



# Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

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## Workers lead struggle against imperialism in Australia

by Ned K

Despite the Fair Work Act intention to severely restrict workers' struggle, workers in Australia are finding ways to take action to defend living standards and to prevent intensified exploitation of labour power in the workplace.

In September this year, Toyota workers in Victoria took 48 hour strike action on at least two occasions in an effort to win moderate wage increases.

Door and window manufacturing workers at plants in three states took strike action in response to US multinational Jeld-Wen's wage offer of a measly 2.5%.

The response of both Toyota and Jeld-Wen has been to wave the big stick. Toyota threatened workers' jobs, by saying their wage demands would force Toyota Australia to transfer 'uncompetitive' operations overseas.

At the same time, Toyota announced that it was building a second car plant in Indonesia at the relatively cheap cost of \$325 million. "The plant will have a capacity of 70,000 units a year, and will supply local and export markets" (*Australian Financial Review* 14 September 2011).

### 'Competitive' exploitation

What does 'international competitiveness' mean for manufacturing workers in countries like Australia?

Take one look at Detroit in the USA where Chrysler has started up production of cars again with car workers, starved of jobs for months and in some cases years, working on the line for half the hourly rate that they were five years ago.

Their wage is now a miserable \$14 per hour, with the blessing of the 'responsible' United Auto Workers Union leadership.

Jeld-Wen's approach was less subtle. It responded to two-day strike action



Workers from the Stegbar and Corinthian plants unite against US multinational Jeld-Wen

by locking workers out for three days in some plants, and indefinitely in the company's Stegbar plant in South Australia.

### Crisis forces workers into action

Workers' action has spread to service industries as well.

In Victoria, postal workers employed by Australia Post have refused to perform unsafe work involving sorting extra mail on delivery motor-bikes or cycles, despite bosses' threats that the 44 workers are taking illegal industrial action and are being stood down.

Qantas baggage handlers, caterers and engineers have commenced campaigns of stop work action, while Qantas cleaners at Tullamarine Airport employed by multinational contractor, Spotless, took strike action to win back an airport site allowance of \$1600 per year.

In all these struggles, workers have shown great courage in taking action in the face of threats.

In the Australia Post case, workers took action by refusing unsafe work, and tested their rights under Occupational Health and Safety legislation.

In the Spotless case, contract cleaners have taken action, even though they know that Qantas, their real employer, if not their legal employer, could effectively sack them by getting rid of Spotless and contracting the cleaning

work to another cleaning company with a new workforce.

So, despite the threat to jobs, threats of manufacturing plants moving overseas, despite the laws being against them, workers collective action is on the rise. Why is this so?

In many industries wage rises have been small and quickly fall behind the rising cost of living.

There are exceptions, such as some jobs in the mining industry, as a result of the so-called 'two speed economy'.

The cap on wage increases of 3-4% in most enterprise agreements and awards is accompanied by continued

intensification of work load, both physical and mental, as companies push for more profits in an imperialist sea of global economic crisis.

### Imperialism demands more attacks

Imperialist interests in Australia are leading the charge to force the government to 'reform' the Fair Work Act to make it even more restrictive and risky for workers to take action, and to reduce wages (Variable Capital) by cutting penalty rates for shift and weekend work.

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# Workers lead struggle against imperialism in Australia

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Even their preferred federal politician, Tony Abbott, is criticised strongly by the Business Council of Australia and other employer groups for not promoting individual contracts.

Suddenly, the discredited Peter Reith is wheeled out of obscurity to vigorously push individual contracts and the need for Abbott to 'toughen up' on 'workplace policy'.

Reith is a mouthpiece for the most reactionary imperialist elements, who want to crush any hint of upsurge of workers' collective struggle, in order to protect and increase profits.

Reith's plan is to place individual contracts, and specifically non-union enterprise agreements, as the centre piece of 'workplace policy'.

However, workers in Australia are

showing their determination to find ways to take effective collective action to defend their immediate economic interests.

The form of action varies depending on the conditions at the time and the relative strengths of the competing class interests.

The outbreak of struggles around economic demands of workers will

spread and give workers an appetite for extending the political gains made by the defeat of the reactionary Howard Government through the Rights at Work campaign.

Central to extending these gains must be to get rid of the ABCC and associated repressive laws against building industry workers.

Another important area of workers'

struggle is to defend manufacturing jobs and industries from multinational takeover and dismantling in the name of 'free trade'.

A win for workers in these key areas of the economy will be a win for all workers, and strike fear into the multinational owners, imperialist money lenders and property speculators.

## Foreign ownership of Australian farmland and water

by *Duncan B*

**Statistics released in September by the Bureau of Statistics show that 45 million hectares – 11% of Australian farm land, is at least partly foreign-owned.**

As of last December, 5.8% of land was majority owned by foreign interests, while foreign interests had a minority stake in a further 5.5% of land.

The Northern Territory had the highest percentage of farmland with some foreign ownership at 24%. New South Wales had 2.6% and Victoria 0.8%.

