



Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

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

Unite on May Day

Build action for working class rights

by Alice M

On 1st May workers around the world celebrate the victories and struggles of the working class and the international solidarity of working people and the oppressed.

On May Day the working class puts forward its demands and a programme of action to defend and improve the living standards of working people and the oppressed, for workers' rights and a genuine democracy for the majority of the people.

May Day gives a voice to the hopes and aspirations of working people for an alternative to the exploitation, oppression, poverty, human rights abuses, foreign occupations and imperialist wars of aggression.

A future where workers are the masters of society; a genuinely socialist society run and governed by the working class in the interests of the majority of the people and the environment, not a tiny handful of monopoly corporations and multinationals.

Class struggle intensifies

The 35 years of relentless attacks by

imperialist neo-liberalism have wrought hardship and suffering on the working people of developing and developed countries. In 2008 the deepening of the global capitalist economic crisis intensified these attacks on the people.

But oppression, injustice and imperialist wars breed rebellion, and workers around the world are resisting.

Wider groups of workers and working people are organising and joining in action against the burden of the economic crisis of monopoly capitalism.

Lighting the way

Internationally, the revolutionary movement of the working class and the oppressed is growing and gives optimism and confidence to the future struggles of working people. The powerful people's mass uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and other countries of the Middle East and North Africa are inspiring the oppressed around the world.

Revolutionary movements in the Philippines and Nepal, led by Marxist-Leninist Communist Parties, are lighting the way for the international



Workers at US multinational Coca Cola show their solidarity

working class struggles against imperialism, semi-feudalism and monopoly capitalism.

In the belly of the world's most savage beast, US imperialism, struggle by very wide sections of working people against the burden of capitalist economic crisis and imperialist wars is sweeping the country. This is bound to grow as the internal class contradictions of US imperialism are bursting at the seams.

In Europe the working class is organising and making preparations for a long fight with its own imperialist ruling class.

Australian workers step up

In Australia, the hard won rights and living conditions of working people are equally attacked by big business. Workers' rights to organise in fighting unions, take industrial action, and the right to strike collectively, are being rolled back by the two main parliamentary parties, acting under

instructions from the multinationals and big business interests.

Casualisation, job insecurity, disappearing penalties, deteriorating wages and health and safety at work is the order of the day. The people are straining under the heavy burden of debt to pay for housing, health, education, infrastructure utilities and other necessities of life. The unemployed and welfare recipients are demonised and have their pensions and allowances slashed.

The coming budget will protect big business interests and push more working people into poverty and economic hardship.

This is at a time of record profits by mining monopolies, banks and other big multinational corporations.

Despite the many obstacles thrown at organised labour, many unions and workers are putting up a fight in defence of their rights and conditions.

Qantas workers, wharfies, road

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Unite on May Day

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transport workers, teachers, nurses, scientists, community workers and many others refuse to be intimidated by threats from big business.

Fundamental change

Under the economic and political system of capitalism, workers' gains are never permanent and the struggle between workers and capital never ceases.

But how does the working class break out of the present situation, and ultimately take control to become masters of society and run the country for the majority of the people?

This can't be achieved in one blow.

Objective and subjective conditions in Australia shape the steps in our struggle towards socialism.

We need far-sightedness, vision and certainty about the ultimate goal of the revolutionary journey and the immediate steps that will lead working people there.

CPA (M-L) position

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) asserts that the core of monopoly capitalism in Australia today is a small number of foreign owned corporations (the most decisive are from the USA), together with their Australian-based monopoly associates. They control the economy and political life of this nation.

Australia plays a critical role in US imperialist wars of aggression and plunder. As the deputy sheriff to US imperialism in the region, Australia hosts a large number of significant US military bases.

This makes us dependent and subservient to US economic, political and military interests at home and internationally.

US imperialism oppresses not only workers but also farmers, small and medium business people and other sections of society. The majority of Australia's population have a common interest in freeing Australia from imperialism.

To bring about fundamental change, the working class must mobilise working people and other smaller classes against the core of imperialism and monopoly capital.

It means struggle for complete anti-imperialist national independence under the political leadership of the working class.

This is integral to Australia's revolutionary road and will open up conditions for the winning and building of socialism.

Tremendous battles lie ahead, both on the ground and in the realm of ideas. May Day inspires confidence that the working class will triumph.

Vanguard

Vanguard is a national monthly newspaper which expresses the viewpoint of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist - Leninist), the CPA (M-L). Readers are encouraged to comment on, criticise or contribute material to *Vanguard*. Articles, digital graphics, cartoons, clippings, comments or a few lines are all very welcome. All material should be sent to:

***Vanguard* Editorial Staff
PO Box 196, Fitzroy, Vic. 3065**

Vanguard strives to provide a Marxist analysis of Australian society, economy and politics. An important aspect of developing this analysis is an intimate knowledge of and close involvement in all aspects of Australian struggle.

The cost of producing a national newspaper is considerable. Readers are encouraged to contribute whatever they can by sending donations to the above address.

The CPA(M-L) may be contacted through *Vanguard* at PO Box 196, Fitzroy, Vic, 3065.

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Iraqi people demonstrate last month against the US occupation of Iraq

- Defend and extend workers' rights and conditions – Abolish the ABCC, fight for the right to organise and the right to strike - Target the Business Council of Australia and the Minerals Council, peak bodies of the biggest foreign monopoly corporations behind the attacks on unions and the rights of working people
- Build an independent, class conscious fighting union movement that defends and mobilises working people and the community
- Defend working people's livelihood and living standards – Tax the super-profits of mining monopolies and big banks to pay for people's services
- No cuts to public spending, education, health, community services. No extension of GST
- Protect and expand environmentally sustainable local manufacturing industry that creates local jobs. Protect and expand local scientific and medical research and development
- Defend and extend genuine democratic rights of the people. Dismantle anti-terror laws
- Protect the environment and make big polluters pay, not the people
- For an independent foreign policy - no foreign military bases on Australian soil. Solidarity with Libyan workers. Demand an end to Australian government support for US and NATO bombing of Libya
- For an anti-imperialist independent Australia and socialism

Fight for genuine democracy

by Jim H

Democracy is a fundamental right that's very important to the freedom and well being of the people. But, democracy is not above classes. In any society divided into classes democracy exists for the class that runs the economy and country.

In developed capitalist societies like Australia, there's democracy for the ruling class of super rich corporations who hold the real power. The term "democracy" is used by this tiny ruling class of big business corporations to deceive the people into thinking the country is governed by the majority of the people and there's equal democracy for all. It conceals the truth about who really runs the country and is confined to having an election every few years. The point is that the type of elections we have only gives pretence that the people have political power. They are essentially a sham to cover up the truth.

In today's Australia no matter which one of the main parliamentary parties is in power, the same class of people run the show. We have the domination of the Coalition Parties and the Australian Labor Party. There is really very little difference between them. In today's conditions of capitalist economic crisis there is even less difference.

The most important and decisive policies and decisions on how the economy is organised and how countries are governed are made in the corporate boardrooms of multinational corporations, the IMF, World Bank and G20. Locally, this ruling class is represented by top company directors and CEOs, media moguls, the Business Council of Australia, Minerals and Mining Council, the Australian Industry Group and Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and their reactionary Think Tanks. Their decisions and interests are implemented and upheld by the governments of the day, the bosses' legal system, a band of top government functionaries and the chiefs of the police and armed forces. This is the real government. It is not elected or accountable to the people. This constitutes a dictatorship of the ruling class.

Whichever parliamentary party is in power it serves this ruling class. Without ruling class support no parliamentary political party can form a government or stay in government. This relationship of power between government and corporate monopolies has been exposed over the superprofits mining tax, the CPRS and more recently the carbon price tax.

