

# RED FIRE

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WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!



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## NO WAR ON IRAN! LIFT THE SANCTIONS

*(Article sourced from [www.redfireonline.com](http://www.redfireonline.com))*

15-06-2019 – In a rehash of the lead up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo held a press conference on June 13 where he promptly blamed Iran for two alleged attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman. Pompeo provided not one shred of evidence, and did not take any

questions from reporters.<sup>1</sup> This follows hot on the heels of similar attacks on four oil tankers in the region on May 12, which, not surprisingly, the US government also blamed on Iran. For its part, Iran has “categorically” rejected the accusations, for the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/51764.htm> (15-06-2019)

June 12 incident,<sup>2</sup> as it did for the May 12 incident. It is not difficult to surmise that both incidents were false flags, designed to create a context for US strikes on the country it “lost” in 1979. Once again, with a pack of lies, the US ruling class is threatening the world with a catastrophic conflagration.

**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.

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Days before the May 12 incident, the US government announced it was sending a strike force to the Middle East, ostensibly to respond to threats to US troops by Iran or their allies. The strike force includes the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier, the guided missile cruiser USS Leyte Gulf and other destroyers. The USS John Stennis aircraft carrier and its strike force is already in the Persian Gulf.<sup>3</sup> When the Islamic Republic of Iran has publicly made no threats against any country for 40 years, US claims of their security being jeopardised are in reality yet more public relations preparing the public for a major war.

**Major US provocations**

US President Trump had already “withdrawn” the US from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on May 8, which was a deal to restrict

<sup>2</sup> <https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/world/2019/06/13/us-iran-oil-tanker-attack/> (15-06-2019)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.studentnewsdaily.com/daily-news-article/u-s-strike-force-heading-to-the-middle-east-to-counter-iran-threats/> (15-06-2019)

Iran’s development of nuclear technology which **could** be used to develop nuclear weapons. The governments of Britain, France and Germany demurred, and declared they would stay within the treaty as a means to better achieve its goal of the prevention of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the “withdrawal” is a violation of international law, as the JCPOA is a plan adopted by the United Nations Security Council. The US cannot simply withdraw without bringing into question their membership of the UN. Needless to say, however, this has not stopped them before.

The US “withdrawal” also came with even more sanctions in Iran than had been in place previously. The scale of these sanctions cannot be underestimated. They aim to shut down Iran’s oil industry entirely, something that Iran heavily relies on. Iran produces 3.8 million barrels of oil per day, which represents 3.9% of the world oil supply.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the US has applied financial sanctions on Iran which effectively cut Iran off from the international financial system. Last November saw US sanctions applied on most of Iran’s banks, including its central bank. Just one result of these combined measures is estimated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to be a 4% economic contraction in 2018, which could be followed by a 6% economic contraction in 2019.<sup>6</sup> Added to an estimated 50% inflation increase over that time, one can see how adversely affected the Iranian masses are as a result.

As if this wasn’t enough, in April US President Trump announced that the US was designating the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC) a “terrorist” organisation.<sup>7</sup> In response, the Iranian government promptly labelled the US Central

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/05/08/donald-trump-announces-decision-iran-nuclear-deal-live-updates/> (15-06-2019)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/17/c\\_137330922.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/17/c_137330922.htm) (15-06-2019)

<sup>6</sup> <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2019/apr/23/impact-us-sanctions-iran-oil> (15-06-2019)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/04/designates-iran-elite-irgc-terrorist-organisation-trump-190408141756166.html> (15-06-2019)

Command or CENTCOM (US troops in the Middle East) as terrorist. The action of the US is unprecedented in that it is possibly the first time that a nation state's armed forces have been labelled in such a way. Usually the designation of "terrorist" is reserved for non-state actors and other armed groups. The US government is overtly throwing the worst invective against Iran it can muster – and the truth be damned.

### **Linked to US defeat in Syria**

Although the US White House has sought the overthrow of the Islamic Republic of Iran since its revolution in 1979 dispensed with the US backed monarchy, the recent moves against Iran are linked to the failed eight year long war for regime change against Syria, from 2011 to the present. Although US troops are still in parts of Syria, where they are enlisting reactionary Kurdish armed groups through its Orwellian named "Syrian Democratic Forces", overall the US suffered a stinging defeat. It was not able to bring down the Syrian Arab Republic despite the arming and funding of tens of thousands of barbaric death squads, under various guises such as ISIS, Al Qaeda and Al Nusra. The Russian intervention, at the express invitation of the Syrian government, was decisive. Beginning in September 2015, superior Russian air power took out ISIS strongholds, and cut off ISIS supply lines. From this point, Washington's proxy ISIS forces, which had been recklessly carrying out atrocities across Syria, barely stood a chance.

US defeat in Syria was arguably the first military defeat for US imperialism since the liberation of Saigon in Vietnam in 1975. Yet as decisive as the superior Russian air power was, air power alone cannot win a war. For this, troops on the ground are needed. And these were provided by the Syrian Arab Army, the Lebanese Hezbollah and armed forces from Iran. The Iranian government recognised that if Syria was taken down by the Pentagon, it would be next. Just as Russia saw that it had to draw a red line on US regime change wars after the destruction of Green Libya, Iran drew its

red line also. Thankfully for humanity, the non-imperialist forces of Russia, Iran, Hezbollah and Syria were able to "contain and roll back" US imperialism and its allies – Israel, Britain, France, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Australia, Denmark, Qatar and so on. Turkey began the war on the side of the US Empire, but finished as an ally of Russia.

While the failed regime change war on Syria has burnt the Pentagon, its 2003 invasion of Iraq has left a string of US bases in that country, although the current Iraqi government is pushing hard to remove them. The US occupation of Afghanistan, in place since 2001, has furnished the US with a string of bases on another side of Iran. Iran is thus encircled with hostile US military bases, in the same way in which the US has encircled Russia and is attempting to do to China. As Brett Redmayne-Titley writes, however, a US ground invasion of Iran will need a stable and secure border.<sup>8</sup> That could have been Iraq in the past, but not now. Other bordering countries of Iran, such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Turkey and Pakistan can hardly allow the US to use their soil for an invasion of Iran either.

### **"Internal" Regime Change**

US air strikes on Iran in isolation from a ground invasion are possible, but would hardly cause what the Pentagon seeks – regime change. Hence, Washington uses the military stick at the same time as using covert means to bring down independent Iran. Using familiar fake political themes as "human rights" and "democracy", and even "workers' rights", the CIA constantly seeks pro-US allies inside Iran, and amongst liberals and deluded left parties internationally. This formula may have worked in Syria but for the assistance Syria received from Russia, Hezbollah and Iran. In Iran, the Zionist Israeli state and the Saudi Arabian monarchy, while outwardly appearing to be foes, would supply dangerous levels of succor to both an external and internal US led war on Iran.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.globalresearch.ca/geography-war-no-iraq-no-iran/5678358> (15-06-2019)

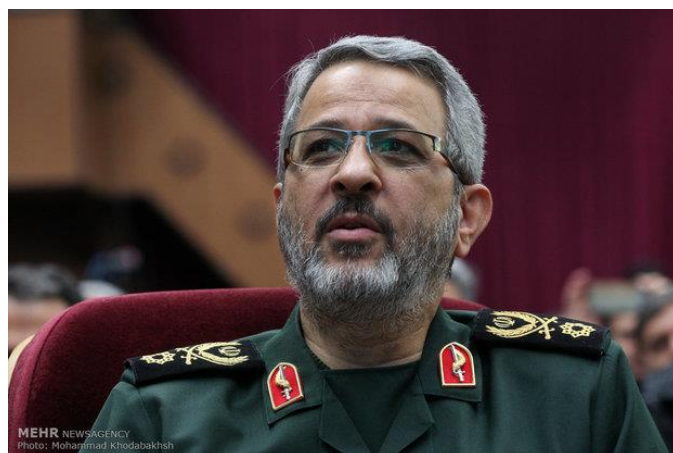
The madness of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and US National Security Adviser John Bolton make US war moves against Iran rather obvious. In the face of this, many Australian left parties swear blind that they oppose a US led war on Iran – while simultaneously calling for regime change in Iran!! They don't wish to acknowledge that Wall Street seeks regime change in Iran any which way it can; by external invasion OR by internal destabilisation. In practice, both are intertwined and cannot be separated. US imperialism fosters internal destabilisation in lieu of an external invasion. Washington has been doing this since the CIA was created in the aftermath of World War II. Why would Iran be an exception?

If US imperialism somehow did not exist, it might be possible for those on the left to agitate for a socialist overthrow of the “capitalism” that currently operates in Iran. But we do not live in such a fantasy world. US imperialism has its agents ensconced in virtually every country in the world (with the exception of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea – DPRK), as well as a layer of internal pro-US liberals who retain desperate illusions about “American freedom”. While working people can certainly have their criticisms of some of the actions of the Iranian government (as do Iranians themselves), the fact is that US control of Iran would plunge the Middle East into a hell previously unknown. The immediate task for workers internationally is to defend Iran against US imperialism, internally and externally.

### **Excuses offered for anti-government agitation**

Some misguided left parties which backed the imperialist led war for regime change in Syria, repeat the dose in Iran. Only this time they offer what appear on the surface to be left justifications for their call to overthrow the government of Iran. However, these “left” justifications are grossly distorted, and no matter how much left rhetoric accompanies them, end up fanning the flames of imperialist war. For example, Socialist Alternative (SALT), reporting on the contrived January 2018

protests in Iran, claim that Hassan Rouhani's government has “privatised numerous state-owned enterprises”.<sup>9</sup> But is this true? It is certainly not “privatisation” as we experience in the capitalist West, where a formerly state owned enterprise is handed over to private capital – whose only goal is profit for themselves. What has actually occurred is the transfer of some state assets to other state bodies, such as the IRGC, the mass organisation the Basij, or the bonyads (charities). As Ramin Mazaheri of Press TV has exhaustively argued, the Iranian government still controls the overwhelming majority of the economy, and would not politically be able to carry out privatisation as it has been known in the West for the last 40 years.<sup>10</sup>



Above: In November last year, Basij head Qolamhossein Gheibparvar (pictured) announced that the Basij would build 3000 solar power plants across the country, each with 5KW capacity. Some misguided left parties which hail solar power as revolutionary, also mistakenly condemn the Basij as repressive force of the Iranian “regime”. In fact, the Basij literally translates as “Organisation for the Mobilisation of the Oppressed”. It is not just a militia defending the Iranian revolution, but also serves social goals. [www.tehrantimes.com](http://www.tehrantimes.com)

The Spartacist League offers banner headlines opposing a US led war on Iran, but then undermine their claimed position by railing against the Iranian government for the oppression of “national

<sup>9</sup> <https://redflag.org.au/node/6153> (16-06-2019)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.mintpressnews.com/what-privatization-irans-unique-socialist-economy/244887/> (16-06-2019)



minorities”.<sup>11</sup> They are joined on this imaginary bandwagon by the Socialist Alliance,<sup>12</sup> the Communist Party of Australia (CPA),<sup>13</sup> Solidarity,<sup>14</sup> and the Socialist Equality Party (SEP).<sup>15</sup> All of these left parties consciously or unconsciously ignore the extent to which violent separatists and jihadists are materially and politically aided by the imperialist powers, as well as the Saudi Arabian monarchy and the Zionist Israeli state, in their multi-faceted efforts to reverse Iran’s 1979 revolution. Baluchi Salafists in the southeast of Iran<sup>16</sup>, Ahwaz separatists in the southwest, as well as some Kurdish reactionary parties such as PJAK (“Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan”)<sup>17</sup> – all carry out barbarous acts against innocent Iranians, while being materially aided by Washington, Tel Aviv and Riyadh. For example, in September last year, Ahwazi separatists, disguised in IRGC and Basij uniforms, opened fire at a military parade in Ahwaz, slaughtering at least 25 people, including women and children.<sup>18</sup> Yet the misinformed left parties would have us believe that it is the Iranian government which is “suppressing national minorities” !

Workers in Australia and internationally have a vital interest in undertaking all measures which can prevent yet another US led imperialist war in the Middle East. As in Syria, working people need to defend Iran against internal and external regime change, against the Pentagon and its allies, and

against leftists who struggle to grasp geopolitics. While world socialism is the ultimate necessity, this goal will not be reached unless workers can prevent the imperialist annihilation of Iran today.