The sheep, beef cattle and grain growing sectors have the highest proportion of foreign ownership. About 11% of the land for these commodities has some foreign ownership.

Of the 135,600 agricultural businesses in Australia, 133,600 were totally Australian-owned, 1300 had some level of foreign ownership and 732 had unknown ownership.

824 of the 1300 businesses had more than 50% foreign ownership.

### Water

Of the 13,700 gigalitres of water used for agricultural purposes, 12,500 or 91% were used by Australian-owned interests, 1169 gigalitres were used by companies with some foreign ownership, and 97 gigalitres had

unknown ownership.

Of the 1169 gigalitres, 915 gigalitres were used by companies with greater than 50% foreign ownership.

These statistics do not reveal the high concentration of foreign ownership in some key industries such as grain marketing.

### Scope for unity

The Greens and the opposition have been calling for greater scrutiny of foreign investment in Australian farming, but Assistant Treasurer Bill Shorten used the survey results to claim that the vast majority of agricultural resources are locally owned.

Australians from all walks of life, including farmers and workers, are raising their voices about the increasing foreign take-over of Australia's agricultural resources.

People are concerned about issues such as food security, environmental concerns, the viability of local communities, and the impact on local jobs.

There is great scope for unity around the question of foreign ownership of Australia's land and resources.

## 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.

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### Celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the defeat of the referendum to ban the Communist Party

**Sunday 23rd October 2.00pm**

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**583 High St. Thornbury (Melbourne)**

**Speakers include: Humphrey McQueen - historian activist  
Veterans from the 1951 campaign**

**In September 1951 the reactionary Menzies government sought to crush the Australian working class in the interests of foreign imperialism, by destroying its most dedicated and genuine voice - the Communist Party. A broad united front campaign waged by the Communist Party and other progressive forces defeated the referendum.**

**Organised jointly by: Communist Party of Australia (M-L)  
Communist Party of Australia**

For information on the campaign, see [mike-servethepeople.blogspot.com](http://mike-servethepeople.blogspot.com)

# European imperialism on the edge of serious trouble

by Jim H

**Europe's economic and political woes continue to deepen. The dominant forces of European imperialism, Germany first, and France second, have reached a point where they will have to move to protect their own interests.**

Greece's government shows an inability to do enough to pay for its debt burden through the imposition of austerity measures on the Greek people. The odds are that there will soon be a default.

So far the main method to pay back the immediate debt has been through a 10 year bond yield, with a more than 20% interest rate.

This means that the Greek government borrows money from the financiers to pay off the debt. This is solving one debt by creating a new and even larger one.

The idea is that it buys time. The trouble is that in the end it does not solve the debt problem. The debt is still there to be paid.

At the end of the day, massive payments have to be made out of Greece's resources. It is easier said than done.

## Crisis moves beyond Greece

Consequently, two of France's banks, with a large exposure to the Greek debt, have had their credit rating lowered.

Other banks are at risk, not only French ones, but German ones as well.

This indicates the complex capitalist connections that exist in the European Union. Effects of events in Greece soon spread through the region.

A far greater risk arising out of a default is that an example could easily be contagious.

Portugal is not so far behind. Spain, and especially Italy, are also in trouble. These two are amongst the largest economies on the continent.

Any meltdown there would have a much greater impact than Greece. Spreading defaults could bring the whole of Europe down.

At 440 billion euro, Europe's massive stability fund that was announced earlier this year is still not big enough to back-stop a country the size of Italy, for example, which has a massive 1.9 trillion euro debt.

On top of this, there has been little action to transform words into deeds in the setting up of the fund.

And Germany has still not ratified its

119 billion euro loan.

It is for this reason that European imperialism is faced with no other choice but to act.

Moves are underway to find ways to step up the exploitation of labour, impose larger government cuts, and extend privatisation.

It is inevitable that alongside this there will be greater repression in general.

## Workers step up struggle

The problem is that this is not a road that can be travelled without raising anger from below.

Working people rightly see that the economic crisis is not of their making and that they should not be made to bear the burden in order to safeguard the interests of the ruling class

The deeper the crisis gets, the sharper becomes the simple truth; either the interests of the ruling class, or those of the working class and its allies will prevail.

The tide of struggle has been on the rise. This is affecting every part of Europe, although for the present, some more than others.

The ruling class faces the dilemma, if it moves decisively, it will definitely fan revolt.

If it does not move decisively, its economic position will deteriorate further.

Because of this, International Monetary Fund chief and major representative of the French Imperialist class, Christine Lagarde, accused "feeble" politicians of endangering the world. And she said that without collective bold action, the whole of Europe was at risk.

Her speech coincided with moves from five central banks who agreed to lend US dollars to European banks that are running short on the currency.

Recent events in Athens, London and Madrid have shown unrest bubbling far closer to the surface than many realise.

The political impact will be profound, should this erupt into open rebellion.

## No compromise with imperialism

It is important to note at this point that the key to the fight back is the extension of working class leadership over the people's movement for the defense and extension of its interests.

