements in practice means **splitting** the working class, incapacitating the refugee rights movement, and nobbling elementary working class defence. Key to building an anti-imperialist refugee rights movement is the forging of a Marxist vanguard party, which can champion refugee rights as a component part of the struggle for a workers' republic.



Above: From left, Russia's President Vladimir Putin, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani, and People's Republic of China President Xi Jinping. As long as the leading elements of the refugee rights movement remain antagonistic to Russia, China and Iran, they will inevitably fall prey to being used by the interests of US-led imperialism. This nobbles the ability to free the refugees, which requires steadfast opposition to US-led imperialism. While political elements such as the Greens, NGOs, and organisations tied to the Labor Party such as GetUp! sometimes campaign publicly in favour of refugee rights, they are not at all prepared to break from the system of world imperialism. Many of their volunteers, as well as refugee rights activists are unaware of this political linkage. Image from www.timesofislamabad.com

Little could be more harmful to both the attempted prevention of imperialist war AND the refugee rights movement. Supposedly "liberal" allies, e.g. conservative Union officials, the Labor Party, the Greens, NGOs, etc., who all **say** they support



www.digitalsovietart.com

REGIME CHANGE FAILS: IS A MILITARY COUP OR INVASION OF VENEZUELA NEXT ?



Above: Admiral Kurt W Tidd, Commander of the US Southern Command, discussed Venezuela with Colombian military leaders in a closed door meeting in early February.

(The following article, and the photo above, is reprinted from the www.venezuelanalysis.com website. The Workers League (WL) has a differing political analysis of the situation in Venezuela. WL calls for workers in Venezuela to continue to seek avenues for the formation of a genuine working class vanguard party, which can help lead the struggle for the establishment of a workers' republic based on public ownership of the means of production. This would entail attempts to win workers over from amongst those supportive of the "Bolivarian Revolution". Also, the article mentions the Syrian "civil war" – WL expressly denies that the imperialist proxy war on the Syrian Arab Republic primarily by the US, Saudi Arabia, Israel, the United Kingdom, France, Australia etc; was a "civil war". Rather it was a war for regime change, similar to that which may be being prepared for Venezuela.)

By Kevin Zeese and Margaret Flowers (Popular Resistance)

<https://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/13668>

Several signals point to a possible military strike on Venezuela, with high-ranking officials and influential politicians making clear that it is a distinct possibility.

Speaking at his alma mater, the University of Texas, on February 1, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson suggested a potential military coup in the country. Tillerson then visited allied Latin American countries urging regime change and more economic sanctions on Venezuela. Tillerson is also reportedly considering banning the processing or sale of Venezuelan oil in the United States and is discouraging other countries from buying Venezuelan oil.

In a series of tweets, Senator Marco Rubio, the Republican from Florida, where many Venezuelan oligarchs live, openly called for a military coup in Venezuela. “The world would support the Armed Forces in #Venezuela if they decide to protect the people & restore democracy by removing a dictator,” the former presidential candidate tweeted.

How absurd — remove an elected president with a military coup to restore democracy? Does that pass the straight face test? This refrain of Rubio and Tillerson seems to be the nonsensical public position of U.S. policy.

The U.S. has been seeking regime change in Venezuela since Hugo Chavez was elected in 1998. Trump joined Presidents Obama and Bush before him in continuing efforts to change the government and put in place a U.S.-friendly oligarchic regime.

They came closest in 2002 when a military coup removed Chavez. The Commander-in-Chief of the Venezuelan military announced Chavez had resigned and Pedro Carmona, of the Venezuelan Chamber of Commerce, became interim president. Carmona dissolved the National Assembly and Supreme Court and declared the Constitution void. The people surrounded the presidential palace and seized television stations. Carmona resigned and fled to Colombia. Within 47 hours, civilians and the military restored Chavez to the presidency. The coup was a turning point that strengthened the Bolivarian Revolution, showed people could defeat a coup and exposed the US and oligarchs.

U.S. regime change tactics have failed in Venezuela

The U.S. and oligarchs continue their efforts to reverse the Bolivarian Revolution. The United States has a long history of regime change around the world and has tried all of its regime change tools in Venezuela. So far they have failed.