Above: Ahwaz separatists view the portion of Iran on the map above (from [www.reddit.com](http://www.reddit.com)) as their own country, but they are prepared to accept aid from the Saudi Arabian monarchy, and protection from imperialist governments when they commit crimes such as the 2018 attack on an Iranian military parade in Ahwaz. The aftermath is pictured below (from [www.aa.com.tr](http://www.aa.com.tr)) 25 people were shot dead in cold blood, and 60 were injured. Despite this, some misguided left parties in Australia make wild claims that “national minorities” are suppressed by the Iranian government. In reality, the imperialist powers fuel extremist separatism in order to break up the Islamic Republic of Iran.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.icl-fi.org/english/wv/1156/iran.html> (16-06-2019)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/iranian-workers-protests-confront-regime-crisis> (16-06-2019)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.cpa.org.au/guardian/2018/1852/06-rally.html> (16-06-2019)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.solidarity.net.au/refugees/ahwazis-face-persecution-in-iran-detention-in-australia/> (16-06-2019)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2018/11/26/irst-n26.html> (16-06-2019)

<sup>16</sup> <https://thesaker.is/foreign-backed-terrorism-in-iran-part-one-us-israeli-backed-salafists-in-iran/> (16-06-2019)

<sup>17</sup> <https://thesaker.is/foreign-backed-terrorism-in-iran-part-two-us-israeli-backed-insurgency-and-separatism-in-western-iran/> (16-06-2019)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/09/22/574848/Iran-Ahwaz-terrorist-attack> (16-06-2019)



# LETTERS, COMMENTS....

*(Articles and contributions to the "Letters, Comments..." section do not necessarily reflect the views and positions of the Workers League.)*

## The Evolution of Chavismo

By Sam Bullock

Looking at the history of Venezuela it was neoliberalism that dominated. The economy in the 60s, 70s and 80s did not serve the majority. During that time, the rich Creole oligarchy served themselves with their own ideology, while rigging elections. Despite decades of corruption, the Communist Party of Venezuela kept campaigning for justice, calling on millions of starving Venezuelans to vote for justice first rather than the oil oligarchy.

The rich minority sent their children to school in the United States of America. At the same time there was a recession for the Mestizos and Afro-Venezuelans. During this time Luis Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch were the two terrorists involved in the bombing of Cuban Airlines Flight 455 in 1976, which murdered 73 innocent people. The Cuban people have resisted such US backed terrorism for decades while standing in solidarity with Venezuela. While defending their revolution with arms in hand, the Venezuelan resistance laid down their weapons to take part in the political process. However, the oligarchy had done their best to destroy Venezuela, which had to import fruit and vegetables. Venezuela's poor lived in barrios with no access to health care or education.

In 1989 the government of Carlos Andres Perez implemented the austerity demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These "reforms" saw basic food prices skyrocket. In response to an uprising against this, the military was sent in to shoot those seeking food from corporations which were hiding food in warehouses rather than selling or distributing it.

Hugo Chavez Frias came from a poor community, and later joined the Venezuelan military. During the 90s he led a coup attempt against the government, for which he was arrested and jailed. He later ran in the

presidential elections with the "Movement for a Fifth Republic", which he won in 1998. In 1999, he led a referendum process which changed the constitution of Venezuela. The state owned oil company PDVSA's revenue was for the first time redirected into medical programs and literacy programs for Venezuela's poor majority. Cuba sent doctors to assist the health care initiatives. For the first time in Venezuela's history, the welfare of the poor was prioritised over the welfare of the rich.

In response, the US government attempted a coup against President Chavez. In 2002, he was abducted, and Venezuelans were told he had resigned. Within days, millions of poor Venezuelans mobilised and advanced on Caracas, forcing the return of their elected President. The coup had failed in the face of mass popular support for President Chavez. Later, some reactionary workers attempted to shutdown the oil industry to force Chavez from power. This also failed, as it could not gain popular support.

I travelled to Venezuela twice during the Chavez years. I was there in 2007 for May Day, and in 2012 for the elections. With millions of Venezuelans still backing him, this election victory would sadly be his last. In 2013, he passed away. Despite assistance from Cuban doctors, he was not able to overcome stomach cancer. His legacy was a love for his people. Chavez's "Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" continued as he was succeeded by President Nicolas Maduro. A strong point was their strong support and solidarity with Syria, Palestine, Cuba and China.

In more recent times, the oligarchy has attempted to sabotage the economy by hoarding food and putting forward ongoing claims that the elections are rigged. They falsely accuse Maduro of being a "dictator". In fact, if the oligarchy had returned to power, millions of Venezuelans would return to the times of semi-starvation. The oligarchy undermines the sovereignty of their own country and works in the interests of a small minority of elite wealthy layers. Meanwhile, the millions of poor Venezuelans – Mestizos, Afro-Venezuelans, Indigenous people and others were the backbone of the Bolivarian Revolution. These people continue to this day to defend the sovereignty of their country from foreign

interference – especially from the US government. The US government has been attempting to destroy Venezuela for five or six decades. The resistance of poor Venezuelans has ensured that, until now, this has not taken place.

### **Socialism with Chinese Characteristics is not Capitalism**

By Sam Bullock

The lies and propaganda against China need to be analysed. Socialism with Chinese characteristics ensured that China advanced from a backwards country in the post World War II period. Under Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, the ideology of the Cultural Revolution was Marxism-Leninism, which was also the foundation of the Communist Party of China and the People's Republic of China.

The victory over Chiang Kai-Shek ultimately saw China's economy advance from a backwards state to a powerhouse world economy. The Communist Party largely nationalised iron and steel production, agriculture, banking and heavy industry. As a result, millions have been lifted out of poverty, and millions of agrarian based people were able to learn to read and write. This was "serving the people". Mao's ideology was based on scientific socialism, which enabled the social and economic development of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

From city to country, the Communist Party backs state-owned co-operatives. Before the 1949 revolution, peasants had to work from sunrise to sunset. Under the Kuomintang, women did not even have names. After the revolution, women had the right to a name, but also equality in work and education.

Mao was inspired by Lenin and Stalin. China's vast achievements lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty, improving their lives out of sight. This earned the ire of elements such as the government of the United States. China's communism was led by Chairman Mao, who, we can admit, made some mistakes during his life's work for the Communist Party of China. The criticisms of Mao from anti-socialist forces though, were not valid.

After Chairman Mao, Deng Xiaoping assumed leadership. Deng introduced socialism with Chinese characteristics, with a dual economy. These concessions to the market were done out of necessity, for attempts

to close the gap between city and country had to be begun. While the limited and controlled private sector advances greatly contributed to strengthening and developing the Chinese economy, Deng's moves faced criticisms from Western based liberals and "socialists".

As Marxist-Leninists, however, we need to reject dogmatism. Deng Xiaoping's moves developed and built an advancing economy, and through that built the wealth of its people. The Communist Party of China also strongly supports the rights of ethnic minorities, and the right to freedom of religion. For example, witness the progress in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Ethnic minorities can receive education in their native languages. An ongoing cultural revolution adds to economic development in transport infrastructure, education and health care. This has led to increases in living standards. Co-operatives run by peasants have the support of the Communist Party. Crucially, wages of workers are also increasing.

The People's Liberation Army assists with building rail infrastructure and with the running of the state owned oil industry. This is based on socialism with Chinese characteristics. The goal of the Communist Party of China is economic improvements servicing the needs of its people. Today, President Xi Jinping is continuing the task of building China based on the ideology of Karl Marx, VI Lenin, Mao Tse-Tung and Deng Xiaoping. As adopted at its 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, which approved the leadership of Xi Jinping, socialism with Chinese characteristics is the basic ideology of the Communist Party of China.





# WEST PAPUA: INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT SPREADS MORE FALSE CLAIMS



Above: A West Papua Liberation Army unit in Nduga regency, in March 2019. Image from [www.rnz.co.nz](http://www.rnz.co.nz)

By Adam Baker

26-04-2019 – When a political movement distributes distorted facts and false claims, its legitimacy is necessarily brought into question. In the case of the independence movement in West Papua, this is a shame, for there may be a genuine case for the achievement of independence, which could potentially resolve historic injustices. Yet today, the current leadership of the West Papuan independence movement appears to have few qualms in using unverified reports, false claims and the backing of compromised allies to push their cause.

## **“Front Line Defenders”: the Empire’s press agents**

The “Front Line Defenders” are a classic example of a corporate funded NGO, with practices not at all in consonance with their claimed *raison d’être*. It is claimed that a team from Front Line Defenders visited West Papua, which went on to claim that around 32 000 people have been displaced by

Indonesian military operations in the Nduga area.<sup>19</sup>

The Free West Papua web site also claimed that bombs had been dropped and hospitals had been torched. However, the Front Line Defenders website does not mention West Papua, and details are hard to come by elsewhere.

What can be garnered from the Front Line Defenders website is that its board of directors are replete with CEOs and wealthy stock market brokers.<sup>20</sup> Quite obviously not short of a quid, one wonders what they might have in common with impoverished West Papuans. Moreover, their campaigns are transparently part of the imperialist human rights racket – where “human rights” are only a concern in countries which are targeted by the US Empire for regime change, or at the very

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.freewestpapua.org/2019/04/01/human-rights-investigators-bombs-dropped-hospitals-torched-and-thousands-displaced-in-nduga/> (22-04-2019)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/board-directors> (22-04-2019)



least, politico-military-diplomatic intrigue with the aim of destabilisation. Hence, Russia, China, Venezuela, Iran and even Indonesia are subjected to the corporate backed Front Line Defenders' hackneyed claims of "human rights abuse". Needless to say, the US Empire is never accosted for the same treatment.

For its part, the Indonesian military rubbishes the claims of 32 000 people being displaced in the Nduga region. Colonel Mohammed Aidi stated that there is no population data available for Nduga, implying that the numbers of claimed displaced people are impossible to verify.<sup>21</sup> The armed West Papuan groups claimed that the Indonesian military had damaged 34 schools, which the military denies. Colonel Aidi did state that six soldiers had perished in gun battles which were *instigated by the armed Papuans*. Further, the armed Papuan groups claim that bombs had been dropped from helicopters.

Who can be believed in this situation of claim and counter-claim? Going by previous history, it is more likely that the Indonesian military version is closer to the truth. This does not imply the slightest political support. Yet if recent events are anything to go by, it is likely that the claims by the armed Papuan groups are falsifications. In December last year, armed Papuan fighters slaughtered 31 Indonesian road workers who were constructing the Trans-Papua highway. Understandably, there was a military response to this. But then the armed Papuan groups enlisted corporate journalists to make the completely unfounded claim that the Indonesian military had used white phosphorus munitions against them.<sup>22</sup> Given that at least one of the journalists assisted the US Empire in its war for regime change against Syria, and where there are credible reports of the US military itself using

white phosphorus against civilians in Syria<sup>23</sup>, it is reasonable to assume that, once again, the armed Papuan groups and their supporters are making fabricated claims.

Some left parties fall over themselves to endorse the West Papuan independence movement, without pausing for a moment to check on its bona fides. The Socialist Alliance is just one of them, and they repeated the unverifiable claims of the "Front Line Defenders" in its newspaper *Green Left Weekly*.<sup>24</sup> They reprinted the claims direct from the United Liberation Movement of West Papua (ULMWP), who likewise reprinted the allegations which were seemingly made verbally by the "Front Line Defenders".<sup>25</sup> The point needs to be made, though, that an independence movement which relies on "NGOs" which overtly or covertly work in the interests of imperialism, especially its mendacious "human rights" arm, is one which is on shaky political ground.

### **Benny Wenda: fighter or fugitive?**

The chairperson of the ULMWP, and de facto leader of the West Papuan independence movement, is Benny Wenda. Mr Wenda no longer lives in West Papua – he lives in Oxford in the United Kingdom (UK), where he has been made a citizen. Supporters retail stories that Mr Wenda is living in a forced exile for his peaceful political activities, and cannot return to his homeland. The truth is somewhat at variance with this classical tale of an exiled activist. On December 7 in 2000, Benny Wenda apparently incited a group of around 50 people to attack a police station at Abepura, alongside two shops, which were torched. In the attack, a police officer was killed, and a security guard from the adjoining shopping complex was found dead.<sup>26</sup> While on trial for this, Mr Wenda

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/386236/32-000-people-flee-violence-in-papua-rights-group> (23-04-2019)

<sup>22</sup> <https://redfireonline.com/2018/12/30/west-papua-corporate-media-enlisted-to-spread-false-claims-fake-news/> (23-04-2019)

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/us-using-banned-white-phosphorous-syria-says-moscow> (23-04-2019)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/west-papua-destruction-and-displacement-nduga> (23-04-2019)

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ulmwp.org/human-rights-investigation-nduga> (23-04-2019)

<sup>26</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20141215023432/http://www.t>

escaped across the border to Papua New Guinea, and then fled to the UK.

The Indonesian government, somewhat understandably chasing someone wanted for the slaying of a police officer and potentially another person, attempted to have an INTERPOL red notice applied to Benny Wenda. INTERPOL red notices are usually applied by the 200 odd member countries, who agree to extradite the wanted person. Within 12 months, however, the INTERPOL red notice against Mr Wenda was lifted.<sup>27</sup> In short, it is not that Benny Wenda cannot return to the West Papuan provinces of Indonesia, out of fear that the Indonesian authorities will not allow him political liberties. It is more that he is a fugitive, who has fled the country in order to avoid standing trial for murder. This fact is unknown to many West Papuan independence supporters, or swept under the carpet by those supporters who are aware.

While in the UK, Mr Wenda has used its protection to garner international support for the cause of West Papuan independence. Nothing wrong with this, one might object. Except, Mr Wenda is enlisting the highest political offices of capital to do so. He founded the International Parliamentarians for West Papua, which was initiated in the Houses of the British Parliament, and was also set up in the European Parliament in Brussels.<sup>28</sup> That is, the leader of the West Papuan independence movement is already subordinating the politics of the movement he leads to the class interests of British and European imperialism. Again, without endorsing Indonesian administration of the West Papuan provinces, if independence was achieved with the European ruling classes as sponsors, it may end up being worse than Indonesian rule. For whatever its faults, the Republic of Indonesia is not imperialist.