While here are signs of definite progress, there remains the significant problem of countering opportunist influence.

## Editorial

### Control of the workers

**Labor says it is a government for the workers. It uses its name and its connections with trade unions in an effort to control the workers.**

Government leaders and some union leaders call for loyalty to the 'labour movement', 'to not rock the boat'. If not Labor, you'll get Abbott, O'Farrell, Ballieu. The Coalition is the workers' sworn enemy, so goes the catch-cry.

It has all been wearing pretty thin over the years.

Labor governments in the states have shown themselves as reliable agents for capital. And now the Federal Labor government chants the mantra of getting the budget into surplus and managing the economy, while real wages go backwards, services are cut and the profits of the big mining companies and banks hit multiple billion dollar records.

The Coalition has been brought into government in WA, Victoria and NSW applying wage cuts, privatisations, and austerity budgets, building on the Labor governments' austerity, privatisation and wage cuts.

These attacks naturally prompt struggle. Trade unions are the main vehicle for that struggle.

However trade unions have two sides. They are the organised body for workers to obtain their just interests. They also exist under industrial law, to help enforce that law on the workers.

Trade unions are subject to laws and registration governing the union's rules, their elections, their industrial action, their meetings, under the Fair Work Act and legislation in the various states.

That second life of unions as an arm enforcing capitalist state policy onto the workforce comes into conflict with workers' struggle against exploitation and oppression. It restricts unions' pursuit of struggle to obtain justice for workers, the primary thing for workers.

In the struggle for justice and rights, workers become frustrated with union leaders who don't wholeheartedly get into that struggle. The role of trade unions and trade union leaders rightly comes under scrutiny.

A number of union officials have positions in the Labor Party and many go to parliament through the Labor Party. Many also have a variety of paid positions in super funds, on boards of government entities, employee credit unions or the like.

Financial inducement, provided under government and business patronage, separates them from the workers in their finances and lifestyle, and compels them to protect their top union position from the workers and rival union officials.

It takes leaders with strong principles, close ties to the workers, and strong working class consciousness to stand against enormous incomes and inducements, and the tendencies that high incomes, social and political status and patronage create.

Lenin wrote in 1920, "This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, or their 'labour aristocracy', who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and their entire outlook, ... are the real agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, real channels of reformism and chauvinism. In the civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie they inevitably, and in no small numbers, take the side of the bourgeoisie, the 'Versaillese' against the Communards.

"Unless the economic roots of this phenomenon are understood and its political and social significance is appreciated, not a step can be taken towards the solution of the practical problems of the Communist movement and of the impending social revolution."

How very true.

This influence takes the form of pushing the illusion that the interests of the ruling class and working class are the same in the present circumstances, and that the way forward is to agree to tighten the belt for the good of all.

In reality, opportunism seeks to protect the interests of European imperialism.

What the working class and its allies need is not the protection of European imperialism, but action that leads towards putting an end to the capitalist system once and for all.

There can be no compromise with imperialism. All efforts made to impose the burden of the crisis on the people must be opposed resolutely.

## Marxism Today

# Political consciousness and mass work

by Bill F

**Different levels of political consciousness among the people require revolutionary activists to work and organise in a number of different ways.**

Most working people in the day to day battles for workplace rights and conditions, democratic and human rights, protection of the urban and natural environment, public and community services, and peace in the world, invariably come up against one or another aspect of US imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation without consciously recognising the economic and political class system of imperialist domination and oppression.

In Australia the majority of unorganised masses are working class, but are largely influenced by the ideas of bourgeois social democracy. The cynicism of parliamentary politics has deepened in recent times with the global economic crisis of capitalist overproduction.

The attacks on the people intensify and the working class is more than ever compelled to rely on the strength of its own organised mass struggle outside parliament to defend the people and move a step forward towards realisation of its own destiny.

### Mass Work

Communists work at all levels defending the people from the economic crisis and promoting the upsurge of an independent anti-imperialist mass movement.

Within the anti-imperialist mass movement there are different levels of consciousness and struggle.

Communists play their part in leading the progressive demands and struggles of the masses, while exposing the connection between the day to day problems and the different aspects of imperialist domination of Australia.

There are natural connections to the masses in workplaces, communities and social networks. Other connections are in mass organisations, single issue groups, and struggles which can inform, educate and mobilise broader sections around particular issues.

Experience of struggle creates opportunities to draw lessons, raise

alternatives to the present status quo such as the nationalisation of key industries, the effects of multinational domination of Australia, and taxing the rich corporations, not the people, to pay for the monopoly capitalist economic crisis.

The essential and critical tasks are to listen to the people, deeply know their lives, struggles and concerns, and to understand the level of mass consciousness and preparedness to struggle.

Communists assist and lead people in struggle, not only in the day to day battles for reforms within capitalism, but importantly, use the science of Marxism to offer explanations of people's situation and actual experiences, and

**“While we recognise that in the general development of history the material determines the mental and social being determines consciousness, we also - and indeed must - recognise the reaction of the mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base. This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism.”**

(Mao Zedong *On Contradiction* 1937)

to put forward ideas of an alternative vision for the future.

