

RED FIRE

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WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!



A bushfire burns through the Adelaide Hills in December. Image from www.abc.net.au

RISE AGAINST THE CLIMATE COLLAPSE!

(The following is the text of a leaflet distributed by the Workers League in Brisbane on December 20, 2019, at a rally called in response to the climate emergency sweeping Australia. At the time of writing, Prime Minister Scott Morrison was holidaying in Hawaii, while large parts of the country were beset by unprecedented bushfires.)

20-12-2019 – The climate collapse is no longer only the content of Hollywood disaster films, but is a lived reality. Australia, the driest continent on earth, is burning alive, and Sydney is being blanketed in smoke and ash which is hazardous to human health. Last Monday, the Climate and Health Alliance released a statement declaring the

smoke haze covering Sydney to be a public health emergency.¹ The statement urges New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Prime Minister Scott Morrison to show leadership and implement measures to alleviate the climate and health crisis. The Liberal Party of Berejiklian and Morrison is stacked with climate deniers, but in reality, ALL government parties and politicians have failed to act on the urgent necessity of climate collapse over a period of some 40 years. Labor and the Greens call for climate action *in words* but they are bound to the same parliaments as the Liberals and Nationals at whom they wave cardboard swords. And these parliaments are but appendages of the rule of the privatised banks and finance capital, set against working people and those without property.

RED FIRE is the publication of the Workers League.

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

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

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One part of a system in crisis

Ecological breakdown is now so severe that it is a clear and present danger to the survival of humanity. The sheer volume of carbon emissions also threatens to cause catastrophic malfunction of the basic ecosystems needed to sustain most animal and plant life. As serious as it is, workers need to be aware that the collapse of a habitable

environment is **but one** symptom of the crisis of capitalism, which is linked to other major crises. It is linked to the lowest real wages in history, to the rampant wage theft of countless workers. It is linked to the attempt to illegally collect large but completely false “robodebts” from welfare recipients. It is linked to mass unemployment, unaffordable housing and thus relentless increases in the number of homeless people. It is linked to never-ending attempts by all governments to restrain what remains of workers’ Unions. It is linked to the shredding of basic democratic rights and civil liberties. It is linked to the repeated imperialist wars and attempts at regime change against any country deemed too independent from Washington. It is linked to the insane provocations by Washington, Canberra and London against Russia and China, which if triggered could mean an unavoidable World War III.

There are alternatives to this nightmare scenario, provided the working class is able to produce leadership which corresponds to their interests. The greatest illusion is that a cross-class climate movement, a movement of “everyone” is the way forward. Such movements of “everyone all together” is precisely what has led to the current political impasse. The “climate strikes” of recent times have mobilised millions of people, but they have only passed on plaintive pleas to the very self-serving politicians who have a *material interest* in sitting on their hands. After 40 years of inaction, after 40 years of dire warnings from the world’s climate scientists, it is clear that these politicians will not act. The bushfires razing Australia currently, and the stark indifference from state and federal politicians is the clearest indicator that the unaccountable elite are no longer fit to rule. PM Morrison is currently holidaying in Hawaii ! This is why it is fruitless for

¹ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/no-safe-level-pollution-labelled-a-public-health-emergency-20191215-p53k5d.html> (16-12-2019)

working people to demand these governments act. They are not “ours”, but are paid functionaries of a class alien to the basic interests of workers. Placing demands on these government hacks recognises their “authority” and, in turn, demoralises and disempowers workers, leading to more confusion and despair.

Working class political leadership is crucial

Instead of pleas for the government of the corporate class to provide free face masks to ward off bushfire smoke, what is urgently required is a political leadership which can inspire and arouse working people to take matters into their own hands. A cross-class climate movement which mobilises hundreds of thousands, but then waits powerlessly for corporate politicians to come to their aid does little but assist hand-wringing about how bad things are. The fact is that the world’s capitalist ruling classes, in Australia as elsewhere, would prefer to see the world burn one thousand times over rather than lose a fraction of their wealth and power. They may have their own children, but their material interest of preserving their capital over-rides even family ties.

While political activity which urges action on climate makes a contribution, a climate movement which attempts to be agnostic on the question of capitalism vs socialism will remain trapped in contradiction. The socialist overturn of private ownership of the means of production is no automatic guarantee that the planet will be able to save humanity from extinction, but without it there is little chance. It is impossible for class society to only “take action” on climate change, and leave all other forms of exploitation untouched. A climate movement which confines itself within the parameters of a for-profit economy will not be able to get past first base.

An urgent transition to zero-carbon energy sources, using all available methods to draw

carbon out of the atmosphere, to the reversing of soil degradation, to the cleaning out of the seas of plastic and other pollution – *none of this can be begun while private capital retains its ownership rights*. Paraphrasing Karl Marx, “despotic” inroads into the rights of corporate property are the first step towards not only a society fit for working people, but also to a safe climate. The forging of a Leninist vanguard party to lead this struggle is not only an overarching goal, but a critical and immediate task.

To begin, we urge agitation around the following demands:

1. A SIX HOUR DAY

2. PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF THE BANKS, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

3. A WORKERS’ GOVERNMENT

WORKERS LEAGUE

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Above: These Koalas were rescued from the Cudlee Creek bushfire in South Australia. Animals as well as humans are losing their homes to the climate change fueled fires. Around 600 homes have been lost around Australia in December. Image from news.com.au

LETTERS, COMMENTS...

On Extinction Rebellion

By Sam Bullock

I would highly recommend that the left steer clear of Extinction Rebellion. They have no class politics whatsoever but are clearly based on the objective of radical green liberalism. They do not use their objective ideologies for the working class. Part of their ideology is to not name individuals when taking action. Yet actions which do not name names let the corporations off the hook, when they are the ones clearly responsible for runaway climate change.

As Australia is a plutocracy, there are no parties of “liberal democracy”. Australia is more like a mining lobby groups which has the Liberal Party in its back pocket. The Liberal Party won the last election due to these lobby groups backing them, and yet Extinction Rebellion have the strategy of appealing to the social conscience of politicians who have none. Extinction Rebellion call for the media to “tell the truth” on climate change, when the fact is the media in Australia is owned by the plutocratic Murdoch and Packer families. This corporate media has no interest at all in ever publishing the truth on climate change, as their class interests demand the opposite.

As communists we must hold the ruling class accountable to the truth, but we live in a plutocracy not a democracy and so it is a complete waste of time and effort to lobby politicians, especially after the victory of the Liberal Party. These politicians have not even blocked the Adani/Carmichael mega coal mine. A true movement for climate change is needed and that’s why we need a communist climate council. We

cannot rely on the capitalist system to fix its own problems. The cause of dangerous ecological destruction, runaway climate change and global warming is the capitalist system itself.

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

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

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XR: FALSE FRIENDS OF A SAFE CLIMATE



Above: Extinction Rebellion host a protest in Brisbane. Image from www.youtube.com

(Article sourced from www.redfireonline.com)

15-12-2019 – Australia is on fire. During November, even before summer began, raging bushfires razed parts of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. New South Wales was the worst hit, with six people losing their lives, and over 600 homes destroyed.² It is undeniable that the fires have been fueled by catastrophic conditions related to the drought conditions, which in turn are related to the rise in temperatures due to global warming. Carbon emissions from fossil fuels are the main culprit, a fact effectively denied by all Australian governments to date – which not only have failed

to act, but enabled the acceleration of carbon emissions, through the approval of new coal mines. What is particularly alarming about this year's bushfires (they now happen every year) is the occurrence of rainforests burning – something previously thought to be impossible.³

Climate action, however that is defined, is a dire and urgent necessity. The question is **what type** of climate action should be taken, and by whom. Into this breach has stepped Extinction Rebellion (XR), with XR activists in Brisbane organising and calling for a shutdown of the Go Between Bridge on December 13, during morning peak hour.⁴ XR effectively claim that due to the recent bushfires,

² <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/nov/22/australia-bushfires-factcheck-are-this-years-fires-unprecedented> (01-12-2019)

³ <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/why-are-our-rainforests-burning> (01-12-2019)

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/events/481665399120050/> (01-12-2019)

their hand has been forced, thus they are impelled to shut down business as usual. Yet XR's misguided attempts to attract attention to the need for climate action may very well lead to even less climate action than current conservative governments and corporations are doing now – which is almost zero.

Working people need to be won to climate action

The most counter-productive effect of blocking major bridges in peak hour is that working people, the overwhelming majority of whom support climate action, could be turned away, and even turned against climate activism if they find themselves blockaded on the streets by people waving the XR insignia. The careless attitude of XR towards working people getting to work or going about their daily lives exposes XR's anti-working class tactics. Anti-working class **tactics** flow from anti-working class **politics** – something XR demonstrate in spades. Their open support and backing for the police who arrest them at actions is but one expression of this. Their reporting of some fellow “rebels” to the police for pickpocketing – who were subsequently subjected to immigration checks⁵ - is another.

Many in the climate movement, such as it is, demand a cross-class climate movement, even if they don't use such terms. That is, they imagine that everyone from all social classes (workers, small business owners, capitalist magnates) can all work together on climate because “everyone” is affected. The climate movement is different, they claim, from a workers' struggle for improved conditions, so it is not an “us and them” scenario. This is radically false, but XR exemplify this, being a classical movement of the despairing petty-bourgeoisie. It is an elementary Marxist tenet that the petty-bourgeoisie (small business owners, start-up entrepreneurs and so on) cannot **lead** and

independent struggle against capitalism, by virtue of their class position. Some layers of this class can be won to an anti-capitalist struggle for socialism *under certain conditions and for certain periods*. But essentially it is only the working class which has a material interest in the overturn of the private ownership of the means of production – the main source of the imminent climate danger.

Thus it is imperative that working people be won to climate action. Yet the XR cavaliers do not even aim at winning the majority of working people to climate action, let alone leading them to a struggle for the public ownership of the means of production. In fact, XR are priests of anti-socialism. Irrespective of their rhetoric about a “toxic system”, they see little wrong with capitalism, just that it is led by the wrong people – the politicians in parliament. Replace these politicians with those who are prepared to “do something”, and the climate problems can be addressed, or so they imagine. Attempting to solve inherently social political problems with individual solutions is a hallmark of the world outlook of the small proprietor.

The right to protest is limited under “liberal democracy”

XR's lack of a class analysis feeds their stunning naivete of the nature of the capitalist state. The right to protest under capitalism is a result of a historical balance of class forces between labour and capital. It is not an absolute right that the establishment is bound to uphold. It can be taken away at any time the ruling class feels the balance of class forces tip in its favour. That is, when they sense that the working class will not (yet) act to prevent the ruling class increasing its power over them. Already, XR in Brisbane have played with fire by repeatedly disrupting traffic, resulting in the Palaszczuk Labor government passing “anti-

⁵ <http://gal-dem.com/this-is-what-extinction-rebellion-must-do-to-engage-with-people-of-colour-on-climate-justice/> (01-12-2019)

protest” laws. In fact, these laws only ban lock-on and similar devices,⁶ but they could well empower police to expand their “stop and search” powers.

