



Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

May Day Special Edition

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Step up *Change the Rules* campaign don't let it die with a parliamentary election!

by Nick G.

On May Day 2019, the day of international working class struggle and solidarity, workers in Australia will show our united resolve to step up the fight to *Change the Rules* and continue the struggle for a fairer, more just society for working people.

The last great mass struggle by workers and communities who succeeded in pushing back the anti-union Penal Powers was 50 years ago, in May 1969.

More than a million workers across the country courageously defied the oppressive Penal Powers. They ignored the threats and intimidation and resolutely demanded the release from gaol of Victorian Tramways Union Secretary Clarrie O'Shea. and the smashing of the Penal Powers.

O'Shea, a Vice-Chairman of the CPA (M-L), acting on behalf of his union members, led the battle by refusing to be questioned about union finances or to pay the fines imposed, and was gaoled indefinitely.

Five days of illegal national strikes, ongoing wild-cat industrial action, protests and marches across the country forced the ruling class of big business to release O'Shea from gaol and suspend the Penal Powers.

Many lessons can be learnt today from this magnificent working class struggle. (See page 5)

No sell-out!

We wholeheartedly support the original demands and mass mobilisation for the *Change the Rules* campaign initiated by the ACTU in 2018.

However, with the declaration of the federal election on May 18, this campaign has been turned into one of supporting the ALP and surrendering our original independent demands to the ALP's electoral agenda.

The defeat of the Coalition government and the election of Labor is a necessary step in a much longer independent mobilisation in a



Organised, Mobilised and United, the working class really can change the rules!

protracted *Change the Rules* campaign.

Under no circumstances should we allow this campaign to suffer the fate of *Your Rights at Work*, a genuinely mass campaign organised and fought for by workers through their unions and communities.

It too was diverted into support for the ALP (against Abbott's reactionary team). It was then brought to an end and the working people's independent organisations dismantled.

Workchoices ended in name, but its Labor replacement, *Fair Work Australia*, reintroduced massive financial penalties for unions and their members.

If you don't fight, you lose

Many supporters and activists in the *Change the Rules* campaign are placing their hopes on a Labor government. It is part of the deception of capitalist democracy.

For some, despite all the betrayals by Labor governments, it's hard to break out of a cycle of hoping for a better deal, and then losing heart every time Labor wins office and backtracks on its promises, to the point where it seems

indistinguishable from the more open party of big business.

We respect this sentiment, but do not share it. We need to break out of its dead-end cycle.

We suggest that people keep the strong pressure of the *Change the Rules* campaign on a Labor government, but do not ever *rely* on Labor. We need to go into a period of Labor government with our eyes open: realising that behind its promises to the working class lies its essential service to capitalism and the big end of town.

There are many working people cynical about parliament and the main political parties. They don't hold much hope for either Labor or the LNP to look after their interests. They sense that big business and multinationals dictate policies to parliament. They will respond with enthusiasm to an independent and militant *Change the Rules* campaign that's not subservient to the ALP and targets multinational corporations.

Change the Rules must not be an appendage to the electoral fortunes of a capitalist political party. It must be a component of an independent working class agenda and fought for in our

workplaces and communities.

Everything unfair and unjust needs to be dealt the blows of the organised working class. If it's not hit in militant class struggle, it won't be changed at all.

We're not just talking of restoring penalty rates or introducing the basic wage as a 'living wage'. We must fight for the legal right to strike, abolishing the Fair work Commission, abolishing the ABCC and the Registered Organisations Commission.

To Change the Rules, we really need to Change the System!

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Women fight to end exploitation, inequality, violence and imperialist war

By Alice M.

(www.cpaml.org 8 March 2019)

The 2019 International Working Women's Day throws a powerful spotlight on working women's lives and struggles in a period of global resistance to the increasing burdens and exploitation of capitalism and US imperialist interventions, invasions and coups. International Working Women's Day is taking place in an historic era of global capitalist and imperialist decay and economic and political crises.

We commemorate many centuries of women's struggles for equality, economic independence and respect against the exploitation, oppression and violence of the patriarchal class systems of slavery, feudalism, capitalism and imperialism.

We celebrate working women's strength, resilience and solidarity in the long struggles for liberation.