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[hejakartapost.com/news/2002/10/31/papuan-separatist-leader-breaks-out-jail.html](http://hejakartapost.com/news/2002/10/31/papuan-separatist-leader-breaks-out-jail.html) (23-04-2019)

<sup>27</sup>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/expatnews/9458223/Benny-Wenda-removed-from-Interpol-wanted-list.html> (23-04-2019)

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.ipwp.org/background/> (23-04-2019)



Above: Benny Wenda often sports a ceremonial head dress to spruik for independence for West Papua. While many claim he is an “exiled independence leader” in fact he cannot return to West Papua as he is wanted to stand trial for the slaying of a police officer and a security guard, which occurred after he incited a crowd at Abepura in the year 2000. Image from [www.looppng.com](http://www.looppng.com)

### Genocide in West Papua?

Genocide is one of the most emotive laden terms in the English language. By its nature the elimination of a people or nation, in whole or in part, invokes virtually universal condemnation. Estimates of the number of Papuans who have needlessly lost their lives at the hands of Indonesian armed forces vary widely, from an alleged 100 000 to possibly 500 000 since the 1950s. Again, these numbers are difficult to verify. However, West Papuan independence supporters today often claim that Papuans are suffering an ongoing genocide, which continues to this day. This implies that the Indonesian military is systematically mowing Papuans down with sub-machine guns, or engaging in regular massacres of Papuans going about their daily lives. *In this sense*, this is patently untrue, and this is not the situation in West Papua today.

What Papuans are referring to as “genocide” has much more to do with the significant transmigration of Indonesians into West Papua from Java, Bali, Sulawesi, Madura and other highly populated islands. With Indonesia’s population

topping 200 million, one could say there is significant overpopulation on the main islands, and thus some form of transmigration program was necessary. One could argue that the transmigration program has become too extensive. In 1971, the non-Papuan population of West Papua stood at only 4%, but had reached 50% by 2004. Now, it is reported to be 51% non-Papuan and 49% Papuan.<sup>29</sup> Some Papuans fear they will thus be displaced over time, becoming a small minority in their own land.

Some West Papuans thus interpret their situation much more as a cultural “genocide”, as opposed to one which involves unchecked military force. To some extent, West Papuans can claim that a certain marginalisation of them is occurring, at their expense, and to the benefit of the Indonesian transmigrants. For example, employment for Papuans is reportedly difficult to come by, especially if they have been dislocated from their traditional means of living, sometimes as subsistence farmers.<sup>30</sup> However, there are many reasons for this, and this may not be intentional on the part of the Indonesian government. Much of the urban and city commercial activity has been run by Indonesians who have settled there. They have higher education and business experience, whereas the indigenous Papuans, who inhabit mostly the highland areas of Papua, generally have not had contact with this type of work. Perhaps understandably as a result, Indonesian run business and government sectors prefer those who are already trained for this type of activity. However, conscious exclusion of Papuans from employment is difficult to prove.

What is more, the development which the Indonesian government is constructing in West Papua does benefit Papuans along with the Indonesian transmigrants. Some Papuans view this

development as benefitting ONLY Indonesian transmigrants. Yet it would be difficult to deny, for example, that the Trans-Papua highway will not assist the economic development of West Papua. In addition, while the delivery of education to all areas of Papua remains a challenge, especially in the remote highlands, primary, secondary and tertiary education is provided at little cost to students.<sup>31</sup> Further, Indonesia has recently rolled out a system of health insurance which reportedly “dwarfs Obamacare”.<sup>32</sup> While complete funding for this healthcare system remains patchy, it is also in place in West Papua.



Above: In 2014, the Indonesian government launched the Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional (JKN) national health care initiative, which aims to supply health care coverage to all Indonesians. By 2019, it is expected that this goal will be met. While the coverage is not perfect, and reportedly better in the major cities than in regional areas, it also applies for all citizens of West Papua. Supporters of West Papuan independence, on the other hand, try to paint Indonesian rule in West Papua as universally oppressive. Yet the Indonesian government provides health care as far as it is able to, it provides primary and secondary education to all West Papuans, and is investing in the expansion of electricity infrastructure in West Papua. Independence advocates need to consider how an independent West Papua could do the same. [www.asia-medialink.org](http://www.asia-medialink.org)

<sup>29</sup>

<http://www.7dayadventurer.com/2016/02/25/transmigration-to-irian-jayapapua-melanesian-marginalisation/> (25-04-2019)

<sup>30</sup> [https://awasmiffee.potager.org/?page\\_id=71](https://awasmiffee.potager.org/?page_id=71) (25-04-2019)

<sup>31</sup> <https://freewestpapua-indonesia.com/Freewestpapua/free-west-papua-afirmasi-pendidikan-tinggi-bagi-putra-putri-asli-papua?lang=gb> (25-04-2019)

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/2142640/indonesias-health-scheme-dwarfs-obamacare-there-problem> (25-04-2019)



## “Leninist” Self-Determination

The most articulate, yet still mistaken, “Marxist” case for the independence of West Papua is put forward by the Spartacist League (SL). The SL call for the independence of West Papua while giving no political support to bourgeois nationalist forces – but then proceed to do precisely that.<sup>33</sup> SL is apparently unaware of the fugitive status of Benny Wenda, referring to him as an “exiled independence leader”, as do all bourgeois – and petty bourgeois – nationalists. In addition, they state that “West Papua is a cause celebre for bourgeois liberals, including the capitalist Greens in this country.”<sup>34</sup> But isn’t there something strange about “Leninists” saluting the flag alongside bourgeois liberals?

In reality, Lenin and the Bolsheviks in their time did not automatically politically advocate every single movement for self-determination or for independence generally. They analysed the concrete circumstances of each situation, and then ONLY backed self-determination if it advanced the struggle of the working class for socialism in that nation and internationally. Lenin and the Bolsheviks would have scoffed at very suggestion of backing a petty-bourgeois or bourgeois nationalist struggle which had no connection – and even worked against – the achievement of socialism.

Like it or not, the character of the political leadership of the West Papuan independence movement today is light years away from socialism. Not only does the leadership put forward factual distortions and falsifications, the armed wing provokes the Indonesian authorities by slaughtering their personnel. When the Indonesian armed forces naturally respond to such an attack, they cry out and run to the Western corporate press. They enjoy the benefits of economic development (roads, education, healthcare) which

Indonesia brings, and which is available for all Papuans, and then claim discrimination.

It would be a different matter if the West Papuan independence leadership proclaimed: we fight for West Papuan independence as part of our struggle for socialism and greater equality throughout Indonesia and the Asia-Pacific, and we are willing to stand with working people in our country and internationally against the perils of capitalism across the globe. Even something leaning in a left-wing direction could be the basis for a reassessment. Until and unless such a moment arrives, workers should leave the advocacy of West Papuan independence to the drawing room conversations of the chattering classes.



Above: Scene from the October Revolution in 1917, backgrounded against a map of Russia. Lenin and the Bolsheviks advocated the right of all nations to self-determination, but only if it advanced the international cause of socialism. Image from Left Voice.



<sup>33</sup> <https://www.icl-fi.org/english/asp/236/papua.html> (26-04-2019)

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 15.

# CASHLESS WELFARE AFFECTS (NEARLY) EVERYONE AND WHY IT HAS TO BE SCRAPPED



*(We reprint below information produced by the Coalition Against Cashless Cards. The Workers League strongly supports efforts to end “cashless welfare” in Australia, which is used to further punish the unemployed and those unable to work, for the financial benefit of private capital.)*

By Burt Braght

For more than ten years, a draconian regime of welfare payments has been used by governments against many Australians. This system is based on **controlling people's expenditures** according to administrative rules, but has been wrongly called ‘income management’. Its electronic applications have been called, BasicsCard, Cashless Debit Card, Cashless Welfare Card, or after the company operating it, Indue.

## What does Cashless Welfare mean?

In a nutshell, Cashless Welfare means the transformation of an entitlement paid by the government in cash or its equivalent into a technically in-kind allowance administered by a private business. Its effect is that people who are pressured by living on already insufficient government payments will have to struggle even more and harder to get by. People on a wide range of Centrelink payments have to suffer dispossession, oppression, discrimination, intimidation and vilification. For people in employment cashless welfare increases the threat of unemployment dramatically. In consequence, the cost of poverty rises not only for those living under it but for (nearly) everyone. First and foremost, cashless welfare means

## Dispossession

by extremely limiting the disposal over money that used to be the benefit payment. The word “cashless” means

here: **no access to legal tender in Australia**. Welfare is provided as 80% non-cash expenditure subject to approval by a private company that processes money transfers. A contract with this private company is compulsory to avoid starvation and destitution. The recipient no longer owns the money in real terms, but is merely permitted to use it for approved purchases. In other words, cashless welfare is hardly different from a voucher system.

## Oppression

Not being able to dispose of funds that one is entitled to is a **severe restriction on living as an adult person**. (Commonly, these restrictions are applied to incapacitated person and require court decisions). In the private sphere, controlling the money belonging to someone else without consent would be called financial abuse. In the social sphere, policies that restrict people's way of life are oppressive. Cashless welfare is oppressive since it takes away people's ability to use what they should own legally with complete disregard of individual circumstances. (Some opponents of cashless welfare have called this punitive, though there is no corresponding crime or felony and there should be no collective punishment.) Hence, cashless welfare it is an arbitrary imposition in order to make those who are suffering enough already, suffer even more. What is more, it establishes two categories of people: on the one hand, those whose income is based on wages and salaries, and on the other hand, those who are in receipt of conditional benefits in the form of non-cash handout. Cashless welfare thus means in a very material (financial) sense

## Discrimination,

which becomes manifest at each over the counter transaction done by the recipient who is forced to produce his/her special card that identifies him/her beyond doubt as someone who is on social benefits and simultaneously as someone whose rights as a citizen have been severely curtailed. Being singled-out is also experienced when permissions have to be sought for money transfers from an anonymous administrator. Persons on cashless welfare have to cope constantly with the fear of compromising themselves when engaging in mundane activities, like making purchases. Thus, another effect of cashless welfare is



Image from Facebook.com

## Intimidation,

which actually has put its forceful stamp onto the very beginnings of cashless welfare. Controlling people's expenditure by means of a pseudo debit card was one of the elements of the Northern Territory Intervention. Cashless welfare cards were imposed during the Howard/Rudd governments in the context of large-scale dispossession and oppression of First Nation's people, an act of racist state terrorism. It's fair to say that people found themselves in a state of shock: there were the army and police in the streets, signalling that times had changed abruptly and drastically, and who was now in charge in the most comprehensive way. **Cashless welfare came into use through instilling even more fear in already intimidated and disenfranchised people**. Governments since then have continually sought to sell cashless welfare to the wider public by asserting its usefulness in tackling issues that prevent people from re-entering the workforce while spreading at the same time

## Vilification and Deception.

During the Northern Territory Intervention, non-existent paedophile rings among Aboriginal males had been used by governments as a pretext to legitimise the excessive use of force for this part of the population. When cashless cards were pushed into other areas, the permanent narrative of the dole bludger was augmented by asserting that certain habits and spending patterns would lead to what has been called inter-generational welfare dependency. Welfare recipients were meant to conduct disorderly lives, and



cashless welfare was the chosen remedy to better people's lot. Governments have named this interference in people's life paternalistic; however the methods of introduction of cashless welfare and the accompanying rhetoric are nothing short of authoritarian. To counteract this accusation governments have relied on faking community consultations as well as evaluations that were meant to prove that they are doing good for people while actually the opposite is the case.



www.news-mail.com.au

Above and Below: There have been some actions opposing the introduction of the cashless welfare card, such as those pictured. Employed workers need to demand their Unions defend unemployed workers.



www.qt.com.au

## Why it has to be scrapped

Some opponents of cashless welfare claim that it is ineffective by assessing it against the governments'

assumed objective of social benefit that is nothing but a stalking-horse. However, as much as cashless welfare hurts people who are already under duress, it provides significant gains: firstly, for the card operator who benefits by having the flow of government funds as a secure source of revenue; secondly, businesses at large benefit from the organised misery to a great degree – dispossession, oppression, discrimination, and intimidation are at work far beyond those subjugated to them. For most people there is a chance that they might be affected by adverse life events causing them to depend on welfare support. For those of working age, the “costs” of unemployment rise sharply, since to the financial deprivation due to insufficient financial support, is added the depressing situation of being controlled down to the mundane aspects of life. **Cashless welfare is thus a manifest threat everywhere.** Workers will be less inclined to speak up and defend their rights as the threat of unemployment is great, while the unemployed will accept miserable working conditions and wages for the sake of escaping this regimen. Cashless welfare thus make sense in this system by helping to lower the price of labour even further. It makes sustainable the high proportion of un- and underemployment, as well as the high proportion of in-secure, that is casual or contractual work relations. This is the cynical rationale of cashless welfare.

These days, there is much talk about the burden on society that is inequality in the sense of disparity of incomes and assets, while cashless welfare increases and ossifies inequality. Inequality can only be contained by raising the most miserable out of their predicament. Resisting cashless welfare is a first step in this direction.