XR protested the introduction of these laws, seemingly oblivious that their actions themselves had provoked the ruling class into putting them in place. If XR continue to defy the bourgeois state without the majority of the working class actively (or at the very least passively) backing them, the ruling class could well decide to ban all climate protest altogether. This may lead to a banning of **all** protest, and a return to days similar to the Civil Rights movement in Queensland in the late 1970s, when former National Party Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen banned street marches. It is possible that a Labor or Liberal government could enact such a ban, because the majority of the working class right now does NOT endorse the appalling tactics (provocative bridge and road blockades) of XR *even at the same time as they understand and support the need for climate action.*

XR are entitled to put forward whatever their ideas are in amongst the climate movement – or what passes for it currently. If they wish to argue for mindless traffic blockades, they are welcome to do so. However, like every other political organisation or group, they must be subject to a critical appraisal of their tactics and their proposals by all concerned, and most especially by working people. XR must not be allowed to monkey with the right to protest under capitalism. At this stage, workers cannot afford to lose that right, as temporary as it might be under bourgeois democracy. If this occurs, next to no climate demands will be put forward, and thus no “climate action”. And XR will be to blame.

Intelligentsia for climate?



Above: Extinction Rebellion (XR) hold a street art style funeral, pining for the impending death of humanity due to catastrophic climate change. While street theatre is a necessary part of political movements, XR’s overt focus of this and similar actions reveals its liberal aims in appealing to the “powers that be”. The aim should be to mobilise working people, even if “all” are affected by ecological breakdown. Image from www.buzz.ie

As if to underscore their commitment to the political rights of the middle classes, XR in Brisbane have organised a “Graduation March” specifically appealing to “graduates, academics and professionals”. XR bill this as a supposed action where emerging professionals will declare they will not sit idle while the climate crisis looms, but will “approach their lives with the health of the planet at the forefront of their minds”.⁷ Decked out with academic gowns and mortar boards, this spectacle march is no doubt intended to show that young graduates are “woke” with the urgent need for climate action. It is true that XR is not a political party per se, but XR defends the rights of the petty-bourgeoisie arguably better than a real one. Elementary Marxism, however, stresses that the educational institutions of any society are always controlled by the class which holds state power. Right now in the Western world at least, capital

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<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/queensland/dangerous-protest-devices-banned-as-laws-pass-queensland-parliament-20191024-p533vs.html> (01-12-2019)

⁷

https://www.facebook.com/events/767281987070381/?active_tab=about (07-12-2019)

rules, and therefore their Universities will ultimately reflect the interests of its benefactors.

While it is true that some genuine dissidents emerge from the halls of Universities, as a general rule academics will ultimately justify the rule of capital, even if only because their income is dependent on a state stipend. Here, though, XR is also encouraging young people with University degrees to become small-business owners, as consultants, private practice physicians, marketers and so on. These new professionals will carry on the “business as usual” that XR crows about the need to stop – but this will presumably be *enlightened* small business as usual. Business as usual “for the planet”, that is. Needless to say, small business engenders big business. The professionals who engage in small capitalism spontaneously engender big capitalism, but it is the *entire* capitalist system which must be overturned if we are to have a chance of preventing ecological collapse. No matter how aware highly trained professionals are about the need for climate action, the very process of privately owned business seeking private profit grates against it.

The urgency of the climate crisis requires not millions of small businesses competing with each other (and with big business) to increase their market share, but public ownership of the means of production, and state ownership of industry, banking, finance, telecommunications, transport – so as to serve the needs of *workers*, not small proprietors per se. A single economic plan needs to be drawn up, which uses all available resources for economic goals and priorities decided upon by working people themselves. In other words, a government of workers’ councils administering a

workers’ state. Social production must be brought into correspondence with social ownership. In the transition from climate destroying capitalism to socialism, some degree of small enterprise may be required – but this would need to be strictly controlled, to prevent the re-emergence of capitalism. Professionals and academics will also be required, not for careers in themselves, but to build a society without exploitation of labour and the environment.

XR remain silent on imperialist war

Small business, on its own, is always nationalist, and therefore pro-imperialist. The petty-bourgeois XR strut like bulls on parade, in an ostentatious display of their supposedly progressive credentials. Yet with one mention of imperialist war, and XR reveal themselves to be downright reactionary. At the height of the ultra-violent US/UK government backed pro-capitalist Blackshirt terror in Hong Kong, some representative of XR openly claimed to be using “Hong Kong” style tactics for the climate. We perhaps should be thankful that, so far, XR have not emulated the anti-socialist and US flag waving Hong Kong separatists to the extent of setting people on fire, beating up bystanders who disagree with them on the street, burning and destroying train stations, or using bows and arrows to fire on police. The last one might be too much even for the pro-cop XR.

From pillar to post, XR remain dead silent on the US war machine, even as it has gone into overdrive in the last ten years. It has become mainstream news that the US military emits more greenhouse gases than **140 countries**.⁸ The US global military empire uses more ships, trucks, bombs, cargo

⁸ <https://www.newsweek.com/us-military-greenhouse-gases-140-countries-1445674> (12-12-2019)

planes and other materiel than any other, all literally fed by fossil fuels – with the possible exception of nuclear powered aircraft carriers. Washington has occupied Afghanistan, invaded Iraq, bombed and destroyed Libya, and waged internecine war on Ukraine and Syria over the last 17 years. This has been backed to the hilt by London, Paris and Canberra, amongst others. Imperialist war is, needless to say, devastating for the environment, and not just in terms of carbon emissions. Yet XR’s lips remain sealed. The potential world war machinations of Washington and the West against Russia, China and Iran also merit not a word from the pontiffs of XR. Here, silence really is consent.



Above: Extinction Rebellion (XR), for all of their vocal activism calling for immediate action on climate change, do not offer a word on the other major catastrophe which has the potential to end human civilization – global nuclear war. XR’s silence on the political provocations of Western imperialism (the governments of the United States of America and the European Union) against the non-imperialist powers (Russia and China) are revealing. XR’s silence on the potential for major wars to be launched by the very governments they are urging to “take action” on climate change, strongly indicates their overall support for such governments. They may despair about these government’s inaction on climate change, but nevertheless unite with them against “the enemy”.

It may seem a contradiction that some parties that call themselves socialist – such as Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance – remain card carrying members of XR despite XR’s avowed anti-socialism. XR allow these parties to take part in their actions *because they agree* on the “need” for imperialist war against China, Russia, Syria, Iran the DPRK (North Korea) and so on. The twin SAs may complain about war in general, but they loudly back US led destabilisation attempts in Hong Kong, Sudan, Algeria, Lebanon, Iraq, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Cambodia, Myanmar and on and on. Needless to say, the governments preparing imperialist wars and imperialist backed subversion cannot be allies in the need to take action on climate change!

Public ownership key

Life threatening climate collapse is here now – only a few inconsequential cranks now deny the need for climate action. Unfortunately, XR build dangerous illusions in the very political and economic system which is the largest driver of extreme climate. Despite their seeming appearance as radicals, XR still limit themselves to placing demands on “the government” which they imagine is “ours”. XR reject the very element which has the possibility of saving us from extinction – a socialist revolution. Without the public ownership of the major means of production – the banks, strategic industry, transport, telecommunications, road, rail and port infrastructure – linked to a planned economy based on priority decisions made by workers themselves, “climate action” is impossible. Workers need their own government, and their own state, which would seek to link internationally with all workers across the globe. With the corporate magnates expropriated, the vitally important work of reversing climate catastrophe, imperialist war and economic collapse can begin in earnest.

XR THREATEN WORKERS' DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS



Above: An Extinction Rebellion (XR) activist hangs the XR insignia from the William Jolly Bridge. Image from the Gold Coast Bulletin

(Article sourced from www.redfireonline.com)

20-10-2019 – The Queensland Parliament's determination to fast track laws designed to impede climate protests are potentially a dangerous precedent. Even though they are ostensibly aimed at preventing climate blockaders from using "dangerous devices",⁹ they could quite easily be used for much more. These moves are a response to the provocations of Extinction Rebellion (XR), who have repeatedly organised actions including the deliberate disruption of peak hour traffic in order to supposedly raise awareness about the urgent need for climate action. While there is little or no debate amongst working people that urgent measures to address the potential climate collapse are desperately needed, the majority are overwhelmingly opposed to the

tactics of XR. Workers keenly feel that obstructing working people going about their daily lives is not the right way to push a political issue – even one as important as climate distortion.

Class nature of the state

While it is true that Australian Labor Party (ALP) Premier Palaszczuk has provided no evidence that XR protestors have included dangerous devices such as butane gas in lock-on equipment, XR has clearly given the capitalist state the ammunition it needs to potentially pass laws criminalising all protest activity. The right to protest under capitalism is a right fought for and hard won, but as with any concession the ruling class allows the workers, it can be taken back at any time. Even conservative Union bureaucrats, who should be

⁹ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-09/extinction-rebellion-protest-brisbane-annastacia-palaszczuk-laws/11585826> (20-10-2019)

organising a working class intervention into the climate movement, are aware that the Queensland anti-protest laws could very easily be used against any political action taken by workers and their Unions.¹⁰ Such anti-protest laws are unlikely to be confined to Queensland, and could spread fast across Australia. XR, with their misguided zeal, could be responsible for the removal of the right to protest about anything, let alone the climate.



Above: While blocking traffic, XR put forward one of XR's key demands - for the government and the media to "tell the truth" about the science of climate change. They don't appear to acknowledge the irony of condemning the system which is administering inaction on dangerous climate change, and at the same time appealing directly to the very arms of that system. The key is to help workers' understand that the current government is not "ours" at all, but an apparatus defending capital's interests. Likewise, the corporate media is welded to the state of capital by a thousand threads, which is why it does not report the direct "truth" on climate change. Credit: Gold Coast Bulletin

XR effectively claims that it is "neither left nor right" politically and is therefore ambivalent on the question of capitalism and socialism. Anyone or any group claiming to be "non-political" while taking political action, inevitably comes down on the side of conservatism. At this stage of history –

at least in the West – this means defending the capitalist for profit mode of production, with all of its attendant superstructure. XR do not deny it, and often openly dissuade any participant in XR actions from raising even anti-capitalism, let alone socialism. This is "off message", according to them. This is an emergency, they say, and questions about politics and capitalism and socialism must "wait" until later. But "later" never comes.

In Queensland history the state does have a past of removing democratic rights to protest. The National Party Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen did just that in the 1970s, banning the right to march. In practice, this gave the Queensland police the authority to smash up ANY protest action, not just marches. A heroic Civil Liberties campaign had to waged to restore the basic right to protest in Queensland. This was eventually won, but it took a determined struggle over a number of years which involved mass street fights with police, mass arrests, and eventually the intervention of Unions on the side of the protestors. At that time, protestors had to put their bodies on the line to regain what should be an elementary democratic right under capitalism. Today, XR, through their wildly misinformed and provocative actions, risk bringing the full weight of ruling class down against the entire working class, not just themselves. If this happens, the memory of XR being responsible for the removal of the very limited democratic rights workers have under the rule of capital, will be burned deep. This risks turning workers away not only from the issue of the climate emergency, but from the very idea of activism and protest itself.

Appeal to workers, not politicians

XR's class basis is petty bourgeois. Small time capital owners, by virtue of their class position, try

¹⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/oct/11/queenslands-proposed-anti-protest-laws-a-slippery-slope-to-suppress-unions> (20-10-2019)

to steer a path between the workers and that of big capital. In practice however, this is not politically possible. There are only two decisive classes involved in production – labour and capital – and therefore only two decisive classes in politics. The petty-bourgeois XR imagine, falsely, that they are not political *per se*. Yet this is exposed as soon as their anti-socialist, and therefore anti-working class, basis becomes known. The working class, NOT the petty bourgeoisie, is the only revolutionary class under capitalism, because only it has NO material interest in the maintenance of the private ownership of the means of production. The petty-bourgeois XR wants to solve the climate crisis without touching on the question of socialised or privatised production. Since this is not possible, they fall on the side of the corporate magnates, despite themselves.