To move from the limited sham

democracy of the present to genuine democracy, the capitalist class rule must be overthrown. Only then will the political power be in the hands of the people. Genuine democracy can only come from below, based on the willing, active participation of the people. The implication is that a system of government, worthy of being called democratic, is run by the majority working class and based on a system of rule through mass organisations that elect their representatives at the local, regional and national levels.

Democracy does not only mean that the people have the decisive say, but that they are also involved in putting the decisions made into practice. This means that the working class and mass organisations rally the people to build a new society.

The ruling class uses every means at its disposal to deceive the people into believing that we have real democracy because we enjoy some equality before the law, the right to belong to organisations and freedom of the press. Reality however, is that most of these formal rights are on paper only.

What we really have are concessions that were won by people in many past battles. In practice they are quite limited and the ruling class takes up every opportunity to cut back even these limited rights. A significant assault is being waged on them at this very time. These rights must be defended and extended.

Equality before the law becomes a farce when laws are made to protect the profit making by corporations and the privileges and property of the rich, against the working class. The right to belong to an organisation doesn't match up with the numerous restrictions that are put on unions and workers. Just consider the present situation in the construction industry, where workers are criminalised and have many rights stripped off them. Freedom of the press exists for those who have the wealth to own publishing and printing companies, newspapers, magazines, TV and radio stations etc. Others don't really have this freedom. The mass media not only always promotes the interests of the ruling class but systematically creates and incites divisions and conflict amongst working people and the oppressed. Murdoch's press is the king maker of this.

Building genuine democracy also means changing the present class nature of the law and replacing it with law that protects the interests of the majority and makes it affordable to all. Ensuring the right to belong to organisations, means putting an end to restrictions that deny the right of the people to organise

Editorial

Imperialism demands more concessions from Labor

Sensing the weakness of the Gillard Labor government and its desire to pander to US imperialism, foreign and local big business monopolies have launched a fresh round of demands.

Even though the original mining super-profits tax was watered down in both size and scope of application by Prime Minister Gillard in almost her first act of government, this was never going to satisfy the big miners. Their media campaign of intimidation and threats to slash production and jobs and pull out investment has now moved on to demanding the removal of any resources rent tax at all.

Similarly, Labor's 'price on carbon' tax to reduce carbon emissions was watered down from Rudd's already minimalist Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. The totally inadequate 5% reduction target is still there.

Despite their massive profits, the big polluters in coal and electricity generation are demanding even more concessions.

In the past couple of months, a succession of top corporate monopoly bosses have lobbed in Canberra and around Australia, whinging about government taxes and regulations and basically demanding exemption from anything that limits or restricts their ability to amass record profits in record time.

At the time of the horrible events in Japan around the Fukushima nuclear plant, the big boss of General Electric, the company which manufactured the reactors at Fukushima, came to Australia to whitewash the nuclear industry and argue for continued exports of Australian uranium deposits.

The latest one to arrive was Cynthia Carroll, chief executive of Anglo American, the world's fourth biggest mining company and the biggest miner of coking coal in Australia. She came specifically to tell Julia Gillard that Labor's proposed carbon tax would put at risk \$4 billion worth of Anglo American planned mining investments, but then went to reveal that "The demand for coal, simply, will be very, very strong in the medium to long term."

She also mentioned the prospect of new Anglo American investment in iron ore in Western Australia. The threatened implication was that the carbon tax would put all this in jeopardy and give Australia a bad name in investment and export markets.

Closer to home, the Business Council of Australia, the mouthpiece of foreign imperialism and local monopolies, has revived its campaign to steamroll the Fair Work Act and introduce even harsher industrial laws.

Labor's Fair Work Act which replaced WorkChoices, was itself another concession to monopoly capitalism that hobbles union activity and limits workers' ability to take action around legitimate industrial and social demands. Again, not good enough for big business. Even Australian Industry Group's CEO Heather Ridout, a former close mate of Julia Gillard and Labor, is now singing a similar tune.

It is obvious, the more Labor concedes, the more often the corporate monopolies will come banging on the door for more. Appeasement never works. Imperialism is stepping up its assault on the rights of Australian workers and the sovereignty of this country.

The fact is, Australia is rich in natural resources, and the national wealth is created by the working people who have the capacity, skills and expertise to run the country for the majority. We don't need monopoly corporations and greedy imperialist investors to dictate our future.

around their collective interests. Freedom of the press means ensuring access to all forms of media, publishing and printing.

Democracy means even more than all this. It means making the workplace and community democratic, so that major decisions are made by the working people. It means that all have a right to an adequate standard

of living and quality of life. All must have enough to eat, affordable housing, the right to good health, education and opportunities. It means that the people have the right to protect their interests against the minority exploiters.

Genuine democracy would ensure that all of this takes place. Unfortunately it won't be handed down. It has to be fought for.

A Tribute to Fotios Antipas

On May Day, when the working class raises the red banner of international solidarity, we are proud to publish a son's tribute to a fine comrade whose struggles earned respect in two countries.

by *Andrew A*

On the 21st of June 2010, my father, comrade Fotios (Fred) Antipas, a long standing activist and member of the CPA (M-L), passed away at the Sunshine Hospital.

Fotios Antipas was born in his beloved village Mesovounia on the island of Kefallonia in Greece. He was the eldest of five children and was born into an extremely poor family.

At the age of 14 he took on the responsibility of supporting his impoverished family.

As a young man growing up in Greece, Fotios experienced at an early age the idea of exploitation.

In one incident when Fotios and one of his brothers made charcoal as a means to support his family, the coal trader who bought the charcoal took advantage of the young boys and underpaid them. This is when Fotios began to question the ideology of the capitalist system.

With the outbreak of WW2, Fotios witnessed firsthand the crimes of imperialism on his home island, and the brutality of the Italian and German fascist war machines.

The only hope of the people of Greece was the heroic struggles of the Communist led resistance forces. At the time, Fotios would run as a messenger boy for the resistance and his political lessons had begun.

Fotios began to resist the system early in his late teens when he served compulsory military service in the Greek army. The right wing officers often used brutality against the uneducated soldiers.

Fotios too had received his fair share of brute force; one day he had enough after being hit by an officer, and Fotios retaliated. Such small episodes of conflict with the Greek ruling class authority continued.

After some time he was warned he had best leave Greece, as he was a marked man by the Greek establishment.

So in 1953, he farewelled his father and boarded the migrant ship *Seven Seas*, bound for Australia.

Fotios, like many early migrants, ended up at the Bonegilla Migrant camp. After a short work stint at the Ford motor company in Geelong, Fotios ended up in Melbourne. Here he got involved with the Greek progressive organisation, Democritus.

In 1957, his comrade Ekaterina arrived from Greece and they married.

They had 3 children Deodora, Glen and Andrew. Deodora also passed away late last year on November 21st after losing a brave fight with breast cancer.

Fotios was politically involved from his early years in Australia. He was not only a student of Marxism – Leninism, but also a teacher. Fotios was not just a theorist Marxist, but very much a practical one.

I would see my father read and study for hours at home, reading and writing for the liberation of the working class and the overthrow of the capitalist state.

He took inspiration and lessons from some of the CPA (M-L)'s most respected leaders including Ted Hill, Ted Bull and Basil Stefanou.

He was never far from working class struggles, whether it was a May Day march, where he would hand out the *Vanguard*, an anti war march, working at the Kalkadoon Bookshop, talking on 3CR in Greek, fighting for workers' rights as a CFMEU shop steward, fighting with his comrades in Sunshine against Smorgon Steel and winning.

Fighting wherever there was a cause of the oppressed and the exploited, Fotios, like a true Marxist and Communist, would be in the midst in



Fighting the Nazi German occupation in Greece

one capacity or another.