### Mass organisations

A deeper level of political consciousness is reflected within organised groups such as mass organisations, issue groups, trade unions, community groups and the like.

There may be some recognition of the nature of US imperialism in terms of global military domination and aggression, but often this is not connected to its economic, political and military domination role in Australia.

For some, imperialism means only political and military aggression. They don't see the economic imperatives behind the aggression, the class rule of corporate monopoly capitalism. Others see only economic aggression as expressed through globalisation and free trade agendas, and somewhat separate from the political and military role of imperialism.

Our political work should promote and strengthen the people's mass organisations, while exposing the links between US imperialism and the local ruling class.

Communists are deeply involved in the struggles of the people, working out immediate tactics of struggle, mobilising the people and offering Marxist explanations on the nature of imperialist domination and how it overshadows economic and political life in Australia.

Political work in mass organisations should promote common interests across people's organisations, and where possible, link immediate struggles to opposing and resisting imperialist domination. Among the activists,

we develop and promote immediate demands of struggle, working class leadership, the mass line method, and put forward an alternative vision for the future around relevant issues.

### Left activism

Many left activists see the need for organisation, solidarity and militant struggle, and are attracted to intermediate levels of activism. The danger of so-called “left activists” is that they mostly confine their activities to their own narrow, and very small, left circles. They frequently suffer from left-bloc isolation and often see themselves as above and separate from the mass of people rather than a part of the people. Most are genuine and sincere people, but the pressures of bourgeois sectarianism and left-blocism isolates them from the majority of the people and can lead to ultra-leftism and adventurism.

Our political work at this level should promote out-going activities that welcome and involve broader sections

of the people. We need to encourage the activists in ways that bring them closer to the people, not further apart. And we also need to encourage activists to keep up their natural mass connections in the people's organisations, workplaces and community.

Revolutionary organisations have no place for bourgeois self-promotion and self-serving interests. The mass line that seeks unity of all forces opposed to imperialism, and respects the differences within the united front on other matters, is the only way a broad anti-imperialist united movement of working people can be built.

### Revolutionary organisation

The highest level of political consciousness is that represented by conscious revolutionary organisation, i.e. communist organisation and discipline. The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) constantly makes a serious, genuine and sustained effort to improve its political work, and to build practical alliances with other fraternal forces opposed to US imperialism and committed to socialism.

Obviously, members of the CPA (M-L) are not the only genuine people who see the need for revolutionary change, for deep seated and thorough national independence, and for the victory of socialism. We have a programme of a revolutionary process connected by stages in Australian conditions, and a certain method of organisation that places greater emphasis on mass work. Practice and experience over time will test our methods, as it will others. Our work is constantly reviewed and adjustments are made in line with changing circumstances.

### Nothing is static

Between the different layers of political consciousness, there is movement and crossover. They are not isolated and static; it's a dialectical relationship

Mass work, the mass line, patient and meticulous hard work and collective discipline are some of the hall marks of a revolutionary organisation striving to serve the people and build an anti-imperialist mass movement.

# Posties stand their ground on Health and Safety

by Alice M

**Postal workers around Australia and their union, the Communication Workers Union (Postal Division) have drawn a line in the sand in the fight for health and safety at work.**

In a nationwide campaign, 44 posties from two Mail Delivery Centres in Melbourne have been stood down because they had the courage to refuse to deliver mail in a new, unsafe delivery system called Separate Bundle Delivery.

The new mail delivery system forces posties to sort and merge more mail outdoors on their motor-bikes and push bikes, whilst making deliveries. Posties know from their own experience that this new delivery system is an immediate threat to their health and safety.

The new delivery system is designed solely to intensify the exploitation of posties' labour power, cut posties' times in sorting and delivering mail, make posties' work harder and faster in unsafe outdoor conditions, pave the way for cuts to full time penalty shift jobs, more contractors and casuals, and slash Australia Post Corporation's wages bill.

It is part of a worldwide drive by global imperialist capital to extract more profit out of workers' labour power and open up more public assets and infrastructure for plunder by monopoly capital.

## Australia Post rejects safety trial

Australia Post has declared that workers refusing to do the unsafe delivery part of their work are taking illegal industrial action and will be stood down.

The stood down posties are not refusing to do their normal method of mail delivery that has been done for many years before the introduction of Separate Bundle Delivery. The 44 posties are reporting for work every morning to do their deliveries in the normal Single Bundle Delivery.

The union and Australia Post are in dispute over the safety, but Post continues to roll out the new unsafe delivery.

The union took the matter to the Federal Court and to Fair Work, where Justice Kirby, in mediating the matter, recommended keeping the status quo of normal Single Bundle delivery whilst a two month proper trial is conducted.

Post rejected both the union's and Justice Kirby's proposals.