This is the basic reason why XR appeal to the capitalist politicians to “take action” – even while recognising that these same politicians have done little or nothing for 40 years about climate distortion. But XR, as patriotic petty-bourgeois elements, have nowhere else to go. The working class, on the other hand, can rely on its own strength, its own organisation, and its own political leadership – even if this has not yet been created. Proper working class leadership would appeal to workers to mobilise and take action to win urgent demands ***against and in spite of the capitalist state*** (especially their politicians), NOT by grovelling to them. This is because ultimately the working class needs to establish its own government and its own state – in the process of overturning capitalist rule, and initiating the collectivised and planned socialist order.

¹¹ <https://metro.co.uk/2019/10/17/angry-commuters-drag-xr-protesters-off-tube-try-glue-10933003/> (20-10-2019)

To begin this struggle, the working class needs its bourgeois democratic rights NOW – they cannot afford to have them taken away by the misguided individualism of XR. Some workers have already turned against XR adventurism, such as those at Canning Town in the UK who physically turned against XR protestors who were attempting to stop peak-hour trains.¹¹ XR can consider themselves lucky that this is not even more widespread. Workers can be won to the necessary activism for climate and social justice, but by inspiring them, not annoying them. Working people, not politicians, can provide hope.

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XR: THE FAUX REBELLION



Above: An Extinction Rebellion (XR) organised “die-in”. Image from AAP

(Article sourced from www.redfireonline.com)

07-10-2019: Extinction Rebellion (XR) are hitting the streets again, with a week of action throughout major cities in Australia – their so-called “Spring Rebellion”.¹² We are in a climate crisis, they claim, and the time for action is now. Almost no one disagrees. Yet in reality XR are not leading a “rebellion” and they are not, in the final analysis, “rebels”. To be genuine rebels would mean to stand opposed to the profit system – the domination of privately owned capital over social labour and over the environment. The XR charlatans make no pretence of opposing even

one corporation, let alone the system which allows corporations to freely pollute the land, sea, air and water humanity requires for life on earth. XR, and their semi-religious self-righteousness, need to be exposed.

From politics flow tactics

Those who place demands on the capitalist state, in the same manner as any politician or any liberal, or any lobby group, cannot be described as “radical” in any way. XR are making repeated demands for “the government” to “do something”. The same politicians who have

¹² <https://ausrebellion.earth/get-involved/spring-rebellion> (07-10-2019)

overseen climate destruction despite repeated and ongoing warnings, can now, XR aver, be made to change their spots if only we – disrupt business as usual. XR whine that we have had years of marches and rallies, for no result. There has been no result so far because almost all climate politics has remained within the sphere of liberalism – plaintive cries to those in power. Despite XR adopting slightly different **tactics**, the **politics** of XR remain just as liberal, if not more, than those that have preceded them.

XR imagine that by changing the **tactics** of climate protest, the politics will follow, and demands will be met. XR have things precisely upside down. The politics are paramount, and if the politics are sharp enough, the tactics themselves become less important. Yet XR's politics are woefully inadequate – even if the aim is to wrench a few small reforms from the capitalist state. XR are not anarchists per se, but they share the petty-bourgeois political approach of anarchism, which is shared with all elements of the petty-bourgeois “democracy” – the Greens, some intellectuals¹³, small business owners and centrist “left” parties. Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin, more than a century ago, wrote...” The philosophy of the anarchists is bourgeois philosophy turned inside out. Their individualistic theories and individualistic ideal are the very opposite of socialism.”¹⁴

XR's bourgeois philosophy turned inside out is revealed as soon as one tracks the corporate and capitalist government links of its spiritual founders Gail Bradbrook and Farhana Yamin.¹⁵ Granted, many of those attracted to XR actions do not themselves have high level links to government or the corporations they act for. XR, however, is simply appealing to the government – which under

capitalism, is a “government of persons”. Whatever criticisms XR may have of all politicians for not “doing something” about climate collapse, they still firmly believe that the capitalist government is “theirs”, or indeed, “ours”. This reflects a purely petty-bourgeois outlook, which cannot see outside their class position.

Due to their class position, the petty bourgeoisie is incapable of coming to a position of class independence from big capital. That is why they are not able to **politically** lead a struggle against the capitalist system. This role must be played by the working class and its special historical product – the Marxist vanguard party. But XR are not only light years away from socialism – they occupy a different universe to the working class. Hence their arrogant disregard for working class folk who may be blocked in traffic by a disruptive XR stunt. Working class people – many of whom overwhelmingly support urgent action to address the climate calamity – should not be prevented by self-appointed XR scions from driving to or from work, picking up their children from schools, or trying to go about their daily lives. Workers certainly can be won to supporting political action to address climate distortion – up to and including strikes against corporations and “their own” government – *if they are given the opportunity to discuss and decide on the tactics of the movement in which they take part.*

Workers must lead and decide

Yet this is precisely what XR denies the working class – or anyone else. XR explicitly deny the right of anyone who takes part in their actions to question their principles, their positions, their politics or their tactics. XR refuses, point blank, to work alongside other climate activists. Sure, they

¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/sep/20/we-declare-our-support-for-extinction-rebellion-an-open-letter-from-australias-academics> (07-10-2019)

¹⁴ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1905/nov/24.htm> (07-10-2019)

¹⁵ <https://redfireonline.com/2019/08/07/whats-wrong-with-extinction-rebellion/> (07-10-2019)

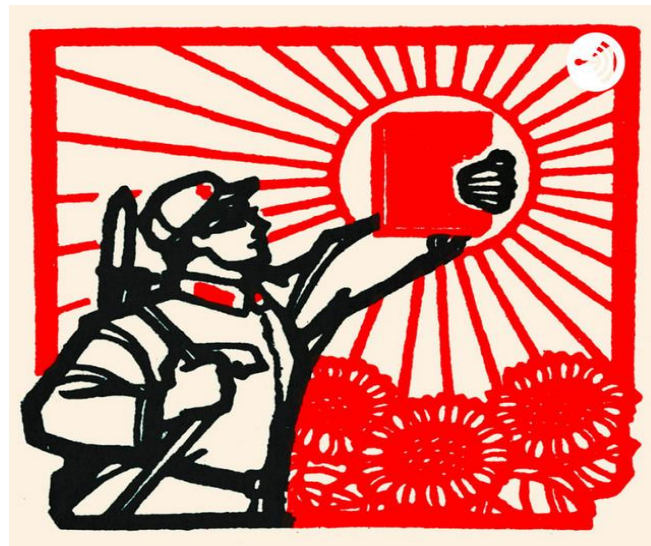
attend things such as the Climate Strike to wave their flag. But once XR is holding an action, ALL participants must subordinate themselves wholesale – in brain and body – to the high priests of XR. No one is permitted to question the framework of activity, its direction, or to question XR's holy principles.¹⁶ Each one of these principles, at their core, is wholly compatible with capitalist imperialism – which is why XR expressly deny the right of socialists to question them. Anyone or any group proposing anything in politics must have their positions examined by the workers – no one is above criticism. XR is no exception.



Above: Police make an arrest at an XR called protest. XR believe that mass arrests are part of what causes social change, and thus encourage it. They view the police making the arrests as just those who are “doing their job”. This demonstrates the basic misunderstanding of the capitalist state of many liberals. The capitalist state is not a neutral arbiter between workers and employers, between labour and capital, or between protestors and the government. It is the armed body which represses the working class, to ensure it does not challenge its subordinate status to the billionaire class which holds effective power. XR climate change activists may not be mistreated badly when arrested, but the same cannot be said for indigenous people, homeless people, and workers on strike. Image from www.crikey.com.au

In fact, XR must be criticised for one of its deadliest shortcomings – its support for the police of the capitalist state. Although some XR members and branches claim that they do not support the cops, it repeatedly returns to the surface. Recently XR VIC attempted to prevent XR members from calling cops “pigs” as they arrested one of their organisers.¹⁷ XR's strategy of mass arrests first, which supposedly leads to political change, is a galling example of their base misunderstanding of the class nature of the capitalist state. Again though, the petty-bourgeois class does not have to face the cops too often in battle, unlike workers on strike, or Aboriginal people. Largely white middle class XR leaders can cope with being arrested, held for a few days and released. This is even their aim.

At the least, workers need to reject those who claim infallibility on climate protest tactics and aims. XR must be forced to argue their positions inside the climate movement like everyone else – there should be no special exceptions. There, workers should counter the lobbying of compromised politicians by putting forward such demands as: a 30 hour week with no loss in pay, an end to coal mining and the collective ownership of the means of production.



¹⁶ <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/about-us/> (07-10-2019)

¹⁷ <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/xr-vic-debates-stance-police-friend-or-foe> (07-10-2019)

IRAQ: DEADLY CHAOS THROUGH SUBVERSION



Above: “Protestors” in Iraq set fire to the Iranian consulate in Najaf. Violent terrorism against those who have defied US imperialism during their war on Syria demonstrates the reactionary character of the “uprising”. Image from Al Masdar News

(This article was current at the time of writing. Since then, the Iraq “uprising” has tailed off, but the imperialist forces behind it continue to manoeuvre against Iran-Iraq-Syria-China co-operation for their collective security and economic benefit. www.redfireonline.com)

13-10-2019 – It’s a familiar pattern. In a region where the US led Cold War against Iran is reaching fever pitch, protestors take to the streets of Iraq supposedly to demand an end to corruption and action on unemployment. Once again it is claimed that the “movement” is leaderless and is composed of youths disenchanted about their future prospects. If you have seen this movie before, don’t be surprised. Sudan, Algeria, Hong

Kong, Russia, China, Venezuela – all of these have sustained attempts at internal destabilisation in recent times, and all of them can invariably be traced back to one source – Washington.

In recent years, Tehran and Baghdad have been forming increasingly close ties, much to the chagrin of the US Empire. The US waged a criminal war which slaughtered at least 1 million Iraqis from 2003 on, in an attempt to undermine the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since that catastrophe, and the gradual withdrawal of US troops, Iraq and Iran have naturally forged closer ties for security and economic reasons. Now, Tehran is viewing the deadly protests as an attempt to drive a wedge between them and the Iraqi government. Iran’s state news agency IRNA publicly suspected the recent riots were the work of the governments of

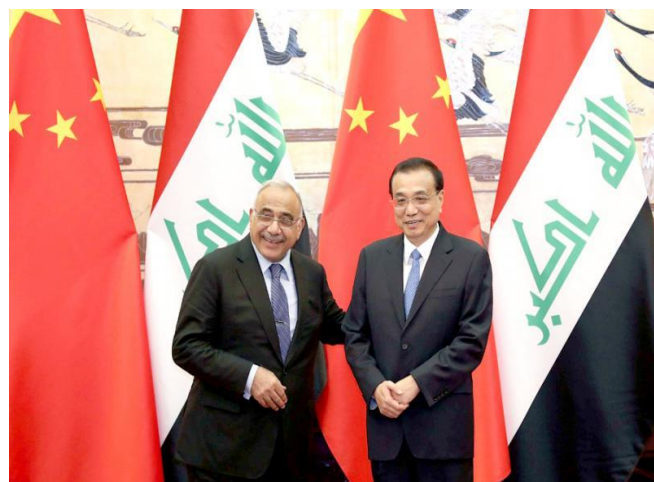
the United States, Saudi Arabia and Israel, and were an attempt to dislodge recent co-operation between Iran, Iraq and Syria.¹⁸ The defeat of US imperialism in its war for regime change against Syria has only diverted similar attempts to neighbouring countries, and others who refuse to bow before the waning influence of Wall Street.

