

Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

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

Opportunities to build unity

Election Analysis

At the centre of the nationally strong vote against the two main parliamentary parties is the people's backlash against the effects of the economic rationalist (neo-liberal) policies of multinational corporations, implemented by both ALP and Liberal/National Coalition governments.

The election result has brought out into the open the widespread disillusionment with the policies of the two main parliamentary parties. It shone the spotlight on the common demands and aspirations of the people on climate change and the environment, workers' rights, better public education and health, infrastructure and services for the people in cities and rural communities. The main thread that unites the diverse national protest vote against the two main parties is the reaction to the burden of imperialist, economic rationalist deregulation of the economy and the shift to market forces. The people are demanding leadership with a clear vision and direction that upholds the interests of ordinary people and the environment.

The early signs of the people's willingness to go beyond the boundaries erected by multinationals will only grow and strengthen in the grass roots movement of united people's actions.

The struggle will continue regardless of who is in government. The leadership of struggle is paramount. It has to be for the people against big business, for people's rights, and for people before profits.

The immediate issues of struggle are for a strong mining tax, for dismantling of the ABCC, for protection of the environment, for the rights of Aboriginal people, against privatisation, and for development of a sustainable national economy including broadband, green energy and rail developments, protection and development of local manufacturing and agricultural industries and defending and developing people's health, education and transport services in cities and rural communities.

The overall crisis of capitalism has deepened, particularly since the 2008 global economic and financial crisis. Super profits of big mining and financial monopolies have risen to obscenely high levels, whilst the exploitation of workers has also intensified.

People see governments and monopolies shifting the burden of crisis onto them through conversion of the private debt of banks and big companies to growing public debt. Governments administer this system

With progressive calls by some unions, independents and Greens MPs for action on the protection of Australia's manufacturing and agricultural industries, opportunities have opened up to build wide unity and expand struggle. That unity will include those progressive ALP members disgusted with the reactionary leaders in parliament and the ALP machine.

Differences in regional and state economies, industries and classes, in

break out of the reactionary policies of both parties. The high informal vote, particularly in Queensland and NSW, also reflects growing frustration and disillusionment with both the ALP and Liberal/National Coalition.

The strong vote against the two main parliamentary parties and the unreliability and instability of a hung parliament has sent a shudder through the ranks of the ruling class and frightened foreign and local monopoly corporations.

These corporations, represented by the Business Council of Australia, are the real faceless men pulling the strings of the two major parliamentary parties. They are the ones who decisively run the country to ensure that profits are protected and maximised.

The sight of the two major parties bowing to the demands of big business corporations on climate change, degradation of the environment, the mining tax, WorkChoices/FairWork Australia, the ABCC, war in Iraq and now Afghanistan, "free" trade agreements and opening up Australia to even greater foreign big business capital investments to plunder the country's vast natural resources, agricultural land and food production, repelled many people in both country and cities.

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The wages share of national income has fallen to a 46 year low and the profits share has almost returned to the record high levels of 2008, while real labour costs have fallen dramatically in the past year. The profits share grew to 28.6% in trend terms, equal to the level achieved in the December quarter of 2008 and just below the record level of 28.8%, reached in the September quarter the same year. The ABS data also shows that whilst real labour costs have fallen substantially, productivity has gone up.

Australian Bureau of Statistics National Accounts data, released on 1 September 2010

of capitalism on behalf of monopoly corporations' constant hunt for bigger profits. Conflict with the people is inevitable.

Working people's anger at the ALP leaders, their grubby manoeuvrings and their embrace of economic rationalism with the cost it has imposed on workers and farmers, has grown. That anger feeds the idea that a solution lies with the Greens and independents. This is a part of an overall struggle for finding the way forward.

The anti-big business and anti-monopolist sentiments of the Greens and independents and many rank and file members in the ALP, people from rural Australia and others, provide a natural basis for united struggle with advanced workers against the sell-outs.

This sentiment was nearly ignited with the mining super profits tax that was watered down by Gillard as one of her first acts.

A line must be drawn on the Australian Building and Construction Commission and its draconian industrial powers.

the size and strength of the organised working class and different degrees of experience with state ALP governments, have produced uneven voting results between and within states and regions.

The nationally strong 11.5% vote for the Greens is seen as a way to

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Class outlook and the Greens Party

by *Bill F*

In the recent federal election the Greens Party has provided a parliamentary alternative to the sell-out policies of the Coalition and the gutless collaboration of Labor leaders. How then, do Communists view the growing influence of the Greens?

For many people disillusioned with the traditional parliamentary parties, the Greens Party has provided a degree of leadership and support for grass-roots struggles outside of the parliamentary arena. While this has been particularly true of climate warming and many environmental issues, as well as humanitarian issues such as indigenous rights and the treatment of refugees,

it has also joined struggles against imperialist wars and nuclear weapons, and in opposition to US military bases in Australia. Party leaders have also used their parliamentary platform to highlight anti-worker attacks and injustices against the people.

On these and many other issues of concern to the Australian people, the Greens Party and its supporters have generally taken a progressive stand against the outright takeover of Australia by US and other foreign corporate monopolies, objectively opposing imperialism.

Part of the people's movement

For these reasons, the Greens Party, its leaders and supporters must be



considered as important contributors to the people's movement for national independence. There are many points of unity which should be encouraged and developed.

For Communists who try to look at these things dialectically, the positive aspects of the Greens Party have so far outweighed a tendency to rely on parliamentary manoeuvres to win concessions from the ruling class.

With the monopoly media focus on the increased Green representation in parliament, there will be struggle within the Greens Party to maintain the intensity of grass roots activism.

Already the monopoly media has started a campaign to pressure the Greens parliamentary representatives to be "pragmatic" and "realistic", to water down their progressive positions and "cooperate" with the pro-imperialist agendas of the major parties.

Class Outlook

The Greens are not a working class party. Their policies and leading figures reflect a class base which is predominately petty-bourgeois; professionals, intellectual workers, academics, small business, self-employed producers, skilled workers, art and culture workers and so on.

This class largely accepts the permanence of capitalism. Their position in society cushions them from some of the harsher aspects of exploitation and oppression. Many have lifestyles that are relatively more comfortable and secure than those of industrial and rural workers. They have options which the great majority of the working class does not.

In reality, the petty-bourgeoisie is also oppressed and marginalised by foreign imperialism and corporate monopoly capital. Their skills and initiative are continually exploited and

twisted into serving the ruling class of foreign monopoly interests and local collaborators.

While they may see the need to resist this process, as a class they go no further than seeking to reform capitalism and somehow controlling the worst excesses of the multinationals.

As a whole, the petty-bourgeoisie seek to bring the working class under their leadership to give weight to their own agenda. At the same time they are fearful of the potential of the working class to go beyond mere reforms and push towards socialism.

Questions of political power

Within their policies and political positions, the Greens make no mention of the dominant role of US imperialism in world trade and international affairs, its manipulation of the United Nations, its nuclear monopoly, its global network of military bases and spies.

The fact that key sections of the Australian economy are now owned or controlled by US, European or Japanese monopolies is ignored.

Nor is there any mention of the role of the state apparatus – the army, police and court system designed to uphold and enforce the economic, political and military rule of imperialism over Australia.

There is the naïve expectation that rational debate will bring about the election of a Greens government, and that the super-rich vested interests will surrender their powers and privileges peacefully.

On these fundamental issues of political power, the Greens fall short. While we can respect and learn from their activism in waging struggle against the worst features of capitalism, it only confirms the crying need for working class leadership of the people's movement.

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
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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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Opportunities to build unity continued from page 1

The rising cost of living and skyrocketing house prices and rents are increasing the hardships of many ordinary people across Australia. This is at a time of a virtual freeze on most workers' wages whilst the biggest monopolies are clocking up record profits.

The disgraceful continuation of the Howard government's racist NT intervention in the Aboriginal communities by an ALP government that called itself "progressive", disappointed many of its supporters. Its cynical opportunism in the inhumane treatment of refugees, discrimination on the basis of sexuality, promotion of racism and many other social issues important to people, alienated many.