We are inspired and pay our respects to the courageous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in their long and resolute struggles for the sovereignty of their communities, land and culture. We firmly support their fight against colonial oppression and dispossession.

We continue to fight for respect and recognition of women as equals in the struggles of working people and in the revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle for socialism.

Women still have a long way to go

Discrimination and violence against women is endemic.

Australia is a country of immense wealth and super profits; yet more women are living in or below poverty.

Government cuts and privatisation of public and community services have led to skyrocketing living costs hitting working class women hardest.

Many working women, especially migrant women, endure insecure low paid work under the constant threat of unemployment and homelessness.

The ruling class of multinational corporations and big business intensifies attacks on hard won workplace rights and unions that offer some protection to working women.

Immense wealth and super profits are created from Australia's natural resources and by the labour of millions of workers, half of them women. Where is this wealth going and who benefits from this wealth?

The capitalist class of multinational corporations seize most of this wealth and tells governments how to run the



country for big business interests. They pay little tax or refuse to pay any at all.

We say nationalise the multinationals and use this wealth to benefit all working people. It will go a long way in lifting and improving women's lives.

Women are still fighting for:

- Equal pay for equal work; and equal pay for work of equal value in all industries
- Increased wages for all workers – Raise the pay of early childhood educators
- Workplace rights and an end to insecure work – Change the Rules to empower women
- Lift Newstart and Single Parents' Benefits to a living wage
- Full government funding for affordable community controlled childcare
- Priority funding for emergency housing and support services for women and children living in or fleeing domestic violence
- Vigorous enforcement of laws to end harassment and discrimination of women
- Legally enforceable rights for family leave and domestic violence leave in all industries
- End gender and sexual violence against women. Government funded compulsory education programs in schools, workplaces and communities, promoting equality and respect for girls and women.
- Ban commercial profit-driven culture that commodifies women as sex objects, domestic servants and subservient to men

Every achievement and improvement in women's economic and social conditions has been wrung out of capitalism through struggle by women in workplaces and communities.

But the volumes of legislation to alleviate discrimination, social and

economic inequality, harassment, abuse and violence against women are not empowered with strong enforcement provisions.

Capitalism in Australia is dominated mainly by foreign multinational corporations and finance capital. The demands of working women flow into the struggles for an independent and socialist Australia.

Class and the exploitation of women

For centuries before socialist women declared International Working Women's Day on 8 March 1909, generations of women resisted and rebelled against the oppression, exploitation, violence and abuse of women in the patriarchal class systems of slavery and feudalism. Patriarchy emerged with the rise of private property and the division of society into two main classes.

Capitalism developed economically out of feudalism, giving birth to the organised working class and its historical revolutionary task of overthrowing capitalism and replacing it with socialism.

Many women previously tied to the domestic and rural serfdom of feudal societies were thrown into the capitalist social relations of production becoming part of the exploited working class, wage slaves.

The rise of the working class and its revolutionary socialist ideology and politics created conditions and compelled working women to organise collectively as a politically conscious force in the struggle against oppression and exploitation.

However, the capitalist class system did not abolish patriarchy, only adapted it to continue the class exploitation. Like slavery and feudalism before it, capitalism relies on the continuing domination by men to sustain the double exploitation of women and divide the working class.

The development of the capitalist economy is based on private ownership of the means of production that reduces everything to a commodity to be bought and sold. Capitalist relations of production create a culture that commercialises and commodifies women as objects and possessions for sexual gratification and exploitation by men and for profit.

The patriarchy of capitalist economy and society generally cast women as inferior with fewer rights and the private property of men with whom they enter a marriage or partnership relationship.

Capitalism exploits and oppresses working women at work and in social relations. The capitalist class as a whole exploits and benefits from paid and unpaid family work done mostly by women at home. Without this work, the labour power of current and new generations of workers necessary for the survival of capitalism could not be created or maintained.

For the overwhelming majority of working women exploitation at work is multiplied by the added responsibility as main carers of families, children, the elderly, the sick and family members with disabilities – for a pittance of government support, or nothing at all.

In over 120 years of struggle women have achieved some important social and legislative improvements. But the continuing exploitation, discrimination, abuse and the burdens and stresses facing working women at work and at home continue.

Today under the increasing weight of deep capitalist and imperialist crisis and wars the hardships and difficulties for ordinary women are intensifying.