Burning of government buildings, snipers on roof tops

Current Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi is at pains to point out that Iraqi people have a right to protest, and even agrees that corruption and unemployment are issues that need to be addressed. But his office is also concerned that outside forces are once again taking advantages of economic grievances to advance a totally different agenda. “Protests” where 8 members of the security forces perish, and government buildings are torched causing infernos, are plainly aimed at violent destabilisation, if not regime change. Some party buildings were also reportedly razed to the ground by the fires. Mysterious snipers on roof tops appeared, as if out of nowhere. They apparently shot at the protestors¹⁹, and it is likely at government security forces as well. This deadly ploy played out in the Ukrainian “Maidan uprising” in 2014, where pro-US proxy forces, carried out shootings of protestors – not the Ukrainian security forces.²⁰ It is not unreasonable at all to suspect that a similar reoccurrence took place in Iraq over the last week.

Why would Washington be so displeased with Iraqi Prime Minister Mahdi as to launch a cookie cutter colour “revolution” against him? PM Mahdi declared the Israeli state responsible for the destruction of five warehouses of the Iraqi security forces. He opened the crossing at Al-Qaem

between Iraq and Syria. He expressed a desire to purchase Russia’s advanced anti-aircraft S-400 missile system. He gave a \$284 million dollar electricity deal to Siemens – a German company, rather than a US one. He also rejected the US’s “Deal of the Century” which will likely permanently end the legitimate rights of Palestinians.²¹ But this is only just for starters.



Above: Former Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi meets with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in Beijing in September, 2019. The ongoing trade and co-operation between Iraq and China is a major concern for US imperialism, which is one reason for the contrived and ultra-violent “protests” provoked in Iraq in October. Iraq has willingly signed onto China’s Belt and Road Initiative, and has engaged in an “oil for reconstruction” deal. Only socialist China is in a position to offer this to developing countries, as the US and Europe remain mired in recession. Image from The Arab Weekly.

Ties to Red China expand

Iraq was one of the first countries to sign up to the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) historically unprecedented Belt and Road Initiative (BRI or “New Silk Road”). The BRI is a massive network of ports, railways, roads and industrial parks which will attract trillions of dollars investment, and will

¹⁸ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/iran-sees-iraq-unrest-plot-undo-bilateral-ties-191008052830021.html> (11-10-2019)

¹⁹ <https://www.france24.com/en/20191004-iraq-protests-abdul-mahdi-cabinet-reshuffle-violence-baghdad-curfew> (11-10-2019)

²⁰ <https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-03-14/who-were-maidan-snipers> (11-10-2019)

²¹ <https://www.globalresearch.ca/us-iran-silent-war-transformed-iraq-uprising/5691311> (11-10-2019)

link Asia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East.²² The US simply cannot accept being eclipsed even by an imperialist rival, let alone an upstart socialist power! The clincher was a visit by Prime Minister Mahdi to the PRC in September, which culminated in the signing of huge trade and investments deals in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on September 23.²³ In May this year, Chinese Ambassador to Iraq Zhang Tao stated that trade between Iraq and the PRC had exceeded 30 billion dollars in 2018, where China is the largest trading partner of Iraq, and Iraq is the second largest oil supplier to the PRC.²⁴ This staggering amount of trade, combined with the overt willingness of PM Mahdi to be a part of the New Silk Road, is reason enough in itself for the CIA to send in its operatives.

As if this wasn't enough, in the recent trip to Beijing, the Iraqi delegation signed an "oil for reconstruction" deal. Under this deal, Chinese firms will work in Iraq in exchange for 100 000 barrels of oil per day.²⁵ And this deal stretches out for 20 years! The US, with its capitalist economy seemingly in terminal decline, is not in a position to cover anything near what the PRC can. And even if it somehow could, the for-profit basis of imperialist industry means it would not be considered. The PRC's economy, despite whatever inroads of free enterprise which have been allowed, does not primarily run on the basis of production for profit. The investments that the PRC makes through the Belt and Road Initiative and other mutually beneficial bi-lateral deals it makes with countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa, are primarily *socialist state investments*. This does not mean that there aren't occasions where privately owned PRC firms cash in, or even mistreat those they deal with overseas. Overall, however, the PRC's gargantuan economic success

derives from its predominantly public ownership of its means of production, and thus must be defended by workers internationally.

Working people have no stake with the nefarious ends of the US Empire, whether it be dangerous and reckless war provocations against Russia and China, or the intense propaganda against states deemed to be not sufficiently pro-US. Workers also have an interest in opposing and exposing, US led regime change efforts wherever they occur, such as the current unrest in Iraq. When socialism is victorious on a world scale, the concept of regime change will be considered a relic of a violent past.

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²² <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/iraq-to-join-china-s-belt-and-road-project-11935462> (11-10-2019)

²³ <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/09/iraq-china-economy.html> (11-10-2019)

²⁴ http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/06/c_138036250.htm (11-10-2019)

²⁵ <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/10/iraq-china-india-oil-construction.html> (11-10-2019)

COLOUR REVOLUTION STALKS LEBANON



Above: Protestors in Lebanon block roads to prevent traffic flow, and cause disruption. Image from Al Jazeera.

(Article was current at the time of writing. Since then, US air strikes on Iranian supported militia in Iraq appears to have confirmed the contention that these demonstrations were an auxiliary to imperialist moves against Hezbollah and Iran. www.redfireonline.com)

10-11-2019 – Lebanon has the distinction of being one state where almost all domestic issues are automatically international. Any political movement which arises there is automatically intertwined with the Middle East and further

afield. The protests sweeping through Lebanon over the past four weeks are no exception. While the catalyst was ostensibly a “WhatsAppTax” – a tax applied to phone app communication technology which is widely used, the demonstrations occurring have much more to do with the US Empire losing its footing after the (not at all total) pull-out of troops from Syria. There is no denying that Lebanon suffers from an economic malaise similar to the decline of capitalist economies in the West. Lebanon has no potable water supply, functioning public transport, and sporadic garbage collection.²⁶

²⁶ <https://www.globalresearch.ca/lebanon-revolution-without-revolutionary-ideology/5693597> (10-11-2019)

Nevertheless, the current protests display disturbing signs of being co-ordinated from abroad.



Above: The extreme saturation of Lebanese flags during the protests in Lebanon is likely to be a sign of a US backed colour revolution. If the protestors were really “anti-government”, why would they proudly display the very same flag that the government flies? It is likely that many were drawn in by legitimate grievances, such as a lack of jobs and garbage collection. Yet imperialist forces know very well how to manipulate such demands to pursue a regime change agenda. Image from www.thereference-paris.com

Veiled move against Hezbollah

Lebanon’s Islamic based national resistance movement Hezbollah played an undeniably heroic role in the US/Saudi led war for regime change on Syria. Hezbollah’s military wing actively assisted Syrian, Iranian and Russian forces in the defeat and expulsion of imperialist funded ISIS and Al Qaeda mercenaries. It is primarily for this reason that foreign forces – the prime suspect being Washington – have organised the current demonstrations in Lebanon which are effectively

calling for regime change. In practice, it is a regime change operation aimed at Hezbollah, even though Hezbollah is not actually the regime! While Hezbollah’s political wing does retain some seats in the national parliament, its primary political power does not reside there. Its popularity also stems from its role in the military defeat of the Zionist Israeli state’s attacks on Lebanon in 2006. This is of course another reason why the Pentagon would like to see them sidelined.

Hezbollah’s leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah initially voiced support for the protests, even at the same time as warning that they could be used to “create a political vacuum”. He warned rally participants that their efforts could well be hijacked by certain political actors and/or foreign forces.²⁷ This soon came to pass, and subsequently Nasrallah signalled that Hezbollah was withdrawing its support for the protests. Reportedly at one recent rally in Lebanon, fist fights broke out against some who were chanting against Hezbollah Leader Nasrallah, after he warned that (unspecified foreign forces) were exploiting the protests to plunge the country back into civil war.²⁸ Few other conclusions can be drawn from the nature of the demonstrations, when, for example, roadblocks with eerie overtones of road blocks set up by the right-wing pro-US Hong Kong separatists emerge.²⁹ Not only roadblocks, but human chains have also been set up by Lebanese protestors³⁰ – a classical colour revolution tactic, from Hong Kong to the countries of the former Soviet bloc. Needless to say, colour revolutions – “internal” regime change efforts organised and funded by imperialism - are often the last resort of Western capital, especially after its defeat in Syria.

²⁷ <https://www.globalresearch.ca/color-revolution-lebanon/5693606> (10-11-2019)

²⁸ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/protests-in-iraq-and-lebanon-pose-a-challenge-to-iran/> (10-11-2019)

²⁹ <https://www.telesureenglish.net/news/Lebanon-Protesters-Step-up-Roadblocks-to-Keep-Pressure-on-Govt-20191028-0003.html> (10-11-2019)

³⁰ <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/lebanon-s-protesters-keep-anti-government-revolt-alive-by-blocking-roads> (10-11-2019)

Linked to moves against Iran, via Iraq

The staged protests in Lebanon are not only aimed at Hezbollah, but also against the Islamic Republic of Iran – and similarly for its heroic role in the defeat of US/UK/FRA/AUST imperialism in Syria. The Iranian state has supported Hezbollah for some time, although the extent to which it does remains unclear. Simply for regional security against the ongoing threat of US imperialism, Iran is justified in cultivating allies in the region. Likewise in Iraq, Iran's security can only be guaranteed by good relations with the government of Iraq, which came about as an unintended consequence of the US led invasion and overthrow of Iraq from 2003. Given that recent demonstrations in Iraq featured the protestors banging their shoes against posters of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the formidable leader of the Iran's Revolutionary Guard elite Quds Force Qassim Soleimani, Iran's fears appear to be confirmed.

The Lebanese Communist Party (LCP) appears to have played a treacherous role, in defiance of anything "communist" or even progressive. Despite some moves to target the banks for the declining economic situation³¹, the LCP has given overall backing to the contrived movement³², despite its rather obvious links to imperialist efforts to destabilise and even reverse the result of the war on Syria. It is extremely dangerous for any self-described party of the left to come behind the political manoeuvres of imperialist forces, even inadvertently. By doing so, the LCP demonstrate that the hammer and sickle they brandish as a party symbol is, at the least, misappropriated.

Irrespective of its defeat in Syria, US imperialism has not scaled down, but scaled up, its regime change operations in the Middle East and

elsewhere. This time it is using internal (political destabilisation) rather than external (arming of barbaric mercenaries) methods. This must be opposed by working people in Lebanon, Iraq and internationally. Despite the governments of Lebanon, Iraq, Iran and Syria not approaching workers' states, the left should call for the military defence of them against US imperialism. This includes Hezbollah and Iranian Revolutionary Guard, **despite** the socialist view of the role of religion in history. Marxists need to continue to recruit to their own banner, while striving to derail US backed colour revolutions, and to undermine international political support for them, wherever they appear.

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Above: Protestors in Lebanon form a "human chain" across the country from north to south. Such tactics are usually an indication of infiltration by US government backed NGOs or similar forces. The tactic was used in the anti-communist "revolutions" in the Baltic countries, and more recently in the reactionary Blackshirt movement in Hong Kong. SG News

³¹ <https://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2019/Oct-13/493420-communist-party-protests-economic-situation.ashx> (10-11-2019)

³² <https://peoplesdispatch.org/2019/10/21/in-lebanons-streets-there-is-no-longer-any-fear/> (10-11-2019)

RELEASE JULIAN ASSANGE!