Detailed information about cashless welfare can be found at the **The Say NO Seven Resource Site**

<https://www.thesaynoseven.com>



To become active against cashless welfare, contact one of the many local “No Cashless Welfare” groups on Facebook.

# Coalition against Cashless Cards

# FREE JULIAN ASSANGE!

## DEFEND BASIC DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS!



*(Statement of the Workers League printed below)*

03-05-2019 – On April 11, Julian Assange – the founder of Wikileaks – was arrested inside the Ecuadorian Embassy in London by British Police, and dragged away to Belmarsh Prison. He awaits likely extradition to the United States of America, where he is likely to face a kangaroo court which could imprison him for life. **He has committed no crime whatsoever.** On the contrary, as a whistleblowing journalist, he has only *revealed* crimes carried out by governments the world over, most especially the one headquartered in Washington – which administers US imperialism.

Even according to bourgeois law, which upholds the “rights” of a tiny exploiting capitalist class against the working people who create their obscene private wealth, Julian Assange’s arrest is a blatant violation. For one thing, Julian Assange is not a citizen of the US and has never travelled to the US. Even according to the “law”, the US cannot put on trial, let alone jail and likely torture, someone who has never been a citizen. How the Ecuadorian government can revoke the citizenship, overnight, of someone it has previously granted

citizenship, is a mystery. And how the British government can enter the embassy of a foreign country, arrest one of the people inside, drag them out and then extradite them to a country to which they have never visited, is an abomination. The fact that this is happening exposes the high crimes of these governments – and reinforces the fact that Julian Assange is telling the truth.

Julian Assange is an Australian citizen, born and raised in Queensland. The fact that the Australian Federal Government barely lifted a finger to assist him over the past eight years sends a chilling message. If you hold an Australian passport, it may or may not protect you. You will only be offered genuine support and assistance if in need if you remain onside politically. That is, if you raise no questions about the imperialist wars waged around the world by the US Empire – with the assistance of the Australian regime. If you write or publish any information which exposes or otherwise criticises the actions of the US government, or any of its allies, your rights as a citizen could be extinguished.

**Basic democratic rights at stake**

There can be no more fundamental democratic right than the right to publish information, or write an article. Yet this right is precisely what is potentially abolished with the arrest and likely imprisonment of Julian Assange. US radio host Don Debar has stated that the arrest of Julian Assange has demonstrated that press freedom does not exist in the US or the EU (European Union).<sup>35</sup> US Democratic Party Presidential nominee Tulsi Gabbard tweeted that if we allow our governments to control us through fear, we are no longer free.<sup>36</sup> Speaking of Julian Assange, former British MP George Galloway wrote: “If we allow him to be incarcerated for publishing the truth, then we might as well check in behind those bars ourselves, for we will never be truly free again.”<sup>37</sup> Again and again, Julian Assange and Wikileaks has demonstrated that, in reality, there is no freedom under the rule of the US Empire. Chelsea Manning, another incredibly brave whistleblower, is currently again in prison for refusing to testify against Julian Assange.<sup>38</sup> That is, Ms Manning has volunteered to return to prison, in which solitary confinement may again be used against her, so that more blatantly illegal criminal charges may not be laid against another person. If anything, the values of Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange, on their own, condemn the global rule of Wall Street.

### **Liberals abandon Wikileaks**

Make no mistake, there would now be a mass movement to free Julian Assange if the entirety of the liberal political spectrum had not turned against Julian Assange and Wikileaks from around 2011. When Julian Assange was exposing the crimes of the US Empire during the time of the

<sup>35</sup>

<https://www.presstv.com/DetailFr/2019/04/11/593186/UK-arrest-Assange-press-freedom-expert-view> (30-04-2019)

<sup>36</sup> <https://defend.wikileaks.org/2019/04/13/press-freedom-human-rights-orgs-condemn-julian-assanges-arrest/> (30-04-2019)

<sup>37</sup> <http://fmimalta.com/truth-itself-is-behind-bars-in-julian-assanges-cell-by-george-galloway/> (30-04-2019)

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/world/north-america/chelsea-manning-sent-to-jail-for-refusing-to-testify-in-wikileaks-case-20190309-p512wl.html> (30-04-2019)

Republican George W Bush administration, he was lauded as an international hero. The moment he began exposing the Barak Obama and Hilary Clinton Democratic administration – for similar war crimes – he was dropped like a sack of spuds by most liberals throughout the Western world. In Australia, almost all ostensibly left parties washed their hands of Wikileaks when it exposed the US imperialist wars on Libya and Syria – which they backed. Their totally irrational Russophobia drove them into a right-wing critique of the Trump administration, one where they virtually demanded a nuclear war against Russia. Julian Assange, for his part, emphasised over and over that he was not a supporter of the Russian government or Donald Trump. Liberals and compromised “socialists”, therefore, bear heavy responsibility for not only the imprisonment of Julian Assange, but the current imperial overreach of Washington and Canberra.



[www.presstv.com](http://www.presstv.com)

This is the basis for the smear campaign by such liberals and self-proclaimed “socialists” against Julian Assange today. What they are attempting to do by smearing the character of Julian Assange is to excuse themselves for siding with the Pentagon against all of humanity. Australian journalist Caitlin Johnstone has performed an excellent debunking of all of the attempted smears against the character of Julian Assange, which essentially exposes the 29 of them as baseless slander.<sup>39</sup> Ms

<sup>39</sup> <https://medium.com/@caityjohnstone/debunking-all-the-assange-smears-a549fd677cac> (30-04-2019)



Johnstone demonstrates how the imprisonment of Julian Assange for the exercising of the most basic liberal democratic value – a supposedly free press – is, for liberals and the fair weather “left”, psychologically confronting.



[www.wiseupaction.info](http://www.wiseupaction.info)



[www.presstv.com](http://www.presstv.com)

Above: Hollywood actress Pamela Anderson visits Julian Assange as he sits currently in Belmarsh Prison in the United Kingdom. Pamela Anderson has frequently spoken out in defence of Julian Assange, which has put to shame almost all Australian left parties, Trade Unions, and even Julian Assange’s own Union – the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance – MEAA. Image from Huffington Post UK.

The dark reality is that the further the capitalist system descends into economic crisis, the less can it allow the trappings of the extremely limited democratic rights previously tolerated. This economic crisis, afflicting the US, Europe and Australia, then drives the reckless imperialist war threats against Russia, China, Iran, the DPRK, Venezuela and so on. It will end only when the workers are able to erect their own state and their own government, as part of an international serious of revolutions across the globe. It is urgent that working people mobilise to free Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning.



WORKERS LEAGUE

# FEDERAL ELECTIONS 2019: NO OPTIONS FOR WORKING PEOPLE FOR A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT!



Image from Oz Kiwi

*(The Workers League issued this statement in the lead up to the Australian Federal Election in 2019.)*

04-05-2019 – The Australian Federal Elections will take place on May 18. As was the case for previous elections, the cast of candidates are largely uninspiring from a working class point of view. In fact, of all the parties and candidates running, no one is taking a consistent and across-the-board position of defending the interests of working people, domestically and internationally. This goes for the mainstream parliamentary parties as much as for self-described left parties. It is another indicator that the system of private production and private profit, and its attendant political process, is a dead end for the working people of Australia and the region.

## **The fraud of “Change the Rules”**

For two years, the conservative officials heading up the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) have pushed the “Change the Rules” mantra. From the off, this has always been code for “vote Labor”. Yet the very industrial relations laws that the “Change the Rules” campaign ostensibly seeks to change were largely installed by the Labor Party when they last sat on the government benches in Canberra. The Orwellian named “Fair Work Australia” was implemented by the Labor Party, which was essentially “Work Choices Lite”.<sup>40</sup> That is, the Labor Party has hardly bothered to “Change the Rules” from the first days of the John Howard Liberal

<sup>40</sup>

[http://directaction.org.au/issue13/fair\\_work\\_australia\\_is\\_work\\_choices\\_lite](http://directaction.org.au/issue13/fair_work_australia_is_work_choices_lite) (04-05-2019)



Party government. They have no intention of doing so if elected this time. Vague promises from the Australian Labor Party (ALP) that they will restore penalty rates are a classical hot air election promise. It is put forward in order to entice workers to vote Labor, but once in government, they will give any old excuse as to why they are unable to carry it out.<sup>41</sup>

The ACTU are now, after 25 years of forcing Enterprise Bargaining on workers, saying that Enterprise Bargaining is not working, and we need to move back to industry wide agreements. Industry wide agreements would be an advance for workers, but the ACTU and their top officials were responsible for Enterprise Bargaining in the first place. The class-collaborationist Union officials also make a show about opposing the widespread casualisation of the workforce – when in practice the ALP as much as the Liberal Party has put this in place. The ALP has no real intention of changing any rules relating to the use of casual and temporary staff for private and public sector workplaces.

Conservative and nationalist Union officials are pushing “Change the Rules”, which, in the direct lead up to the election, has morphed into “Change the Government to Change the Rules”.<sup>42</sup> It’s a replay of the “Your Rights At Work –Worth Fighting For” campaign of 2006, which in the lead up to the Federal Election of 2007 became “Your Rights at Work – Worth Voting For”.<sup>43</sup> That is, vote for the Labor Party, put them in government, and they will change the rules for you. Little could be more false. The Labor Party is the alternate party of Australian capitalism, and the ALP is keenly aware of the difficulties of capital obtaining an adequate rate of

return on profitable investment. This is why in all fundamentals the Labor Party is a struck match away from the Liberal Party (Liberal National Party in Queensland). Yet workers are being inveigled, despite the similarity, to just vote ALP and hope for the best. This is a deliberate deception.

### **Ruling class limits participation**

Workers need to be aware that these elections are run for and by the Australian ruling class. As such, they are not “ours”, as much as the government is not filled with “our politicians”. Every attempt is made to prevent participation in the elections by pro-working class and/or small parties and independents. A new law was passed in March which doubled the deposit fee to \$2000 just to run in the Lower House.<sup>44</sup> The incumbent major parties obtain massive public funding for their campaigns, on top of six and seven figure donations from big business. These “donations” to the Liberal and Labor parties run into the millions of dollars, and some come from the largest corporations in the country. The officials of some Unions also divert Union member’s money into donations for the ALP.<sup>45</sup> Money politics may not be on the scale of what happens in the United States of America, but something very similar is happening here. Billionaire mining magnate Clive Palmer’s right-wing populist United Australia Party has spent \$50 million on electoral advertising.<sup>46</sup> The parliamentary set up is set against working people – but this is its purpose.

It is not only the financial cost which benefits the two major capitalist parties. The very electoral process is designed to do this also. The size of the electorates often number up to 100 000 people. A meeting of this number of people is not possible, and thus cannot convene to keep their elected

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/federal-election-2019/bill-shorten-s-penalty-rates-pledge-under-threat-20190417-p51exr.html> (04-05-2019)

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.actu.org.au/actu-media/media-releases/2019/change-the-government-change-the-rules-nationwide-protests> (04-05-2019)

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.actu.org.au/actu-media/speeches-and-opinion/greg-combet-your-rights-at-work-worth-voting-for> (04-05-2019)

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-09/zali-steggall-helen-haines-independents-australian-politics/10786984> (04-05-2019)

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/ng-interactive/2019/feb/01/political-donations-2017-18-search-all-the-declarations-by-australian-parties> (04-05-2019)

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/clive-palmer-says-he-s-spent-50-million-on-election-ads> (04-05-2019)



member accountable. Certainly a whole state – who Senators are elected to “represent” – cannot meet to discuss how their Senators have been performing. Moreover, there is no right to recall a politician once they have been elected. This, on top of the astronomical salaries paid to politicians, and permanent over-the-top superannuation payments once they leave parliament, ensures loyalty to the profit system. It is not so much a system of salaries as a form of “official” corruption.

The right to elect means little without the right to recall – which is why the ruling class does not allow it. The preferential voting system also benefits the major parties. It ensures that preferences which inevitably flow to the major parties inflate its overall count. To cast a valid vote, and to run in the elections, individuals and parties must allocate preferences – which means in practice your votes flow to the major parties which represent big capital **against** those who labour for a living. Dirty horse-trading occurs between the various political parties for each other’s preferences, and there are even some who charge “consultancy fees” to organise preferences to help minor parties get elected,<sup>47</sup> i.e., who profit from backdoor preference deals. Even if this did not occur, the main effect of the preference system is to advantage the twin parties (arguably one party) which administer the rule of the stock market.

### “Official” politics is repellant

There are approximately 60 registered political parties in Australia, both inside and outside the state and federal parliaments.<sup>48</sup> Along with a number of independents, these parties will attempt to attract the votes of the Australian electorate. Marxists, however, recognise the working class as the only class in today’s society which has a material interest in raising the living

standards of all on the basis of equality. This is due to the fact that the working class has no material interest in the system of private production for private profit. On the contrary, its interests are bound up with the social ownership and social use through labour, of the means of production – the land, banks, factories, mines and so on. Humanity steps forwards, or falls back, according to the living and working conditions of this class. Yet not one of the parties or independents running in the Australian Federal Election takes elementary and consistent positions, domestically and internationally, which defend the interests of working people.