Not only did Fotios fight for local causes, but in the late 60s took on the US-backed Greek junta from Australia, with the help of his comrade Ted Bull, when the waterside workers refused to unload Greek merchant ships.

After the junta was overthrown, the Greek unionists invited Aussie waterside workers to Greece to thank them for the sacrifices in fighting the Greek fascists.

My dad would talk to me for hours on the downfall of capitalism and he told me he would not be around to see that day. And today we are seeing the slow decay.

Like many people of his generation, circumstances and the times directed

him to evolve as a conscientious Communist, but like many true Communists it was something more, and this was demonstrated in his last days of life.

His wife Ekaterina asked him if he loved her; Fotios, with the little life left in him responded 'Yes'. "How much?" his wife asked. "All I can", he answered. These were his last words.

Like all lost comrades, they fought for a better world because they loved and cared not only for their families, but also the working class, and to their last breath they gave us all.

Lost comrades are not just spectators in life; they were active participants for the liberation of humanity, the most honourable way any one can live.

Victorian primary schools 'must' teach religion

by *Bill F*

Victoria was one of the first places to set up a free, secular and compulsory government education system in 1872, but all this has been progressively undermined, especially in recent times.

Now the State Liberal government says that all Victorian public primary schools must host Christian education classes run by some 400 volunteers of the Access Ministries organisation, regardless of whether the schools or parents want this.

Other religious groups, such as Jewish, Islamic and Hare Krishna also run some classes, but the overwhelming majority (96%) are delivered by Access Ministries.

Even though the actual legislation states that religious instruction "may be given", the Education Department has ruled that, "The word 'may' used in ... the Education and Training Reform Act ... is interpreted as 'must' to conform with the original intent of the Victorian legislation".



Parents who do not want their children to attend the compulsory half-hour religion class each week can choose to 'opt out', but this sometimes causes social problems for their children, including those from minority groups or religions.

Children who do, in fact, 'opt out' are denied the alternative of school work, and are forced to sit in a room or corridor during that period.

The Humanist Society of Victoria has taken legal action against the Education Department, claiming children who 'opt out' are being discriminated against. In New South Wales, ethics classes are

provided for children who 'opt out', but the Victorian Education Department refuses to follow this example, saying that it would be unfair to the others.

If one of the government's reasons for funding private schools is to give parents the choice of a religious education, then it should also be recognised that many parents choose government schools in order for their children to receive a secular education and to make up their minds about religion later in life.

For further information, see www.religioninschool.com

Victoria's public sector workers prepare for battle

by *Jim H*

Victoria's 250,000 public sector workers, working in almost 2,000 enterprises, are gearing up for a campaign to raise their wages and conditions, and to improve services that are important to working people.

At present, Victoria's public sector workers often find themselves as the lowest paid government workers in Australia.

Work pressure has been increasing markedly, as the effects of cost-cutting, corporatisation and privatisation take their toll.

In response, the public sector unions are developing a united campaign of action with wide community support.

Public sector workers recognise that the services they provide are important for the livelihood of the people. For this reason, these services must be fought for.

The campaign will link the common interests of public sector workers and the interests of the wider community.

JobWatch under threat

According to JobWatch, it was told on March 17 by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Richard Della-Riva: "It is my assessment that the activities for which the previous government provided funding are no longer clearly aligned to the objectives of my Department."

JobWatch provides advice to 20,000 Victorians each year about unfair dismissal, harassment and bullying.

The rare honesty of Della-Riva's remark does not take away from the fact that it reveals an intention, by the Baillieu Coalition government, to wage a major assault on jobs and conditions. It is openly a government serving the big end of town, and in doing this, is extending what was laid down by the previous Labor government.

Cutbacks will hit everyone

As employees of this government, public sector workers stand on the frontline.

If the Victorian government gets away with its intentions, wages and conditions will go down across the board. Cutbacks to public services will be extended and the standard of living of the majority of Victorians will be lowered.

This battle is going to have much broader implications. All workers will be affected by its outcome. If it is won, the assault will be turned back and all workers will be left in a stronger position to protect their interests.

These developments cannot be separated from the general push by the biggest foreign and local corporate monopoly employers to extract more from all Australian workers.

Part of this push is to raid public resources and bring in harsh austerity measures.

Both Labor and the Coalition parties

are co-opted to implement the neo-liberal economic policies of foreign imperialism through cost cutting, corporatisation and privatisation.

Defending the public interest

All unions involved are well aware that the outcome will be determined

mainly by the preparedness of public sector workers to take a firm stand and do whatever has to be done.

With a well prepared strategy and iron strong solidarity, together with winning over the active support of the wider community, the public sector workers can win.

Measures for a People's Budget

by *Nick G*

Blind Freddy will not see it, and neither will you or I; a budget that puts the interests of the people first... an anti-imperialist Budget that makes defence of Australian independence and sovereignty its starting point.

That is because it is impossible for the ruling class of corporate monopolies to subordinate its own interests – tied as they are to US and other imperialisms – to those of the people. A government that puts the interests of the people above big business profits would:

- Restrict multinationals' profits leaving Australia; use them for the development of local industries and agriculture
- Re-nationalise the Commonwealth Bank to provide a source of capital for an independent economy and impose lending directions on all other banks
- Introduce a tax on the super-profits of the banks, other financial institutions and the mining industry; redirect capital for social infrastructure and other beneficial uses for people and the environment
- Increase company tax on large corporations and profits and dividends sent overseas
- Reduce taxes on important locally-owned manufacturing and renewable energy industries; give assistance to the production of commodities that are beneficial to the Australian people's future
- Reduce income tax for all but those on the highest bracket
- Tax the polluters; outlaw the passing on of this cost to consumers
- Increase expenditure to ensure adequate wages and salaries and social security payments; provide quality free public health and education
- Increase expenditure on social housing to combat the shortage of affordable housing
- Provide more and better quality child care services
- Guarantee workers' rights to enjoy secure employment, decent conditions, a safe workplace and the right to organise and strike
- Provide assistance to small and medium businesses and farmers under threat from competition from unfair monopoly actions and foreign competition
- Increase funding to local scientific and technical research and development to build an environmentally sustainable economy and advance medical research
- Scrap the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement. Oppose Australia signing up to the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement, which aims to increase US imperialism's control of the Australian economy
- Provide assistance for the development of regional economies and Australian farming on the basis of local ownership
- End wasteful and elitist public expenditure on private schools; government funds must be exclusively used to raise the standard of public education
- Stop military spending that supports US imperialist wars of aggression and occupation. Withdraw funding to US military bases on Australian soil
- Involve the people in making change

Marxism Today

Immediate Demands, National Independence and Socialism

by **Bill F**

How do Immediate Demands relate to the *Vanguard* slogan “For an Independent Australia and Socialism”?

Firstly, immediate demands should cover the most prominent issues of concern to the working class and many broader sections of people in society.

They should cover areas where the people are engaged in the day to day struggle for improvements and reforms in their living and working conditions, for protection of the natural environment, for equality and justice in society, for decent social services and community facilities, for an independent foreign policy based on peace, fairness and integrity.

Immediate demands also look after the well-being of the people, build unity, and strengthen the capacity to struggle.

The mass line

A list of Immediate Demands was formulated by the CPA (M-L) and represents an attempt to apply the approach outlined by Mao Zedong in his essay, *Some questions concerning methods of leadership* (1943) “...all

correct leadership is necessarily ‘from the masses, to the masses’. This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas)”...

Thus, immediate demands arise from the people, from campaigns and mobilisations that have already been initiated around the conditions of life, but are expressed in a way that points to progressive alternatives that are both realistic and to some extent, reveal a vision of the future.