The continuing sell-out by the ALP, and a weak and muted leadership in the organised working class, pushed some of the poorest, alienated and unorganised, in cities and country, into the arms of the more reactionary Liberal/National Coalition.

Small business people, suffering from crippling debts and a precarious existence, either stayed with the Liberal/National Coalition or moved to the independents or the Greens.

Independents and Greens

In contrast, the three ex-National Party independents were returned in a stronger position, vigorously championing the needs of country people and communities. The effects of imperialist globalisation and the economic rationalist policies of "free" market forces and privatisation of infrastructure and services, unequal "free" trade agreements, monopolisation of food production and retailing by Coles and Woolworths, big debts to the banks and the destruction of agricultural land by mining monopolies, have brought hardship to many farmers and rural communities.

On some important matters the three independents have, between them, taken a positive stand in the interest of the people against the domination of Australia by the multinationals.

Even Bob Katter strongly denounced the Howard government's WorkChoices and the ABCC, voting in parliament against both of these anti-worker and anti-union laws.

Andrew Wilkie, the new independent, is widely known for his opposition to the continuing war in Afghanistan and support of progressive social issues.

The big swing to the Greens reflected the disillusionment and anger with both the ALP and Liberal/National Coalition on climate change, the rights

of Aboriginal people, refugees, neglect of public transport, workers' rights and conditions and the overriding power of big developers in the inner cities. Barbara Shaw, a long time local and highly respected Aboriginal community activist, from Mount Nancy town camp outside Alice Springs, stood for the Greens, receiving 12.5% of first preference votes.

In the mining towns of Western Australia and north Queensland, a ferocious campaign by the mining monopolies and the Murdoch press against the mining tax and the ALP government spooked local communities into fearing the loss of jobs and livelihood.

ALP loses support

Bowing to the demands of monopoly capital, the ALP leadership betrayed the people on most fronts. They abandoned even their own mild reforms for reduction in carbon emissions and a meagre super profits tax on the mining monopolies. The replacement of Rudd by Gillard – who immediately announced she had

local monopoly corporations loudly demanded that a future government continues to roll out the economic rationalist agenda of privatisation, more attacks on workers, making the people pay for any carbon tax, further cuts to company taxes and no tax on mining profits.

Multinationals panic

The Business Council of Australia, the Minerals Council, the Australian Industry Group and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented their list of demands to make sure ordinary people pay for the continuing global economic crisis, and that their super profits are preserved above all else.

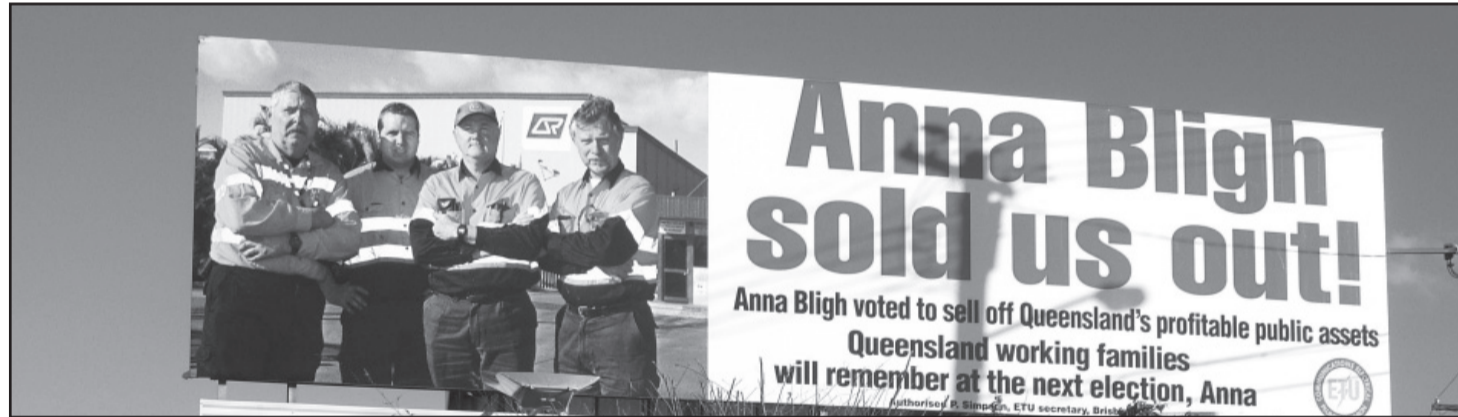
Murdoch's media monopoly, the powerful mouthpiece for the most reactionary section of the ruling class, strongly campaigned for the victory of their loyal servant, the Liberal/National Coalition under Abbott's leadership. Divisions and competing interests in the ruling class between the more aggressive and powerful mining interests and the struggling manufacturing industry were evident in differences in approach to the mining super profits tax and the elections.

from every state, shook the ruling class out of its smugness and comfort zone. Chris Richardson from Access Economics declared, "This is the worst outcome. Business would have been far happier to see either side win comfortably." Stephen Walters from JP Morgan wrote, "For financial markets, a hung Parliament is the worst outcome possible." "Foreign investors flee political uncertainty" screamed a newspaper headline.

The powerful Business Council of Australia was quick off the mark, issuing warnings to the ALP, Liberal/National Coalition, the Greens and the independents, demanding faster implementation of so-called "reforms" driven by the economic rationalism of imperialist globalisation. It demanded any future government and elected politicians implement their blue print for the Australian economy.

Confidence in the people

The success of the Greens and the wide support for independents grew out of many years of broad based progressive grass roots struggles and movements by the people, including members and supporters of the ALP, Greens, other smaller parties and even



Privatisation was a big issue with Queensland workers

"thrown the doors of the government open to the mining companies" – was as clumsy as it was treacherous. The people wanted the ALP government to stand up to the thuggery of the polluting corporations and mining monopolies, to lead the fight and mobilise mass support behind it.

The ALP government continues with the lighter version of WorkChoices under a new brand name of FairWork Australia and refuses to abolish the ABCC. Some union leaders chained the union movement to the increasingly conservative ALP government, whilst the rank and file workers were crying out for leadership dedicated to fighting for the interests of working people.

The people felt insulted by the vacuous, celebrity-style election campaign of the two main parties, void of any policies and any real vision for the nation.

In the lead up to the elections, the ruling class of foreign and

Two party system shaken

For the ruling class, the two party parliamentary system is the most efficient means of controlling the people and ensuring stability for the capitalist exploitation of workers and natural resources.

When the government of the day can no longer rule by deception and disillusionment sets in, the people's attention is directed to the other main party promoted as the only alternative available for the resolution of economic and social problems. And the merry-go-round continues endlessly. It's the use of parliamentary deception that disarms the people, to convince them there is no other alternative outside the parliamentary system.

The unreliability of a hung parliament, with the election of progressive Greens into the Senate

some supporters of the Coalition.

These struggles need to be deepened and broadened in the progressive movements of the people in workplaces and communities.

Crucial to the expansion and strengthening of this powerful movement is working class leadership.

Conditions are good for popularising the immediate demands listed in this issue on page 7.

Explanation and presentation of facts in the light of classes and class forces will arm the people, identify the main source of many problems and build broad mass alliances and a powerful movement for real change.

Central in all of this is an understanding of which class holds power, the strength and leadership of the working class, and the inability of parliamentary institutions to bring about fundamental change to put the workers and their allies in charge of the country.

Bring the Australian Wheat Board back under the control of the government!

by Nick G

Australian grain growers, the purported “owners” of the Australian Wheat Board (AWB), are incensed that the company could soon be controlled by Canadian giant Agrium Inc.

This follows on from the Japanese Sumitomo Corporation’s 50% purchase of Australian grain trader the Emerald group last March and Canadian grain firm Viterro Inc’s takeover of South Australia’s ABB Grains Ltd last year.

The AWB was founded in the wake of the 1930s Depression to save grain growers from the anarchic ravages of the domestic and international markets for wheat.

As a government-owned and operated entity it ran the “single desk” system under which it was the sole marketer of wheat for the international grain trade and the domestic purchaser of “last resort” – meaning that it always stood ready to bail out struggling farmers when falling demand or prices threatened to leave them in ruin.