Above: Election posters from the major parties – and the billionaire funded United Australia Party. In bourgeois elections, the major parties focus almost wholly on personalities to the exclusion of policies and what they actually plan to do. In office, those elected are virtually unaccountable for their practice. The working class is understandably repelled by this “politics”. Image from [www.adelaidenow.com.au](http://www.adelaidenow.com.au)

The major parties – Labor and Liberal, are unquestionably parties of capital. Progressive minded people may suspect that the Australian Greens are not overtly pro-capitalist, but this view is mistaken. The Greens’ focus on parliament prevents them from offering a systemic alternative. Billionaire Clive Palmer’s United Australia Party uses populist rhetoric, such as raising the old age pension by \$150 a week, but Mr Palmer also refuses to pay workers he sacked from his nickel refinery in Townsville their entitlements – despite

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/hire-me-and-get-into-parliament-the-preference-whisperer-s-message-20181214-p50mdh.html> (05-05-2019)

<sup>48</sup>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_political\\_parties\\_in\\_Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_political_parties_in_Australia) (05-05-2019)

swimming in cash. Katters Australian Party was forced to sack the racist Fraser Anning, who went on to form his own even more racist Conservative National Party. Derryn Hinch's Justice Party correctly criticises the racism of Pauline Hanson's One Nation, but allies with them on "law and order".

The bickering and fighting of the parliamentary parties and MPs are understandably a huge turn off for many working people and the downtrodden. They see it as irrelevant to their life outcomes – and to a large extent they are correct. For this is the field of *bourgeois* politics, i.e. the system which is set up to deceive working people into believing that they live in a (liberal) democracy, which is supposedly a huge achievement for humankind. In reality, the politicians and parliament are a stage on which the corporate magnates dangle willing marionettes. The real decisions about investment, what will be produced and how, are made in corporate boardrooms by CEOs and other managers on obscene salaries. The government's "public service" is linked to private industry by a thousand threads.

### Left parties inconsistent

Self-described left parties running in the Federal Election also do not live up to a basic standard which working people deserve. The Socialist Equality Party (SEP), which publishes the World Socialist Web Site, does highlight some urgent issues which need addressing, such as increasing poverty and unemployment. Yet the SEP are known as strike-breakers for their total opposition to Trade Unions. While it is true that the Unions are almost universally led by conservative pro-capitalist officials, Union members are nothing like that. Unions themselves need to be defended by all workers regardless of the sell-out officials. But the SEP dismiss Unions *in toto*, which places them on the side of the employers. In a like manner, the SEP dismiss workers' states (e.g. China, Vietnam, the DPRK) *in toto*, which places them on the side of the US state department. This is despite the SEP

holding nominal positions against the imperialist wars on Libya and Syria.



Above: A Syrian government held checkpoint in Syria. All of the parliamentarist parties left all foreign policy unmentioned during the Federal Election. They did not mention Australian government backing of the US led war on Syria, for example. Some Australian left parties running in the Federal Election had the same position as the Labor, Liberal and Greens parties with regard to the war on Syria – they propagandised for it. Workers are in desperate need of an anti-imperialist party. Image from [www.dw.com](http://www.dw.com)

The Socialist Alliance and the Victorian Socialists are also running candidates, with the Socialist Alliance teaming up with the Socialist Alternative and a number of supporters. Domestically, the Socialist Alliance and the Victorian Socialists put forward positions which align with working class interests – such as the call for more public housing, better public transport, a rise in welfare payments, and the blocking of the environmental catastrophe of the Adani mega coal mine in Central Queensland. However, it is relatively easy to put forward left-wing positions on home soil. The test for the left comes as soon as the international sphere is broached.

Unfortunately, the Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Alternative (the mainstay of the Victorian Socialists) broke irrevocably with working class internationalism by being the loudest advocates of the US led imperialist wars on Libya and Syria. For

close to ten years, both of these “left” parties openly called for regime change in Libya and Syria – which was precisely the aim of the US state department, aided by London, Paris, Tel Aviv, Riyadh and Canberra. Thankfully they were defeated in Syria by a combination of Syria, Iran, Hezbollah and Russian armed forces – with lesser backing from China. These “state department socialists” were only continuing in Syria their hostility to the anti-imperialist and non-imperialist bloc – Russia, China, Iran, the DPRK (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) and so on. More recently, these “left” parties have again demonstrated their fealty to the Pentagon by cheering on US backed regime change efforts in Sudan and Algeria. Needless to say, if a left party calls for free healthcare at home, but shells for imperialist war abroad, their left credentials are null and void.



Above: In Queensland, militant Aboriginal rights fighter Wayne Wharton ran for the Senate, on a progressive political platform. [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk)

In Queensland, some critical support could be offered to independent Senate candidate Wayne Wharton, a long-time militant Aboriginal activist. He is advocating a treaty with the Indigenous people, but also supportable positions on Aged Care, the Murray-Darling water crisis, and a livable income for welfare recipients. However the preferential voting system militates against backing

progressive independents. This election, Senate voters have to number at least 6 parties above the line, and at least 12 parties below the line. This is a means of forcing preferences (or votes) towards the major parties. In the lower house, preferences are compulsory, meaning that some votes will necessarily flow towards right-wing and fascistic small parties. On principle, no votes or preferences should flow to anti-working class parties. A political break with all of them is a dire necessity.

There are a plethora of drastic political problems which urgently need addressing. Some of these include: unemployment, poverty, unaffordable housing, unaffordable education, failing public transport, and the imminent threat of catastrophic climate change. All parties should be loudly calling for the release of Julian Assange, a whistle-blowing journalist. The increasing surveillance of spy agencies online and elsewhere is a symptom of a system aware that its people are looking for urgent change. Then there is the growing threat of nuclear war against China and Russia, led by Washington but backed by Canberra. Yet none of these issues can be addressed through the “election” process carried out by the corporate elite. This is why the Workers League is calling on workers to fulfill their legal obligation on election day, but to **cast a blank ballot in protest against the system** which upholds their oppression. What is urgently needed is a workers’ party which fights for a workers’ government. Join us!

Workers League

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# LIBERALISM AT A DEAD END: ALP LOSES “UNLOSABLE” ELECTION



Above: There was no option to vote to Stop Adani, as important as that is. Image from Shutterstock.

*(The Workers League released this statement on the day following the Australian Federal Election.)*

19-05-2019 – It’s a cliché to put forward the “Don’t mourn, organise” aphorism after a significant defeat for workers. After the victory of the Coalition (Liberal Party, National Party, Liberal National Party in Queensland – collectively the L/NP) in the 2019 Federal Elections, the working class will certainly need to double down on its organising efforts. But some crucial political lessons will need to be learnt before embarking on much needed organising.

At the time of writing, with around 75% of the vote counted, the L/NP are two seats short of forming a majority government.<sup>49</sup> They will either govern in their own right, or form a minority government with the formal or informal backing of some independents. For the Australian Labor Party (ALP),

this was a classic case of losing an unlosable election. Yet again the ALP’s “small target” strategy cost them. That is, the ALP were promising very little, if anything, which was substantially different, let alone more progressive, than the L/NP. The one progressive aspect the ALP were promising was the extremely conditional (and likely false) pledge that they would restore penalty rates which have been taken away from some workers. The ALP was perhaps expecting to limp home into government without doing much at all, because voters would naturally want to get rid of the L/NP. Even within the sphere of bourgeois politics though, unless the majority of voters are offered something substantial by the liberal side, they will stick with the status quo, or even move to the right.

## **Catastrophe of “Change the Rules”**

Working people must be clear. If the ALP had won the Federal Election, the working class would still be subjected to intense attack on all fronts – from

<sup>49</sup> <https://tallyroom.aec.gov.au/HouseDefault-24310.htm> (19-05-2019)

low wages, near starvation aged pensions and unemployment assistance, privatisation of health care, cuts to education, worsening public transport and so on. The pace and severity of the attacks may have been slightly lower than under an L/NP government, but that is all. This is because the major parties are the twin parties of Australian capitalism, which is a component part of Wall Street led imperialism. The system of production for private profit is in acute crisis in Australia, Europe, the US and Japan. This is what is driving the relentless austerity, the ongoing danger of US led imperialist wars, not to speak of the imminent danger of potentially irreversible ecological collapse – of which global warming is but one aspect.



Above: The ACTU's "Change the Rules" campaign was always implicitly about electing the Labor Party to sit on the government parliamentary benches in Canberra. As the election approached, the campaign became an explicit call to Vote Labor. The Union movement will not be able to take elementary steps forward unless it makes a complete political break from the Labor Party and all of its officials within the movement. Image from [www.anmfsa.rog.au](http://www.anmfsa.rog.au)

For two years, the top officials of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) have been running the "Change the Rules" campaign. This was always code for "Vote Labor". In fact, at a late stage the careerist officials of the ACTU changed the rules themselves – from "Change the Rules" to "Change

the Government to Change the Rules".<sup>50</sup> It became an explicit "Vote Labor" campaign. But in fact, the politically compromised ACTU officials advised not only a vote for the ALP, but also preferenced the Greens above the ALP in some states for the Senate. In other seats, the ACTU produced how-to-vote cards which preferenced the racist Katter's Australian Party and the right-wing Democratic Labor Party.<sup>51</sup> After selectively mobilising workers for two years on the vague promise that industrial relations laws could be changed by electing the ALP, the conservative officials of the ACTU, from Sally McManus down, ended up playing preference exchanges with right-wing parties! And now that the L/NP has been re-elected, the Union movement has been brought back to ground zero.

### The fraud of "Vote Climate"

The nightmare of staggering carbon emissions from the Adani mega coal mine in the Galilee Basin in Queensland triggered a wide campaign against it throughout the country. Yet the "Stop Adani" campaign was always led by operatives of GetUp! – an NGO which repeatedly denies its links to the Labor Party, yet inevitably assists them.<sup>52</sup> This was why the Stop Adani campaign stopped short of doing what was actually needed to Stop Adani – a mass action effort independent of the parliament, the government and its state. The complete opposite occurred – Stop Adani was directed entirely towards lobbying the ALP, lobbying the parliament, and lobbying the government. That is, the leadership of "Stop Adani" was committed to the political forces of capital which began Adani – and indeed all new coal developments in the country. The overwhelming majority support for halting the Great Barrier Reef destroying Adani

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.actu.org.au/actu-media/media-releases/2019/change-the-government-change-the-rules-nationwide-door-knock> (19-05-2019)

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/federal-election-2019/actu-puts-greens-ahead-of-labor-on-how-to-vote-cards-in-higgins-20190516-p51o2h.html> (19-05-2019)

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/oct/23/getup-warned-by-electoral-commission-it-may-be-associated-entity-of-labor> (19-05-2019)

mine could have stopped Adani – but for the leadership of Stop Adani.



Above: If there are any doubts about the political motivations of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC or “Baby GetUp!”) this poster should dispel them. The AYCC advertised a partnership with Ben and Jerry’s Ice Cream corporation, with both supposedly supporting the making of the Federal Election a “climate election”. AYCC push the myth that capitalist corporations can be partners in efforts to combat perilous climate change, when in fact capital itself is the main culprit. Image from [www.benandjerry.com.au](http://www.benandjerry.com.au)

In any case, an ALP government was hardly going to Stop Adani. Yet an ALP or ALP/Greens government was also the aim of the “Student Strike 4 Climate” (SS4C) actions which preceded the elections, and were geared towards them. Again, however, the student strike for climate was organised by GetUp! and “Baby GetUp!” the AYCC (Australian Youth Climate Coalition).<sup>53</sup> Hence, they organised student strikes – outside L/NP electorate offices! This could scarcely have been a more blatant vote catching exercise. This is light years away from organising against the profit system which is the prime culprit of environmental vandalism.

<sup>53</sup> <https://redfireonline.com/2019/03/13/for-real-climate-action-expropriate-capital/> (19-05-2019)

The leaderships of some Unions even boasted about linking with GetUp!, despite it being the face of the liberal elite. The conservative officials of the Australian Unemployed Workers Union (AUWU) hailed its virtual affiliation to GetUp! in its attempt to gain a much needed boost to Newstart (unemployment benefits).<sup>54</sup> To do this, it had to trample on AUWU members who so much as questioned the political compromises required for such an unholy alliance. Ironically, either internal Union democracy, or internal movement democracy, is the very thing which GetUp! and their backers cannot tolerate.

Much more needs to be analysed about this election. But the crucial lesson for workers is that all forms of liberalism – whether in the form of GetUp!, the conservative Union officials, the NGO led “environmental” movement, the ALP and others – offer no way forward. The working class can only advance by making a **political break** with all the liberal agents of capitalist class rule. Socialism is needed, but the pre-requisite is a Marxist vanguard party composed of the most class-conscious workers. The Workers League seeks to take the first steps on this path, and calls on all who agree to take part.