Economic war

Destroying the Venezuelan economy has been an ongoing campaign by the US and oligarchs. It is reminiscent of the US coup in Chile which ended the presidency of Salvador Allende. To create the

environment for the Chilean coup, President Nixon ordered the CIA to “make the economy scream.”

Henry Kissinger devised the coup noting a billion dollars of investment were at stake. He also feared the “the insidious model effect” of the example of Chile leading to other countries breaking from the United States and capitalism. Kissinger’s top deputy at the National Security Council, Viron Vaky, opposed the coup saying, “What we propose is patently a violation of our own principles and policy tenets If these principles have any meaning, we normally depart from them only to meet the gravest threat ... our survival.”

These objections hold true regarding recent US coups, including in Venezuela, Honduras, Ukraine and Brazil, among others. Allende died in the coup and wrote his last words to the people of Chile, especially the workers, “Long live the people! Long live the workers!” He was replaced by Augusto Pinochet, a brutal and violent dictator.

For decades the US has been fighting an economic war, “making the economy scream,” in Venezuela. Wealthy Venezuelans have been conducting economic sabotage aided by the US with sanctions and other tactics. This includes hoarding food, supplies and other necessities in warehouses or in Colombia, while Venezuelan markets are bare. The scarcity is used to fuel protests, e.g. “The March of the Empty Pots,” a carbon copy of marches in Chile before the September 11, 1973 coup. Economic warfare has escalated through Obama and under Trump, with Tillerson now urging economic sanctions on oil.

President Maduro recognized the economic hardship but also said sanctions open up the opportunity for a new era of independence and “begins the stage of post-domination by the United States, with Venezuela again at the center of this struggle for dignity and liberation.” The second-in-command of the Socialist Party, Diosdado Cabello, said, “[if they] apply sanctions, we will apply elections.”

Opposition Protests

Another common US regime change tool is supporting opposition protests. The Trump administration renewed regime change

operations in Venezuela and the anti-Maduro protests, which began under Obama, grew more violent. The opposition protests included barricades, snipers and murders as well as widespread injuries. When police arrested those using violence, the US claimed Venezuela opposed free speech and protests.

The opposition tried to use the crack down against violence to achieve the U.S. tactic of dividing the military. The U.S. and western media ignored opposition violence and blamed the Venezuelan government instead. Violence became so extreme it looked like the opposition was pushing Venezuela into a Syrian-type civil war. Instead, opposition violence backfired on them.

Violent protests are part of U.S. regime change repertoire. This was demonstrated in the U.S. coup in Ukraine, where the U.S. spent \$5 billion to organize government opposition including U.S. and EU funding violent protesters. This tactic was used in early US coups like the 1953 Iran coup against Prime Minister Mossadegh. The U.S. has admitted organizing this coup that ended Iran's brief experience with democracy. Like Venezuela, a key reason for the Iran coup was control of the nation's oil.

Funding Opposition

There has been massive U.S. investment in creating opposition to the Venezuelan government. Tens of millions of dollars have been openly spent through USAID, the National Endowment for Democracy, and other related US regime change agencies. It is unknown how much the CIA has spent from its secret budget, but the CIA has also been involved in Venezuela. Current CIA director Mike Pompeo said he is "hopeful there can be a transition in Venezuela."

The United States has also educated leaders of opposition movements, e.g. Leopoldo López was educated at private schools in the US, including the CIA-associated Kenyon College. He was groomed at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and made repeated visits to the regime change agency, the National Republican Institute.

Elections

While the US calls Venezuela a dictatorship, it is in fact a strong democracy with an excellent voting system. Election observers monitor every election.



Above: The logos of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the notorious National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The NED was established in 1983 as a front for the CIA, which specialises in subverting and overthrowing governments around the world which are too independent for the US government's liking. The NED has spent millions of dollars funding the parties of right-wing opposition figure Leopoldo Lopez, such as Primero Justicia and Voluntad Popular. Image from www.pacificfreepress.com

In 2016, the economic crisis led to the opposition winning a majority in the National Assembly. One of their first acts was to pass an amnesty law. The law described 17 years of crimes including violent felonies and terrorism committed by the opposition. It was an admission of crimes back to the 2002 coup and through 2016. The law demonstrated violent treason against Venezuela. One month later, the Supreme Court of Venezuela ruled the amnesty law was unconstitutional. U.S. media, regime change advocates, and anti-Venezuela human rights groups attacked the Supreme Court decision, showing their alliance with the admitted criminals.