Whilst 44 workers have been stood down for refusing to do unsafe work



and continue to defy the bullying, threats and intimidation by the bosses, nationally other posties are reporting daily injuries resulting from the new delivery system.

Even Australia Post's own designated doctors are certifying the new injuries as directly related to the new unsafe mode of delivery.

Comcare (Commonwealth Government Health and Safety Authority) approved the new unsafe delivery system without even sending their own inspectors and risk assessors into the field to observe the new system in action.

Comcare approval is based on Australia Post's computer presentation of the new Separate Bundle Delivery.

This is in spite of Australia Post's long record of vast numbers of

reported work injuries and workers' compensation claims.

In contrast, the union commissioned a comprehensive investigation and detailed report by independent experts and ergonomists that unequivocally condemned the new delivery system as unsafe for workers.

## Union and community campaign

In Victoria, the first stage of the new outdoor sorting and delivery system is being introduced at Airport West and Mt Waverley Delivery Centres, and preparations are underway to roll it out to other centres.

Posties in these centres have warned management they will stand up for their rights and refuse to work in unsafe conditions.

## Elliott Johnston - A memorable life

by Ned K

**On 25 August Elliott Johnston passed away in Adelaide at the age of 93 years and 6 months.**

He and his wife Elizabeth joined the Communist Party of Australia in 1941. Elliott remained a member of the Communist Party of Australia until 1983, when he became a Judge of the Supreme Court.

In the mid 1960s he was recommended by the Chief Justice to become Queens Council, but this was rejected by the then Liberal Government in SA of Steele Hall.

In 1970 the Dunstan Labor Government accepted his nomination by the legal fraternity as a QC.

Elliott Johnston as a lawyer represented many "Aussie battlers" often for no financial reward.

He is fondly remembered by the Firefighters Union for representing them with success in an important struggle on safe minimum staffing levels in fire brigade vehicles.

At a public meeting held at Elder Hall, University of Adelaide, on Friday

9 September to pay respect to his contribution to the struggle of working people, firefighters formed a guard of honour at the entrance to the Hall.

Approximately 1,000 people from all walks of life filled the Hall and spilled into the front foyer.

It was a moving occasion, especially when Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement co-patron Lowitja O'Donoghue addressed the meeting.

She co-patroned the Movement with Elliott Johnston himself in 1971.

She spoke highly of Elliott Johnston for his recommendations in 1991 in his report as Commissioner for the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. She lamented the lack of action to this day by governments on his recommendations.

In his early years as a member of the Communist Party, he travelled many miles on an old motor bike as fulltime Organiser for the Party in the Iron Triangle area (Pt Augusta, Pt Pirie and Whyalla) of SA.

In the mid 1950s he spent 18 months in China and marvelled at the achievements made by the Chinese

Unity and solidarity amongst posties and between different centres is growing.

Many workers are rallying around the stood down posties, and continue to raise funds to help them pay their living expenses. Some centres have initiated a regular levy towards a welfare fund.

A wider public campaign is now underway, with the community being asked to send cards to Australia Post's new Managing Director, Ahmed Fahour (ex National Bank, Citigroup and other banks), along with messages of support to the union and their local posties.

Public rallies are being held outside Australia Post's head office and Stephen Conroy's offices (Federal Minister for Communication).

The struggle for health and safety is uniting posties and strengthening the union.

Many understand that collective action locally in their workplaces and communities is the only way that their conditions can be protected and improved.

The experience with Comcare and Fair Work Australia has exposed the role of the state as no more than a tool for big business.

The unity and struggle of postal workers augurs well for the coming battles of the working class, as economic crisis really starts to bite.

people as they took the socialist path.

Like many Communist Party members and progressive people of the second half of the 20th Century, he was embroiled in the various splits within the communist movement in Australia that were triggered by external international political events.

Elliott Johnston never lost his belief in the necessity for humanity to rid itself of the system of capitalism and its current imperialist stage, nor in his belief in the working class as the leading class to lead humanity to the bright future of socialism.

There have been outstanding members of the legal profession in Australia's history who have taken the side of the workers and played a leading role in the struggle to build a Communist Party embedded in the Australian working class.

Despite differences in how to achieve this, they have all played their significant part.

The 1,000 people who attended the Memorial meeting on Friday 9 September are evidence that Elliott Johnston was one of them.

# Foreign invasion never brought democracy to Afghanistan

by Max O

**“Invasion never brings democracy”, was the major point Malalai Joya drove home in her speech to the audience at a recent forum, held at the Australian Education Union premises in Adelaide.**

She is currently on a speaking tour around Australia. She is an anti-war and human rights activist who at one time was a member of the Afghan parliament (2005-2007), but was dismissed for denouncing criminal activities of the warlord MPs. Joya is also a fierce opponent of the Western backed Karzai Government.

She pointed out that the Afghan people are plagued by three enemies: government warlords, the Taliban and the US/NATO forces.

When the West exits Afghanistan the people will only have to confront two internal enemies who will be weaker as a result.