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[www.redfireonline.com](http://www.redfireonline.com)



<sup>54</sup> <https://unemployedworkersunion.com/join-get-up-auwus-joint-newstart-campaign/> (19-05-2019)



# ALGERIA: US FOMENTS DESTABILISATION IN AFRICA



Above: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (at right) meeting with Algerian Foreign Minister Abdelkader Messahel (at left) in Moscow, on February 19, 2018. Ties between Russia and Algeria go back to the founding of Algeria's independence, when Russia was then part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Image from [www.thearabweekly.com](http://www.thearabweekly.com)

*(Article sourced from [www.redfireonline.com](http://www.redfireonline.com))*

17-04-2019 – Algeria was one of the foremost countries of the wave of anti-colonialist liberation struggles which followed the Second World War, winning its independence from France in 1962. Today, there are both hidden and barely hidden attempts to bring Algeria back within the vice-like grip of Western imperialism. The US Empire, desperate after being defeated in Syria, and following ham-fisted failed attempts at regime change in Venezuela, is responding by doubling their bets. Anywhere they can see even half a chance at fostering and fomenting internal regime change where an independent country exists, Wall Street in all probability has contingency plans ready to roll.

To the uninitiated, waves of protest in Algeria calling on an octogenarian leader to refrain from

running in the Presidential election for a fifth time appear to be self-justified. Yet in Africa, and politics in general in 2019, things are not at all what they seem. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held a joint press conference with Algerian Deputy Prime Minister Ramtane Lamamra last month. Lavrov pointedly warned of external interference and destabilisation in Algeria.<sup>55</sup> This was a veiled reference to the US state department, delivered with trademark Lavrov diplomacy. Russia and Algeria have been strong allies since the time of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and Algeria also signed a Strategic Partnership agreement with Russia in April 2001.<sup>56</sup> More recently, in 2014 Algeria rejected a US demand to

<sup>55</sup> <https://dailynewssegypt.com/2019/03/19/russia-warns-of-external-interference-in-algeria-lavrov/> (10-04-19)

<sup>56</sup> <https://jamestown.org/program/the-broader-regional-meaning-of-russian-foreign-minister-lavrovs-maghreb-tour/> (10-04-19)

set up a military base on their soil.<sup>57</sup> Since then, Algeria has been one of the very few Arab countries to vigorously defend the Syrian Arab Republic against the US/Israeli/Saudi backed jihadist death squads which besieged them, as Algeria itself is susceptible to similar attacks,<sup>58</sup> some as spillover from the NATO destruction of Green Libya in 2011.

### **Algeria tilts towards Russia, against NATO**

Given the aftermath of NATO's annihilation of Libya, in cahoots with Al Qaeda linked death squads they armed, Algeria has found it necessary to align itself with the Russia/Syria/Anti-NATO bloc. This is the real reason for the current round of staged protests calling for "regime change" in Algeria. There are always some domestic pro-US layers of society in all countries, from liberal students to agents of small or large business classes. In this case, such elements are betraying Algeria's independence under a grossly distorted banner of "freedom and democracy". To be sure, working people in Algeria have no stake per se in the capitalist system operated by the Algerian political leaders. However, allowing Algeria to be fully open to US/NATO plunder via US backed regime change would be consonant with a return to occupation by French imperialism, i.e. it would return Algeria to a situation before its independence in 1962. To that extent, workers in Algeria and internationally need to militarily side with Algeria/Russia/Syria against the US Empire, while retaining their own organisational and political independence.

Russia, in the form of the then USSR, has backed Algerian independence since the first hours of its declaration in 1962. Yet today the alliance between Algeria and Russia to a large extent hinges on Algeria's backing of Russia's actions in Syria, where

it is still combatting the residues of the unhinged US backed ISIS death squads. Russia also appreciates the Algerian government's role in what they term the "pacification" of Libya and Mali.<sup>59</sup> That is, Algeria taking measures to prevent the further spread of the remnants of the Al Qaeda elements used by Washington to overthrow Colonel Gaddafi in Libya. These actions by Algeria are in the interests of working people across North Africa despite the politics of the Algerian government.

Further, it is not just in a tactical security bloc against US backed jihadism in North Africa where Algerian-Russian co-operation is apparent. Energy supplies are vital also. Algeria and Russia are top gas exporters, with Algeria producing 130 billion cubic metres of gas annually. 14% of this amount is exported to Europe.<sup>60</sup> Russian gas exports to Europe are also extensive, so co-operation with Algeria in this sphere is mutually beneficial. Washington, of course, views such trade and co-operation with Europe as an obstruction, and political impertinence – despite the US not being able to supply gas itself.

### **Algeria signs onto the New Silk Road**

As if to further underscore declining US economic power across the globe, in 2018 Algeria became one of the 90 countries to have signed onto Red China's One Belt One Road (also known as the New Silk Road or the Belt and Road Initiative – BRI). Algeria signed onto the BRI in Beijing itself, while attending the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.<sup>61</sup> Under the BRI, China's booming socialist economy commits billions of dollars to infrastructure development in countries along the old Silk Road. Algeria will be a part of the Maritime Silk Road, which connects China, Europe, India,

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.sott.net/article/278889-Defeat-for-the-empire-Algeria-rejects-US-demand-for-military-base> (10-04-19)

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.globalresearch.ca/algeria-on-the-edge-of-a-soft-coup/5528762> (10-04-19)

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<sup>59</sup> <https://africandailyvoice.com/en/2019/01/24/algeria-syria-and-yemen-at-the-heart-of-sergei-lavrovs-visit-to-algiers/> (13-04-19)

<sup>60</sup> [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-01/25/c\\_137771977.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-01/25/c_137771977.htm) (13-04-19)

<sup>61</sup> <https://africandailyvoice.com/en/2018/09/05/algeria-joins-the-new-silk-roads/> (13-04-19)

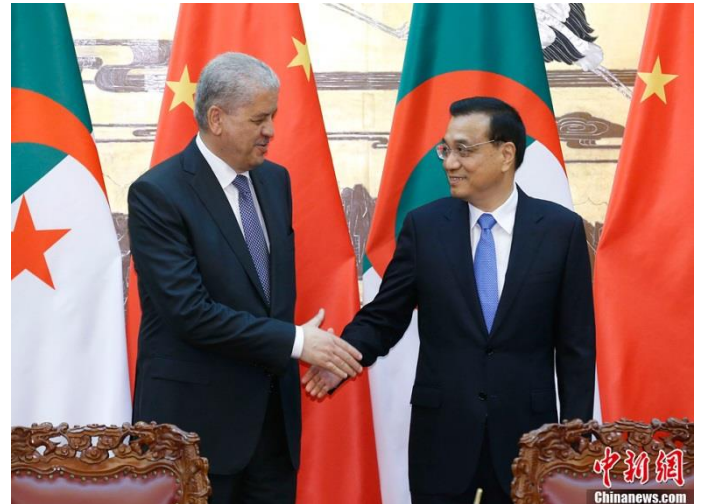
East Africa and the Red Sea states. Washington is furious at this, but is unable to prevent it. What is more, the People's Republic of China has remained Algeria's largest trading partner since 2013. 2017 figures have China accounting for \$8.3 billion of Algeria's \$45.95 billion worth of imports.<sup>62</sup>

The People's Republic of China (PRC), like the USSR at that time (and now Russia), has extensive ties with Algeria due to its assistance for its struggle for national liberation. This is not lost on the current Algerian leadership, regardless of their politics. As Guy Burton wrote:

"China's connections to Algeria go back even further. In 1958 China was the first non-Arab country to recognize the National Liberation Front and provide it with arms and funds in its struggle for independence. Following independence in 1962, China provided soft loans and other forms of assistance, including medical missions to the new government. When China eventually joined the UN in 1971, Algeria was one of the co-sponsors that proposed the resolution. Today, Algeria has one of the largest Chinese communities in Africa and the Middle East, at around 70,000."<sup>63</sup>

Such ties, forged in bonds against colonialist and imperialist struggle decades ago, are not easily forgotten. The US can fume as much as it likes, but it cannot match anything like the camaraderie and mutual backing offered by both China and Russia – in political and economic terms. The economic crisis of the capitalist US economy, however, drives it further and further into reckless military adventures, and/or, constant preparation for them. This is why Africa today is subjected to US military intervention, the arming and funding of proxy jihadist death squads, and constant backing for compromised opposition groups within African states. The aim is chaos, destabilisation and disruption, and even open war, in order to

undermine friendly relations with Russia and China. Washington will consider using any means, from using its own troops, to arming and funding Al Qaeda linked barbarians, to covert or overt backing of internal regime change "revolutions" – such as the one in Algeria today.



Above: Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal (left) meets with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in Beijing in 2015. China was the first non-Arab country to recognise Algeria's National Liberation Front during its struggle for independence. Today, China and Algeria have an extensive trading partnership as well as a strategic security pact. These trade and military ties are what the US ruling class is attempting to disrupt by fomenting civil unrest through backing a layer of pro-Western youth and students within Algeria. Image from [www.gbtimes.com](http://www.gbtimes.com)

### AFRICOM – footprint of the US Empire

AFRICOM (Africa Command) was established in 2007 as a counterpart to the US Empire's CENTCOM (Central Command) and SOUTHCOM (Southern Command). It currently shares its headquarters with EUCOM (European Command) in Stuttgart, Germany. Some US Senators have recently openly questioned why, after 10 years of "operations", the US does not have its AFRICOM headquarters stationed in Africa.<sup>64</sup> It takes some galling arrogance, even from the standards of US imperialism, to assume that they have a right to

<sup>62</sup> <http://northafricapost.com/25232-algeria-joins-belt-and-road-initiative.html> (13-04-19)

<sup>63</sup> <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/what-protests-in-algeria-and-sudan-mean-for-china/> (13-04-19)

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2018/03/13/senators-consider-putting-africom-headquarters-staff-in-africa/> (13-04-19)



permanent bases in countries overseas, and base entire military commands based on sections of the globe. Yet this is the reality of Africa today.

Even some US citizens were surprised to learn, after US troops were ambushed in Niger in October 2017, that US troops are crawling over many countries in Africa.<sup>65</sup> The reaction was one of “what are they doing there?”. To put it bluntly, they are there as an imperial occupying force – albeit one that is not advertised as such. There is some evidence that the main task of US troops across Africa is the fostering and fomenting of coups against African countries which demonstrate even half a shred of independence from the US behemoth. Today Algeria and Sudan, tomorrow Cameroon and Nigeria, and on and on it goes.

Many African countries have baulked at allowing a permanent US military base to be set up on their soil. One of the core responsibilities of AFRICOM is supposedly “stability operations” – but what is meant by this is clearly demonstrated in Algeria and Sudan in recent times. That is, not stability, but thinly veiled destabilisation, to bring down any government or any ruler not willing to play by the rules of Washington. To facilitate this, the Pentagon operates what are euphemistically termed “Cooperative Security Locations” or “Lily Pads”. Lily Pads are weapons and vehicle depots which include airfields for military aircraft as well as drones. Lily Pads have been constructed in Algeria (despite its refusal to host a US base), Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cabo Verde, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe and Togo.<sup>66</sup> It doesn’t take too much understanding of geopolitics to realise that this is an imperial occupation, which can only

serve Washington to the detriment of hundreds of millions of Africans.



Above: The US has imposed a drone base in Niger, ostensibly to rein in Al Qaeda operations. In reality, the Pentagon uses Al Qaeda and other proxies to sow chaos, and then use the chaos as justification for the insertion of their military all over Africa. Image from [www.rt.com](http://www.rt.com)

### Left parties toe Washington’s line

Seemingly oblivious to the US Empire’s troops across Africa, or perhaps because of it, some Australian left parties have been eager to put their hands up to man the megaphone for the US state department. First cab off the rank was the Socialist Alliance (SA), as an extension of its role of propagandist for US led regime change war against Syria. In Syria, SA pumped for US/Saudi/Israeli armed jihadists who were leading a mythical “revolution”, alongside secular forces which did not exist. Similarly in Algeria, SA falls for a corresponding assortment. Sam Wainwright in SA newspaper *Green Left Weekly* claims that the Algerian opposition marches have “included Islamists, people with a democratic secular outlook, the Kabylie independence movement (a Berber speaking part of the country) and the Algerian Socialist Workers Party (PST).”<sup>67</sup>

For a start, the PST is linked to the French NPA (New Anti-Capitalist Party). The NPA was notorious

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<https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/04/28/605662771/the-military-doesnt-advertise-it-but-u-s-troops-are-all-over-africa> (13-04-19)

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2018/02/26/africom-giant-waste-money.html> (13-04-19)

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/algeria-turning-point-people-rise> (13-04-19)

for calling on French imperialism to arm jihadist death squads to effect regime change in Libya and Syria. French imperialism certainly did this, and parties such as the NPA in France and SA in Australia, cheered on these atrociously dirty wars – arguably the dirtiest in history. Islamists were at the heart of the “uprisings” in Libya and Syria, and SA again hails their participation in regime change operations in Algeria. Some Berber independence groups also backed US led regime change in Syria, and “democratic and secular” opposition to the Syrian government was a fantasy.



Above: A protester in Algeria holds up a placard with a symbol calling for no fifth term for the President. The absence of demands other than that for the current government to step down are usual indicators of an effort to bring down a government or a leader, with little if any progressive political program in its place. Image from [www.politico.eu](http://www.politico.eu)

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and its “World Socialist Web Site” (WSWS), to their credit, did not back US led regime change in Syria. However, in Algeria they switch sides and fall into line with Washington. The SEP loudly criticised parties such as SA for spruiking for US led regime change in Syria. Yet they don’t notice the irony of adopting the same position – regime change backed by imperialist powers - as SA in Algeria! Will Morrow claims in the WSWS that the “...ongoing movement of the Algerian working class against the military backed regime is part of a renewed eruption of

working class struggle around the world.”<sup>68</sup> One could only believe this if it was possible to ignore the swathe of US operated “Lily Pads” across Africa, US troops swarming across many African nations, Algeria’s alliance with Russia in security and gas exports, Algeria signing onto Beijing’s New Silk Road and major trade with Red China. One would have to have to be wearing blinkers to ignore Washington’s concern about all African countries’ dealings with both Russia and China. For all rational observers, Algeria’s “uprising” is anything but pure.