Years of violent protests and regime change attempts, and then admitting their crimes in an amnesty bill, have caused those opposed to the Bolivarian Revolution to lose power and become unpopular. In three recent elections, Maduro's party won regional, local and the Constituent Assembly elections.

The electoral commission announced the presidential election will be held on April 22.

Maduro will run for re-election with the United Socialist Party. Opposition leaders such as Henry Ramos Allup and Henri Falcon have expressed interest in running, but the opposition has not decided whether to participate. Henrique Capriles, who narrowly lost to Maduro in the last election, was banned from running for office because of irregularities in his campaign, including taking foreign donations. Capriles has been a leader of the violent protests. When his ban was announced he called for protests to remove Maduro from office. Also banned was Leopoldo Lopez, another leader of the violent protests who is under house arrest serving a thirteen year sentence for inciting violence.

Now, the United States says it will not recognize the presidential election and urges a military coup. For two years, the opposition demanded presidential elections, but now it is unclear whether they will participate. They know they are unpopular and Maduro is likely to be re-elected.

Is war against Venezuela coming?

A military coup faces challenges in Venezuela as the people, including the military, are well educated about US imperialism. Tillerson openly urging a military coup makes it more difficult.

The government and opposition recently negotiated a peace settlement entitled "Democratic Coexistence Agreement for Venezuela." They agreed on all of the issues including ending economic sanctions, scheduling elections and more. They agreed on the date of the next presidential election. It was originally planned for March, but in a concession to the opposition, it was rescheduled for the end of April. Maduro signed the agreement even though the opposition did not attend the signing ceremony. They backed out after Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, who was meeting with Secretary Tillerson, called and told them not to sign. Maduro will now make the agreement a public issue by allowing the people of Venezuela to sign it.

Not recognizing elections and urging a military coup are bad enough, but more disconcerting is that Admiral Kurt Tidd, head of Southcom, held a closed door meeting in Colombia after Tillerson's

visit. The topic was "regional destabilization" and Venezuela was a focus.

A military attack on Venezuela from its Colombian and Brazilian borders is not far-fetched. In January, the NY Times asked, "Should the US military invade Venezuela?" President Trump said the US is considering US military force against Venezuela. His chief of staff, John Kelly, was formerly the general in charge of Southcom. Tidd has claimed the crisis, created in large part by the economic war against Venezuela, requires military action for humanitarian reasons.

War preparations are already underway in Colombia, which plays the role of Israel for the US in Latin America. The coup government in Brazil, increased its military budget 36 percent, and participated in Operation: America United, the largest joint military exercise in Latin American history. It was one of four military exercises by the US with Brazil, Colombia and Peru in Latin America in 2017. The US Congress ordered the Pentagon to develop military contingencies for Venezuela in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act.

While there is opposition to US military bases, James Patrick Jordan explains, on our radio show, the US has military bases in Colombia and the Caribbean and military agreements with countries in the region; and therefore, Venezuela is already surrounded.

The United States is targeting Venezuela because the Bolivarian Revolution provides an example against U.S. imperialism. An invasion of Venezuela will become another war-quagmire that kills innocent Venezuelans, U.S. soldiers and others over control of oil. People in the United States who support the self-determination of countries should show solidarity with Venezuelans, expose the U.S. agenda and publicly denounce regime change. We need to educate people about what is really happening in Venezuela to overcome the false media coverage.



8 Things You Need to Know About the 1.5⁰ IPCC Report



Above: Polar Bear searching for food while ice caps continue melting. Image from Christopher Michel/Wikipedia Commons.

(We reprint below an article about the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's latest report, which states that the world has only 12 years to halve carbon emissions to have a chance to avoid an average 1.5⁰ temperature increase globally. The article does not have a pro-working class perspective, but is reproduced for information purposes.