Narrow the target, broaden the base

Secondly, the immediate demands formulated by the CPA (M-L) sharply target the large foreign corporate monopolies and multinational companies that are the core of Australian capitalism.

The most powerful and influential monopolies are American. Together with its political and military influence, this economic influence means that the interests of US imperialism underpin Australian capitalism.

Small Australian capitalists, entrepreneurs and producers are being wiped out every day by the inroads of

foreign imperialism.

Working people face job insecurity, loss of wages and conditions, rising living costs, and poor public amenities and government services as a result of ever-increasing attacks to serve the interests of foreign imperialism, especially US imperialism and its partners in Australia.

Paving the way for US imperialism are the foreign and local collaborators in the Business Council of Australia. They manipulate and bully State and Federal governments, and finance mass media campaigns to promote more foreign investment, more dismantling of Australian industries, more subservience to so-called ‘globalisation’.

The link to socialism

It is impossible to talk about winning socialism in Australia without confronting the dominant core of capitalism in this country – US and other foreign imperialist interests.

The path to socialism lies in expelling foreign imperialism and winning real and genuine national independence.

It is fundamental to uphold the leadership of the working class in this revolutionary struggle, but it would be wrong to think that the working class

can achieve victory on its own.

It needs and can win allies from other sections of the people also oppressed by imperialism. The demands reflect the interests of these sections as well, and flow in the direction of building a united front against imperialism, a people’s movement for national independence.

Test ideas in practice

Finally, and critically, as Mao Zedong says, we need to “... go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action.”

This means systematically and diligently promoting these immediate demands at an appropriate time, and in an appropriate manner, in the struggles taking place.

What is important is to promote the ideas behind the demands, not just focussing on the words alone as if that is all that is necessary.

To review the full list of Immediate Demands, see *Vanguard* Nov. 20120 or www.vanguard.net.au

They will also be republished in the June issue of *Vanguard*.

No nuclear power! No nuclear weapons!

by **Bill F**

The Fukushima tragedy underscores the dangers of the nuclear industry run for profit under capitalism.

Even now, a month after the earthquake and tsunami hit the Fukushima nuclear power complex, massive doses of radiation are still spewing into the surrounding sea and air, while heroic emergency crews are desperately trying to cool the fuel rods and can barely contain sporadic fires and explosions.

The evacuation zone around the nuclear plant has been increased, and the official disaster level has been raised to the maximum 7, on par with the massive Chernobyl disaster of 1986.

A succession of large after-shocks in the range 6 to 7+ on the Richter scale are terrorising the population and threaten even more hideous nuclear destruction across the north of Japan.

Yet, we have the pro-nuclear lobby still arguing that nuclear power is the answer to Australia’s energy needs and the solution to climate warming. Ziggy Switkowski, former chair of ANSTO

(Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation) has kicked an own goal with his statement “... the best place to be whenever there’s an earthquake is at the perimeter of a nuclear plant because they are designed so well”, followed by, “On the other hand, you know, if the engineers do lose control of the core, then the answer becomes different.” It sure does!

In a recent article, Ian Lowe, president of the Australian Conservation Foundation, noted that nuclear power was already on the way out. “In 2008 and 2009, the world retired 3000 megawatts of old nuclear capacity and only 1000 megawatts was brought on line. In the same two years, about 60,000 megawatts of new wind power was commissioned.”

He then listed five compelling reasons why Australia shouldn’t go nuclear.

“First, nuclear is certainly not a fast enough response to climate change. Even the fervently pro-nuclear Switkowski committee concluded that it would take 10 to 15 years to build one nuclear reactor. Their hypothetical crash program of 25 reactors by 2050 would only slow the growth in our greenhouse

pollution, not achieve the reduction that is needed.

“Second, it is too expensive. Again, even Ziggy Switkowski’s group conceded there would need to be both a carbon price and other government subsidies to make nuclear look competitive. In every country where it operates, the nuclear sector is substantially reliant on taxpayer subsidies. And insurance companies won’t insure nuclear reactors, so the public picks up the bill when things go wrong.

“Third, the waste. Accidents are not the only risk to society from nuclear power. Nobody has yet demonstrated safe permanent management of radioactive waste, 55 years after the nuclear experiment began.

“Fourth, weapons. While it is possible in principle to solve the problem of radioactive waste, there does not seem any real prospect of stopping weapons proliferation... The more people use nuclear technology, the greater is the risk of fissile material being diverted for weapons.”

We might add that proliferation is only part of the problem – what about

‘rogue states’ like the USA, Israel and Pakistan that already have nuclear arsenals?

“Lastly, the fundamental point is that there are better alternatives. A Commonwealth report 20 years ago said we could get all our electricity from a mix of renewables by 2030.

“A study released last year concluded that we could achieve that goal by 2020 if we were serious about it. This is a responsible approach to reducing our greenhouse pollution and doing our bit to slow down global warming... A mix of renewable supply systems would also decentralise energy production, so it would be good for regional Australia.

“It would not require new regulatory systems, local development of a whole new set of technical skills or an unwise level of dependence on foreign expertise.”

We have to agree with his conclusion: “The nuclear debate should be a no-brainer for Australia.

“There is no case for us to commit to a dangerous, slow and expensive energy option when we have such plentiful sources of safe, clean renewable energy.”

Self-empowerment of Aboriginal communities developing in South Australia

by Nick G

In the March edition of this paper there was a statement from Aboriginal Elders from the Northern Territory. It was an appeal to the people of Australia to “walk with us in true equality”.

Two Aboriginal men in South Australia have enacted that equality, bringing Aboriginal law and culture back to the communities of Port Augusta and Coober Pedy without seeking the permission of, or relying on handouts from, the colonial authorities.

Karranjal John Hartley was born in New South Wales and is of Ku Ku Yalanji/Irish descent. Murray George is a senior man from the Kaltjiti community at Fregon on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands.

Remarkably, they have not only revived interest in traditional law and culture within their own people, but they have had a warm and positive response from non-Aboriginal people, and even the authorities, in the two towns.

Both towns are significant as meeting places and residences for people from various language groups around the north and west of South Australia. These groups are not always on good terms with each other, particularly in Coober Pedy with its proximity to Olympic Dam and other mining areas.

The mining companies exacerbate conflict and play favourites over Land Titles disputes. It is colonial divide and rule at its worst, with big money involved.

Recognising that their traditional law and culture is vulnerable, John and Murray established the Aboriginal Law and Culture Movement to regenerate and maintain Aboriginal values, beliefs and practices. They insisted that they do this on their own terms; that they needed, as John says, to “break out of organising within colonial constructs”.

“On their own terms” meant, among other things, that when it came to enacting traditional law in Port Augusta and Coober Pedy at the beginning of this year, they had no petrol, no money and no food. A friendly donation gave them a kick-start, but it was eventually the support from within the Aboriginal communities of the two towns that enabled them to continue.

Arriving in Pt Augusta just before the New Year, John and Murray accessed some land through a local Elder, got hold of a grader and prepared a site for ceremonies, and set about contacting locals and explaining their purpose.

After a week they were ready to begin. And it was not only the older



Murray George and John Hartley

members of the community who came to their camp, but some of the younger people in the town, young Aboriginal people with jobs to go to but with a real desire to embrace their culture and the learning of their old people.

One young fellow, with his family’s support, was assisted to go to the APY Lands and travel country. It has been quite unusual for young people in the towns, with all the attractions and temptations of the fast life, to willingly undertake the customary rites of passage, so for many people, this was an inspiring commitment.

Enacting traditional law was something that had not been done in Port Augusta for 50 years, so there were a few misconceptions that had to be overcome, both within and outside of the Aboriginal community.

Meetings were held with the police, not for permission or approval, but simply to clear the air. A phone call was had with the Mayor.