(The following is the text of a statement released by the Workers League, joining worldwide efforts to ensure the release of Julian Assange, the founder of Wikileaks. His health is failing due to inhuman isolation for prolonged periods of time in confined spaces. Basic and elementary democratic rights are at stake, as well as the well-being of Julian Assange and his friends and family.)

10-12-2019 - The life of Julian Assange, the founder of Wikileaks, is in extreme danger. At stake is not just the well-being of Assange himself, but the very right to political dissent. Detained in

Belmarsh Prison in the United Kingdom (UK) where it is likely that he will be extradited to the United States (US), his health is failing due to the inhumane physical and psychological conditions of deprivation to which he has been subjected. On November 22, 80 medical doctors wrote to the UK government voicing their grave concern that Mr Assange could die before his farcical “trial” is set to take place. The letter has been sent to the Lord Chancellor, the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Justice.³³ The deliberate denial of medical care, at the very least, is a flagrant breach of basic medical ethics. It also makes a mockery of

³³ <https://consortiumnews.com/2019/12/05/doctors-intensify-pressure-on-britain-over-assange/> (08-12-2019)

noble sounding declarations of a “democratic” society.

Julian Assange and Wikileaks are guilty of nothing. Supposedly under capitalist “liberal democracy” all citizens have the right to engage in political discourse, have the right to free speech, the right to publish and distribute information, and the right to question how revenue collected for taxation is spent. The governments overseeing Western imperialism – the US, the UK, Australia and others – clearly breach virtually all the rights of citizens piously claimed by its defenders, when push comes to shove. Right now, Western imperialism is in a state of perilous decline due to yet another capitalist economic downturn which has lasted for the last ten years. In this condition, capitalist governments are in the process of removing the basic democratic rights many imagined were guaranteed. The whistle-blowing of Julian Assange and Wikileaks proves the opposite.

Canberra loyal to Washington

Born in Townsville, raised in northern New South Wales, Julian Assange is as Australian as can be. Yet his Australian passport has almost no meaning, given the appalling lack of action from the Australian government. In December 2018, Australian consular officials apparently met briefly with Julian Assange while he was still effectively held in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. This was reportedly the first contact with Mr Assange in six years.³⁴ Incredibly, the Australian government released a statement on May 31 this year, claiming that the appropriate level of consular assistance and health concerns had been raised and addressed during two visits to Julian Assange in Belmarsh Prison.³⁵ Even if these visits did take place, Canberra is lock-step with

³⁴ <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/australian-officials-pay-visit-to-julian-assange> (08-12-2019)

Washington in vain attempts to re-establish the global domination the US enjoyed for a period after the capitalist counter-revolution destroyed the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR) in 1991. To do this, they must not only threaten and wage endless imperialist wars around the globe, they must intimidate into silence every last vestige of questioning over their reckless policies from “their own” citizens.

Free Julian Assange !



Jail the War Criminals!

The West is the dystopian nightmare, not China or Russia

Julian Assange, alongside Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden, are proof positive that the Orwellian style totalitarian states now in existence are in the capitalist West – they are not China or

³⁵ <https://dfat.gov.au/news/media/Pages/statement-on-julian-assange.aspx> (08-12-2019)

Russia – the propaganda bogeymen of the corporate media. Chelsea Manning was jailed for refusing to testify against Julian Assange, bravely defying the US authorities even after previously being incarcerated.³⁶ Edward Snowden, the former National Security Agency (NSA) analyst, cannot return to his home in the United States, after he exposed to the world the fact that the CIA is effectively spying on everyone through the internet.³⁷ There is surveillance of virtually every computer user in almost every country which is routinely handed over to the CIA for monitoring, and whistleblowers such as Assange, Manning and Snowden are living proof.

Despite this, working people in Australia, the US, Europe and elsewhere are subjected to a non-stop barrage of hysteria in the corporate media claiming that China and Russia are totalitarian states which suppress democratic rights! The hypocrisy is staggering. The People's Republic of China (PRC), born of a momentous revolution of hundreds of millions culminating in 1949, is today surpassing the technological, scientific and economic former power of the US Empire. In doing this, it does not threaten war against anyone. Yet deliberately deceitful Western press complain that the PRC uses facial recognition technology, implying a mistrusting government monitoring its citizen's every move. At the same time, police in Australia use the very same technology – but of course in the name of “security”. Russia is accused, without a shred of evidence, of “meddling” in US elections, of invading Ukraine, and of shooting down flight MH17. This, coming from the Pentagon which has overtly waged endless regime change wars around the globe, routinely funded and created “opposition” parties

in countries they don't like, and arming Nazis in Ukraine.³⁸

Julian Assange despised the cant of those in power, and set out to hold them to account, whatever the cost. He may pay the highest price, unless a world-wide movement can be mobilised. This movement must be so powerful that the ruling classes of the West realise that they will lose a lot more by making a martyr, than by making a concession. Crucially, it will take actions of the working class, in defiance of conservative Union officials and other liberals who have abandoned him, to achieve results. At stake are the very rights to “life, liberty and happiness” that capitalist society always promises but never delivers. Workers are in dire need of a Marxist vanguard party not only to blaze a path to socialism, but to help free those who sacrifice themselves for a better world. *RELEASE JULIAN ASSANGE!*



Above: Many liberals and those susceptible to Russophobia have abandoned Julian Assange over false accusations that Wikileaks was somehow working for the Russian government. Here, Julian Assange asserts again that the source of the material which proved damaging to the Democrats 2016 Presidential election campaign were leaked from the Democrats and their organisations themselves. Black Star News

³⁶ <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/10/722059301/chelsea-manning-is-freed-from-jail-faces-new-subpoena-in-wikileaks-case> (08-12-2019)

³⁷ <https://www.wired.com/story/after-six-years-in-exile-edward-snowden-explains-himself/> (08-12-2019)

³⁸ <https://www.globalresearch.ca/us-arming-assisting-neo-nazis-ukraine-congress-debates-prohibition/5673930> (09-12-2019)

WAMENA: PAPUAN MILITIA TERRORISE CIVILIANS



Above: Part of the firebombing in Wamena carried out by separatist Papuans. Image from www.tribunnews.com

(Article sourced from www.redfireonline.com)

05-10-2019: Parts of West Papua are again in flames, after armed Papuan separatist militia launched an attack on the town of Wamena in the Papuan province of Indonesia. The death toll stands at 30, with 22 of the victims being Indonesian transmigrants, according to Indonesian national police Chief Tito Karnavian.³⁹ The armed Papuan militia set fire to numerous government and private buildings, leading to some Indonesians being burnt alive after becoming trapped.⁴⁰ These deadly attacks by armed Papuan separatists mark a serious turn to

anti-Indonesian pogroms which cannot be justified, regardless of history. It reveals the “independence” movement, at the very least, as being politically compromised. Leftists in Australia and internationally need to carefully investigate the situation, rather than being swept into a trance by the slogan of “Free West Papua”.

Liberation movement?

Throughout history there have been many liberation movements which have fought for a just cause of emancipation from colonialism and

³⁹

<https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/6402252/migrants-caught-up-in-papua-violence/?cs=7579> (03-10-2019)

⁴⁰ <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/protesters-burn-buildings-in-indonesias-papua-province> (03-10-2019)

imperialism. Over time, left parties and movements have thrown political support behind them, and have thereby stood on the side of elementary justice. The West Papuan case, however, is qualitatively different – in a negative way. A liberation movement forfeits the name if it is involved in ethnic violence, or in murderous acts against civilians or migrants. Unfortunately, armed Papuan separatists have done this repeatedly, and the attacks on Wamena in the last week of September were particularly vicious. By September 27, 1500 Indonesian residents had gathered at Wamena airport in a bid to leave. Local Air Force official Arief Sudjarmiko stated that 2500 people had registered to get aboard flights.⁴¹ They were not fleeing the Indonesian military or security forces. They were fleeing for their lives from Papuan separatists, who were clearly targeting Indonesian transmigrant workers, such as motorbike taxi drivers, shop workers and restaurant waiters.⁴² It should go without saying that socialists of any persuasion cannot endorse the wholesale slaughter of workers of any nationality – even if systematic discrimination against one group of workers is proven.

Yet even this does not appear to be the case in West Papua. While it is the case that the Indonesian transmigrants dominate the local economy in the Papuan provinces, there are policies in place to promote Papuans within the civil service.⁴³ There is a disparity between the coastal cities of West Papua, where transmigrants predominate in economic and commercial activity, and the relatively underdeveloped Papuan central highlands. The lack of development is not entirely

the fault of the Indonesian government, but nonetheless the Indonesian government is attempting to spur development in Papua through infrastructure building, such as roads and electricity coverage. There is even an awareness that infrastructure building on its own will not solve all problems. Hence, in 2019, the Indonesian government increased spending on education by 13% across the country, including Papua.⁴⁴ There may well be ways in which the Indonesian government is not administering the Papuan provinces using entirely just methods. For example, there are plans to have the roads built in Papua operate as toll roads.⁴⁵ A campaign to remove tolls from the roads would seem necessary. However, as in Australia, such a campaign would have to involve the working class of all nationalities, for lower living costs. It would not usually be a campaign against the road infrastructure itself – but particularly in Papua, where there are relatively few roads.

Not all Papuans are anti-migrant

There is evidence that the anti-migrant dimension of the West Papuan independence movement is not universal. For example, there appears to be peaceful co-habitation amongst indigenous Papuans and Indonesian transmigrants in certain areas. In Wamena during the separatist attacks, some indigenous Papuans helped to shield Indonesian transmigrants from the assaults. They even worked together to guard shops and buildings from the armed separatists – protecting their lives by doing so.⁴⁶ There were statements saying that the residents did not know where the

⁴¹

<https://www.nst.com.my/world/2019/09/525226/thousands-scramble-flee-unrest-indonesias-papua> (03-10-2019)

⁴² Ibid, 1.

⁴³

<https://www.theislanderonline.com.au/story/6402252/migrants-caught-up-in-papua-violence/?cs=11679> (03-10-2019)

⁴⁴ <https://papuawest.com/2018/12/12/government-to-shift-focus-from-infrastructure-to-education-in-papua/> (03-10-2019)

⁴⁵ <https://news.mongabay.com/2017/10/indonesias-big-development-push-in-papua-qa-with-program-overseer-judith-j-dipodiputro/> (03-10-2019)

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<https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2019/09/30/good-neighbors-papuans-help-non-natives-flee-violence-in-wamena.html> (03-10-2019)

armed independence marauders came from – perhaps the highlands. Wamena is the largest town in the central highlands, so it becomes the first target. Some Papuan independence militia claim that they have no issue with transmigrant workers, only those who act as informers for the government and security forces.⁴⁷ In Wamena and elsewhere, however, this is not the case. What cannot be denied is that the West Papuan independence movement has always had an anti-migrant basis. Romantically minded leftists in the West, who clamour to support West Papuan independence, are either not aware, or wilfully ignore, this base prejudice.

Moreover, it is the “exiled” West Papuans who are the most strident in prosecuting what is often a misleading campaign for separate independence. In the case of the Wamena attacks, Indonesian authorities, not without cause, have accused de-facto independence leader Benny Wenda and his international network of orchestrating the violence in order to make headlines days before the United Nations (UN) general assembly sits in New York.⁴⁸ Mr Wenda is no stranger to stoking deadly riots, as he is himself a fugitive for doing just that in Abepura in 2002. Benny Wenda incited a crowd of 50 to attack some shops, which resulted in two people dead.⁴⁹ While detained facing trial, he escaped from Indonesia and fled to the United Kingdom (UK). From Oxford in London, the fugitive Mr Wenda convenes a disingenuous campaign for West Papuan independence, particularly appealing to the forces of imperialism against Indonesia. To say the least, a movement which regularly incites violence against those of another ethnicity, often resulting in the slaughter of innocents, is not one to be endorsed.