The Workers League holds the view that all possible measures that can be taken to limit carbon emissions must be done. However, the scale of the industrial, economic and political changes necessary for a switch to zero carbon emissions may not be possible while the world remains trapped within the economic and political straitjacket of capitalist imperialism. Working people of the world will have to find a way to overthrow capital and initiate nationalised, planned economies based on public ownership of the means of production – socialism. We should not despair, but rather re-commit to class struggle.)

By Kelly Levin (www.wri.org)

While all countries committed under the Paris Agreement to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C-2°C (2.7-3.6° F), major questions remained: How can the world achieve this temperature goal? And what happens if it doesn't?

The world's leading climate scientists, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), answered these questions and more in their latest report released today. Nearly 100 scientists analyzed how the world can achieve the 1.5°C goal, as well as impacts associated with this rise in temperature.

Here are eight findings:

1. Limiting warming to 1.5°C requires major and immediate transformation.

Global emissions were roughly 52 GtCO₂e in 2016, and are projected to be 52-58 GtCO₂e by 2030. Annual emissions need to be about half that (25-30 GtCO₂e/yr on average) by 2030 to limit warming to 1.5°C (with no or low overshoot). While it's still technically feasible to avoid a 1.5°C rise in temperature, behavior and technologies will need to shift across the board in order to achieve these emissions reductions. For example, by 2050, renewables are projected to supply 70-85 percent of electricity in 1.5°C pathways. Energy efficiency and fuel-switching measures will be critical for the transportation sector. Reducing energy demand and improving the efficiency of food production, changing dietary choices and reducing food loss and waste also have significant potential to reduce emissions.

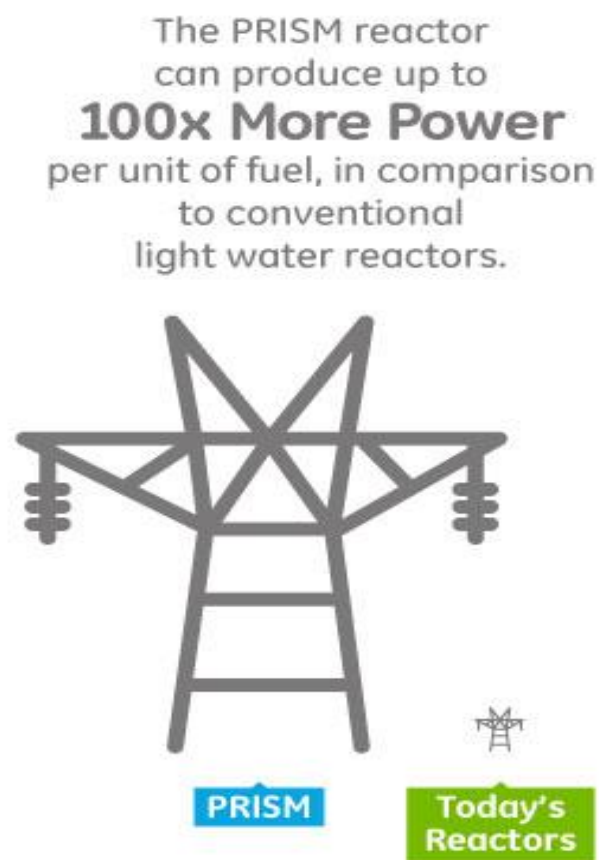
The report also highlights how ambitious climate action brings many benefits for shared prosperity and economic stability — more jobs, increased energy access, access to sustainable transportation and health improvements, to name a few. There are also important trade-offs in the case of poorly designed policy. And while not cited in the IPCC report, new analysis by the New Climate Economy found that bold climate action can deliver \$26 trillion in economic benefits through 2030 (compared with business-as-usual) while generating more than 65 million jobs and avoiding more than 700,000 premature deaths from air pollution in 2030.

2. The scale of the required low-carbon transition is unprecedented.

While there have been examples of rapid change in specific technologies or sectors in the past, there is no precedent in our documented history for the rate of change at the scale required for limiting warming to 1.5°C. In other words, we have never before witnessed such widespread, rapid transitions, and they will need to be made across energy, land, industrial, urban and other systems, as well as across technologies and geographies.

Making this monumental shift will require substantial new investments in low-carbon technologies and efficiency. The report finds that if the 1.5°C goal is to be met, investments in low-

carbon energy technology and energy efficiency will need increase by roughly a factor of five by 2050 compared to 2015 levels.