The government warlords and the Taliban backbones will crack when the US/NATO stops supporting and funding them. Fear of a bloodbath after the exodus of foreign troops would be no worse than the catastrophic situation that presently exists.

## US/NATO props up Kazai ‘mafia regime’

Joya said that, after 10 years, the US/NATO occupation forces have killed tens of thousands of innocent children, women and men through their support of the fundamentalist regime of Karzai.

The Afghan people see them as their worst enemy and there have been many revolts against their blind bombardments and aerial attacks.

The West’s support for President Karzai and the mafia regime he leads, is like hammering nails into the coffin of freedom, democracy, women’s and human rights, because his government is riddled with misogynist Islamic fundamentalists, warlords, drug lords and criminals.

Joya declared Karzai a traitor and a criminal to her people. He has collaborated with, and placed these enemies of the Afghan people into positions of power, and compromised himself by continuing to keep silent about their inhumane past and present.

## Dollars for corruption

The West’s training of the so-called Afghan national army and police will not assist the welfare of the people.

Joya stated, around \$62 billion has been spent by the West to prop up



Malalai Joya

the Karzai government. However all the finances, all the training has only benefited the corrupt regime and its corrupt officials.

In fact, it needs to be understood that Afghanistan does not really possess a national army and police so much as armed bands connected to fundamentalist parties.

Therefore, foreign troops working with the so called national army “are only adding fuel to the fire” and the sooner they withdraw the better, Joya argued.

## No peace with warlords

Peace is the primary demand of the people in Afghanistan, but warlords see their opportunities in war and conflict. Therefore they are a hindrance towards any decent future.

She explained that you can’t expect any improvement from a police force directed by such warlords. In many areas of Afghanistan, the people in fact hate the police as much as they hate the Taliban.

Joya pointed out that as long as looters and killers like the Australian-supported warlord, Matiullah Khan are being backed by the foreign troops, and have full immunity for their cruelty, there will be no progress in the situation of the Afghan people.

## US imperialism protects warlords

Another criminal in high office is the Interior Minister of Afghanistan, Bismillah Khan, a former warlord connected to a criminal fundamentalist group called Jamaat-e-Islami, who has installed many warlords from his party in key posts of the Afghan police force.

As a result, the Afghan people have lost all trust in the foreign troops who are seen as only making things even more difficult.

The foreign troops are engaged with brutal warlords; they essentially support a mafia regime, and are themselves implicated in drug-trafficking.

They kill innocent civilians through their bombardments, and are only motivated by their own strategic and regional interests. For example, it is estimated that Afghanistan has around \$3 trillion worth of mineral deposits.

The US superpower is not serious about the war on terrorism. They in fact keep the situation lawless, as an excuse to stay longer in Afghanistan.

Because Afghanistan is in the heart of Asia, the US can exert its power on China and Iran. It can also maintain its grip on the oil and gas of the Central Asian republics. She argued the conditions of the poor Afghan people are of no importance for them.

## Women continue to suffer

Joya pointed out that recent research has ranked Afghanistan as the most dangerous country in the world for women. Women’s rights in Afghanistan are presently a catastrophe.

One of the reasons touted for the US and NATO invasion was the serious plight of Afghan women, however they are still subjected to the most inhuman kinds of violence.

Their situation is no different to the time of the Taliban rule. In fact, Joya argued it is even worse in some provinces: Women and girls are raped, kidnapped, killed, flogged in public, stoned to death, poisoned or have acid thrown on their faces.

Joya agreed that it is essential to fight the Taliban to secure women’s rights.

However, the US/NATO occupation has only exacerbated women’s conditions, for they have brought into government a band of extremely anti-women elements that are similar to the

Taliban or even worse e.g. the Northern Alliance, some pro-US technocrats and monarchists, and even some ex-Taliban.

## Taliban resistance compromised

In reality, although they have resisted the US/NATO occupation, the Taliban do not have total support from the Afghan people.

Joya explained that they are influenced and supported by some elements in the Pakistani government, receiving enormous support from fanatical Islamic groups in that country.

They also obtain arms and support from the fundamentalist Iranian regime.

This unfortunately results in the Taliban using their weapons and acts of terrorism to impose themselves on the Afghan people.

Their religious influence is not great, because they have created their own version of Islam where they oppress people, particularly women.

In eastern and southern parts of Afghanistan, the killing of civilians by the US and NATO, and the unwillingness of the Karzai government to solve their problems, motivates some to join the Taliban for help. Nonetheless, Joya insisted, the Taliban and other fundamentalist groups are enormously hated due to the many crimes and brutalities they have committed against defenceless people.

She made clear that the Taliban’s opposition to the US/NATO invasion is not sincere and is only employed to dupe people into supporting their ascent to power. Their claims for real independence are fraudulent, because they were in fact created by the CIA and the Pakistani ISI in the first place.

They would be willing allies of the US if they were able to come to power again, or through power sharing with other reactionary and fundamentalist elements, to form a non-independent, undemocratic, and reactionary government.