Above: Papuan protestor campaigns to maintain internet coverage in Papua and West Papua. Separatists and their backers claim something insidious about this, but in fact the blocking of the internet was to prevent more fake videos inciting ethnic violence from being spread. Separatists use distorted or false information to claim Papuans are being subjected to racial discrimination by Indonesian authorities, when there are signs that it is the other way around. By preventing the further spread of fake videos during the unrest, the Indonesian government was protecting the lives of both Papuans and Indonesians. The Guardian

Fake videos, real lies

When violent riots by Papuan separatists break out, the Indonesian government sometimes responds by “throttling” or blocking the internet. While this raises a hue and cry by unenlightened West Papuan independence supporters internationally, this action has a rational basis. Often the violent riots are begun by the spreading of fake videos online, making false claims about mistreatment from Indonesian authorities. In the case of Wamena recently, the bloodthirsty riots were set off by rumours circulated that a high school teacher had used a racist remark against students. Papua police Chief Rudolf Alberth Rodja, however, stressed that the police had investigated the alleged school and teacher, and confirmed

⁴⁷ <http://lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/violence-papua-could-get-worse> (03-10-2019)

⁴⁸ <https://www.muswellbrookchronicle.com.au/story/640225>

<2/migrants-caught-up-in-papua-violence/?cs=7281> (03-10-2019)

⁴⁹ <https://redfireonline.com/2019/04/27/west-papua-independence-movement-spreads-more-false-claims/> (03-10-2019)

that this incident was fabricated, and was a blatant untruth. He said that it is believed that this was hoax information deliberately distributed in order to fuel riots.⁵⁰ As Papuan separatists have a history of telling lies in order to whip up support, it is not unreasonable to accept the police account here.

For example, the Papuan separatists told the mother of all lies in December 2018, when they made the preposterous claim that the Indonesian military had used white phosphorus munitions against them in the Nduga region after a flag raising ceremony. They had the active support of corporate journalists who had made the same unsubstantiated claims against the Syrian government during the US led war for regime change.⁵¹ That is, Papuan independence advocates willingly worked with the corporate media which repeatedly referred to ISIS and Al Qaeda as “rebels” and “revolutionaries” in Syria, in order to use the same lies against the Indonesian government. These spurious claims were soon debunked as utterly fallacious, given that the Indonesian military had never stationed artillery in West Papua, let alone million-dollar jet fighters. And the only helicopters the Indonesian military has there are transport choppers, unequipped with any offensive weapons, which would be needed to fire ANY ordinance.⁵²

West Papuan separatists and their entourage need to spread whoppers because the politics of their independence movement falters at the first question. Prime among the distributors of falsifications is “human rights” lawyer Veronica Koman. Despite being herself of Chinese-Indonesian ancestry, Koman is inherently anti-

China and pro-imperialist. On October 1, she posted on her Twitter account a claim of solidarity with the violent Blackshirt rioters in Hong Kong, who in turn claimed solidarity with Uyghurs.⁵³ The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) are currently targeted by the CIA for destabilisation, and, they hope, regime change. Their aim is to counter the rising socialism of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) by any means – including funding those engaging in armed violence, and up to life-threatening extreme jihadism. But Koman’s anti-socialist fealty to the Pentagon is not the reason she is wanted.

Veronica Koman has been charged with serious crimes by Indonesian police. She refused three times to be questioned, who then charged her with violating the Electronic Information and Transactions Law and the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination Law.⁵⁴ Racial and ethnic harmony is crucially important in a large multi-ethnic country such as Indonesia. However, Koman had repeatedly been stoking ethnic conflict by posting false information which aided violent riots in Surabaya. Instead of defending herself on charges of provoking deadly unrest and fuelling ethnic conflict, Koman fled to Australia. Understandably, the Indonesian government issued an Interpol red notice for her arrest,⁵⁵ but whether this will be enacted by the Australian government remains to be seen. Since fleeing as a fugitive to Australia, she has since appeared on ABC and SBS with favourable coverage, but without mentioning the criminal charges laid

⁵⁰ <https://www.smh.com.au/world/oceania/protests-sparked-by-hoax-racism-claims-kill-injure-dozens-20190924-p52uez.html> (03-10-2019)

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<https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/2018/12/22/exclusive-chemical-weapons-dropped-papua/15453972007326> (03-10-2019)

⁵² <https://infowestpapua.com/2018/12/26/phosphorous-bomb-propaganda-in-west-papua-a-seriously-fake-yet-silly-issue-administered-by-australian-media/> (03-10-2019)

⁵³ <https://twitter.com/veronicakoman> (03-10-2019)

⁵⁴ <https://jakartaglobe.id/context/police-issue-red-notice-to-interpol-to-track-and-capture-veronica-koman/> (03-10-2019)

⁵⁵ <https://en.tempo.co/read/1250173/veronica-koman-fugitive-police-issue-red-notice-for-interpol> (04-10-2019)

against her. Unfortunately, a lack of basic honesty is *de rigueur* for pro-US “human rights” advocates.



Above: Here is the real politics of Veronica Koman. On June 18, 2019, she tweeted a picture of herself with Josh Wong – one of the leaders of the ultra-violent anti-China Blackshirt terrorists in Hong Kong. Despite having Chinese ancestry herself, Koman displays the extreme anti-socialism of the US flag waving “democracy” crowd. Image from www.dimsumdaily.hk

Left parties blind on West Papua

Some Australian left parties blindly raise both hands when it comes to a request for volunteers for West Papuan independence. They barely lose a step before blundering into yet another international issue without checking its bona fides. Never one to miss a chance to embellish the Australian government, the Socialist Alliance chimes in with a demand that the federal government grant Veronica Koman protection and not hand her over to the Indonesian government. At the least, they display First World disrespect for the legal system of a Third World neighbour. They then pose the rhetorical comparison of West Papua to the case of East Timor.⁵⁶ If someone hasn’t told them, comparisons between East Timor – which after a long struggle won

independence from Indonesia – and West Papua, are like chalk and cheese. Likewise, Socialist Alternative echoes the East Timor comparison, and swears to uphold all South Pacific struggles for “self-determination”.⁵⁷ The Communist Party of Australia⁵⁸ and the Communist Party of Australia Marxist-Leninist⁵⁹ both reflexively hail the cross-class “people” of West Papua.

These left parties have forgotten their “Marxism”. Even if it was the case that Papuan militia did not slaughter innocent civilians, did not foster and foment ethnic violence against Indonesians, and did not spread lies and falsifications – Marxists would not **automatically** endorse self-determination or independence. While Marxists stand against national oppression, advocating the **exercise** of self-determination is dependent on a number of factors. The most important of these is whether or not it advances the struggle for socialism in that country, in the region, and internationally. Even accounting for the fact that, due to historical factors, the working class of Indonesia is more developed than that of West Papua, there is ample space for working class Papuan and Indonesian collaboration in struggles against capitalism in the region. For example, that which is facilitated by the common language of Bahasa Indonesian.

In stark contrast to liberal and petty-bourgeois nationalists, Marxists do not engage in the shadow boxing of a “good” versus a “bad” nation. What are required are methods of political struggle which advance the class consciousness of workers of all nations. “Self-determination” and/or “independence” may or may not play a role in this process. Either way, efforts to forge Marxist vanguard parties across the entirety of the Asia-Pacific remains essential.

⁵⁶ <https://socialist-alliance.org/news/west-papua-australias-new-timor-leste> (04-10-2019)

⁵⁷ <https://redflag.org.au/node/6895> (04-10-2019)

⁵⁸ <https://www.cpa.org.au/guardian/2019/1888/11-west-papua.html> (04-10-2019)

⁵⁹ <https://www.cpaml.org/posting1.php?id=967> (04-10-2019)

FOR PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF ALL AGED CARE FACILITIES!



Image from abc.net.au

(Article sourced from www.redfireonline.com)

04-11-2019 – Another year, another damning report into the critical failings of Australia's Aged Care system. An interim report from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has again found that the Aged Care system displayed shocking levels of treatment of elderly residents, including excessive use of chemical restraints.⁶⁰ The aged people of a supposedly advanced industrialised country, after a lifetime of contribution to the community through work and other areas, are being treated with cruel inhumanity. A related problem is that young people with a disability are being funnelled into Aged Care homes, because there are no other

facilities available for them. An estimated 3500 people with a disability under the age of 60 live in aged care nursing homes, which are not suited to their needs.⁶¹

Profit system failure

It is no mystery why the appalling treatment of aged care residents has gone on for years. It has effectively been privatised and is now run by big business for private profit. In these circumstances, the physical and mental health of Aged Care residents is at the bottom of the list of priorities, if at all. At the top of their list is the extraction of cash, usually from Aged Care residents who are pensioners, and their families who are mostly

⁶⁰ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-31/aged-care-royal-commission-report-finds-unsafe-industry/11658328> (03-11-2019)

⁶¹ <https://synapse.org.au/information-services/young-people-in-nursing-homes.aspx> (03-11-2019)

working-class people with little accumulated wealth. For over a decade, doctors and nurses have warned the federal government about the critical level of understaffing in nursing homes across the country but have been met with no response. The New South Wales Nurses and Midwives Association released a statement stressing the fact that Aged Care needs to be affordable and accessible, and provided by professional and accredited staff who are remunerated accordingly.⁶² Instead, what transpires are Aged Care centres that are chronically understaffed, with a shortage of qualified nurses, which leads to long waiting lists, unmet expectations and unnecessary pain and suffering.



Above: Reports emerging in September found that Bupa, a private sector health care “provider”, was putting the health and safety of aged care residents at risk. Despite receiving around half a billion dollars in government subsidies per year, more than half of its aged care facilities were failing basic standards of care. Private and for profit aged care is not able to function in an era where capitalism is in dire recession. Workers need to push their Union leaders to demand the aged care system return to public ownership, and remain part of a public health care system. The scandals about gross mistreatment of the elderly cannot be allowed to continue. www.abc.net.au

Two years ago, for profit “health care provider” Bupa actually issued a directive to their staff to conserve continence pads in their Aged Care facilities because they were allegedly running “over budget”.⁶³ Unless the pads were 75% wet, Bupa staff were told not to change them. Cost cutting on essential items includes food for the residents. In recent times, the amount many Aged Care homes had been spending on food for residents had dropped to \$6 per day. Some who raised the alarm over this critical underfunding commented that both prisoners and guinea pigs receive more fresh food than those in Aged Care.⁶⁴ The lack of fresh food in at least adequate proportions, apart from the base inhumanity of private profit margins, leads in turn to more health problems for residents in terms of wounds, falls, and hospital readmissions. To say this is a false economy is a vast understatement.