Ironically, given the source of the current threat to the Board, it served as a model for the Canadian Wheat Board.

Both the CWB and the AWB were opposed by US grain producers on the grounds that government purchase and sale was unfair in a free trade environment. This is despite the latter’s heavy subsidies from the US Government, which rather undermines the credibility of “free trade” arguments.

Nevertheless, conservative Canadian and Australian governments driven by neo-liberal ideology have worked to strengthen the US imperialists at the expense of the farmers of their own countries.

In 2007, the Canadian Harper government tried to end the CWB’s “single desk” but was defeated.

The AWB’s “single desk” was abolished under Kevin Rudd, despite a pre-election pledge that it be retained. But it was the government of John Howard that had set the wheels in motion with the 1999 privatisation of the AWB.

This was sold as a move to give wheat growers ownership of the Board; indeed, the 2009 AWB Annual Report opens with the question “Who is the AWB?” superimposed over a young cocky looking over his wheat crop.

However, as a publicly listed company, the AWB is actually in the grip of a small group of local and foreign



investment banks, insurance companies and fund managers.

The largest single shareholder, HSBC Custody Nominees (Aust) Ltd holds around the same number of shares as the bottom 41,000 retail (or “Mum and Dad”) investors.

The threat to the AWB from Canada’s Agrium follows an announced merger between AWB and GrainCorp.

The latter emerged as a competitor following the demise of the single desk, and a merger of the two would have strengthened the international competitiveness of an Australian diversified agribusiness – hence the pre-emptive attack by the Canadians.

(Incidentally, GrainCorp and the AWB may be competitors, but four of the top five shareholders in each company are the same: HSBC Custody

Nominees, JP Morgan Nominees Australia Ltd, National Nominees Ltd, and ANZ Nominees Ltd. They represent 32% and 36% respectively of the total shares in each company.)

Grower dissatisfaction rising

President of the SA Farmers Federation John Lush warned back in 2004: “The US dominates Australia in the trading environment and we cannot afford to lose any of our advantages such as collective bargaining and single desk marketing if we are to have any chance of competing internationally.”

On August 12 2010 Mark Harrison, chairman of the NSWFA grains committee told the *Weekly Times* “What we are left with is Australian wheat growers struggling to compete

in a world market still corrupted by subsidies.” He called for the recreation of a single marketing desk.

The AWB provided economic stability for many small and medium-sized Australian farmers for half a century.

Imperialist-serving neo-liberal governments of both persuasions, having privatised the Board and removed its single desk status, are simply engaging in nation-wrecking and the undermining of economic sovereignty.

- Stop nation-wrecking by multi-nationals – nationalise the AWB and bring back the “single desk”!
- Reject the unequal “free trade” arrangements!

Commonwealth Bank posts big profit rise

by Jim H

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia’s statutory net profit after tax for the year ended 30 June 2010 was \$5,664 million, representing a 20% increase on the prior year. This is an increase of 42%.

Shareholders pocketed an 18.7% dividend for the end of the financial year. Most of this went to the big players.

Performance in their retail outlets has been boosted, improved in the bank’s own words, through “ongoing efficiency gains”.

Better results have been achieved from banking to business. The bank’s security arm Comsec has done well.

The bank’s major shareholders, ranked according to proportion owned,

are:

AMP

JP Morgan Nominees

UBS Wealth Management Australia Nominees

RBC Dexia Investor Services Australia Pty Ltd

Citicorp Nominees Pty Ltd

Questor Financial Services Ltd

National Nominees Ltd

Together they hold an overwhelming control over the bank. There is a strong link to US and British financial interests. The bulk of the dividends are paid out to these foreign owners.

When it is considered that the bank holds \$89 billion, it is not hard to imagine what a difference this could make, if the resource was used not just to make a profit, and an unjustified one,

out of the exploitation of its workforce, gains from harmful speculation and increasingly from an over emphasis on mining minerals out of the ground, was used to strengthen the nation’s sustainable manufacturing industries, build new infrastructure, give better assistance to smaller business, ensure quality and affordable housing for all and a range of other services important to Australian working people.

Financial assets leaking away overseas could be retained in the country and put to good use.

The owners of the Commonwealth Bank are not going to make any such change.

The answer is nationalisation of the banks under the Australian people’s control.

Selling off the farm - the export of wealth

by Ned K

The federal election campaign by the two major parties and the mainstream media rarely touched on issues of real substance about the future of the country. So it was surprising to see in *The Weekend Australian* of July 31 half a page on the issue of rural properties being taken over by overseas interests.

The newspaper article started off by saying, "Labor yesterday demanded the Coalition back foreign investment in the farm sector after Tony Abbott revealed he would be prepared to limit foreign purchases to protect the national interest!"

Just who is the preferred party of foreign capital? Is it Labor, the Coalition or either? Just what was the squabble about?

Well, on this occasion the squabble between the opposing politicians was actually about a real struggle for survival by small farmers in Australia being forced to sell up to overseas companies due to soaring water prices, as well as the purchase of large rural assets by foreign owned companies.

The article listed nine properties in the sheep, cattle and cropping industries with a total value of \$2.8 billion that have fallen into foreign companies'

hands. In addition it mentioned AAco, Australia's largest cattle company being taken over by IFFCO of United Arab Emirates, and Packer's Consolidated Pastoral Co as being purchased by London based private equity firm Terra Firma.

The article also listed Cubbie Station, Carrington Farms and Clyde Agriculture, which owns 12 properties in NSW and Qld, as being up for sale and likely to be purchased by foreign owned companies.

Then in the August edition of the magazine *The Monthly* there appeared a revealing article by Paul Barry called "China's Quarry". The essence of his article was highlighted in large print on the second page where it said, "It's too late to worry about selling off the farm, because that process is almost complete"

Barry followed up this comment by adding that "Virtually every petroleum or gas project in Australia is either foreign-owned or has a foreign partner. The same is true of just about every coalmine and every new coalmine and every new iron ore mine."

The new player in all of this is China. Not only regarding the destination of the resources extracted, but the ownership and control of the resource projects in Australia. Barry says that 26 of the 40



Irrigation water on Cubbie Station

major new projects in iron ore mining are Chinese-owned, Chinese-funded, have a Chinese joint-venture partner, or all three.

Super-profits tax

Rudd's super profit tax was a small step in the correct direction to safeguard Australian sovereignty and to make sure there was some degree of control, however small, of the rapacious appetite by foreign capital for our resources.

The media commentators in the election campaign said that "the

economy" is the central issue for voters in any election.

Central to "the economy" is who controls and owns the wealth of the country that is produced by working people. Where does that wealth end up – In the hands of a rich minority of overseas-based corporations or in the hands of the ordinary people in Australia?

Until this question is addressed and resolved in favour of the people, all the talk by politicians of real improvement in the living standards of ordinary Australians is pure deception.

Praise Gillard and pass the surgery saw

by Louisa L

I've decided on a career change. I'm going to be a doctor, and I voted ALP to ensure I live my dream. Training will only take eight weeks. Yes, I know that by the time you read this those damned Greens and independents might have dashed all my hopes. And Julia hasn't exactly promised that I'll be able to do it, but I know it's just around the corner.

How do I know? She's planned it for teachers, so doctors are bound to follow suit. It's called Teach Next, and she says it's for people who "have been put off by the time it takes to meet qualification hurdles." Well, I can tell you, that's the only reason I'm not a doctor ... all that training!

As usual the union mob are whingeing. Australian Education Union Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos reckons, "Every student deserves to be taught by a fully-qualified teacher ... The skills required to teach children cannot be learned in such a short period of time.

"The focus should be on addressing the things that make it hard to recruit people into teaching and to keep our best teachers in the classroom: high workloads, large class sizes and inadequate career paths," he said. Spoilsport.

Gillard's copying a similar system in the USA, called 'Teach for America' (TFA). After crash teaching courses, recent college graduates are placed by TFA where other under-qualified, under-certified teachers are often called upon to work – low-income urban and rural school districts.

Now that's just where Gillard wants the Teach Next crew to go – places where it's difficult to get teachers – and it won't be in the private system.