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) fights alongside working women for economic and social equality, respect and an end to the violence, abuse and exploitation of women.

The CPA (M-L) vigorously upholds equality and respect for women in the Party and in the people's struggles. We do not tolerate any form of discrimination, sexism and gender inequality, abuse and violence against women.

The double exploitation, inequality, abuse and violence against women cannot be eradicated under capitalism. Socialism will create the necessary conditions for women to achieve their full potential, economic independence, equality and respect in all sectors of society. In a socialist system, working women will be empowered to run the society as equals to men for the benefit of all working people.

Silicosis the “new” Asbestosis



By Shane S.

(www.cpaml.org 4 March 2019)

A recent Queensland report from the ABC has again highlighted the growing danger of industrial disease, in this case, Silicosis.

“An audit of Queensland’s manufacturing stone industry has revealed 98 workers have contracted the potentially deadly lung disease silicosis - 15 of those terminal - with more than 550 workplace breaches in what health experts are calling a major epidemic.”

Unfortunately, Queensland is not the only State affected by Respirable Crystalline Silica.

Most other States in Australia are also seeing a return of this controllable disease and Government Ministers are concerned enough to have a national discussion about it (This reads panic stations).

This now uncontrolled disease is of serious concern in all countries that manufacture, import or use Artificial Stone.

The danger of working with silica has been well known for centuries, it is the oldest industrial disease known to humans, and while lung transplants are possible with reasonable outcomes, there is no cure for silicosis.

90-100% silica

Crystalline Silica is found naturally in rocks, stone, soil, sand all over the earth, but now engineered material known as “artificial stone”, mainly used to create kitchen, bathroom and laundry bench tops, is being produced throughout the world replacing natural stone as a cheaper viable alternative.

While natural stone etc. has a silica content up to 40%, artificial stone can be 90-100% silica.

Engineered stone is a composite material made of crushed stone bound together by an adhesive.

The polyester resins used to bind the stone also has features which add to the danger for workers. When drilling, cutting, polishing or grinding this stone, crystalline silica dust particles

can easily enter the lungs through inhalation, causing silicosis and many other diseases including, emphysema, lung cancer and bronchitis, if adequate protection is not used.

Not just stone masons

The ABC report refers to “stone masons” being affected, which really downplays those it may affect. It is not only stone masons working with this material who are in danger, it is plumbers, carpenters, electricians, labourers or any other worker, manufacturing, preparing or installing these items in any building or home.

It may also include other people in the home at the time of benchtop cutting and installation or building fit-outs, as well as people in the near vicinity working in other occupations not directly involved.

Due to the very fine particles found in the dust it could remain in the air for extended periods up to 500 hours.

Due to the increased demand and wide spread use of artificial stone items and lots of money being made, basic safety measures have been discarded and ignored. What was deemed controllable is now exposed as uncontrolled.

The only safe way of working with silica content is by wet cutting, well-controlled ventilation, specialist dust removal equipment and appropriate masks individually fitted.

It is through controlled safety and education that those working with or near silica can reduce the level of danger from this and other related diseases.

While the appropriate use of equipment, combined with knowledge of the serious dangers associated with silica is vital, it means nothing if the appropriate equipment or education is not supplied or its use not encouraged, which, appears to be the missing component.

Why are workers still dying?

Governments and their agencies, combined with employers’ responsible for workers’ safety, have once again

Editorial

Here we go again: Another Federal election is upon us

The upcoming Federal election has already generated more than its fair share of mainstream media coverage.

We are bombarded with sound-bites, highlights of frantic stop-overs in marginal electorates where announcements and/or promises are made by the leaders of the major parties.

All this is duly reported, usually at some length. Pundits dissect the utterances in an effort to reveal some weakness, some glaring mistake that will be catastrophic for the campaign of either the incumbent PM or the Opposition leader and their respective party’s fortunes at the polls.

Add to this the various polls conducted during the course of the election campaign, as well as the *vox pops* with individuals in various electorates, attempting to gauge what issues are important for the individuals concerned.

We get saturation coverage, most of which has little to no bearing on how the country is governed. The seemingly interminable coverage serves to legitimise parliamentary politics as the epitome of democracy, as the beginning and end of politics in Australia.