Above: The urgency of climate change means all zero carbon energy sources must be used, especially nuclear power. Power Reactor Innovative Small Module (PRISM) reactors produce 100 times more power per unit of fuel input, in comparison with conventional light water reactors. Image from www.gehitiachiprism.com

3. “Limiting warming to 1.5°C” can mean different things—with different results.

The majority (81 out of 90) of the modeling scenarios for limiting warming to 1.5°C exceed this temperature threshold before dropping back down. The results of these scenarios are very different from those that never overshoot 1.5°C. For example, consider the impacts of warming on a fragile ecosystem: If the 1.5°C goal is exceeded for many years at a significantly higher temperature, irreversible impacts, such as species extinction, may result even if warming is eventually brought down to 1.5°C.

The impacts of 1.5°C of warming will also depend on the chosen emissions-reduction activities. For example, a more rapid reduction of black carbon can help stem the loss of snow and ice in the Arctic.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the 1.5°C goal is for *global* average temperature increase. Temperature increase at any one location, as well as its resultant impacts, will vary.

4. A 1.5°C limit to warming is not safe for all...

The report finds that significant climate impacts already occur at 1.5°C, especially in regards to low-lying areas, human health and oceans. The impacts will hit the poor and most vulnerable the hardest due to loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, population displacement, health effects and more.

5. ...but risks associated with warming are substantially lower at 1.5°C than 2°C.

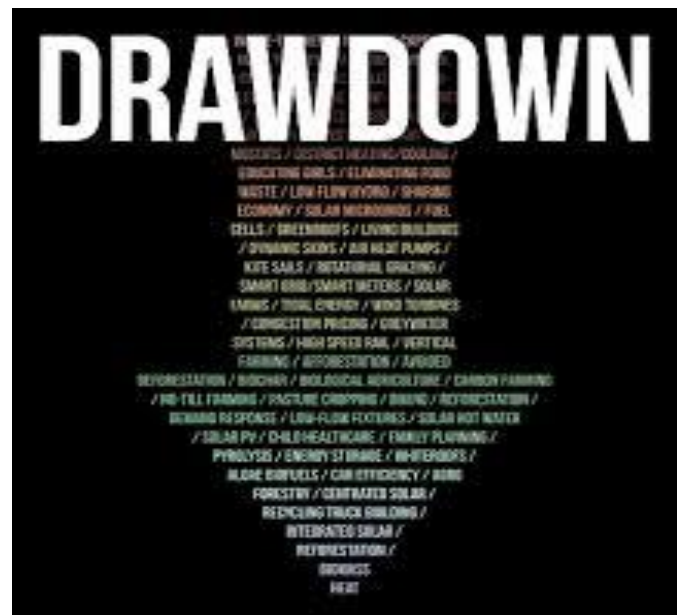
Because the Paris Agreement specifies that countries should “limit warming to well below 2°C, and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C,” the IPCC report takes stock of how much higher the risks of a 2°C world are than 1.5°C. For example, under 1.5°C of warming, the report finds it is very likely to have one sea-ice-free summer every 100 years; at 2°C, the frequency increases to at least one every 10 years. (Read more in our accompanying blog comparing the impacts of 1.5°C vs 2°C.)

6. Emissions will need to reach net-zero around mid-century.

In addition to large emissions cuts in the next decade, net CO₂ emissions will on average need to be reduced to zero by mid-century. If the date of reaching net-zero emissions is brought forward one decade to 2040—fewer than 25 years away—the chance of limiting warming to 1.5°C is considerably higher. The sooner emissions peak before 2030 and the lower the level at which they do so, the less daunting the challenges will be.

All pollutants leading to climate change must be addressed. The report notes the critical role of short-lived but highly potent climate pollutants,

such as methane and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). While carbon dioxide dominates long-term warming, reduction of other pollutants can contribute to the 1.5°C goal in the short term, with substantial co-benefits, such as reducing air pollution.