Arizona education researchers, Ildiko Laczko-Kerr and Professor David C. Berliner, blather on about it, "Students of under-certified teachers make about 20% less academic growth per year than do students of teachers with regular certification ... Present policies allowing under-certified teachers, including those from the TFA program,

to work with our most difficult to teach children appear harmful. Such policies increase differences in achievement between the performance of poor children, often immigrant and minority children, and those children who are more advantaged."

What would a couple of eggheads like them know?

Have I got a deal for you!

Then you've got those journalists and what-not talking about Mad Monk Abbott and the deals he might do to form government. Julia will give him a run for his money.

Look at the deals she's offered private schools. Instead of increasing the number of public school counsellors from around one for every 1000 kids, she's hoping to spend \$220 million to extend the school chaplain program. Hallelujah brother! Shove your separation of church and state up your proverbial.

And it's 10% all around: 10% bonuses for the top 10% of teachers, and extra money for the best 10% of schools, all based on a few tests with

just 40 questions each. Kerching! Bring out the cashbox! Divide and conquer.

And just because of this sort of thing, teachers, especially state school teachers, have dumped on Julia! What a shame! And they've supported those closet reds, the Greens, or that Wilkie bloke who mentioned public education and the rotten deal he said it was getting in his first media interview.

And those other three independents – they come from the country, and might not be too keen on untrained teachers ending up on their doorsteps or NAPLAN tests that hammer their local schools.

But back to my original idea. Whaddya reckon?

What? You don't want an ex-teacher amputating your leg after eight weeks training? Well what about fixing your car?

Another bloody spoilsport. Lucky for me you're not running the country. Come to think of it, Tony might like the idea. Perhaps he can do a deal with Julia?

Surgery, here I come!

Marxism Today

Reform or Revolution?

by *Duncan B*

The question of reform or revolution is an important one. It is true that a revolutionary situation does not exist at present in Australia. It is also true that the last couple of years have seen a continuing struggle in this country.

The workers have led the way with some staunch resistance to employers' attacks on wages and conditions and the right to organise. Community and environmental groups have also had some good wins.

As inspiring as they are, these struggles do not alter the fact that Australia is a nation still dominated by foreign imperialism, especially US imperialism.

Imperialism dominates Australia

Imperialism dominates all the main sectors of the Australian economy such as finance and banking, the mass media, mining, food processing and manufacturing. It also dominates our cultural life, smothering our own Australian culture.

Imperialism is behind the attacks on the wages and working conditions of Australian workers. What is needed is to rid Australia of imperialist domination, rather than try to reform the existing system.

Reformism is strong in Australia

The reality of Australian politics over the past one hundred and twenty years is that most struggles have been for 'a few crumbs from the rich man's table', that is, for reforms through the actions of the trade union movement and by the Labor Party in parliament.

The Labor Party was formed in the 1890s to win reforms in the interests of the workers in parliament. The trade union movement and the parliamentary system have had a strong hold on Australian workers for the last hundred years or so, and the Labor Party is still seen by many to be the party for the workers.

In reality, the Labor Party does not challenge the capitalist system or the domination of Australia by US imperialism.

The trade unions are an important form of working class organisation. While unions struggle to defend workers' wages and conditions from the

attacks of the capitalists, even the most militant union still operates within the confines of the capitalist system.

The recent struggle over the leadership of the Labor Party is sure to set people thinking about the question of who will lead the working class as it strives to meet the challenges of the present situation in Australia.

The question of leadership of the working class is more important than ever.

Revolutionary leadership

The working class needs revolutionary, not reformist leadership. The time has come to look beyond parliament and trade union politics for a solution to our problems.

The workers need organisation that will offer revolutionary political leadership outside the capitalist system.

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) is working hard to build its revolutionary leadership and to win the respect of the working class. It seeks to win the support of the most advanced elements drawn from the ranks of the working class and members of other classes who support the working class.

The CPA (M-L) is guided by the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism which recognises that the material world – matter – is primary. Ideas – consciousness – are the reflection of this objective reality.

Dialectical materialism informs the practice of the party. With the aid of this philosophical outlook we can see that all things in nature and society are constantly coming into being and passing away.

We understand that things like parliamentarism and parliamentary politics are bound to pass away, but we also see that that must be achieved through the class conscious activity of the mobilised working class.

Day to day struggles

Undoubtedly, the struggle for reforms and immediate demands is critical to lifting the consciousness of the working class.

In the experience of class struggle around specific issues, working people learn that Australian capitalist society is dominated by foreign and local monopolies that exercise political

power, and that the state is a tool of their rule.

The CPA (M-L) strongly supports all struggles of the people to defend and improve their rights and conditions and has proposed some immediate demands on important issues. (See opposite)

Capitalist exploitation

The Communist Party uses the dialectical-materialist approach to analyse Australian society. It has concluded that Australia is a capitalist society characterised by production for profit. This profit is derived from the unpaid labour time of the workers who produce the manufactured goods, build the office blocks or work in the mines, power stations or railways.

The CPA (M-L) recognises that the production of commodities by Australian workers is largely socialised. That is, production is mainly organised on a mass basis in workplaces where tens, hundreds or thousands of workers are employed. On the other hand, the capitalists privately appropriate the commodities that the workers produce.

This is one of the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system. Sooner or later the workers will act to put an end to this contradiction and establish a socialist society in Australia.

The age of imperialism

We live in the era of imperialism, which is the stage of capitalism where monopolies and finance capital dominate; when the export of capital is of pronounced importance compared with the export of commodities; when the world has been divided amongst the big trusts and multi-national corporations and when there are no longer any new territories to be seized without conflict.

The CPA (M-L) recognises that the present stage in the struggle to end capitalism in Australia is to win Australian independence from the foreign (mainly US) imperialist interests and their local allies who dominate the key sectors of Australia's economy.

Australia has a limited measure of independence, but the foreign imperialist powers (in particular the US, Japan and Britain) continue to exert decisive political, economic, diplomatic, military and cultural influence in Australia.

The leading class

The CPA (M-L)'s analysis of Australia's class society leads to the conclusion that the working class is the leading class in Australia's struggle for national independence. This is because large-scale production forces the working class to be the most disciplined, cohesive and politically-conscious class. The working class can draw support from members of other classes in Australian society (small businesspeople, farmers, urban petty-bourgeoisie, etc.) to achieve its goal.

The capitalist state

The capitalist state comprises the various levels of state bureaucracy, the armed forces, the police (open and secret), the courts and the gaols. The state exists to protect the imperialist domination of Australia against the threat of revolutionary over-throw by the working class and its allies.

Currently, they maintain their domination mainly by deception (parliament, 'democratic' rights, 'free' press, etc.)

Should the deception become less effective, the capitalists will turn to violent means to preserve their rule.

What is the alternative?

The CPA (M-L) offers an alternative to the continued imperialist domination of Australia.

The key strategy is to assist the Australian people to win national independence and through that, move ahead towards socialism.

The CPA (M-L) works towards the formation of a vast peoples' movement in Australia. This will comprise all Australians who oppose imperialism in any way and will ensure that the tiny handful of supporters of imperialism will be isolated from the vast majority of Australians.

As time goes by, more and more Australian workers will realise that the struggle for a multi-stage revolution for Australia is the best way forward.

Victory in this great struggle is more likely if the Communist Party is built in the heart of the working class so that it can assist the Australia-wide mass movement of the working people and all those who want progressive, fundamental change.

Immediate Demands on current issues

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) is striving to advance the demands of the Australian working class and working people at this current time. These immediate demands form a solid basis on which to build united struggle by wide sections of the people. We urge all comrades and friends to promote and support these demands in their mass work.

Workers/union rights and democratic rights

- Empower workers with the right to strike!
Scrap the ABCC – Stop criminalising workers demanding decent wages and conditions. Drop charges against Ark Tribe
- Guarantee workplace rights!
Right to job security
Right to a safe workplace
Right to organise
Right to collective action
Right to union OH & S representatives
Right to full entitlements when companies fail

Environment

- Make the polluters pay!
Cap and tax carbon emissions – no “market solutions”
No pollution reduction costs passed on to the people
- Phase out coal!
Create clean power using renewable energy
Retrain workers for new clean, sustainable industries
- Water belongs to all – it’s not for trade or sale!
- No uranium mining – unsafe for workers, communities and humanity!