The PR, the spin, the promises; the result is the same, no matter whether it is the LNP Coalition or the ALP that gets elected to government. Bourgeois class interests remain paramount and no serious challenge to these interests can be mounted through the electoral system.

The mainstream’s media saturation coverage of the current campaigning provides little in the way of real critical analysis and contextualising and helps to foster boredom and passivity in the electorates. For the majority of the population their involvement in the political process comes down to casting a vote every three years. People vote, go home and go about their lives leaving the job of governing to the ‘professional’ political representatives.

The capitalist ruling class does not want nor does it seek to foster the active participation of the majority of the population in how the country is run.

It is also clear that with the ongoing crises in capitalism there has been a steady drift rightward in politics in many parts of the world. Australia is no exception and parliamentarism has proved amenable to this rightward drift in politics.

We only have to recall that the likes of Pauline Hanson and Fraser Anning have managed to get themselves into the ‘hallowed halls’ in Canberra to realise that bourgeois parliaments usually have no trouble with reactionaries.

No, the capitalist ruling classes have history when it comes to cosyng up to reactionaries.

In Germany in the 1930s under the Weimar parliamentary democracy, when there was fundamental and clear dissatisfaction with capitalism and its attendant bourgeois class rule, the resort to open fascist violence was used to smash the working class.

The rightward drift in politics here and overseas shows that the potential for fascist repression exists.

The hype associated with Federal election campaigns is just so much sound and fury signalling more of the same: the continuing dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

There can be no serious challenge to bourgeois class rule through the processes associated with parliamentarism. We need to not be diverted by the bourgeois political system. Rather, we should promote an independent working class agenda and strive to build an independent and socialist Australia. That’s the path to real democracy.

failed to protect workers from the oldest industrial disease known to humans.

In the most technologically advanced era ever, why are workers still placed in this danger?

The drive for greater profit, unfettered competition, survival at all and any cost, greed, lack of appropriate government oversight, reduction of

“red tape”, corruption, deliberately dumbing down of workers’ safety knowledge, interwoven with unfettered technological advances owned and controlled by the few, all equate to the one cause, Capitalism.

Removing the cause of the problem will rectify all the symptoms.

Marxism Today

The unfairness of a “fair day’s pay”

by Danny O.

(www.cpaml.org 26 March 2019)

It has been the catchcry of the official trade union movement worldwide for 200 years. It’s a slogan so often heard in the labour movement that it is almost a cliché. Now we are told Australian workers have lost it and that we need to “change the rules” to get it back. It is of course “a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work”.

On the surface, this seems like a reasonable demand. As workers we all have to work to survive and want to be suitably compensated for the work that we do. But when we take a closer look at workers’ wages and bosses’ profits and where they come from, a “fair day’s pay” just doesn’t seem as fair anymore.

What are wages?

As workers under capitalism, we have only one thing that allows us to survive – our ability or capacity to labour. That ability to labour, like almost everything under capitalism, is a commodity that is bought and sold. Karl Marx called it our ‘labour power’. We have to sell our labour power to a boss in exchange for a wage.

A wage is really the price the boss pays to use your labour power for a certain amount of time i.e. a shift at work - maybe 4 hours, maybe 8 hours, maybe more or less. So, what determines your wage? Or in other words, what determines the price of your labour power?

Like all commodities, labour power has a value. Like all commodities, that value is determined by the average time and cost it takes to produce it. Since our labour power is inseparable from ourselves as living human beings, the cost of producing and reproducing our labour power is the cost required to keep us alive and functioning as workers for our entire life.

This includes things like food, housing, clothes, transport, education etc. In other words, the basic cost of living. It also includes the cost of maintaining and raising our families and kids. The kids replace us as workers when we die, ensuring a supply of labour for the bosses well into the future.

What makes up the basket of basic necessities needed to reproduce our labour power varies with the time, place, history and societal customs of where we live. For example, in

Australia in 2019 it is fairly common for a family to need two cars, owning your own home by the time you retire is a pretty standard expectation, mobile phones are a necessity to work and function socially.

All these things make up our basic living costs and so must be factored in when calculating the value of our labour power and therefore our wage.

In comparison, a worker in a developing country will have lower basic living costs and so will require a different basket of basic necessities, and in turn, require a lower wage to live as a worker in their country.