Above: Any chance we have of limiting global temperature increases to 1.5^o will include a number of measures aimed at carbon drawdown – withdrawing and storing the carbon already present in the atmosphere. Significant geo-engineering projects will need to be considered and/or implemented. Image from www.greenpolicy360.net

7. All 1.5°C emissions pathways rely upon carbon removal to some extent.

The report shows clearly that we will need to focus efforts not only on reducing emissions, but also removing and storing carbon from the atmosphere. Carbon removal is necessary for both moving to net-zero emissions and for producing net-negative emissions to compensate for any overshoot of 1.5°C. The pathways studied in the report rely on different levels of carbon removal (ranging from 100-1,000 GtCO₂ over the 21st century for scenarios with limited or no overshoot), but all rely on it to some extent. The report notes that carbon removal deployed at such a scale is unproven, and is a major risk to our ability to limit warming to 1.5°C. The report also notes that feasibility and sustainability of carbon

removal could be enhanced if a portfolio of carbon-removal approaches is pursued.

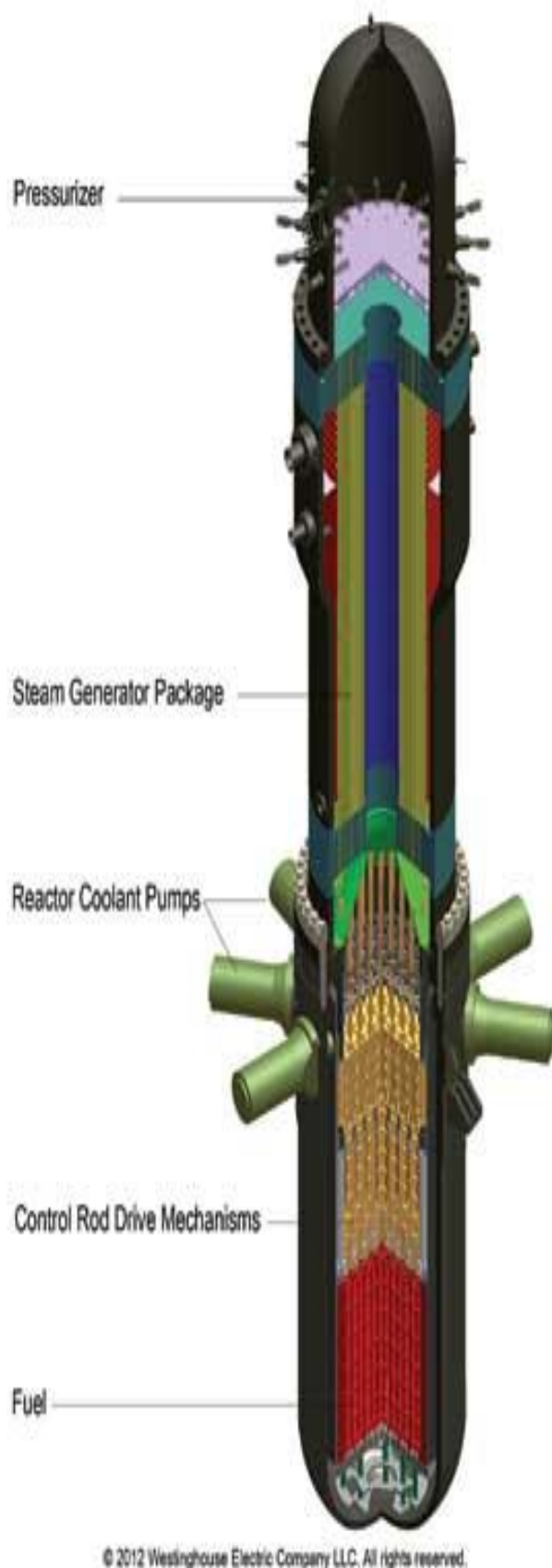
8. Everyone – countries, cities, the private sector, individuals — will need to strengthen their action, without delay.

Without transformation in society and rapid implementation of ambitious emissions cuts, limiting warming to 1.5°C while achieving sustainable development will be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. Even if countries fulfill their current national climate goals and make deep emissions cuts after 2030, warming would still very likely exceed 1.5°C, given the challenges associated with dropping emissions to net-zero well before 2045. Therefore, all countries and non-state actors will need to strengthen their contributions without delay. The COP decision at Paris requested countries to submit a next set of climate commitments by 2020, so this is an important opportunity to take bolder action. At the Global Climate Action Summit last month, leaders from states and regions, cities, businesses and civil society reinforced that messaging, calling on countries to “step up ambition” and commit to strengthening their national climate plans during the UN climate summit this December in Katowice, Poland.