In the event, the enactment of traditional law on the ceremony ground was attended by many in the Aboriginal community, including young people. The police described it as the quietest New Year for years and one even provided the fuel money to get Murray and John to Coober Pedy.

There they made a more permanent camp. Positive meetings were held with the police and the local magistrate. These people, who were embedded in the colonial structures, could at least see the sense and the need for community Elders to be involved with the young people.

Young Aborigines are grossly over-represented in the gaols – everything the colonial authorities have tried to do has failed.

“We have ways to address problems with our young people, but we’re not recognised and supported by the colonial

authorities, we’re not given our due or our worth,” John told *Vanguard*.

Working through a local Elder, more than one hundred of the Coober Pedy Aboriginal community gathered around the ceremony site where various activities were held to enact traditional law and to regenerate and rekindle customary law and culture.

Actually, over the time that the camp was functioning, something like 1000 Aborigines from all over, from the APY Lands, from Kokatha and Dieri country and from as far away as Western Australia came to celebrate law being enacted again in this community.

As Murray says, “We call ourselves brothers and sisters for a very good reason – because we *are*. There are many languages in our communities, but the law that runs through them is the same.”

The non-Indigenous community was also affected. The town was quiet and pleasant to walk around at night, lots of the tourists were inquisitive about what was happening, the income of shop-keepers increased and, in return, non-Aboriginal people helped out with boxes of food and drink for the camp.

“We didn’t wait for permission or

proper funding to do this,” said John. “We did what is our inherent right to do as Aboriginal people in our own land, bypassing the colonial authority.”

There is hope that what happened in these two towns will become an annual event.

There are some things involved with traditional law and culture that are not for sharing, but John was very positive about the willingness of traditional custodians to share what was for open knowledge and practice.

“We hold the stories, but we can share them too,” he said. “But we need recognition and respect and support, for if that thin line of old fellers around the country who hold the stories and the Language dies out, then our young will be lost to us for all time and the oldest, continuous living culture on the face of the planet will cease to be.”

“Aboriginal culture is for all Australians. Our view is that if you’re born in this country, then you’re born *of* this country.”

John and Murray are working on a documentary on song-lines linking country.

See <http://twobrotherswalking.com/>

“Don’t Tell Me Peace Has Broken Out!”

by Ned K

“Don’t Tell Me Peace Has Broken Out” is a famous quote from the German progressive writer Bertolt Brecht in the period of Spanish and Second World War to highlight the prevalence of war as an ever present feature of imperialism and the desire of the peoples of the world for peace.

It is still applicable today. The imperialist theatre of war has now spread to northern Africa.

Accompanying each new act of war

is the language of imperialist war. In Afghanistan, the government forces are “fighting for freedom” while the non-government forces are “terrorists”.

In Libya, the imperialist language is that the government is “tyrannical” led by a “dictator” while the non-government forces are “rebels” but “fighting for freedom”.

However, let Brecht also have the last word with telling words for the imperialists of his day and now.

“Because things are the way they are, they will not stay the way they are”.

Challenges for the Australian Labour Movement in 2011 and beyond

Vanguard is pleased to publish the following May Day statement from Brian Boyd, Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, because it makes a contribution to discussion of important issues facing the working class in Australia.

The next Federal election will be won by the party that attracts the majority of the working class vote.

Between 30% and 40% of Australians self-identify as being working class – and traditionally their vote has gone to Labor.

But politicians of all shades play up to working people. They are desperate to win their vote, but seldom think about them after they get it.

Media commentators write endlessly about who is ‘winning’ this battle for the ‘hearts and minds’ of working people.

Before 2007 many workers were insultingly called “Howard’s battlers”. Leading up to the 2010 federal election some spin doctors tried to portray them as “Abbott’s Army”.

After the recent NSW state election (March 2011) they called them “O’Farrell’s Battlers” because of the many ALP seats lost in Western Sydney.

But the ‘ownership’ battle the parliamentary parties have opened around working people’s vote never takes into account what those people want.

The conservatives love to claim most workers deep down ‘aspire’ to becoming business people. Their courting of working people is desperate and cynical.

They are looking for converts alright but not because they believe working people deserve respect for their work and a fairer share of the wealth they create. They are solely looking for votes.

The ALP struggles with its responsibilities to the people who created the Labor Party in the first place, while it constantly courts and duchesses big business for support. Occasionally some commentators get close to the heart of the matter.

Michael Thompson in *The Australian* (April 2) wrote about the “traditional working class supporters” of Labor, the “core working class constituency”, “rusted on Labor die-hards”, the “working class heartland” and so on. Thompson expressed concern that the ALP has been taken over by so-called ‘progressives’ “to the exclusion of Labor’s working class supporters”. While he gives the term ‘progressive’ too easily to the opportunists within the party, he does not shy away from the still valid term ‘working class’ to make

his point.

In his 1999 book, *Labor without class*, Thompson expressed concern that ALP traditional supporters will turn to “other political parties” searching for anyone “who speaks to their values”.

For the record, Thompson emphasises that Labor’s heartland is quite capable of embracing the causes of “equality for women, tolerance of other cultures, care for the environment and like issues”, without jettisoning their basic working class aspirations and values.

Michael Thompson goes over briefly the 1996, 1998, 2001 federal elections and how the results showed the ALP allowing the ‘drifting away’ and ‘defections’ of the working class.

But he misdiagnoses the 1999 failed ballot for a republic, over-emphasising the “blue collar outer suburban electorates... solidly voted no!” There were more concrete reasons for this unfortunate failure – the purposefully poor presentation of the referendum question by John Howard and how certain pro-republicans undermined the cause with a self-righteous and over ambitious stance.

Thompson’s targetting of what he calls the “Whitlamite generation” is also a distraction from crystallising the problems facing the modern ALP.

It should be acknowledged the Gough Whitlam ‘experiment’ of 1972-75 broke the stranglehold of the Cold War Menzies era; it ended our disgraceful “all the way with LBJ” mentality and our equally disgraceful involvement in the Vietnam War, with Whitlam pardoning a generation of anti-war youth.

Whitlam also challenged ASIO for its dealing with ultra-right groups like the Ustashi, and exposed the hold the US has on our foreign policy by revealing the secret operations of US spy bases like Pine Gap.

His Minerals and Energy minister Rex Connor tried to get some value out of our mineral riches four decades before the current mining tax debate, only to fall foul of con-men and maybe a dirty tricks operation.

Whitlam promoted, via “seed” monies, an Australian cultural renaissance in literature and cinema (e.g. *Sunday too far away*) in the face of US product overkill swamping our TV screens and the like.

But certainly Michael Thompson shines a worthy light on how

mainstream political parties cause distrust and cynicism by playing games with working people.

Between 2005-07, hundreds of thousands of organised Australian workers took to the streets, organised in their workplaces and campaigned in their communities to get rid of the anti-worker and anti-union Howard government. They achieved this historical mission, including (it should never be forgotten) the unseating of Howard himself.

Since then careerist apparatchiks have suggested that all the ALP “has to do is mount a WorkChoices scare campaign and the blue collar workers will come running back to Labor with their tails between their legs,” writes Thompson.

Before the last federal election (August 2010) the ALP polling showed their campaign was not hitting home. In the last week the ALP grabbed hold of the union movement’s issue: “WorkChoices – never again”.

It was a reluctant switch of emphasis as Prime Minister Gillard and Co didn’t want to talk about industrial relations. They didn’t want to concede, as some in the union movement had, that the then new Fair Work Act was already exposing the new government’s claim that “WorkChoices was dead”, as simply not being true.

There was nowhere near the enthusiasm from organised workers in the lead up to the 2010 federal election, compared with the pre-2007 federal election period. They had nothing to fight for, especially in terms of workplace rights and the ability to achieve better wages and conditions.