To be sure, to lift Algeria and Africa finally clear of the devastating legacy of Western colonialism, socialism – the class rule of the workers – will have to emerge victorious. The current Algerian government will ultimately stand in the way of such progress. However, right now, working people in Africa and internationally have a vital interest in militarily siding with Algeria, Syria, Russia and China against the nefarious ends of US imperialism. At the very least, workers should demand that the US withdraw AFRICOM and all US troops from African soil. The sovereignty of Algeria and all African countries must be guarded, and defended in a temporary bloc alongside the non-imperialist (and anti-NATO) states. US backed coups, in such a scenario, will have little or no chance of “success”.



<sup>68</sup> <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2019/04/06/alge-a06.html> (13-04-19)



# PHILIPPINES: LIBERALS CRY FOUL AFTER CRUSHING DEFEAT



Supporters of President Duterte at a rally in Manila. Image from [www.channelnewsasia.com](http://www.channelnewsasia.com).

*(Article sourced from [www.redfireonline.com](http://www.redfireonline.com))*

25-05-2019 – The May 13 midterm elections in the Philippines delivered an unprecedented victory for the overwhelmingly popular President Rodrigo Duterte and his allies. At the time of writing, it is likely that allies of President Duterte will sweep all 12 Senate seats which were up for election<sup>69</sup>, which represents a history making effort. Virtually all mid-term elections in the Philippines run against the incumbent government – but not this one. President Duterte, first elected President in 2016, is by now the most popular President in Filipino history.

Elections in the Philippines use a unique mixed-member majoritarian system, where a part of the

legislature is elected through proportional representation and another part are elected from local districts. Unusually, candidates for the Senate compete against each other for a spot, even if they are members of the same party. This can lead to a situation where Senators transfer their political loyalties according to political developments. This partially explains how many elected members switched their allegiance to President Duterte's party PDP-Laban (Partido Demokratiko Pilipino Lakas ng-Bayan) in 2016, creating the so-called supermajority in the House of Representatives.<sup>70</sup>

## **Defeated parties claim "fraud"**

In Australia, some left parties – in defiance of their usual strident defence of "democracy" – line up

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3010065/philippine-midterm-elections-unofficial-count-shows-all> (25-05-2019)

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2019/05/13/1914710/fault-our-system-how-fix-elections-philippines> (25-05-2019)



with particularly unsavoury political elements in order to oppose President Duterte. The Socialist Alliance (SA), in its newspaper *Green Left Weekly*, retailed the claims of electoral fraud by the Partido Lakas Ng Masa (Party of the Labouring Masses – PLM). In the wake of their defeat, the PLM called for the dissolution of the Philippine electoral commission COMELEC and its replacement with an “independent” body. Independent from whom? The overwhelmingly popular President ! They bleated that COMELEC should be replaced by a “genuinely independent” body which is accountable to the people, not the President, which includes representatives of “grassroots people’s organisations, not the elite”.<sup>71</sup>

It takes some chutzpah for SA in Australia and the PLM in the Philippines to accuse President Duterte as being part of the “elite”. President Duterte’s commanding popularity amongst Filipino workers and poor masses occurs precisely because he is NOT seen as part of the elite. Certainly he is not a “trapo” (traditional politician), who for generations have been involved in direct or indirect corruption, and have come from wealthy backgrounds. President Duterte is the first President to hail from southern Mindanao, what was a poorer region in comparison to the industrialised northern Luzon region. And he is decidedly not in any way linked by any relations to wealthy Manila families such as the Aquinos. President Duterte reportedly doesn’t wear socks, and doesn’t know how to tie a necktie. He doesn’t appear to covet material wealth, and lives in a modest house. These idiosyncrasies are only just a part of why poor and working class Filipinos see him as one of their own, and back him so strongly.

It is difficult to avoid a conclusion that parties such as the PLM are claiming fraud in the elections not due to fraud occurring, **but because they lost**. They claim all kinds of voting irregularities to do with the vote counting machines, but the Philippines changed from a manual voting system to an

automated voting system in 2007 – more than ten years ago. All of a sudden, after an election in which they rail against the supposed “tyranny” of President Duterte, they suffer a huge electoral defeat – and promptly claim “fraud”. In reality, the vast majority of Filipinos endorse and support their President who has been elected with a huge majority, and do not regard him as a “tyrant” at all.

SA in Australia, and the PLM in the Philippines, despite their claims of advocating “socialism”, line up with the real elite bourgeois opposition to President Duterte. For example, the Otso Diretso electoral ticket openly fanned the flames of chauvinistic anti-communism against Red China. Otso Diretso tenders baseless claims of Chinese “imperialism” in the South China Sea, and ludicrous declarations of a Chinese “invasion” of the Philippines. They claim that President Duterte is a stooge of Beijing – for not being willing to go to war against China !! During the election campaign Otso Diretso members attempted to sail to the Scarborough Shoal in order to plant a Philippine flag – an act of blind anti-communist ultra-nationalism. They were not able to do so, having not gained permission from the Philippine Coast Guard. Instead they brought their flag-waving bigotry to the coastal town of Masinloc in Zambales.<sup>72</sup>

### Fascism?

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) join in with other left parties they usually criticise for reformism, such as SA, in denouncing President Duterte as “fascist” or using “fascistic” measures. In an article about the May 13 elections, the SEP incredibly compared the Duterte Youth to the Hitler Youth. They claim that the Duterte Youth declared in an election statement that they would “finish” those who worked with “rapist, criminal and terrorist comrades”.<sup>73</sup> The Duterte Youth are chasms away

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/philippines-election-dirtiest-decades> (25-05-2019)

<sup>72</sup> <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/08/19/otso-diretso-bets-barred-from-scarborough-shoal> (25-05-2019)

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2019/05/15/phil-m15.html> (25-05-2019)

from being a fascist youth group who are targeting “communist” youth from a right-wing standpoint. They are certainly nationalist, and backers of President Duterte.<sup>74</sup> However, the armed “communist” groups in the Philippines are Maoists, rather than “communists”. This means they display no solidarity, and in fact engage in bitter enmity, with the Chinese workers’ state. In the context where it is the US state department which is provoking China in the South China Sea, and even attempting to use ISIS to destabilise President Duterte, it is the Maoists and the liberal “socialist” groups which form a right-wing bloc, rather than the Duterte Youth.

Liberals in the Philippines and internationally also use the label of “fascist” to describe President Duterte’s use of the police force in order to combat the drug problem in the Philippines. They use the universal “human rights” card in order to whip up a largely false scare campaign against President Duterte’s war on drugs. But this reeks of hypocrisy, especially when the campaign is backed by such fronts for US imperialism as Human Rights Watch (HRW).<sup>75</sup> HRW is the very same US state department backed organisation which prosecuted Washington and Riyadh’s barbaric war for regime change against Syria over the last 8 years. HRW repeatedly referred to Al Qaeda and ISIS elements as “rebels” fighting a supposedly just cause – when in fact they were death squads carrying out regular atrocities.

President Duterte’s war on drugs takes no prisoners, certainly. But it is a war against the drug dealers and the drug pushers, not those who become addicts as a result. And what the liberal opposition cannot dispute is that despite what seem to be harsh police measures, the majority of Filipinos recognise the problems hard drug prevalence was causing, and back Duterte’s stern measures to deal with the problem. Many Filipinos

now recognise that the streets are safer at night, now that the heavy police measures have scared off many of those involved in the drug trade. Some employers are grateful, because some employees were telling them they didn’t want to go home late from work at night, for fear of being accosted by the drug pushers, some of whom were the tricycle drivers themselves.<sup>76</sup>



Above: US backed NGOs and their international backers complain of “human rights” abuses during President Duterte’s harsh measures against illegal drug pushers. Yet they don’t mention the fact that many drug pushers and users have voluntarily surrendered to the police, to avoid being taken in a police raid. Here, some drug pushers and users have surrendered to the police in Makati, and made a pledge not to use or sell methamphetamine. Image from [www.news.abs-cbn.com](http://www.news.abs-cbn.com)

From any objective analysis, let alone a Marxist one, President Duterte’s administration cannot be described as “fascist”. Fascism means a precipitous environment where a capitalist ruling class has decided to dispense with the normal trappings of “democracy”, and forcibly disbands opposition – most especially trade Unions, socialist and left parties. Nothing of the sort is occurring in the Philippines. Liberals and fake left parties, combining with ruling class opposition to Duterte, are labeling something “fascist” out of desperation.

<sup>74</sup> <https://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/03/06/17/voice-of-change-a-closer-look-at-the-duterte-youth> (25-05-2019)

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/tag/philippines-war-drugs> (25-05-2019)

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/2179753/his-silent-supporters-philippines-president-duterte-man-who-can> (26-05-2019)

This is because despite their hosannas to “democracy”, they are loathe to admit that in fact it is they who are in a minority, and the majority is behind the President. What is in fact occurring is that the domestic and international critics of President Duterte – such as the PLM in the Philippines, SA and SEP in Australia – oppose the Philippine government *from the right*.

### **Sinophobic and Russophobic opposition**

Today’s New Cold War includes Sinophobia (fear of China) and Russophobia (fear of Russia). Both are forms of racism and anti-communism, even despite the overthrow of socialism in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) through capitalist counter-revolution in 1991-2. Reformist left parties in Australia, the Philippines and internationally are united with US backed NGOs and mainstream liberals in their bitter hostility to anything which approaches real socialism. Or, for that matter, political independence from Washington – which Moscow demonstrates in spades. This is why their political positions, despite denials, line up with the Pentagon and Wall Street. President Duterte, on the other hand, is immune from the illness of Sinophobia and Russophobia, and like many others, can see the declining economic and political power of the former “sole superpower”.

As a nationalist, Duterte is seeking what he sees as the best way forward for the Philippines. China’s gigantic socialist state backed economy is rising so rapidly that it is offering trade and investment partnerships to neighbouring and regional countries of mutual benefit. The US former hegemon is not in any position to offer anything remotely comparable, so its influence in the Pacific is waning. Duterte recognises this, and positions the Philippines to take advantage of it – and is denounced as a “Chinese agent” by the opposition. Worse than this, the liberal opposition castigate Duterte for taking measures to **avoid a war** with China! Hence, in the same way in which Obama and Clinton liberals in the US condemn US President Trump for avoiding a war with Russia,

the liberal pro-US opposition condemn Duterte for avoiding a war with China. If there is any indicator that liberals (and fake “socialists”) in practice work for the opposite of the very values they claim, this is it.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the new parliament in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Duterte stated: “I am being criticised about the South China Sea. Am I prepared to go to war? I am not. Will we win the war? No. It will just create a massacre. I would lose my soldiers and policemen. If you attack China, its closest missile will hit Manila in seven minutes. Those fools want me to... We can’t do anything about it. That’s how it is. The United States will help???”<sup>77</sup> Not only is President Duterte determined to avoid a war with China (provoked by US imperialism); he is determined to ensure that the Philippines takes advantage of China’s economic largesse.

President Duterte has thus signed the Philippines up to Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, or New Silk Road). At the recent Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing, President Duterte inked a deal which would see China inject 12.2 billion US dollars into the Philippine economy.<sup>78</sup> Rather than conflict with China in the South China Sea, a deal was struck in which both the Philippines and China will cooperate to explore and utilise resources in the area. One can see how news of this would be received in Washington. In return, Washington politically and materially aids fronts posing as NGOs to in turn mount campaigns against the “tyranny” of President Duterte. Dutifully, reformist left parties follow suit.

If this wasn’t enough to cause consternation in the Oval Office of the White House, President Duterte has also tilted the Philippines towards Russia. Trade ties with Russia have been increased, with the Duterte administration actively enabling the Philippines-Russia Joint Commission on Trade and

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<sup>77</sup> <https://eurasiafuture.com/2019/04/01/duterte-completely-rejects-war-against-china-and-calls-for-further-cooperation/> (26-05-2019)

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[https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d774e79497a4d34457a6333566d54/share\\_p.html](https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d774e79497a4d34457a6333566d54/share_p.html) (26-05-2019)



Economic Cooperation (JCTEC).<sup>79</sup> In addition, for the first time in history, the Philippines and Russia have engaged in military cooperation, in areas of international defence and security. Last month, Russian warships docked in Manila for a four-day friendly visit in what was the latest round of military cooperation.<sup>80</sup> This took place under President Duterte's "friend to all, enemy to no one" approach to international relations. This means that while the Philippines will not ditch the traditional relationship with the US (somewhat fractious at times due to US colonial history in the Philippines); non-traditional allies will be sought and engaged. All of this sounds normal to rational people. Unfortunately, in an era of the decline of US economic and political power, Washington and their liberal allies are scarcely rational.