Their so called mantra of “anti-occupation” is not taken seriously by most Afghan people, who know quite well they would sell their brutality and guns to the highest foreign bidder.



Warlords

# Libya's occupation has not ended

by *Jim H*

**Make no mistake. The imposition of a foreign controlled regime in Libya will not bring benefits to the people of that country.**

Its oil and other resources will be used to enrich foreign oil company owners and other members of the US and European imperialist class.

The so called rebels would not have been able to reach Tripoli without the sustained and massive US/NATO bombardment, without the use of mercenaries, without other material support, including clandestine foreign 'special forces' units. It has been a war of invasion.

Gadafi and his supporters have stood against this invasion. They continue to do so. From the messages coming out, it seems that Libya is in conditions of protracted war. Resistance continues. An ongoing insurgency is on the cards.

## Scramble for power

US/NATO military actions will continue. This fact has already been announced. In this context, the new regime will rely on foreign imperialism to enforce repression of any movement for real national independence.

One cannot discount the possibility of existing divisions between the coalition of opportunism deepening, as the factions scramble for power and position.

At least from a distance, the fault line is likely to be between those forces working most closely, particularly with US and British interests, and the pro-al Qaeda movement.

The tension is seen in conflicting pronouncements concerning the bringing in of Sharia law and Western style bourgeois democracy

## Lessons of history

Libyan events bring some important universal lessons.

Although the main characteristic of the Gadafi forces is anti-imperialist and that over the decades much of the country's wealth was used to benefit the people, it is also true that there were some shortcomings.

There was a period of adventurism that resulted in political isolation, not only from imperialism, but also from others who may have been able to be allied or neutralised, even if only temporarily.

Internally, the contradictions existing in Libyan society were not always



US/NATO air power blasts away Libyan independence

handled in the best way, relying too much on force.

Not that this is particularly unique, especially in this part of the world.

The difference is that when you make a decisive stand against imperialism, you are likely to become a target of attack.

The experience has been a test of the Green Book revolution, where Gadafi sought to build a new society that was neither capitalist nor socialist.

Within it are elements of state ownership and central planning and Islamic principle.

Its social base is that it did not rely

on working class leadership, but on the leadership of a national bourgeois element. As a result, the movement was unable to have a consistent focus and apply the most effective strategy.

Despite these shortcomings, it remains that Gadafi and his forces have played, and continue to play, a progressive role.

Their anti-imperialist credentials are the main thing at this difficult time. They deserve support, in what is likely to be a long and difficult war.

How this is going to be waged is as yet uncertain. There will be twists and turns.

## US hypocrisy in the Middle East

by *Bill F*

**The policies of US imperialism in relation to conflicts in the Middle East are riddled with hypocrisy.**

Popular protest movements against dictatorial governments subservient to US interests are inevitably met with violent repression, while Obama and Clinton make their mealy-mouthed speeches urging "restraint" and "democratic reform".

This has happened in Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain, and is continuing in Yemen where hundreds are being slaughtered every day by the reactionary Saleh regime, another US puppet.

In Saudi Arabia, where clerical feudalism enforces its rule by trading oil for sophisticated US weaponry, any protests are quickly and violently suppressed.

Women have no democratic rights at all; not allowed to vote; not allowed to even drive a car!

The most brutal and sadistic punishments are handed out – whipping, amputations, beheading, and torture is rife in the prisons and police stations.

This all tolerated and ignored by the champions of 'democracy'.

However, if the government is neutral or, heavens forbid, critical of US imperialism, all sorts of illegal sanctions, trade embargoes and restrictions are quickly imposed by the US and the smug gang of western

countries that like to call themselves the "international community" – Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, and Australia always tagging along.

Syria is one country now facing internal conflict, but not on the scale seen in Tunisia, Egypt or Yemen.

Nevertheless, the US has lobbied for sanctions and has tried to isolate and demonise the Syrian regime.

No doubt there are a clutch of servile Syrian 'dissidents' waiting in the United States for their chance to step in when called upon, as has happened in Libya.

### Speaking of Libya, speaking of hypocrisy!!

The so-called 'no fly zone' that US/NATO imposed on Libya was justified in the name of "protecting civilians".

It was loudly and enthusiastically promoted by Australian Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd and endorsed by the Gillard Labor government.

To their great shame, Russia and China allowed this imperialist manoeuvre to be approved by the United Nations Security Council, thus giving it a veneer of legitimacy.

When, as predicted, it turned into aggressive, offensive air support for the anti-Gaddafi rebel forces, and resulted in many civilian casualties, not a murmur was raised, not by the complicit governments, or by Russia, China or Australia.

There is very little chance that the puppet regime that has now been imposed on the Libyan people will bring much joy.

As it continues to serve the puppeteers, as the nation is plundered at a high cost to the people, as the benefits of the past, like job security, decent health care and education services and a standard of living that was the envy of the region, become no more than a memory, resentment will grow on the ground. It will add fuel to the resistance.

Foreign occupation is likely to shift from a short-term mission to a more permanent presence. Libyans of all persuasions will resent this.