In the lead up to the 2007 election the employers had pushed for influence on the then ALP opposition and its agenda – Ms Heather Ridout of the Australian Industry Group was very influential in that push.

After the 2007 election many unionists believed Ms Ridout was given high level unofficial status by the ALP government. Whatever – employers’ influence on the government continued up to and beyond the 2010 federal election. And many people within the labour movement continually warned the federal ALP that the employers would always be “fair weather” friends.

Now that we have a minority ALP government in Canberra, with tenuous arrangements in place, the employers are looking for harsher IR legislation to further weaken workers’ rights.

Heather Ridout has been using code – claiming that the current IR laws are making businesses “uncompetitive” and “less productive”. She has complained that the “Bargaining process” and unions’ concerns about “job security” and “sham contracting” are negatively impacting on employers.

This development highlights a key, unresolved contradiction facing the Gillard government – how to promote business and economic development while allowing Australian workers to have a fair deal. The employers don’t want working people to have workplace rights – it is as simple as that. Ridout might have been the more ‘acceptable’ employer representative in recent years, but she knows who butters her bread. She knows Prime Minister Gillard is in a hard place.

The federal ALP has reviewed its performance in the lead up to the August 2010 federal election and the poor result it achieved at the election. Some of those commenting on the result will say anything to avoid making a comparison between 2007 and 2010.

Put simply, the 2007 result was characterised by a focused, determined union campaign that delivered. 2010 wasn’t.

Some Laborites want to visit the links between the ALP and the union movement, but only to lessen the voice of the organised workers. While it is begrudgingly acknowledged “unions played a key role in the campaign against John Howard’s WorkChoices” some want union influence within the ALP to “have a closer relationship to union coverage in the workforce”. This is code for less union influence on policy development and more influence to go to party careerists.

Everyone talks about the “return to core values” but many want to deny organised labour’s effective input. The lesson of 2007 is not sinking in.

An effective anti-conservative campaign by a unified union movement can add a 4-5% vote winning margin to an election.

But it is critical in any election scenario that key pro-worker policies are articulated and promoted so organised labour can be motivated. Trying to sell economic growth for the sake of it just doesn’t do it.

All the more reason for an independent and unified union movement which sees through the hype and circus of parliament, and focuses on issues that will improve the standard of living and the rights of workers.

Divide and rule practised against Aboriginal people

by Nick G

British colonialism refined the tactic of divide and rule over its subject peoples in an effort to prolong its reactionary domination.

Anyone with half an understanding of history can see this still being played out on a daily basis by the journalists of the capitalist media, particularly in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Noel Pearson, Warren Mundine and a handful of other indigenous "leaders" are put forward to advance positions which, in the name of the exploited, further oppress and marginalise ATSI peoples.

It is classic neo-liberalism: highlight existing inequality to create opportunities for the further enrichment of the few under the guise of some sort of "intervention" or "Superman-to-the-rescue" scheme involving private corporate interests.

More questions than answers

The latest example is the publicity given to Walpiri woman Bess Price on the *Q and A* television show and the howls of outrage at Aboriginal academic Prof. Larissa Behrendt's subsequent "tweet".

Behrendt is currently one of nine people suing Murdoch press columnist Andrew Bolt under the Racial Discrimination Act after he challenged their identity as ATSI people.

The disgraceful rag, the so-called *Australian*, seized on Behrendt's tweet to slur her under the heading "Aboriginal sophisticates betray bush sisters".

Price was promoted as a supporter of the racist land grab, a.k.a. the Northern Territory "Intervention", claiming that it had led to improvements for Aboriginal people in the NT.

However, Barbara Shaw, spokesperson for the Intervention Rollback Action Group in Alice Springs, and resident of Mt Nancy Town camp, says that comments by Price on *Q and A* about the "success" of the Intervention ignore the huge evidence of continuing failure.

IRAG says Mrs Price's comments have caused distress amongst people living in prescribed areas under the Intervention, whose experiences of deteriorating social conditions continue to be ignored by government and mainstream media. "It is outrageous that Bess Price can continue to go on national media and spread false information on the Intervention while life in our town camps and communities gets harder and



Barbara Shaw and Marlene Hodder

harder", says Barbara Shaw.

"We now have a massive crisis in Alice Springs as people come in from the bush because of the failure of the Intervention. On Monday night while Bess was on *Q and A* talking about our kids being safer, I was dealing with multiple situations of children needing emergency care.

"The Intervention has done nothing to help - I find it harder to look after my family because I am still on the BasicsCard. If things are so good, why do government statistics show more children being admitted to hospital for malnutrition and more young people committing suicide and self-harm?"

"Why are more and more children being taken away from parents and put into care?" Ms Shaw asks.

"Bess says education is the key to improving lives. But she didn't say that Yuendumu school attendance rates have halved and are now down to only 30% since the Intervention came in and bilingual education was banned by the

NT government."

Ms Shaw says she is very concerned that Bess Price is misinforming the wider community about the feelings and views of NT Aboriginal people about the Intervention.

"Marcia Langton wrote in the *Australian* today that Bess Price 'resides in Yuendumu'. This is untrue and *The Australian* needs to correct the public record.

"Bess does not live under the Intervention. She lives a comfortable lifestyle in the eastern suburbs of Alice Springs, not in a prescribed area.

"She does not have a BasicsCard and she does not work for the dole. She doesn't have her home raided. She doesn't have her alcohol taken away at the bottle shop,"

Ms Shaw concluded, "Bess says Aboriginal women have been given a voice by the Intervention - but which ones?"

"Thousands of women have lost their jobs as Community Development

Employment Projects (CDEP) close down, many women leaders have lost their positions of authority as community councils were closed and Government Business Managers and Shires took over."

An Alice Springs based community worker and IRAG member Marlene Hodder says, "Many Warlpiri women living in Alice Springs are very unhappy that Bess Price assumes she can speak for them.

"Last year they sent a strong recorded message to Minister Macklin as she refused to meet with them on more than one occasion. They are tired of not being listened to as they feel the Intervention is an insult to them as mothers, grandmothers and carers.

"These women say they struggle to maintain their dignity with racist taunts being thrown at them as they walk into town, and the unfairness of the BasicsCard when the reality is that there is no work for them."

Fighting back

Where there is oppression there is resistance. As the history of the British Empire can testify, where there are attempts to divide and rule, there are counter moves to unify and act.

- **End the racist intervention now!**
- **Aboriginal control of Aboriginal affairs!**
- **Unite against divide and rule tactics!**

Coles accused of predatory behaviour

by Duncan B

Coles has been accused of using its market power to prevent a competitor from buying Australia's largest lamb processor, Colac-based company CRF.

CRF supplies 60% of Coles' lamb nationally - about 1.2 million lambs a year. This is about 95% of CRF's processing. It is obvious how dependent CRF is on Coles.

CRF's contract with Coles is up for renewal, and it is alleged in the *Weekly Times* of April 13 that Coles threatened CRF that it would not renew this contract if the CRF board sold the business to a rival consortium.

It is alleged that Coles then put in an offer for CRF which was about half the



\$15 million bid for CRF by the other consortium.

Coles is now the only bidder for CRF, and the CRF board has had to recommend that shareholders accept Coles' offer, because if Coles withdrew its business, CRF would have to go into administration, forcing it to make workers redundant.

Coles' behaviour has been described as "outrageous" and "unconscionable."

They are denying the allegations and putting a positive spin on the affair.

Lamb producers are likely to be the long term losers as Coles seeks to vertically integrate meat sales from the farm to the customer. It's called monopoly capitalism, and like the price cutting campaign, it is designed to weaken the bargaining power of suppliers and drive competitors out of the market.