Manufacturing, jobs, resources tax

- Stop nation-wrecking by multinationals – nationalise and build the nation for the people!
- Regulate and control foreign investment - reject unequal “free trade” deals!
- Tax the profits of the mining monopolies! Keep the wealth in Australia!
- Develop renewable energy production!
Build clean, safe, sustainable manufacturing and value-adding industries
Improve services and amenities in mining communities and regional areas

Health, education, and livelihood

- Serve the people – no privatisation!
More and better public schools
More and better public hospitals
More and better public housing – implement rent controls
More and better public transport
More and better affordable community-run childcare centres
- Nationalise the banks!
Regulate interest rates
Cut bank fees
- More affordable private housing!
- Scrap Negative Gearing!
- Increase pensions and entitlements!

Aboriginal sovereignty and the ‘intervention’

- End the racist Intervention now - Aboriginal control of Aboriginal affairs!
Stop land grabbing by mining companies!
- Unconditional restoration of the Racial Discrimination Act – scrap compulsory ‘Income Management’!
- Leave Land Rights alone - recognise Aboriginal sovereignty!
- A just Treaty with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples!

Foreign policy

- For an independent and peaceful foreign policy!
- No more support for American wars – get out of Iraq, Afghanistan and the Philippines!
- No US Alliance – no foreign military bases on Australian soil!
- Nuclear free Australia!

Social issues

- Equal rights for women!
Equal pay for work of equal value
Make equal opportunity a reality
Parental leave paid at full wage
- For a multicultural Australia!
No to racism
Stop demonisation of asylum seekers and refugees

The rich and the super-rich just get richer

by **Bill F**

It should come as no great surprise that a handful of rich capitalists and investors in Australia have weathered this early period of the global economic and financial crisis in very good shape and grown even richer.

The *World Wealth Report*, produced by Merrill Lynch Global Wealth Management and Capgemini shows Australia’s population of high net worth

individuals (HNWIs) jumped 34.4% last year, to 173,600. It defines HNWIs as people “with more than \$US1 million in investable assets, excluding the family home and collectables.”

The total wealth of Australia’s HNWI population jumped 36.8% in 2009 to \$US519.4 billion, giving an average wealth of \$US2.99 million.

The working class and other working people who create the wealth in this country have to battle like hell just to keep up with the cost of living and

many go backwards – a 36% increase in wealth is beyond comprehension for most of us. Hey, we think we’ve won the lottery when we get a 3% wage rise!

The report also points to the “ultra rich”, individuals defined as having more than \$30 million in investable assets, excluding house and trinkets. In the whole world there are only 93,100 people in this category, and their wealth grew by 21.5% during 2009, a period of ‘global financial crisis’.

Only 6,517 “ultra rich” live in the Asia-Pacific region, reflecting the uneven development of imperialism across the globe.

It seems the rich and the super-rich were able to cushion themselves from most negative consequences of the crisis and march onwards over the bodies of millions of sacked and destitute workers and homeless families.

This is what always happens when global capitalism breaks down, and this is why it has to go.

Capitalism can't guarantee a clean environment

by Bill F

People's demands for a safe, pollution free environment and a roll-back of climate change are being ignored and frustrated by the major parliamentary parties in their subservient role to local and foreign profiteering monopoly capitalists.

During the election campaign, on the few occasions that the environment was mentioned, all the two major parties had to offer were vague generalisations about 'consulting the people' or 'real action', but no concrete plans or vision for the future.

The CPA (M-L) has proposed four Immediate Demands on some of the major environmental issues. Our demands put the interests of the working class and working people ahead of the profit-taking of the multinationals and their local collaborators. The demands show what should be possible and achievable in a rich country like Australia where many people have the basic education, skills and enthusiasm to repair our damaged environment.

Make the polluters pay!

- Cap and tax carbon emissions – no "market solutions"
- No emission reduction costs passed on to the people

This can be done by government regulation. Firstly, a limit should be enforced on the amount of greenhouse gases released by companies, in just the same way other toxic pollutants are restricted. In addition, a carbon tax should be levied to pay for clean-up costs, and the research and development of clean, alternative energies and industrial processes.

There is no need for a whole new army of parasitic brokers and traders dealing in 'carbon credits' – just some inspectors with ABCC-like powers to check up on the polluters and enforce regulations!

Phase out coal!

- Create clean power using renewable energy
- Retrain workers for new clean, sustainable industries

There needs to be a programme to phase out the dirty, coal-fired power stations and replace them with solar, wind and geothermal energy.

These technologies already exist and can take up most base power demands relatively quickly. In some locations, natural gas could be used as an interim or supplementary measure.

Nobody should lose their job. On



the contrary, workers in the coal-mining and power industries should be assisted to expand their skills and form the core workforce in new clean and sustainable industries.

Similarly, workers in the automobile industry could quite easily shift across to the manufacture of buses, trams and carriages for a massive expansion of public transport infrastructure in the main cities.



Water belongs to all it's not for trade or sale!

Capitalism wants to turn everything into marketable commodities. The monopolies would patent and sell the air we breathe, if they could get away with it.

Water, like air, is essential to the life of humans and all other living things. If the use of water is only determined by 'the market', a rich minority will

take as much as they want, with no responsibility for the rest of us or for the land.

Major water systems such as the Murray-Darling should be nationalised and controlled by a central government agency, along with metropolitan water supplies, reservoirs and pipelines, to ensure long-term planning to meet the needs of the people and to repair and protect the natural environment.

No uranium mining – unsafe for workers and humanity!

Australia should cease the mining and sale of uranium ores. At every stage of production, processing and transport, uranium is highly dangerous and toxic to human beings. When used as a source of power, it results in deadly waste that must be stored safely for thousands of years – can we trust anyone to do this, let alone giant monopolies only interested in relatively short-term profits?

There is already sufficient uranium available for nuclear medicine requirements and the people of the world want to see the elimination of nuclear missiles and bombs, not addition to the stockpiles.

Mining and energy boom should pay for sustainable manufacturing in Australia

by Ned K

In Australia in mid 2010 there were over \$350 billion worth of existing mining and energy projects approved or in the process of being approved.

As the federal election results await a definitive outcome, one of the biggest corporations in the mining and energy sector, BP Billiton, announced a \$14.37 billion profit. (Adelaide *Sunday Mail* 29 August).

A few days earlier, dairy products manufacturer National Foods announced that it was reviewing its operations with likely closure of some of its regional plants such as the cheese manufacturing plant at Jervois near Murray Bridge.

Similar uncertainty prevails for workers in what is left of the car component industry as the continued existence of car assembly plants in Australia is based on an increasing reliance by the multinational car companies on imported components.

In the booming mining and energy industries in Australia, local engineering manufacturers are struggling to get a look in.

An example is the \$43 billion Gorgon Liquid Natural Gas Project in the North West. According to the Australian Financial Review, only a

fifth of the steel for the project is being provided by steel manufacturers in Australia. The Australian Steel Institute in April this year calculated that only 8% of all steel fabrication work required in Western Australia will be done in Australia. Consequently, steel fabrication and employment in this industry is nowhere near potential.

One of the multinationals involved in the Gorgon project, Chevron, complained that sourcing steel fabrication from Australia was too costly compared with its 'overseas suppliers'. A familiar line of argument that manufacturing workers in Australia have heard from multinational corporations since the early 1970s when manufacturing in Australia started to decline rapidly, and big capital moved its manufacturing to cheaper labour sources in the perimeter countries of global capital.

"Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones" (*Communist Manifesto* Marx, Engels)

This depiction of capitalism is certainly an apt description of what manufacturing workers in Australia have experienced in the newest stage

of capitalism over the last 40 years as "... in place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations" (Marx).

The "disturbance of all social conditions" referred to by Marx is reflected in the 2010 federal election outcome where the voting trends arguably indicate a real concern by the working people of Australia about the direction of the country.

Central to this concern is a desire by millions of people in Australia for the plight of local industry and jobs, health, education and environment, at a time when there is a mining and energy boom!