For the resistance, this is a time to take stock, consolidate and set the foundation for future victories.

The legacy of the positive aspects of the Gadafi days will help. So will any effort to overcome past weaknesses.

Ultimately, this is a matter for the Libyan people to work out. They will do just that.

### Palestine

Hypocrisy is too gentle a word for discussing US policies in regard to a Palestinian state.

For decades the US has promoted an endless round of on-again, off-again 'negotiations' between the Israeli government and Palestinian representatives.

Meanwhile, Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestinian land has been financed and even encouraged by US imperialism, which wants to maintain a foothold in the Middle East in its competition with European and Russian imperialisms.

Fearing growing pressure for unity between the Palestinian factions, the Obama government has worked hard to undermine and discredit the efforts of the Palestinian Authority to seek recognition of a Palestinian state at the United Nations. Among other threats, they have announced the intention to veto any Security Council vote or General Assembly recommendation.

Israel's Netanyahu has celebrated this US support by announcing 1100 new settlement houses in occupied Jerusalem.

It leaves Abbas and the Palestinian Authority with nowhere to go. The Oslo Accord now lies in tatters, any prospect of a 'two-state solution' buried by the creeping rash of settlements in the occupied territories.

# 45,000 rally across NSW against wage and job cuts

by David B

Tens of thousands of NSW public sector workers rallied outside State Parliament House in Sydney on Thursday September 8 against new laws undermining public sector pay and conditions.

The workers were also responding to the NSW Budget announcement slashing 5,000 public sector jobs and cutting services to the community.

The rally followed one a month earlier of around 10,000, when the government introduced a law restricting pay rate increases to 2.5%, until workers flogged off jobs and conditions and demonstrated they had increased their output productivity.

The O'Farrell government made the broad job cut announcement but didn't specify where the jobs would go, where the services would be short, where people would have to do without. The Treasurer engaged in a hue and cry of balancing the budget to make up for a \$4.5 billion black hole. Even the government's own chosen auditor found there is no hole. Nonetheless, slashing and burning is to be imposed on government workers.

The 5,000 public sector job cuts are being spread about through health, education, transport, prison staff, police clerical support, support staff for child protection workers, and many more.

Teachers struck and public schools closed, workers from public hospitals stopped work, striking public prosecutors joined striking prison officers, public servants stopped work, road workers downed tools, fire fighters marched to the rally in huge numbers from engines parked nearby, huge swathes of the public sector closed down and ambos were prominent.

Public sector workers are faced with the stark pressures on their jobs and wages by the government. They are targets to pay for capitalism's crises.

## Labor paved the way

The NSW Labor leaders, tossed out of government in such spectacular fashion in March, paved the way for the imposition of these laws and the attacks on the public sector.

NSW Labor had a policy of limiting wage rises to 2.5% as does the reactionary O'Farrell government. They didn't impose it by law as O'Farrell has.

O'Farrell bound the Industrial Commission to reject pay rises above the limits government sets. In the past



the Labor ministers worked to enforce it by negotiation forcing productivity cuts as part of awards and EBAs and argument in front of the commission.

Now the government has legislated, no negotiation, no argument.

## Weak union politics limits response

If workers do not respond they know they will be beyond salvation. And the community will suffer diminished services, so much wider circles can be mobilised. There is wide understanding of a need to respond.

Actual response remains limited. It cries out for militant leadership, but there are problems.

Some narrow minded union leaders view the problem as how to wrangle a deal to maintain the value of wages, defend their position and rebuild NSW Labor. Those with a history of giving way in previous wages deals, of opportunism in dumping others, raise concerns in many workers' minds about leaders' fitness to take the lead in a real movement to defend wages

from the clawing grasp of capital and its government stooges.

Such history of weakness in struggling against the effects of the capitalist wages system leaves them completely incapable of taking the fight further to get rid of the system which gives rise to the effects.

## Workers starting to mobilise

35,000 workers rallied in Sydney while another 10,000 rallied across the state.

After hearing at the rally of the effects of the cuts from a child protection worker, a hospital clerk, a policewoman, a school principal and a prison officer, the crowd took more than an hour to march from the Domain to Parliament House to give Barry O'Farrell a piece of their mind.

The strike and stop-work actions followed a smaller scale rally of 10,000 a month earlier and a 15,000 signature petition against the public sector wage restriction laws presented on 1 June.

A Unions NSW initiative is seeking

to mobilise units formed in suburban areas. Under the "Better Services for a Better State" banner, organisations are being developed from activist meetings including community groups.

The growth is limited but important. What is most important is that workers and unions, some of which have been long dormant, are in action and will have to take more.

The situation is and will continue to force action on public sector workers.

NSW unions fail partially, as Marx once noted, "from an injudicious use of their power" and "fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organised forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class ... the ultimate abolition of the wages system." (*Wages, Price and Profit*)

The attack on NSW public sector workforce will force many to enter into exercising the power of the workers.

There will be a lot of reflection on why it has come to this.