But there’s still a little more to it. At any given time and place, there are several important factors that impact exactly what your wage might be. One is the supply and demand of qualified workers in a given industry or field. The more workers available to do the job the lower your wage is likely to be, and vice versa.

Another very important factor is the existence or non-existence of strong trade unions. Unions reduce competition between individual workers and gives them the ability to force the boss to pay higher wages.

In short, at any particular point in time, wages are determined by the relative strengths of the working class and the capitalist class in the marketplace. When the working class is in a strong position wages will tend to be higher, and when the capitalists are in a stronger position wages will tend to be lower.

But while wages may be higher or lower at any particular point in time and place, as a rule they will fluctuate around the value of our labour power as determined by the costs of the basket of basic necessities as described above.

This rule applies to the working class in general, and not to any individual worker as such. This explains why it is that some workers may be a bit better off and some a bit worse off, but why it is impossible for the working class generally to ever become rich just from working.

What are profits?

Now that we understand wages, we can turn to the question of profits. When we sell our labour power to the boss, we agree to work for a certain amount of time in exchange for a wage that basically meets our cost of living, or in other words, is equal to the value

of our labour power.

For arguments sake, let’s say you are lucky enough to work full time in an ice-cream factory 8 hours a day, 5 days a week and receive a wage of \$1,500 which you can live comfortably enough on. Presumably a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work.

But, let’s say that over the course of the working week you make ice-cream valued at \$2,500. Regardless, you still only get paid \$1,500. So, what about the \$1,000 difference? Well that’s value that you created by working but don’t get paid for. Karl Marx called it ‘surplus value’. Once all the ice-cream you produced is sold, the boss pockets your surplus value as his profit.

As workers we produce all the value in society, but we only receive a portion of it back in the form of wages. The bosses take the rest as profits. How’s that for fair?

But what about...

But what if the ice-cream workers at the factory got together and demanded to be paid the full \$2,500? Wouldn’t that be fair then? Well the boss would certainly be faced with a dilemma. If he agreed to pay it and kept everything else as it was before, then there wouldn’t be any surplus value and hence no profit. Bankruptcy could result which would mean that there would be no money to keep the ice-cream factory operating.

So, to stay in business the boss would be forced to come up with a way to extract surplus value from the workers to make a profit.

In other words, the workers would need to produce even more ice-cream in the same amount of time. Perhaps by making the workers work harder, or with some new machines that can make ice-cream faster. Either way, the result is that workers would be producing value that they aren’t paid for (surplus value) and the boss would be pocketing the profit. Fair?

Can we change the rules for fairness?

The Australia Institute released a report in 2018 detailing the long-term decline of the labour share of Australia’s GDP. The report reveals the economic output in the Australian economy and how much of that output goes to paying workers. It was found that in March 2018, 47.1% of GDP went to workers incomes. That’s about 11% less than the historic high of 58.4% in 1975. And close to the lowest at any point in the last 70 years.

This decline has been mirrored by a rise in the share going to corporate profits, which are once again nearing record highs after falling from their peak in the global financial crisis in 2008/9.

This trend is a reflection of the diminished strength of the trade union movement. Trade union strength has steadily declined since the introduction of neo-liberalism and the restructuring of Australia’s economy starting in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Draconian anti-union laws restrict the ability of workers to fight for wage increases, while companies are given free rein to make as much profit as they see fit.

All of this means that Australia is experiencing some of the greatest inequality that it has ever seen. Profits are soaring and wages are declining. And the industrial laws are keeping it that way. It is this reality that provides fertile ground for the ACTU’s campaign to ‘change the rules’.

The campaign aims to change the rules to allow workers and unions to reverse the trend. It speaks of restoring balance and returning fairness to the system.

But while it’s obvious that the system is less fair now than what it was in 1975, is it right to say that it was ever fair? To what point do the labour share and profit share of GDP have to get to make the system fair? If wages rose 11% and profits declined 11% would we have a “fair day’s pay” again?

The revolutionary alternative

The Marxist explanation of wages and profits outlined above shows that it is the workers producing value that they don’t get paid for which is the source of the bosses’ profits.

No matter how high workers’ wages may be, as long as the boss is making a profit it means the workers are being exploited. Hence, there can never be a “fair day’s pay” under capitalism.

The trade union demand of a “fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work” blinds workers to the reality of the capitalist system. It misleads us into thinking that fairness for the workers can be achieved under capitalism.