The CPA (M-L) has put forward these Immediate Demands to answer the concerns of the people

- Nationalise and build the nation
- Regulate and control foreign investment
- Tax the profits of the mining monopolies
- Develop renewable energy production
- Build clean, safe, sustainable manufacturing industries
- Improve services in regional areas

US economic crisis continues

by *Jim H*

Much has appeared in Vanguard about the state of the global economy and the central place of US imperialism in this. In short, the crisis began the US and spread out from there. Furthermore, the crisis is the result of the operation of the economic laws of capitalism.

The present crisis has been a long running one, which came to a head in 2008. Through the maze of contradictory reports from institutions, assorted economists and advisors, official statistics, plus media reports, one thing remains clear, the crisis is continuing.

A number of the latest key indicators tell the story.

Official economic growth this year has been a miserable 1.3%. What there was is largely due to a temporary spike in car sales. In any case, a more accurate measure of economic growth would be how many more commodities, and therefore value, was produced.

Declining production

Signs are that production is declining. The unemployment rate is up to the 10% barrier, although the real number of out of work is seriously underestimated. Consumer spending has fallen. A downward trend for retail sales can also be seen over the same period. Businesses are currently hoarding an estimated \$1.84 trillion. That is, the money is not being re-invested, because of fear over the state of the economy. Such is the confidence in the future of the American economy.

The rate of interest is at an historically low level, at close to zero, underlining the depth of the crisis. Mortgage rates are down to 3.92%, a thirty year low and together with plummeting house prices it is not translating into more house sales.

Broadly speaking, the interest rate measures the value of currency. A low rate means a low value for the American dollar. An interest rate as low as the one now prevailing in the US shows that there remains a large oversupply of American dollars, way above what is required for the economy. Finance is way out of step with production and alternative avenues for investment in the global economy.

Huge foreign debt

US foreign debt, already massive, stood \$456.9 trillion at the end of last year and has continued to rise. Government debt is at over \$14 trillion and this is only the federal debt. Overall,

every American man, woman and child owes \$443,280. This puts the numbers into perspective. The Foreign debt of the US is 25% of its gross domestic product (GDP).

Conditions such as these leave little room find to prop up the economy. For the Obama administration this means choices between borrowing more, taxing the big corporations, taxing wage earners and cutting back on the provision of government services to the American people. Borrowing more will immediately add to the existing problems. The corporations will not allow their creature to put the burden on them. The Obama administration can only achieve and remain in office with their endorsement. Increasing taxes on wages and cutting back on government services will shrink the domestic market and incite anger from the American people, many of whom are already demanding that those who caused the crisis should pay for it.

It is hard to see a way out of this situation.

As certain as the US is in decline, is that this will continue to be exported to

the global economy, through the many linkages to US imperialism that exist. No country can avoid being affected in some way. Those more securely tied to US imperialism must be affected most of all.

Additional factors are that the European and Japanese economies are also in trouble.

Impact on Australia

Our economy is heavily dependent on overseas borrowing, predominantly from huge international US banks. They do and will continue to pass on their problems in the forms of higher wholesale interest charges and the imposition of other conditions. Overall it will add to the cost of finance.

Nervous shareholders, and many of the biggest are American, are less stable. Share market instability will affect the whole economy, through the risk of sudden capital flights from businesses, industries and the nation.

A declining global economy means further instability in capital flows and a loss of overseas markets. And in more desperate and competitive environment,

particularly for countries like Australia which cannot compete against the big players.

The US Australia Free Trade Agreement will exacerbate this. Australia stands to become even more of a dumping ground for US products, while increasing protectionism there restricts Australian exports.

US interests will increasingly demand that a new round of neo-liberalism be applied by the Australian government.

We are already seeing clear signs of this shift from both the Coalition and Labor, who are only too willing to do as they are told. The aim is to carve out a larger share of Australian income for US interests. Such is the power of US imperialism over Australia. The recent election will not change this.

An outcome of all of this is that the economy will be distorted even more than it is now. We will become even more dependent on mining exports, which will in turn, draw more resources from the rest of the economy.

Australia's future wellbeing depends on achieving a break from being a dependency of the US economy.

Monopoly media and elections

By *Jim H*

The monopoly media is a major prop of capitalism and Australia's subservience to US imperialism. At certain times, such as in the lead up and during the recent election campaign, the media moguls step up their use of their electronic and print outlets to manipulate and turn to turn the election into high farce.

None more than the Murdoch Empire, which first played a key role in undermining Kevin Rudd and promoting Julia Gillard.

Then Tony Abbott was given a face lift and pushed forward. Through Murdoch and the rival Packer stable, the election became a matter of shallow personality profiles, cheap gossip and evasion of substance. Is it any wonder why so many turned off the bland and meaningless offerings?

An election of this type suits the media moguls and their class. They do not care for the prospect of real discussion and consideration of solutions to real problems. The Australian people would ask for way too much more than they are prepared to allow.

Matters that are important to Australians, real issues that demand immediate attention, like restoring

democratic rights, action on global warming, lifting the burden of economic crisis off the backs of working people and safeguarding Australia's independence hardly rated a mention.

Failure to take these matters up during the election campaign reinforced the primary role of elections as a means of deception and to work the pretence that political power is in the hands of the people.

The purpose is to sow the illusion that the people, while the real choices are being made by a few behind closed doors.

Manipulating elections

In the absence of real content the election result can be more easily manufactured, and hide the reality that the real decisions are made in the boardrooms, in the exclusive clubs and corporate networks and by highly paid and unelected functionaries.

To an important extent, a significant section of the Australian population was able to resist manipulation.

The owners of the media monopolies are important members of the ruling class and closely tied to US interests. A bland election that ignores the issues and can be easily manipulated suits their interests. With this they ensure they government, whatever its stripes,

is one that does what it is told.

Both the coalition and Labor are completely beholden to the media monopolies. They are dependent on them to be provided with the needed profile. In turn, the political parties must show their worthiness as willing puppets. Their scope for independent policy is strictly limited. This is a major reason why there is so little difference between them.

An important factor in this election is that the ruling monopoly class is divided. It is one of the reasons, although by no means the only one, why it ended up with neither wing getting the numbers in their own right. The more reactionary elements went for the coalition and the slightly more liberal with Labor. An expression of this second tendency was the Melbourne *Age* tilt towards Labor.

A major problem facing the Australian people is that a small minority monopolises the means of accessing and passing on information. This calls for democratisation of the media. Pockets of this exist in community media.

The only effective way to do this is to turn over the resources of the media monopolies for use by the majority to communicate and put forward their views. Private ownership and control over the media must be ended.

Struggle for West Papua independence is hardly reported

by *Bill F*

Our monopoly media seldom reports anything that is happening in our nearest neighbouring countries, unless, of course, it has something to do with the profits of Australian and international mining/oil companies, for example the East Timor gas fields.

The decades-long struggle by the people of West Papua for independence from Indonesia barely rates a mention in the pro-imperialist media. After all, the government of Indonesia is an important ally of US imperialism, which has substantial investments in the country and trains and supplies its military forces. Neither the Australian government nor the monopoly media groups are interested in upsetting the US or Indonesia by investigating and reporting on the independence struggle of the West Papuan people.

The following information comes from a variety of articles and websites:

From www.freewestpapua.com.au

“However in 1962, conflict erupted over West Papua between The Netherlands and Indonesia, and a United Nations agreement gave control of the colony to Indonesia for six years. This was to be followed by a referendum to determine the views of the population.

“These six years of Indonesian control saw well-documented cases of violence and abuse by the military. Then in 1969, Indonesia conducted a shame referendum called the Act of Free Choice. Only 1025 Papuans, representing a population of one million, were picked to vote. Under severe duress, including threats from senior ranking military officials to cut their tongues out, they voted to remain part of Indonesia.

“In the 35 years that have followed, the people of West Papua have suffered at the hands of Indonesia’s military regime. Since 1962 an estimated 100,000 people have been killed or disappeared by the brutal military regime. Thousands have been raped and tortured and entire villages, especially in the highlands, have been destroyed. “During the mid-1990s the Indonesian military systematically destroyed village gardens, causing widespread famine. Despite the democratic reforms in Indonesia following the fall of General Suharto in 1998, terrible human rights abuses have continued. In 2001, the elected leader of the Papuan Presidium Council, Mr Theys Eluay, was assassinated by the Indonesian military.”