Propaganda drowns out the facts in Libya

by **Bill F**

The western monopoly media has been busy firing their propaganda missiles to justify the blatant imperialist war launched against Libya.

They quote the United Nations Security Council resolution 1973 that approved the so-called 'No Fly Zone', allegedly to defend the civilian population.

While they maintain this was approved by the "international community", they neglect to say that it was never voted on by the General Assembly of nations, and that it only passed the Security Council by a handful of votes.

Large and important nations, such as Brazil, Germany, China, India and Russia did not vote for it, but they are not counted as "the West" and therefore not part of this mythical "international community".

Nor was there any examination of why these countries took this position, or why China or Russia did not veto the resolution.

The only matter the monopoly media wanted to report was that the United Nations had endorsed the 'No Fly Zone' and anything else was irrelevant.

No Truth Zone

US imperialism then took over. Their planes initially carried out unprovoked attacks on Libyan air defences and airfields, securing the 'No Fly Zone' in a matter of days.

They then proceeded to attack other Libyan military targets behind the battle-lines, such as tanks, artillery, troop compounds, ammunition dumps and communication facilities.

This was not questioned in any way by the monopoly media, even though it was only supposed to be done to 'protect the civilian population' under direct attack.

The next step was to extend the aerial assault to Libyan infrastructure such as roads, transport depots, civilian communication equipment, radio and television stations and administrative offices.

This too was justified by the monopoly media, quoting that part of resolution 1973 that stated "all necessary means" could be used to 'protect the civilian population'.

Only when the dirty work had been done, and the propaganda line been bedded down, did the US hand over the ongoing air war to the French and

British, who also wanted to practice their military skills.

Since then, the 'No Fly Zone' has become purely air support for the so-called 'rebel militia' whenever they go up against the Libyan army.

With the aerial bombing of Tripoli and Sirte and other towns held by the government, any pretence of 'protecting the civilian population' has been blown away. Like Iraq and Afghanistan,

democracy" supporters. In spite of this, some facts have emerged about some of the groups involved in the leadership of the 'rebels'.

According to Peter Dale Scott, a former Canadian diplomat and English Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, "The main group leading the insurrection is the *National Conference for the Libyan Opposition* which includes the *National Front for*

Upon their return to Libya they grew angry about what they viewed as the corruption and impiety of the Libyan regime and formed the LIFG to create a state that would show what they believed to be the true character of the Libyan people."

"As recently as February 2004, then-Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee that 'one of the most immediate threats [to U.S. security] is from smaller international Sunni extremist groups that have benefited from al-Qaida links. They include ... the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group.'"

Through dependent military connections in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, the US has been able supply these extremist groups with weapons and training sufficient to maintain the war in Libya in spite of their poor organisation and morale.

Whenever the 'rebels' are featured in media reports, all we see are a handful of people waving flags and shooting in the air. (Tricky camera work – remember the rent-a crowd tearing down the statue of Saddam!)

Where are the huge mass rallies that we saw in Egypt, and are still happening in Bahrain and Yemen?

Where are the people who opposed Gaddafi, but also opposed foreign intervention? Who is interviewing them?

Yet with all the fighting, chaos and disruption, the 'rebel' government has still been able to set up an oil export company and dispatch its first oil tanker from Benghazi to Europe.

But that's just a side issue. This war is not really about oil, is it?



Libyan government supporters on the street

indiscriminate use of air power always results in civilian casualties or in military-speak, "collateral damage".

None of this hypocrisy has been seriously examined by the apologist monopoly media.

The most pathetic propaganda effort has been to fudge the facts about the so-called 'rebel militia' who are presented as "freedom fighters" and "pro-

the Salvation of Libya (NFSL). The NFSL, which is leading the violence, is a U.S.-sponsored armed militia of mostly Libyan expatriates and tribes opposed to al-Qaddafi."

Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) was founded in 1995 by a group of mujahideen veterans who had fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Cubans commemorate the Bay of Pigs victory

by **Jim H**

On April 16, a mass march took place in Havana to mark the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of the socialist character of the revolution and Cuba's historic victory over a US invasion force at Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs).

This attempted American invasion was aimed at what they now called regime change. Very little has changed over the years. As the number one imperialist power in the world today the US behaves as if it has the right to determine how all nations should run their affairs. In a recent TV interview, a spokesperson for the US administration, when responding to a question regarding the funding of the Syrian opposition,

replied that they were in the business of actively supporting forces 'that will bring about democratic change all over the world.' This was a rare moment of honesty.

But democracy for these people means imposing the right for American

multinationals to exploit peoples and resources. The predatory behavior of US imperialism is the principal cause of conflict in the world. The anniversary of the Bay of Pigs reminds us yet again of the need for international unity against this scourge.



What's in a name? Ask United Voice!

-contributed-

On 1 March 2011, the union I belong to, the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union (LHMU) became United Voice.

In Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*, Juliet asks, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet" The same in one sense is true of my union. It was "sweet" to me when it was LHMU and before that when it was LTU and FMWU.

However it is much sweeter now as United Voice. A lot of other union members think the same.

We know that unions have their limitations, but all union leaders should at least be out there leading from the front and inspiring members and potential members.

I know I can speak for a lot of members of United Voice. At least our number one leader and her team are 'having a go'.

Organising To Win

We are proud of the national leadership of our union in endorsing a name that reflects what most working people all across Australia want.

People know that to win any issue, big or small, we have to be united. However that's not enough, we have to have a strong voice too, otherwise neither the bosses nor the politicians will hear us.

Not only that, if unions are timid with a whisper instead of a voice, how can we as members expect others in the community to join us in fighting for just causes?

It's also a proud time for members of United Voice to see our National



Council as (can you believe it?) guests at the high profile National Press Club, all in United Voice tops I am told, surrounding a group of journos from mainly mainstream media outlets!

According to a United Voice National Councillor who was there, these journos were 'all ears' when Louise Tarrant, United Voice national leader, walked up to the podium and addressed the Press Club faithful. I was sent a copy of her speech, and I can tell you it did us members and all workers proud.

Here are a few excerpts from her speech. "Our name change recognises that we need to look beyond haggling with individual bosses or even industry-wide negotiations to the multitude of factors behind the silent restructuring of our economy over recent decades... this silent restructuring has left many millions of Australian workers behind in low paid and insecure jobs."

She went on to say, "Two weeks ago we (United Voice) commissioned an Auspoll survey of a cross-section of the Australian community which turned up some breath-taking results. In that poll we asked *the* defining question of every generation: 'Will the future we pass on to our children and grandchildren be

better than that handed to us?' 63% of Australians thought the future would not be better."

The thin plastic line

Louise Tarrant's speech is worth quoting a bit more. "The average young Australian is now living with debt equal to three times their household income. For many of our members their credit card has become the thin plastic line between survival and poverty."

In commenting on the impact of the Global Financial Crisis of the last few years, she argued that Nobel laureate Paul Krugman's description of USA that 'for most Americans, economic growth is a spectator sport' is fitting for most Australians too!

She ended her speech by saying, "Our members are on the economic front line. They deserve a politics and economics that puts their needs and interests at centre stage.

"Our challenge to governments and business is to begin a conversation, a conversation in which workers' voices are heard.

"A conversation that recognises the dignity of work and the importance of fairness and security in our society..."

A letter to Julia

For the single aged pensioner like me the only possibility is to get the cheapest of the cheapest and catch some fish and/or get bush tucker too at times.

It is time the RAA was lifted to a realistic level, something in the order of five or six times the current level.

This is essential to give pensioners and other beneficiaries the ability to have a reasonable standard of living.