Indeed, this is the role of the trade unions under capitalism. They are great organisations for the defence of workers’ rights and wages against the bosses and must be supported, but ultimately, they confine workers’ struggle within the bounds of capitalism rather than for its revolutionary overthrow.

The bosses or capitalist class are like parasites that live off the unpaid labour of workers. They are redundant. The working class must overthrow them and start to rule society for themselves in a socialist system.

Then the surplus value that workers produce would belong, not to the parasitic bosses, but to the working class as a whole, held in common to meet the needs of the great majority of the people. Only then can we ever really start to speak of a “fair day’s pay”.

All the way with Clarrie O'Shea!

By Alice M.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the momentous working class struggle to abolish the anti-union Penal Powers and free Clarrie O'Shea, Secretary of the Tramways Union, from gaol.

On 15-21 May 1969, more than a million workers across the country collectively defied the oppressive anti-union Penal Powers laws.

They took illegal industrial action, courageously went on strike, held spontaneous stop work meetings and go-slows and marched and protested in the streets. They ignored the threats and intimidation of fines and gaol by the bosses' courts and governments and resolutely demanded the abolition of the Penal Powers and the immediate release of Clarrie O'Shea from gaol.

Many workers took "wild-cat" industrial action in defiance of some top union officials in the ACTU and a few Trades and Labour Councils.

Five days of strikes across the country nearly brought the Victorian economy to a standstill, and forced the ruling class of big business to release Clarrie O'Shea from gaol and pull back from using the Penal Powers.

The Tramways Union and O'Shea's fines were unexpectedly paid by an anonymous person, later to be confirmed as acting for ASIO. Clarrie was released from gaol without him or the Tramways Union paying a cent of the fines.

Fearing a repeat of mass struggle, the courts and the government dropped their demands on other unions to pay outstanding fines imposed on them by the Arbitration Court.

... mobilised working class

The fight against the anti-worker Penal Powers was led by Communists, militant trade unions and their members. Clarrie O'Shea was a Vice-Chairman of Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist).

Acting on behalf of the Tramways Union members' instructions, and supported by other militant unions and many workers, O'Shea refused to pay heavy fines imposed on the union by the penal provisions of the Arbitration Act.

For months he ignored summonses to appear in court, and when he finally fronted the court he refused to answer any questions on his union members' funds and their hidden whereabouts.

He was immediately sentenced to an indefinite gaol term. The sentencing judge was no other than John Kerr, the infamous Governor-General who in cahoots with the CIA and the British ruling class engineered and executed



"Because if workers confine themselves merely to economic questions, they confine themselves in a pretty narrow sphere. It is necessary to go further than mere immediate economic questions. For myself, I believe you must end capitalism altogether; it is that system that gives rise to the never ending economic struggles."

the coup that sacked the democratically elected Whitlam government in November 1975.

But this victory was not due solely to Clarrie O'Shea's political courage. Working class battles and successes are not achieved by the heroic acts of an individual. Clarrie knew this very well and said it often enough. He credited the victory to the power of an organised and mobilised working class imbued with the class consciousness and an understanding of the vital necessity to break the capitalist class laws that chain the working class.

For many years members of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) were immersed in working class struggles, often leading the protracted campaign to abolish the penal powers with militant unions and progressive working people.

They worked tirelessly with unions and workers raising working class consciousness, exposing the capitalist state, parliament, the courts and the legal system which work for the capitalist class of big business.

The Penal Powers struggle involved people from many walks of life. Ted Hill, Chairman of CPA (M-L) and a workers' compensation lawyer closely worked with Clarrie O'Shea and other militant and Communist unionists (Ted Bull, Paddy Malone, Norm Gallagher) advising on legal strategies, but always urging unions and workers not to rely on bosses' courts and that the working class battles can only be won "on the ground" by mass struggle, independent of parliament and the courts.

Hill and O'Shea worked with other

progressive lawyers and civil rights activists, including Lionel Murphy who later became Attorney General in the Whitlam government.

Ted Bull, Paddy Malone and Clarrie O'Shea were Vice-Chairmen of the CPA (M-L) at that time and played a critical part in the Penal Powers mass struggle with their members.

class consciousness

Who was Clarrie O'Shea? Where did O'Shea get his courage, conviction and unshakeable confidence in the power of mobilised working class, in the collective power of workers?