Papuans rally in Jayapura

From the International Commission of Jurists - Australia

“Since 1969, the West Papuans have been subjected to many human rights violations at the hands of the Indonesian military and security forces, their traditional lands have been occupied by large numbers of transmigrants from other parts of Indonesia, their resources have been exploited mainly for the benefit of others (in particular by the Freeport Mine) and their environment has been degraded by mining activities. The symbolic act of defiance in raising the West Papuan flag carries heavy prison sentences. As a result of military crackdowns at various times, many thousands of West Papuan refugees have fled across the border into Papua New Guinea, and many remain there.”

From Ghali Hassan, www.globalresearch.ca

“Like Papua New Guinea, West Papua is rich in mineral and energy resources. Its resources exploited by multinational corporations, including Union Oil, Amoco, Agip, Conoco, Phillips, Esso, Texaco, Mobil, Shell, Petromer Trend Exploration, Atlantic Richfield, Sun Oil and Freeport-McMoran (USA); Oppenheimer (South Africa); Total (France); Ingold (Canada); Marathon Oil, Kepala Burung (UK); Dominion Mining, Aneka Tambang, BHP, Cudgen RZ, and CRA (Australia).

“The extracted billions in gold are shared between these corporations, the Indonesian military and Indonesia’s elites at the expense of the people of West Papua who remain poor, and their unique environment.

“Freeport’s Mt Ertsberg mine is the second largest copper mine in the world. It also contains the largest proven gold deposit in existence. Since 1967, Freeport-McMoran extracted more than \$100 billion from West Papuan soil, value. The region around the mine is (military zone) closed off to outsiders, as well as to the traditional land owners who have been dispossessed. The mine is in the rugged central highlands of the Island at elevations of more than 13,500 feet above sea-level. Freeport is simply turning an entire mountain of gold and copper into an open pit.

“In the US, Freeport was known to be the largest polluter of land, air and water, both in terms of volume and toxicity, in the whole of North America. In addition to extracting the wealth of West Papua, Freeport has done irreparable destruction to the surrounding environment, including the logging of unique rainforest and the poisoning of nearby rivers. Other mines like Bougainville and Ok Tedi in Papua New Guinea have had similar effects. Furthermore, Freeport is the cause of thousands of West Papuan deaths, and continues to pay the Indonesian military for gross human rights abuses, including the killing on 11 November 2001 of Theys Eluay, the Chairman of the Papuan Presidium Council and pro-independence leader.”

From Dr. John Ondawame, West Papua National Coalition for Liberation

“Pacific leaders continue to be bribed by Indonesia, diplomacy is failing and it will be very difficult for our political leaders to contain our OPM [guerilla]

forces after these ongoing diplomatic failures. We are close to declaring a total intifada in Papua.”

From Jason MacLeod, University of Queensland

“West Papua is the Indonesia’s Palestine. Papuans consider that their land has been occupied without their consent. Freedom of expression is prohibited, foreign journalists banned, migrants continue to pour into the country, and the police and military keep a repressive lid on boiling Papuan anger. It is also a modern day Avatar. Papuans are defending their land from the exploitative practices of resource extractive industries. For the Papuans theirs is a struggle for survival.

“However, unlike Palestine and the film Avatar, resistance to the Indonesian government’s rule has overwhelmingly been through civilian based movements. Only last month, for instance, 20,000 plus people – students, women, young people, religious leaders, NGO activists, traditional chiefs, farmers and even members of the Majelis Rakyat Papua, West Papua’s indigenous senate – all converged on the capital and occupied the provincial parliament for two days to pressure the Papuan political elite to hand back Special Autonomy, a package or policy, finance, and legislation designed to give Papuans a measure of self-rule. After ten years of broken promises and still born hopes, Papuans concluded Special Autonomy had failed. It is a news story that should have been covered by every major media outlet. But here in Australia we heard next to nothing.

“... At the recent Pacific Island Forum, Vanuatu tried to raise the West Papua issue but Papua New Guinea’s political leaders blocked the discussion. Again. The Australia and New Zealand governments also failed to raise their voice for on behalf of Papuan rights. Again.”



OPM fighters

Palestinian factions reject appeasement talks

by *Bill F*

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has announced a fresh round of face to face negotiations between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority, to commence in Washington this month and run for up to 12 months.

These talks are to take place under the direct supervision of US imperialism and the Obama administration, which is desperate to prop up the discredited 'Oslo peace process' as further cover for Israel to implement its apartheid policies across the rest of Palestine. By taking part in these talks at a time when Israel is stepping up its persecution of Palestinians, is encouraging and building new settlements on Palestinian land, is evicting hundreds of Palestinians from East Jerusalem and is enforcing its ruthless blockade of Gaza, the Palestinian National Authority is only appeasing aggression and undermining the unity of Palestinian resistance.

Press statement on negotiations

This unity was demonstrated at a meeting of 11 Palestinian factions in Damascus on August 15, where a joint press statement was read by Dr. Maher al-Taher, member of the Political Bureau of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which posted the following report:

"The 11 factions, including the PFLP, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Democratic

Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the General Command and others, met on Sunday in order to discuss the issue of a potential Palestinian Authority return to negotiations and to make it clear that resuming such negotiations under U.S. authority, whether direct or indirect, places the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people as subject to the dictates of the U.S. and Zionism. The factions' statement was issued jointly and read by Comrade Taher; it said that the goal of the US and its strategic ally, the Zionist state, "aims at the liquidation of the national rights of the Palestinian people, while covering up the criminal practices of the occupation in building settlements, Judaizing Jerusalem, and besieging Gaza." The statement went on to say that the occupation intends to create "facts on the ground" whereby the perennial presence of occupation Israeli forces on Palestinian land is legitimized through such negotiations. Comrade Taher said, "The Zionist/US pressure to conduct direct negotiations is an attempt to provide cover for the US and Israel's aggressive plans for the region." The statement went on to say that "in a time of a growing international movement in solidarity with the Palestinian people and their just cause, and increasing isolation of Israel as a racist state, the US and Israel are insisting on direct negotiations in order to provide a lifeline to lift the isolation of the criminal occupation state." The statement called for an end to internal division and urged that instead of negotiations, the Palestinian Authority



Dr. Maher al-Taher (PFLP) reads the statement by 11 Palestinian factions

concentrate on building national unity, "and to stop betting on the futile negotiations, and instead adhere to Palestinian national rights and constants and the choice of resistance to liberate the land and end the occupation."

The head of the Political Bureau of Hamas, Khaled Meshaal, said the meeting of the factions was "exceptional in terms of the quality and number and weight of the factions in the Palestinian arena and what the meeting represents in the Palestinian political context. It is exceptional in its timing in light of the Israeli aggression and the ongoing American pressure on the region," emphasizing that the statement rejected both direct and indirect negotiations and reflected a wide range of Palestinian political opinion. The PFLP also issued a statement on August 15, 2010, emphasizing that there is an urgent and historic mission

for national salvation and national unity of the Palestinian people, their political and social forces and their national institutions, and that the Palestinian leadership must reject any US pressure to push Palestinians into direct negotiations, which provide a cover for the continuing settlement project and attempts to liquidate the Palestinian cause. It called for a comprehensive national forum of all national and Islamic forces to end the division and restore unity in the national interest of the Palestinian people to defend our rights to return and self-determination and all national rights. The Front urged that no one should be fooled by any statement of the "Quartet", saying that there is no political value or obligation to abide by the wishes of the Quartet that continues to allow the ongoing Israeli crimes against our people."

Greeks – beware of bankers bearing loans!

by *Nick G*

The punishments currently being imposed on the Greek working class and people contain great lessons for the Australian people.

Having tottered on the edge of financial bankruptcy as a nation, Greece has been occupied and reduced to semi-colony status by an Axis of imperialist financial institutions dominated by the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Important rights of the Greek people won through years of struggle were abolished on July 8 at the dictate of the imperialists.