Turning Evidence into Action

There’s no sugarcoating it: Keeping warming to 1.5°C will be hard. Really hard. But the IPCC report also makes it clear that the world has the scientific understanding, the technological capacity and the financial means to tackle climate change. Now what we need is the political will to precipitate the unprecedented concerted actions necessary to stabilize temperature rise below 1.5 C.

There are substantial economic and development benefits from bold climate action. And even more importantly, limiting global warming to 1.5° is imperative. Falling short would lock in climate impacts so catastrophic our world would be unrecognizable. Governments, businesses and others have the clarity they need. Now it’s time for them to step up to the challenge.



© 2012 Westinghouse Electric Company LLC. All rights reserved.

Above: A Westinghouse Small Modular Reactor (SMR). SMRs have a number of advantages over traditional large scale nuclear reactors, in that they can be scaled down in size, and can offer even more safety features than large scale reactors. www.ansnuclearcafe.org

NATO CO-ORDINATES INFORMATION WAR ON RUSSIA



(The following article and photo above is reprinted from www.strategic-culture.org, the website of the Strategic Culture Foundation. It is dated 05.10.2018. The Workers League joins with all political and anti-war forces warning against the extremely dangerous levels of hostility towards Russia, emanating from Washington and its allies, including Canberra. Despite Russia remaining today a capitalist power, its independence and sovereignty must be defended by workers worldwide, especially in the face of the threats from imperialism. As we have mentioned previously, modern Russophobia contains elements of racism and anti-communism, even despite the overthrow of socialism in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1991-2. Russia's military power is one important pillar which is currently preventing the US ruling class from launching a world nuclear war. Given this, the international struggle for socialism is more important than ever.)

The US, Britain and other NATO allies upped the ante this week with a coordinated campaign of information war to criminalize Russia. Moscow dismissed the wide-ranging claims as “spy mania”. But the implications amount to a grave assault recklessly escalating international tensions with Russia.

The accusations that the Kremlin is running a global cyberattack operation are tantamount to accusing Russia of “acts of war”. That, in turn, is creating a pretext for NATO powers to carry out “defensive” actions on Moscow, including increased economic and diplomatic sanctions against Russia, as well as “counter” cyberattacks on Russian territory.

This is a highly dangerous dynamic that could ultimately lead to military confrontation between nuclear-armed states.

There are notably suspicious signs that the latest accusations against Russia are a coordinated effort to contrive false charges.

First, there is the concerted nature of the claims. British state intelligence initiated the latest phase of information war by claiming that Russian military intelligence, GRU, was conducting cyberattacks on infrastructure and industries in various countries, costing national economies “millions of pounds” in damages.

Then, within hours of the British claims, the United States and Canada, as well as NATO partners Australia and New Zealand followed up with similar highly publicized accusations against Russia. It is significant that those Anglophone countries, known as the “Five Eyes”, have a long history of intelligence collaboration going back to the Cold War years against the Soviet Union.

The Netherlands, another NATO member, added to the “spy mania” by claiming it had expelled four members of Russian state intelligence earlier this year for allegedly trying to hack into the headquarters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), based in The Hague.

There then followed predictable condemnations of Russia from the NATO leadership and the European Union. NATO was holding a summit in Brussels this week. It is therefore plausible that the timing of the latest claims of Russian “malign activity” was meant to coordinate with the NATO summit.

More sanctions against Moscow are expected – further intensifying tensions from already existing sanctions. More sinister were NATO warnings that the military alliance would take collective action over what it asserts are Russian cyberattacks.

This is creating a “casus belli” situation whereby the 29 NATO members can invoke a common defense clause for punitive actions against Russia. Given the rampant nature of the claims of “Russian interference” and that certain NATO members are rabidly Russophobic, it is all too easily dangerous for cyber “false flags” to be mounted in order to criminalize Moscow.

Another telltale factor is that the claims made this week by Britain and the other NATO partners are an attempt to integrate all previous claims of Russian “malign activity”.