Public health care a basic need

As with other multiple crises affecting society, the plummeting standards of Aged Care in Australia mirror the declining state of the capitalist economy. Since 2008, the “global” financial crisis hit the West hard, and it has barely recovered. The previous sectors of the economy where capital had been making what they consider an adequate rate of return – manufacturing, industry, agriculture – have long since ceased to do so. In turn, the capitalist class demanded that the public relinquish parts of the public economy which had previously been denied them – such as Aged Care. Capital moved into Aged Care not to take care of the elderly people in their final years, but to make a quick buck. Providing the smallest amount of “care” while extracting the most amount of money, for them, is “good business”. For working people who have worked their whole lives, raised

⁶² <https://www.nswnma.asn.au/chronic-understaffing-in-aged-care-is-causing-enormous-pain-and-suffering-for-residents-and-families/> (03-11-2019)

⁶³ <https://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace/cost-cutting-and-understaffing-of-aged-care-homes-leads-to-rationing-and-neglect-20171010-gyxn7b.html> (03-11-2019)

⁶⁴ <https://www.yourlifechoices.com.au/news/my-guinea-pigs-eat-better-ama> (03-11-2019)

children, built communities – this is insanity. For this issue, as for many others, working people and private capital have utterly irreconcilable interests.

At the very least, all aged care should be taken back into public ownership and treated as part of a public health care system. For profit “providers” should be expelled from the Aged Care system without compensation. Qualified and specialist nurses, doctors and Aged Care workers should be employed until there are adequate ratios of residents to care workers and medical staff. This campaign should be led by the Unions, who should both organise and mobilise the overworked and underpaid staff currently employed. There would be more than enough public sympathy for such a militant campaign, given the horror stories that have emerged from numerous enquiries.

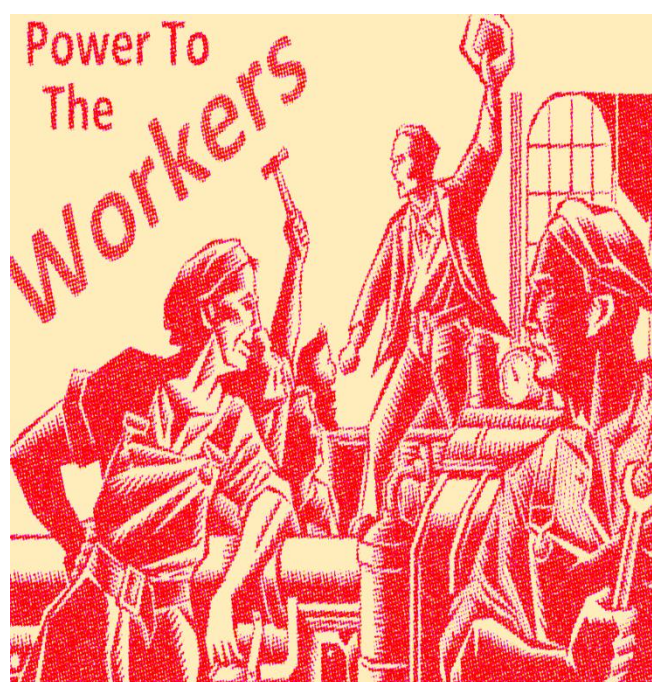
Standing in the way of this much needed effort are the conservative and self-serving Union officials, who have either restricted themselves to silence, or the occasional press release. Unfortunately, under capitalism the labour bureaucracy has a material interest in maintaining the status quo – even an unbearable one. The top officials live the life of Riley off the funds provided by Union members and their numerous connections to regional and national Union bodies, the Australian Labor Party, and state and federal parliaments. It is the parents and grandparents of current Union members and unorganised workers who languish in below standard for-profit nursing homes, not those of well-off officials.

Careerist Union officials must be positioned by workers into taking a stand for basic justice for the elderly. Even just to win decent Aged Care, let alone other public services, the working class will have to jettison the current Union misleaders, and replace them with those committed to a class struggle against the capitalist system. This is bound up with efforts to forge a Marxist vanguard party, which could provide the desperately

needed leadership workers are crying out for. Such a party would stop at nothing to build a socialist world, where the health and well-being of working people would come before all else.



Above: Graphic from the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) highlighting the gross disparity between daily meal allowances for federal politicians (\$181) and those for aged care residents (\$6). This obscenity is a part of the capitalist system in decline. It is most keenly felt by working class Australians, many of whom have worked for the majority of their lives, built the society, and paid taxes. Workers need to demand Union officials take a clear stand against such outrages.



CHILE: NATIONALISM NO ANSWER TO AUSTERITY



Above: One of the many public buses torched by rioting Chileans last October. Image from Axios

(Article sourced from www.redfireonline.com)

02-11-2019 – During the last week of October, deadly riots swept Chile, ostensibly in response to the government's increase of 30 pesos to public transport fares. While the Chilean government quickly suspended the 4% increase, it did not prevent thousands of demonstrators from flooding into the streets. Initially, the actions began by commuters jumping turnstiles and avoiding paying the increased ticket fares to ride the Metro railway in the capital Santiago – an entirely legitimate form of protest against an

increase to the cost of living. However, these actions were soon eclipsed by the torching of these same railway stations by protestors, causing some trains to be burnt to shells. Reportedly, 49 subway stations were set alight, and 26 public buses were destroyed by fire.⁶⁵

Worse was to come. Some non-public buildings were set ablaze, along with some 200 supermarkets.⁶⁶ In one of the supermarkets, three people lost their lives.⁶⁷ This was after it had been looted, along with many others. This was followed by the firebombing of a garment factory in the

⁶⁵ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/20-killed-in-chile-protests-against-rise-in-metro-fares/1630338> (30-10-2019)

⁶⁶ <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2019/10/chile-protest-santiago-metro-public-transit-fare-inequality/600874/> (30-10-2019)

⁶⁷

<https://www.scmp.com/news/world/americas/article/3033742/chiles-president-reverses-subway-fare-hike-triggered-worst> (30-10-2019)

capital, where five people perished.⁶⁸ At one stage the subway station entrances had to be closed off, to prevent more arson. This led to commuters being stranded, unable to get home from working that day. While it is true that thousands of people also attended rallies which contained no violence, the taking of innocent lives by any movement can never be justified.

“Neoliberalism”

Working people in Chile have endured decades of extreme privatisation in many areas, from water to education. Hence the current slogan “It is not about 30 pesos, but about 30 years”. A political movement with the ability to combat this assault must be assembled – of this there is no doubt. Yet the current movement has dramatic overtones of populism – an attempt to build a cross-class movement for “all people”. Yet class realities can be brushed over so easily. A movement which obliterates class distinctions inevitably moves to the right, and inevitably becomes nationalist. For working people, nationalism is crippling, and often prevents even the first steps forward.

What became known as “neoliberalism” (or “austerity”), has been applied more extensively in Chile than elsewhere in Latin America, and perhaps the world. Yet neoliberalism is a misnomer. Neoliberalism implies that there can be a nicer, softer, even social-democratic, version of capitalism. It is spoken of as if it is a choice that governments choose to enact. *Yet “neoliberalism” is not a policy, but the current phase of the capitalist system.* There is no going back to the “welfare-state” capitalism of the post World War II period – in Australia or Chile. There can only be moves forward to socialism. This requires the overthrow of capitalism via the construction of a workers’ state, administered by a workers’ government.

This central conclusion, however, is one which the forces behind the current Chilean protests are yet to learn or accept. Rather, they have turned in the direction of populism, while some have committed criminal arson ending in murderous violence. Obviously workers cannot condone the needless elimination of human life, and nor can workers tolerate the destruction of vital public infrastructure such as buses and trains. Instead, workers could organise the *occupation* of public transport and public infrastructure, as this would immediately pose the question of just who it belongs to. Attempts to organise the operation of public transport by workers would necessitate some form of workers’ committees, which could form the basis of workers’ councils. From here a workers government would NOT be a bridge too far.

All Chileans together?

Worlds away from this perspective is the “all for Chile” approach. While a rejection of all capitalist politicians can be a healthy development, the #ChileDesperto (Chile Awake) movement attempts to simply change politicians, without confronting capitalism. This can be seen with their demand for the resignation of President Sebastian Pinera. Yet why did this movement not arise during the Presidency of the “Socialist” Party’s Michele Bachelet? The Bachelet government maintained and even accelerated the same “neoliberalism”, regardless of the fake veneer of being politically “left”. Moreover, the #ChileDesperto movement’s other demands are eerily reminiscent of the US backed Blackshirt thugs in Hong Kong, which aims (in vain) to uphold capitalism rather than be re-integrated into socialist China. Indeed, the following demands could have been written by the right-wing pro-US Hong Kong elements:

⁶⁸ <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/world/401476/chile-protests-five-dead-after-looters-set-fire-to-factory> (30-10-2019)

1. The withdrawal of armed forces from all Chilean Streets
2. Lifting of all curfews
3. The resignation of Sebastian Pinera
4. Legal accountability of all politicians, armed forces and police members responsible for the violation of human rights.

Note there are no class demands here. All are within the framework of the existing state – which is the guarantor of the “neoliberalism” they claim to oppose. In addition, the wanton vandalism and criminal violence against public and private property, endangering human life, has been used as a rationale by the Pinera government to deploy the armed forces. This is also the reason given for the curfews – and not entirely without justification. The ruling class will skilfully use any pretext to paint their use of military force as being to “serve and protect” or to “keep the peace”. The Chile Desperto movement, and the violent and life-threatening vandalism they do not condemn, has given them just that.

“Left” betrayal

To some extent, the seeming agnosticism towards politics of the Chile Desperto movement may be somewhat understandable – but not excusable. The Chilean government of Michele Bachelet from the misnamed Socialist Party (actually barely social-democratic) preceded the government of Sebastian Pinera. If “left” at all, perhaps no one noticed it, as the Bachelet government barely changed the policies of extreme capitalism (“neoliberalism”). A lack of political awareness – not by any means restricted to Chile – often gives social-democratic capitalist politicians the benefit of the doubt. Some can wait longer for a party supposedly more progressive to deliver. This is

always a recipe for disappointment and demoralisation of the hopes that a more humane face can emerge from the horrors of “the market”. So it was with Bachelet, who turned out to be barely left at all.



Above: Camilla Vallejo, dubbed the “world’s most glamorous revolutionary” by the *New York Times*. Vallejo was a leader of the student movement in Chile who later was propelled into parliament as part of the Communist Party of Chile. Unfortunately, the CP and Vallejo covered for the austerity measures of the Bachelet government, which further demoralized and disoriented Chilean workers and students struggling against capitalist impoverishment. Image from Reddit

The “left” had been in governmental power in Chile for much of the previous twenty years. The centrist Party for Democracy and then the (misnamed) Socialists, despite a left veneer, continued the capitalist austerity of the dark days of the Pinochet dictatorship, while not moving to substantially change it. The last Bachelet government was termed a “New Majority” and included the Communist Party of Chile (PCC). The PCC’s most visible member was Camilla Vallejo, a leader of the student movement of 2010, and dubbed “the world’s most glamorous

revolutionary” by the New York Times.⁶⁹ Yet the “Communist” party of Chile betrayed the very notion of socialist principle by horse trading with Bachelet’s “Socialists” to get Vallejo elected into the parliament of a bourgeois state – the same one which was the basis for the Pinochet apparatus. In return for PCC backing, Bachelet’s “Socialists” did not challenge Vallejo’s run for Congress, which led to the PCC gaining ten seats.⁷⁰

In parliament, Vallejo and the “Communist” Party of Chile betrayed not only the student movement, but the entire working class, by covering for the austerity of the Bachelet government. This was yet another let down by yet another “left” party which entered a capitalist government. The “Communists” came to be seen as just another set of self-interested politicians set against everyone else. Worse, the “Communists” sat in parliament and negotiated with parties of the fascistic right-wing, some containing the same personnel from the days of Pinochet. This is another example of the nationalism of so-called “Marxism-Leninism”. Under nationalist logic, all national parties are part of the nation – even fascists. Needless to say, such perfidy is the very opposite of the basic tenets of Marxism and Leninism.