The 'great protectors' of the interests of the city workers and the village poor, the social democrats under Prime Minister George Papandreou, have extended the retirement age for all to 65 (up from 55 for women and 60 for men), cut pensions and removed their fully guaranteed status and reduced the number of occupations classified as

"hazardous", thus adding 5-8 years of additional labour to those jobs.

The pension bill also incorporates clauses that make it easier and cheaper to fire workers and allow firms to pay young first hires less than the minimum wage. And this is with youth unemployment standing at around 30-35%! "Young people who have just started working have no hope," said 24-year old unemployed protester Melina Panagiotidou.

In response to the new legislation, Greek workers held their sixth 24-hour strike for the year.

These strikes are made possible because the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) has the ability to call all workers of the private sector on strike in case the need arises.

However, as a peak body for private sector unionists, the GSEE is thoroughly saturated with the bourgeois ideology of trade unionism, which seeks to confine the struggles of workers within limits that ensure the survival of the capitalist

system.

Thus, this same GSEE signed an agreement, on 15 July, with major employers' groups to freeze salaries this year, and then raise them – depending on inflation in the Eurozone – in 2011 and 2012.

The deal affects all workers in the private sector, roughly 2 million people. The first planned salary raise, a year from now, is expected to be around 1.5%. The second one, about 1.7%, is due in July 2012. And even these piddling increases are conditional on an improved capitalist economy!

So long as a nation is subjected to the pressures of imperialism, the situation of its working people is precarious at best.

Even before the outbreak of the great financial crisis, Howard's Liberal government had proposed extending the working age of Australians. Following the GFC, Rudd articulated a strategy for a social democratic response that saw government stepping in to fill the void

of a private sector retreat, to be followed by a retreat by government once the private sector had recovered. On July 25 last year, he was frank enough to admit that his "plan to return the budget to surplus...will mean tough decisions, unpopular decisions and budget cuts".

He may just as well have said, "For a taste of things to come, stay tuned and watch how my social democratic colleagues in Greece deliver tough decisions, unpopular decisions and budget cuts".

It is essential that Australian Communists agitate around the immediate demands published in this month's *Vanguard* and bring to the forefront of people's expectations issues such as the defence of medical care, of public education, of better public transport and all the other demands the people have raised.

Into the struggles around those issues we must inject a revolutionary consciousness for anti-imperialist independence and for socialism.

Pilots in dogfight with Jetstar bosses

by *Bill F*

A meeting of 400 pilots from Jetstar and Qantas has condemned plans by Jetstar, the Qantas 'economy' airline, to introduce new individual contracts which attack wages and conditions.

The meeting was held on August 23 at the Wooli Creek Rowers Club in Sydney, and also included concerned pilots from Virgin Blue and Tiger airlines.

Jetstar wants its pilots who work on the Singapore-Melbourne route to sign on to individual contracts based on Singapore laws, which provide for poorer wages and conditions than Australian standards.

This is despite Jetstar flight crews flying Australian-registered A330 aircraft into Australia.

In a related move, Jetstar management also wants Singapore and Vietnam-based pilots to be transferred to Australia,



where they would be employed through a "new Jetstar Group company" that would only be required to pay the basic award rate.

The pilots passed a unanimous resolution which said that the company's plans were "... an offensive attempt by Jetstar management...to pit

pilots against each other to secure their careers".

In heated discussion at the meeting, pilots considered various work to rule tactics to frustrate Jetstar management without losing the sympathy of the public

One pilot was reported as saying "We don't want to do anything that will cause delays to passengers. But we do want Jetstar and Qantas to stop undermining our wages and conditions and opportunities to progress through the company by putting pilots into shell companies where our EBA doesn't apply."

Their union, the Australian and International Pilots Association, has taken Jetstar management to the Fair Work Australia tribunal with another dispute over union access to members in the workplace.

It seems that Jetstar management is spoiling for a fight at any cost.

Multinationals use WA government to grab Aboriginal land

by *Bill F*

The state government of Western Australia has compulsorily acquired traditional Aboriginal land at James Price Point, north of Broome, for a liquefied natural gas processing plant to be built by Woodside Petroleum. The area is pristine wilderness, with the coastal waters holding a great variety of sea life and rare species.

Woodside owns 50% of the Browse gas field, in partnership with BP, Chevron, Royal Dutch Shell and BHP-Billiton. Work on the construction of the processing plant is supposed to be completed by mid-2012 before the joint venture partners will commit further investment capital. The WA government intervened to protect the timetable of the corporations, after negotiations between the company and the Kimberley Land Council had not progressed quickly enough for the money men.

Negotiations for an Indigenous Land Use Agreement had been going on for two years and a Heads of Agreement was signed between Woodside, the government and the Land Council in April last year. The agreement promised some benefits for the local people over a 30 year period; however this was subject to a number of issues, such as access to land and environmental protection, being resolved.

Wayne Bergmann, executive officer for the Land Council, called the land grab "sticking a finger in the eye" of Aboriginal people in the Kimberley. "It is irresponsible for the WA Premier to start compulsory acquisition when his

own reports are not completed. The social impact reports are not completed, a whole range of traditional owner issues have been identified which, if not addressed, means the Kimberley Aborigines could be headed for a train wreck. This attempted land grab could be a game changer. The Kimberley Land Council's ability to hold traditional landowners together was on the basis of creating responsible development and finding a balance that we could live with."

He further stated, "This is a game changer. There may not be a project because the premier has compromised the integrity and goodwill. I think the tension levels are rising way beyond any expectations. This is colonisation all over again, of taking an interest away from the most disadvantaged Aboriginal people for the benefit of the stronger party ... "for a rich mining company to make billions of dollars for their shareholders".

Respected indigenous leader and former Australian of the Year Mick Dodson described the acquisition as "theft of our land" and "another invasion".

Also outraged is Joseph Roe, a local person who has filed a native title claim over the land and has also vowed to fight the compulsory acquisition, in spite of earlier differences with the Kimberley Land Council. Woodside will have to negotiate "in good faith" and if agreement is not reached within six months, the dispute goes to the National Native Title Tribunal for arbitration.

There already exists very vocal and

active opposition to the project by a number of environmental and human rights groups. These are now gearing up for an intense local and international campaign, with support from high profile musicians Missy Higgins, John Butler and Xavier Rudd. Another prominent supporter is the businessman Geoffrey Cousins, who opposed Gunn's pulp mill in Tasmania. He noted, "The idea of big corporations being involved in a process that involves them being beneficiaries

of land that is compulsorily acquired from native people is an issue that's likely to resonate around the world. This is a world issue. The Kimberley is one of the last great wilderness areas of the world."

This episode is a good example of imperialism in action. 'Honey words' have served their purpose to divide and confuse, and now the gloves come off, using the full ambit of legal powers exercised by the ruling class state.

Salute to Comrade Forte

Fortis Antipas passed away recently after a long illness and the loss is keenly felt by his family and comrades. Fortis will be remembered however, because in his lifetime he took up the cause of the working class and oppressed.

Our comrade's journey began long ago when his experiences as a soldier in the Greek army made him aware of the injustice around him. From this moment he wanted to do his bit to put an end to this injustice. Once on this course, Fortis found himself involved in many struggles over the years, often in a leadership role.

He learned that to move forward the working class must have a political party of its own, and that this could only be a genuine Communist Party.

After migrating to Australia as a young man, Fortis, like all other working people, had to deal with the challenges of bringing up a family and making ends meet. He also found time to be an activist in his local community, where he organised and fought against polluters, greedy developers and a range of other enemies of the people. Fortis became known as an important local leader as a result.

There was also ongoing involvement in the Democritus League, founded as a communist organisation within the Australian Greek Community. And he was one of the founders of the newspaper Neos Cosmos.

In addition to his activism, Fortis also left his mark in the important struggle against the betrayal of communism in the form of revisionism and subsequently was a foundation member of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist). As a Party member he contributed to ideological discussion and working out how to apply Marxism-Leninism to Australian conditions.

Fortis was a respected member of the Vanguard team.

With all this he has left behind a legacy that will continue to contribute to the cause of the Australian working class. He will be dearly remembered by all who knew him.