Above: Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia. The British government’s claims that the Russian government carried out an assassination attempt on Sergei Skripal while living in the UK have collapsed for a complete lack of evidence. The supposedly deadly nerve agent Novichok was claimed to have been used, but somehow did not finish off Skripal. Six months later, the UK government claimed that it had found some suspects, but again this collapsed for lack of evidence. Photo from www.bbc.com

The alleged cyber hacking by Russia, it is claimed, was intended to disrupt OPCW investigations into the purported poison-assassination plot against Sergei Skripal, the former Russian spy living in Britain; the alleged hacking was also claimed to be aimed at disrupting investigations into alleged chemical weapons atrocities committed by the Syrian government and by extension Syria’s ally Russia; the alleged Russian hacking claims were also linked to charges of Olympic athletes doping, as well as “interference in US elections”; and even, it was asserted, Russia trying to sabotage investigations into the downing of the Malaysian civilian airliner over Ukraine in 2014.

Up to now, it seems, all such wildly speculative anti-Russia narratives have failed to gain traction among world public opinion. Simply due to the lack of evidence to support these Western accusations. The Skripal affair has perhaps turned into the biggest farce. British government claims that the Kremlin ordered an assassination have floundered to the point of ridicule.

It is hardly coincidence that Britain and its NATO allies are compelled to shore up the Skripal narrative and other anti-Russian narratives with the ramped up “global cyberattack” claims made this week.

Photographs of alleged Russian intelligence operatives have been published. Potboiler indictments have been filed – again – by US law enforcement agencies. Verdicts have been cast by NATO governments and compliant news media of Russian state culpability, without Moscow being given a fair chance to respond to the “highly likely” claims. Claims and narratives are being accelerated, integrated and railroaded.

It is well-established from the explosive disclosures by Edward Snowden, among other whistleblowers, that the American CIA and its partners have the cyber tools to create false “digital fingerprints” for the purpose of framing up enemies. Moreover, the vast cyber surveillance operations carried out by the US and its “Five Eyes” partners – much of which is illegal – is an ironic counterpoint to accusations being made against Russia.

It is also possible in the murky world of all foreign states conducting espionage and information-gathering that attribution of wrongdoing by Russia can be easily exaggerated and made to look like a campaign of cyberattacks.

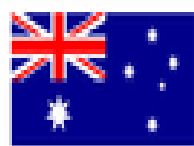
There is a lawless climate today in the US and other Western states where mere allegations are cited as “proof”. The legal principle of being innocent until proven guilty has been jettisoned. The debacle in the US over a Supreme Court judge nominee is testament to the erosion of due process and legal standards.

But what is all the more reprehensible and reckless is the intensification of criminalization of Russia – based on flimsy “evidence” or none at all. When such criminalization is then used to “justify” calls for a US-led naval blockade of Russian commercial oil trade the conditions are moving inevitably towards military confrontation. The blame for belligerence lies squarely with the NATO powers.

A further irony is that the “spy mania” demonizing Russia is being made necessary because of the wholly unsubstantiated previous claims of

Moscow’s malfeasance and “aggression”. Illusions and lies are being compounded with yet more bombastic, illusory claims.

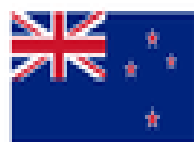
‘FIVE EYES’ COUNTRIES



Australia



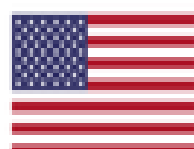
Canada



New Zealand



United Kingdom



United States



Above: The “Five Eyes” countries – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and the United States of America. The governments of these Anglophone nations accuse the Russian government, without evidence, of spying and hacking into computer systems around the world. With manifest hypocrisy, the governments of the Five Eyes countries routinely monitor and track the data of their own citizens and the citizens of the world through programs such as Echelon and PRISM. Edward Snowden exposed some of this, and as a result is still unable to return to his home in the US. Image from www.thebestvpn.com

NATO’s information war against Russia is becoming a self-fulfilling “psy-op”. In the deplorable absence of normal diplomatic conduct and respect for international law, NATO’s information war is out of control. It is pushing relations with Russia to the abyss. ★



#Cilke



www.no-to-nato.org