There is also the “New” left in Chile in the form of the Frente Amplio, or “Broad Left”. It includes Revolucion Democratica, a centrist party modelled on the Spanish Podemos, feminists, humanists and others.⁷¹ They have 20 seats in parliament, but as a political formation which does not claim or seek to represent the working class, their politics are one of insufferable compromise. Even on the issue of the recent demonstrations, the Frente Amplio has reportedly temporised between taking part in

parliamentary votes on the reduction of public transport fares, and abstaining until the military is withdrawn from the streets. This form of populism cannot see outside of a capitalist parliament, and thus only has the “weapon” of voting, or not casting a vote, inside it. This is hardly a solution.

Break the impasse

Inequality in Chile is at staggering levels. Pensions are set below the minimum wage. Private health insurance companies reek in profits while placing tight restrictions on coverage. The public health system is short of resources, with extremely long waiting lists for operations. The public transport costs are some of the most expensive in Latin America. Water, electricity, gas and telecommunications have been privatised, which leads to ongoing and arbitrary price rises.⁷² Working people in Chile have suffered for decades, and there needs to be a political break through. However, populism, nationalism and liberalism have no solutions. Given the betrayal of the parties which have claimed some form of leftism, from the social-democratic “Socialists”, to the ultimately conservative “Communists”, to the populist “Broad Left”, it will be difficult, but not impossible, to convince Chilean workers that there can be a genuine left.

Some Australian left parties have uncritically endorsed the Chilean protests. Socialist Alternative recognise the significant loss of credibility the left has endured, particularly the betrayals of the Communist Party of Chile. However, so far they omit any mention of the life-taking criminal arson, and the trashing of public transport.⁷³ The Socialist Alliance manage to channel liberalism, anti-communism and

⁶⁹ <https://ontd-political.livejournal.com/9528154.html> (02-11-2019)

⁷⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/28/chile-bachelet-communists-election> (02-11-2019)

⁷¹ <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/10/chile-protests-fare-hike-pinera-demands> (02-11-2019)

⁷² <https://www.globalresearch.ca/battle-chile/5693735> (02-11-2019)

⁷³ <https://redflag.org.au/node/6931?fbclid=IwAR1Q7rj54ogArFN9n8IJ-I5AYTpikGjNQZiLD3ileQznH4F3S7IGcsAeVok> (02-11-2019)

Russophobia at the same time by comparing the neoliberalism in Chile to the reversal of Gough Whitlam's "legacy" by the Labor Party in Australia, "sweatshops" in China, and "oligarchy" in Russia !!⁷⁴ Already, the Socialist Alliance is attempting to steer any solidarity movement with the Chilean protests behind the anti-China and anti-Russia New Cold War of US imperialism.



Above: Many Chilean national flags were prominent during the #Chile Desperto demonstrations. This is a major shortcoming, as the austerity being imposed on working people cannot be combatted by attempting to stand for the "real" nation. Nations include all classes, and for their to be progress, the working people must sever ties with the capitalist class – which waves the same flag. Image from Cipher Chile

A significant problem with the Chile Desperto movement in Australia has been the overt nationalism of the solidarity actions. At one action, participants to a solidarity rally were warned that only national flags of all countries would be permitted (!), and that any flag representing any political party were disallowed.⁷⁵ The Chile Desperto organisers claimed this was to show a

"united front" which comes from the "people" and not from any political party. This is astonishing. A political rally where political parties are banned! Such "neither left nor right" movements are invariably dangerous, as they tend towards the right-wing. The banning of party symbols is primarily a move against left-wing and workers' parties, despite claims to be "for all". The result was a sea of Chilean national flags, alongside the Mapuche indigenous people's flag. An exception must have been made here, for the Mapuche people are not a nation.

There will be no breaking of the political impasse in Chile, or internationally, if a movement does not break with nationalism and/or populism. There is no Marxist category which is the "people". In Chile, as in Australia, the super wealthy rich elite all claim to be a part of the "people". Any political alliance with them is a flagrant betrayal of the interests of the working class. The Chile Desperto movement, perhaps despite its intentions, displays the same nationalism of those they claim to stand against. What is needed is movement which proclaims that it defends the interests of the workers ONLY, in Chile, Latin America, and internationally. Opposing classes have opposing interests, in Chile as elsewhere. A workers party which fights for a workers government – not seats in parliament – is a critical pre-requisite. A genuine move towards socialism can then begin.

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⁷⁴ <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/popular-revolt-drowning-chile-neoliberal-oasis> (02-11-2019)

⁷⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/events/2450583998597954/24>

53534684969552/?notif_t=admin_plan_mall_activity¬if_id=1572139302001897 (02-11-2019)

BOLIVIA: THE EMPIRE OVERSEES ANOTHER COUP



Above: Main placard reads “No to the US coup in Bolivia”. Image from [pressenza.com](https://www.pressenza.com)

(Article sourced from www.redfireonline.com)

24-11-2019: It was one of the fastest nullifications of an election result for decades. On October 20, Bolivian President Evo Morales was re-elected with a margin of 10 percentage points, only to resign on November 10 in the face of a right-wing opposition with links to the US Empire. The opposition groups claimed the election results were fraudulent, but statistical analysis found that there were no irregularities with the process or counting of the votes.⁷⁶ One of the opposition groups has members of a Christian fascist organisation from Santa Cruz,⁷⁷ a hotbed of US

government linked separatism. The main opposition candidate in the election, Carlos Mesa, is a named member of the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington based “think tank” funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).⁷⁸ The Organisation of the American States (OAS), a Cold War alliance of Latin American anti-communist governments led by Washington, chimed in with the call for “new elections”. After reported raids on his home, Evo Morales and former Vice President Alvaro Garcia Linera have fled to Mexico, which offered them asylum.

⁷⁶ <http://cepr.net/press-center/press-releases/no-evidence-that-bolivian-election-results-were-affected-by-irregularities-or-fraud-statistical-analysis-shows> (24-11-2019)

⁷⁷ <https://thegrayzone.com/2019/11/11/bolivia-coup-fascist-foreign-support-fernando-camacho/> (24-11-2019)

⁷⁸ Ibid, 2.

US in regime change frenzy

Over the last eight years, the US ruling class has left no stone unturned in efforts to overthrow and depose governments from countries around the world seen to be too independent, or resistant to global US domination. In Libya, the US used NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) to destroy Green Libya, leaving a hellhole in its aftermath. In Syria, the US and its Western allies armed and funded barbaric ISIS mercenaries in an effort to remove the Syrian government. Here they were defeated by a combination of military and political defence from Syria, Iran, Hezbollah and Russia. Seething from this loss of face, Washington redoubled its regime change machinations, repeatedly attempting a coup in Venezuela, fostering fake uprisings in Sudan and Algeria, and funding faux “human rights” fronts in Cambodia and Thailand, to name but a few. Most brazenly, Wall Street has overtly and covertly backed ultra-violent right-wing separatists in Hong Kong, in a vain attempt to spread political unrest throughout China.

Unfortunately, the faulty political basis of Morales and his (misnamed) Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) offered Washington the easiest path to install domestic right-wing collaborators at the crucial time. Evo Morales was the first indigenous President of Bolivia, in a nation where the majority of the population are indigenous. Morales and Linera managed to govern Bolivia for 13 years, repeatedly winning elections, sometimes by landslides. The MAS government used redistributive social-democratic policies which resulted in some gains for Bolivian workers and the poor. Under Morales the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate was a steady 4.9% per year, and per capita GDP grew by over 50%. Poverty fell from 60% in 2006 to 35% in 2017.

Unemployment nearly halved, the minimum wage increased threefold, and social transfer payments were given to millions of poor Bolivians, enabling many to enter full-time education for the first time.⁷⁹ Such measures were the basis of the popularity of the Morales government, especially amongst the Indian majority.



Above: Bolivian security forces jostle with indigenous protestors resisting the US backed coup. Image from Common Dreams

Reformism no solution

At the same time, the Morales government made repeated concessions to the agribusiness class and sought partnerships with capitalist industry in order to spur growth. It is not entirely wrong to use private sector capital to develop agriculture and use mineral resources, but it was often done at the expense of Bolivian workers, with little regard for the environment. In fact, Bolivian workers had to struggle and often strike against the Morales government, and in response Morales had little hesitation in sending in heavily armed police to severely repress them. In 2016, the COB (Bolivian Workers Central) trade union body called a strike in response to Morales closing Enatex, the state-run textile company, causing the loss of 1000 jobs. Hundreds of workers were arrested by the police repression ordered by the MAS

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<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/evo-morales-la-caída-del-héroe-de-la-transformación->

boliviana-en/
(24-11-2019)

government.⁸⁰ In 2013, miners launched a general strike against the Morales government for continuing the anti-worker pension scheme of the previous government, demanding “retirement with dignity”. The police repression was severe, with the arrest of 400 miners, with the Morales government in some cases demanding prison terms of up to six years!⁸¹ In 2011, some 5000 rural teachers embarked on strikes against the Morales government for a reasonable wage increase. The COB had to settle for less than their demands, after hundreds of riot police were unleashed against the teachers, resulting in nine wounded.⁸²



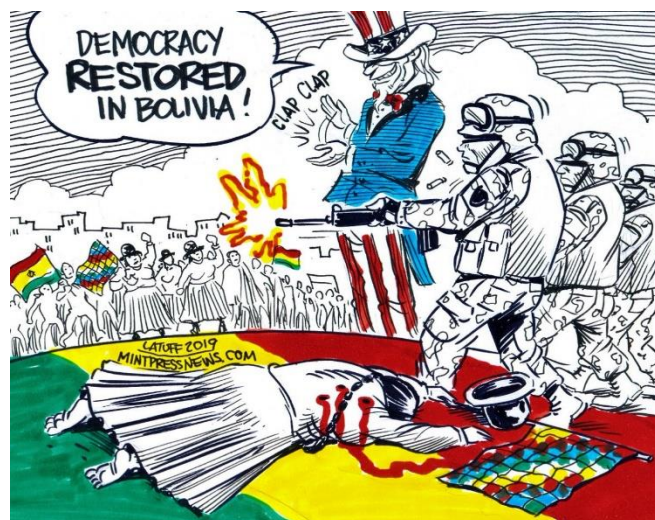
The police Morales ordered to repress striking workers were the same police who in turn turfed Morales when the signal was given. Far from “socialism”, the Morales/Linera government was reformist at best, which used the armed forces of the bourgeois state against workers when they saw fit. There was no effort to build workers’ power, or workers’ militias, because Morales only sought a few reforms within the capitalist system, **regardless** of his rhetoric. Morales may have railed against capitalism, against US imperialism, and against the extreme danger of climate collapse **in words** – but his loyalty was always with the very system he denounced. Bolivian workers paid a

heavy price for this. Now, Bolivian workers and the poor are left almost defenceless to face the fascist right, in paramilitary or government form, while Morales and Linera themselves have deserted the sinking ship.

Workers in Bolivia, and their peasant and Indian allies, need to politically break with MAS before they can take steps forward in their defence. Workers internationally need to resolutely oppose the US backed coup, while offering no political support to the remnants of the legacy of Morales. It is another lesson that capitalism cannot be reformed, and that real socialism begins with workers in power.



Above: ML Today Below: Twitter.com



⁸⁰ <https://nacla.org/blog/2016/07/05/why-bolivian-workers-are-marching-against-evo-morales> (24-11-2019)

⁸¹ www.internationalist.org/boliviageneralstrike1306.html (24-11-2019)

⁸² <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2011/04/boli-a28.html> (24-11-2019)