It is also necessary, at times like what we have been through lately, and also of normal Wet seasons, to have enough to be able to buy in sufficient reserve food stocks, because the roads are cut by floodwater EVERY wet and food stocks in our one and only supermarket run very low. The most common cheaper

stuff goes really fast at such times and shelves are empty.

This year has been very bad, as well you know, so there is a very strong justification to increase the RAA to all in the remote and isolated towns across Australia.

If short of food, we can eat the 'equal opportunity' animal, the crocodile (they see us as food just as we see them as food, thus = opportunity) and Roo meat

United Voice is here to make sure that happens."

I told my National Councillor how refreshing it was to see that a union leader is telling a big business audience like the National Press Club that workers under her leadership are going to be on the front foot and taking action for a fair go for working people. That gives members, and I'm sure workers from other unions, hope.

Apparently the new ACTU President, Ged Kearney, was present at the National Press Club and afterwards told United Voice members she is with us all the way in organising for a better future.

As long as they are true to their words, our United Voice leader and the ACTU's Ged Kearney will get a positive response from workers everywhere, at a time when the whole union movement is crying out for a bit of boldness and vision beyond the narrow confines of enterprise bargaining and being told what workers can't do because of this or that law.

Practice is the test

Apparently, our National Council is fair dinkum! A couple of days after Louise Tarrant's inspiring Press Club speech, about 100 members of the Council joined cleaners in Canberra at a noisy demonstration in front of a federal government building to protest against the shonky cleaning contractor who is still allowed to operate there.

That's what we like to see; action to back up inspiring words.

I bet the cleaners in that building had a good laugh and valued the show of solidarity for their just cause. They won't forget in a hurry those two words, United Voice!

by Jack D

Dear Julia,

I have not noticed any rise in the Remote Area Allowance for a very long time. The price of food here in these remote and isolated towns is astronomical.

When buying green vegies, for instance, after seeing the price of them it is certain they must be gold-plated!

All food stuffs are very dear and to give an idea, the typical family here of two adults and two children say that it costs about \$80 to \$100 EXTRA per week, over and above their costs for the same stuff when they lived in Townsville or Cairns.

is good, but people should not be forced to live off the bush in this day and age.

Trusting you will seriously address this RAA matter as it is crucial to people in these areas.

There are relatively few on RAA compared to the whole beneficiary population, so it should not cost too much to fix it.

Regards to Wayne Swan too,
Jack



Aged Care workers take strike action

by Ned K

The corporate media like to stereotype union members who take industrial action, so that some sections of the public associate striking unionists with rough and tough blue collar male workers who are to be feared! However, their portrayal is wearing thin. Workers in industries that have never taken strike action are now doing just that, going on strike.

A case in point is aged care workers in Perth, employed at the Carinya of Bicton aged care facility. These workers have taken industrial action at least twice in the past year, and have been locked out twice in retaliation by their employer.

The most recent occasion occurred in early April when five carers on one shift took protected industrial action of four hours so they could attend the Federal government's Community Cabinet in Perth to put their case to the Prime Minister for the need for more funding for aged care and aged care workers' wages.

The employer responded with an application to lock out the five workers for two weeks!

The latest action by workers followed four hour rolling stoppages by 50 Carinya aged care workers in January this year.

The workers have the full backing of their union, United Voice, which is living up to its new name.

Workers' spirits are still high, and the WA State Secretary Dave Kelly said, "If management thought it was going to get people to back down (by locking them out), they were wrong. Our members will continue to press the company for a reasonable agreement."

Fair Share campaign

The strike action by these aged care workers in WA is a fine example to tens of thousands of aged care workers across Australia who are currently battling the industry and the Federal government for recognition and respect for the work they perform.

Their union, United Voice, which represents many carers and service workers in aged care, has served a claim on the whole industry, under the Fair Work Act Low Paid Bargaining stream, for an increase in pay for an accredited aged care worker from about \$17 per hour under the award to \$26 an hour under a collective agreement.

The \$26 per hour rate is the average hourly rate in collective agreements



United Voice members in Perth

for a Certificate Level 3 skill across all industries. The union's argument is that aged care workers who have these equivalent skills and training should be paid the same as someone with equivalent skills who happens to work

say, in a factory producing a physical product.

Carers are looking after society's aged citizens who have given to the community all their lives. Is this work of less value to the community than someone who produces a physical product? If so, asks the union, what type of society do we live in?

The employers made their position clear by lodging an appeal to the Federal Court to argue that aged care workers are not low paid, and therefore the union cannot access the Fair Work Act's Low Paid Bargaining stream for aged care workers!

The Federal government which funds aged care, and is able to intervene in Low Paid Bargaining stream matters

as the funding third party, has not yet revealed its position.

Currently it is hiding behind a Productivity Commission inquiry into aged care and the restraints on it as a good manager of the economy overall. This is just a euphemism for cuts to people's services and the protection of profits.

United Voice is awaiting the court's decision on the employers' argument that aged care workers are not 'low paid'.

Regardless of the court's ruling, the aged care workers at Carinya will continue their outstanding struggle; history in the making for aged care workers generally, most of whom are women.

Rallies for victimised Adelaide workers

by Nick G

Two rallies in one week in Adelaide have shown that workers will stand beside each other in the face of harassment and bullying by employers.

More than 50 workers from around eight unions gathered at the front of FairWork Australia on Monday April 11 to support sacked Baiada (Lilydale) chicken plant worker Anyuon Mabior, who is fighting an unfair dismissal claim against the company (see *Vanguard* November 2010).

Mabior and fellow Sudanese claim that the young worker was sacked when he complained of racist emails circulating at the plant, which employs mainly Chinese and African workers.

When the issue first arose, the Lilydale plant in Adelaide had a scared and confused workforce subject to bullying and persecution, denied work breaks and proper payments, and forced to work long hours.

But when one person stands up, others are sure to follow.

Lead organiser for the National Union of Workers in South Australia, Dave Garland, said that although the FairWork process would be a long one, "we are winning on the ground".

"More than 100 Baiada workers have joined the NUW in SA and membership has increased at Baiada sites right across the country this year, as workers in each state see the value of standing together for fairness."

Meanwhile, the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union is fighting for a sacked Section 457 visa worker, Mohammed Khan, a diesel mechanic from Fiji.



Khan was unlawfully sacked by Adelaide Isuzu boss Tony Emmanuele, just two weeks after joining the union.

Adelaide Isuzu employs around 180 workers in three plants, dozens of whom are s457 visa workers. The AMWU alleges that many of the workers – Filipinos, Fijians, Chinese and Indians – have been subjected to bullying, harassment and intimidation.

The union refers to reported cases where s457 visa workers have been expected to work up to 16 hour shifts with only a half hour break.

On Thursday April 14, around 100 AMWU members and supporters, including representatives from the CFMEU, AEU, SDA and FSU demonstrated outside Adelaide Isuzu.

AMWU organiser Brendon "Patch" Patchett, not exactly what you'd call a small bloke, blasted the management of the Isuzu outlet, claiming that he had been physically challenged by the boss.

He described it as a company known for harassment and bullying.

With many of the cars driving past on busy North East Road honking their

horns in support, Mohammed thanked people, especially from other unions, for coming and showing support.

"It's very unfair for workers to be dismissed for joining a union," he said.

National AMWU Secretary Dave Oliver described Mr Khan as "a courageous man".

"As an s457 visa worker, he is bonded to his employer, which means that regardless of the circumstances of his leaving the company, he has to find other work within 28 days or be deported.

"He's not a commodity; he's a fellow worker and a human being.

"There's something very wrong with the system when a company with this form can do this to this man and still keep employing workers on Section 457 visas," he told the rally.

Workers from around the world, unite!

Fight racism and workplace harassment!

Get active and organised, and stand together against capitalism!