Above: Under President Duterte, the Bangsamoro region now has its own regional parliament, as part of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. (BARMM) This move has helped win Muslims in the region away from extremist Islam, which then fuels separatism. This is another move which has so far eased armed conflict in the region, which may close off an avenue through which the US state can further aid jihadist groups in their efforts to destabilise the Philippines. This does not necessarily mean that the BARMM will adopt pro-working class measures, however. Image from [www.bangsamoro.gov.ph](http://www.bangsamoro.gov.ph)

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.dti.gov.ph/exports/1071-main-content/moscow-news/11957-philippines-and-russia-follow-through-jctec-and-pv-initiatives> (26-05-2019)

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1478236/world> (26-05-2019)

## Defend Filipino sovereignty

There are other areas where the Duterte administration breaks new ground. President Duterte seeks a Pan-Philippine federalism, where areas such as the Muslim south can take part as equals. To this end, the Bangsamoro region now has its regional parliament. He has sought to integrate Muslim Filipinos into the national dialogue, and win them away from extremism. President Duterte has also emphasised the freedom of religion which is guaranteed by Filipino law. The practical effect of this has somewhat undermined the authority of the Catholic Church in what has historically been a deeply Catholic country. To be able to confront the power and influence of the Catholic Church in the Philippines, without losing overall popularity, is a measure of the depth of support President Duterte commands.

Nevertheless, the aim of socialism is workers' power in the Philippines, the Asia-Pacific and beyond. To this end, Marxists in the Philippines should remain in a temporary bloc with the Duterte Administration, while continuing to recruit to their own banner. This would take account of the popularity of the President, while seeking to forge the vanguard party needed to advance socialism internationally. Marxists internationally need to tread the line between defending Filipino sovereignty and striving for revolution.

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# SUDAN: US PLOTS FURTHER BALKANISATION



Above: In response to US backed sedition, the Sudanese army deploys outside its headquarters in Khartoum. [www.scmp.com](http://www.scmp.com)

(Article sourced from [www.redfireonline.com](http://www.redfireonline.com))

19-06-2019 – Corporate media throughout the world is flush with news of a “democratic uprising” in Sudan. Apparent activists on the ground claim a “revolution” is on the verge of removing a “dictatorship”. Those with keener insight, however, can easily see that there are very sinister forces behind the demonstrations in Sudan, and that the chaos occurring once again across Africa can only be orchestrated by the forces of US imperialism. A new “Scramble for Africa” (of sorts) is taking place, but over one hundred years after the last one, this time the imperialist powers are not competing against each other, but uniting as a bloc against the non-imperialist powers. *What is taking place in Sudan today is not a “revolution”, but a proxy hybrid war waged by Washington against Beijing and Moscow.*

## US drives the Balkanisation of Sudan

Little more than 18 months ago, now ousted President Omar Al-Bashir stated in an interview that the Sudanese government was informed that the US desire is to divide Sudan into five parts if they are unable to obtain protection.<sup>81</sup> As a result, at the time Sudan requested the advanced S-300 anti-aircraft missile system, as well as SU-30 and SU-35 fighter jets to be purchased from Russia. The SU-35 is the fighter jet which, with its superior capabilities, was used to great effect by Russia in effectively eliminating ISIS from the ground in Syria, and defeating the US-led regime change war. The information about US government plans to further Balkanise Sudan are eminently believable, given the fact that the US government was the key

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.rt.com/news/410932-us-wants-divide-sudan/> (19-06-19)

player in the partition of Sudan,<sup>82</sup> which created a new state – South Sudan, but led to immense suffering and destructive conflict since its beginning in 2011.

While the long running conflict in Sudan seems intractable, in reality it is fueled not only by the US government, but also by the governments of Britain, France and the entire European Union (EU). It is these imperialist powers which are the main architects of the conflicts in South Sudan and Darfur, with the training, arming and financing of militias opposed to the Sudanese government.<sup>83</sup> When conflict erupts, they lay all blame for the resulting violence on Sudan's forces, while moving in to secure energy resources for themselves – particularly oil. If anyone has any doubts about the participation of the US and EU governments in the current "democratic uprising" in Sudan, the visits by US and EU consular officials to the protesters' sit-in in Khartoum should dispel them. None other than US Charge d'affaires Steven Koutsis personally dropped in to the sit-in outside the Defence Ministry.<sup>84</sup> When the US state department approves and assists your protest, it's not hard to smell a rat.

### **Necessary alliances with China and Russia**

Protesters in Sudan may have any number of legitimate grievances. And indeed, the actions of Omar Al-Bashir's government in sending troops to aid the Saudi Arabian monarchy's genocidal war on Yemen can only be condemned. However, Sudan under Bashir was at the same time strategically tilting towards Russia for military security, and towards China for economic development. Given the fact that the US Empire cannot offer either of these, Sudan has little choice. Washington knows

this, and this is what is driving its plans for ongoing chaos and instability in Sudan, at any price. War, communal and ethnic conflict, destabilisation – all of this devastation can only benefit the US ruling class. For one thing, it will make it extremely difficult for Red China to deliver any infrastructure to Sudan which can only assist its economic development. For example, Chinese companies are involved in a planned 7500 kilometre railway from Port Sudan on the Red Sea to Dakar in Senegal on the Atlantic, crossing Chad, Nigeria, Niger, Bamako and Mali.<sup>85</sup> Nothing disrupts railway construction like war and political unrest – something in which AFRICOM (Africa Command – the US military across the African continent) specialises.

China's socialist economic power is the reason it is able to offer mutually beneficial trade and much needed infrastructure development to all African countries, including Sudan. While Russia is not socialist per se, it remains independent of the US, and it contains unrivalled superiority in military technology – partially as a hangover from the days of the Soviet Union. With Washington bent on fostering the expansion of ISIS throughout Africa, as in Syria, it is only Russia who can offer effective prevention.<sup>86</sup> Washington and its allies, including the Zionist Israeli state<sup>87</sup>, will stop at nothing to prevent cooperation between Africa and Beijing and Moscow. This includes fomenting false "democracy movements".

Regardless of the actions of the Sudanese government, or the current Transitional Military Council (TMC), working people in Sudan and internationally risk everything by being manipulated by the forces of a US Empire which is willing to gamble with global nuclear war (against China, Russia, Iran) to prevent losing the status of

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<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/07/us-played-key-role-in-southern-sudans-long-journey-to-independence/241660/> (19-06-19)

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.globalresearch.ca/the-balkanization-of-sudan-the-redrawing-of-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/22736> (19-06-19)

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.globalresearch.ca/military-opposition-forces-reach-agreement-sudan-tensions-persist/5677597> (19-06-19)

<sup>85</sup> <https://schillerinstitute.com/blog/2017/12/04/china-investiert-einen-transkontinentalen-bahnkorridor-afrika/> (19-06-19)

<sup>86</sup> <https://eurasiafuture.com/2019/06/08/daesh-is-spreading-all-throughout-africa-and-only-russia-can-stop-it/> (19-06-19)

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-africa-12987245/sudan-accuses-israel-over-port-sudan-air-strike> (19-06-19)



world's only superpower. Left political forces in Africa need to demand the withdrawal of AFRICOM from their continent, while welcoming economic assistance offered by China, and the military protection offered by Russia. The presence of AFRICOM troops increases the chances of chaos – as that is their brief. Workers need to reject the constant threat of war and economic malaise which is virtually all the private profit system currently offers, in Africa or the West. At the same time it is important to maintain political independence, and seek to forge genuine Marxist parties which safeguard the interests of the working people of Africa, Eurasia and beyond.

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*AFRICOM: GET OUT OF AFRICA!*

# HONG KONG: US FUELS RIGHT- WING SEDITION

*(Article sourced from [www.redfireonline.com](http://www.redfireonline.com))*

23-06-2019 – In recent months, Hong Kong has been subjected to demonstrations which ostensibly push for elementary democratic “reforms” which, if attained, will prevent the extradition of those charged with crimes to “mainland” China. The Western corporate media has, true to form, presented these protests as being “pro-democracy”. Yet little could be further from the truth. In reality, the contrived unrest in Hong Kong is yet another attempt by US imperialism and its allies to prevent the integration of Hong Kong into the People's Republic of China (PRC), through the backing of openly right-wing and often pro-colonial elements – some of whom seek a return to British imperial rule.

The corporate media description of the protests in Hong Kong – reportedly up to a million on the streets on June 9 – as “pro-democracy”, turns reality on its head. From 1843 until 1985, under British rule, there were NO elections of any kind. It

was not until 1995 that elections of all positions in the legislative council took place.<sup>88</sup> Hong Kong was officially handed back to China in 1997, where the Hong Kong “Basic Law” was implemented – basically an agreement between the British government and the PRC to enable the return of Hong Kong which was seized by the British Empire during the time of the Opium Wars. Since that time, the 1949 socialist revolution in China overthrew capitalist rule, and ended China's “century of humiliation”. Capitalism remained, however, in British administered Hong Kong.

## **Hong Kong “activists” funded by NED**

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was set up as a front of the notorious CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) in the early eighties, after news of CIA involvement in blood soaked military coups became known. Today, the NED openly funds the misnamed Solidarity Centre and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs in Hong Kong.<sup>89</sup> Despite years of fact-free accusations against Russia for “meddling” in the 2016 US Presidential Election, Washington directly funds right-wing provocateurs in Hong Kong who seek to prevent Hong Kong's re-integration into the culture it had been a part of for thousands of years. More than this, the US state department is seeking to retain capitalism in Hong Kong, as a means to undermine and prevent socialism in China from becoming even more economically and politically powerful than it is today.

The recent demonstrations in Hong Kong stem from the “Umbrella Revolution” in 2014, which was transparently backed by Washington, and it even led to the founding of a political party almost entirely backed from US shores. The “Demosisto” party in Hong Kong was launched in 2016 by 19 year old Joshua Wong, with no explanation as to why someone with almost no political experience

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<sup>88</sup> <https://www.liberationnews.org/what-is-happening-in-hong-kong/> (23-06-2019)

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.ned.org/region/asia/hong-kong-china-2018/> (23-06-2019)

could fund a party from out of nowhere.<sup>90</sup> Yet it had already been apparent that the West was financing and politically backing proxy forces in Hong Kong. In 2015, Freedom House held an event marking its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary by honouring three generations of “democracy” activists in Hong Kong – Martin Lee, Benny Tai and Joshua Wong.<sup>91</sup> These “Occupy Central (Umbrella movement)” leaders were all beneficiaries of funding from those such as Hong Kong media mogul Jimmy Lai. The Apple Daily head had slipped a cool HK \$5 million the Hong Kong Democratic Party – whose founding chairman is none other than Martin Lee.<sup>92</sup> Can anyone imagine the outcry if Beijing created and funded an opposition party, in say, California? Or if Russia created and funded an anti-US party in Florida? Yet the opposite happens in relation to Hong Kong, but all the Western “democrats” remain silent.

### Minor legal changes

The actual changes that are being proposed by Hong Kong’s legislature are relatively minor and probably should have been enacted as a matter of course years earlier. The bill is formally known as The Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019. It emerged as a result of a case where a pregnant woman was murdered in Taiwan and the perpetrator fled to Hong Kong to avoid being charged, as there is no extradition treaty between Taiwan and Hong Kong.<sup>93</sup> Despite being part of China, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) still has separate extradition arrangements with different countries. In effect, the protestors in Hong Kong today are protesting to prevent a murderer from facing trial. If the bill does not pass as a result of the protests, future murderers and others accused of serious crimes

could flee to Hong Kong from other countries, and they would never face any form of justice. To paint these protests as benign and “pro-democracy” flies in the face of even bourgeois justice, let alone “democracy”.

To be sure, some in Hong Kong have legitimate grievances against the government, but they are more to do with the difficulties involved in finding affordable housing, work which is not exploitative and so on. Yet such issues do not aim to be addressed by the current Western backed protests – indeed they may worsen them. For all of their “democratic” rhetoric, these protests seek to retain the system of production for profit in Hong Kong, under the guise of warding off “authoritarianism” from Beijing. They do not wish to join with the rest of China in building a predominantly publicly owned and planned economy, which does not primarily run on the basis of production for profit. In fact, the publicly owned means of production on the basis of the workers’ state which emerged out of 1949 lays the basis for an economy which produces for human needs and jobs for workers as a first priority.

In reality, the current political leadership in China should abandon their pledge to retain capitalism in Hong Kong for 50 years after 1997. The fact that the West is now openly backing sedition in Hong Kong against Red China is more proof that agreements with Western governments will not ultimately be respected by imperialism. A more important goal for them is to prevent the rise of China’s gargantuan socialist state backed economy which is rapidly propelling it to the status of number one world superpower. Without endorsing all of the politics of the government in Beijing, workers internationally need to defend China and Hong Kong against the nefarious moves by US backed fronts to cut away its component parts. The interests of workers coincide with rising China, not with the fading but still dangerous US Empire.

<sup>90</sup> <https://journal-neo.org/2016/04/18/hong-kong-gets-new-us-backed-party/> (23-06-2019)

<sup>91</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/event/75th-anniversary-special-event-honoring-three-generations-hong-kong-democracy-activists> (23-06-2019)

<sup>92</sup> <https://journal-neo.org/2014/11/07/occupy-central-s-dirty-money-dirtier-leaders/> (23-06-2019)

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 1.