Clarrie O'Shea was a committed Communist for most of his working life. His political outlook was shaped by his long experiences in working class struggles and the science of Marxism-Leninism and Communism.

As a worker with long experiences in struggle he easily understood the social relations of production under capitalism and class exploitation. It was this knowledge that gave him the immense confidence in the capacity and

power of the united working class to bring fundamental change.

Clarrie strongly supported struggles against imperialist domination of Australia. He argued that fighting for Australia's independence is an integral part in the struggle for a socialist Australia.

The May 1969 defiance and rebellion against the penal powers was not spontaneous. For years militant unionists and Communists were preparing the working class. They drew on workers' daily experiences to expose and explain the capitalist nature of industrial laws, the bosses' courts and parliament, deepening working class consciousness. Workers understood the necessity to organise independently of parliament and courts, and that the real power lies in the mobilised working people.

class struggle never ceases

The Penal Powers and Clarrie O'Shea mass struggle inspired and gave courage to many peoples' struggles, in particular the mass movement against the Vietnam War and US imperialist wars; for Australia's independence; improvement in wages and conditions; and progressive social policies that were fought for and carried through to the election of the Whitlam Labor government.

But the penal powers against unions and workers were never repealed and the victory didn't last long.

In 1977 the ruling class came back with the Secondary Boycotts laws, and sections of the penal powers against the working class were brought back dressed in a new outfit. For the last 40 years they continued to be strengthened and widened under different disguises by successive Liberal and Labor governments.

Today the anti-worker laws are dressed up as the un-Fair Work Commission, ABCC and ROC. Workers never had the legal right to strike but nevertheless, they did strike.

Many lessons can be learnt today for our Change the Rules campaign from this magnificent 1969 working class struggle.



Language, Law, Land strengthen First Nations

By Lindy Nolan

Imagine if Tony Abbott turned up at your place, telling you how to live, like he did to Northern Territory Aboriginal Peoples recently. At Borroloola, the Garawa sent him packing.

They can't drink their water or eat their fish because mining multinational Glencore poisoned the lot, and paid no tax on \$100 million yearly income from their land.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have had 230 years of groups like Glencore ripping them off, and pro-corporate stooges like Abbott telling them it's for their own good.

dollars from First Nations' lands, corporations outsource the dirty work to governments.

Above all, they work to a systematic plan to divide and conquer and win pro-capitalist collaborators among First Nations. In 2001 the key BCA-Aboriginal "partnership" Jawun was set up, followed by its offshoot, Empowered Communities in 2013.

Corporate reps spend thousands of hours winning allies in Aboriginal communities.

Some First Nations are convinced by white academics, that traditional Aboriginal culture, not endless trauma and power imbalances, causes domestic violence.

Others are sponsored to elitist schools



The Business Council sets the corporate agenda in Australia and ensures it's carried out.

There's different tactics for different conditions. One is to attack quickly and on a wide front, exhausting those who respond.

You can see it in action. Who designed the Community Development Program that enslaves Aboriginal workers?

Or Basics Cards that humiliate them?

Or turns off water supplies and demolishes communities?

Who drives the policies that still steal record numbers of Aboriginal children from loving extended families?

Who opens 50 percent of the N.T. for fracking and ensure First Nations have no veto?

Who does nothing about an epidemic of youth suicide? Or ignores Royal Commission recommendations, when for forty years an Aboriginal person has died in custody every five weeks?

How imperialism captures First Nations allies

After they kidnapped him in 1789, Wangal man Bennelong became a temporary ally of the British invaders. Finally, he rejected them, living with his people and ex-convict friends.

Today, as they jockey for lucrative mining, real estate and tourism

and universities, learning individualist, top-down solutions.

Prolonged anger is destructive. Its source is fear. It wears you down, confuses your thinking. So, when corporate CEOs arrive offering solutions, some are won over.

It explains how an activist, burning with fury against corporations, deaths in custody and violence, became, for a while, the most outspoken Aboriginal supporter of the mining industry and companies like Glencore that offered some jobs for her people.

When First Nations demand evidence, corporations provide bucketloads for their "solutions".

Corporate education is a multi-trillion-dollar operation. Rupert Murdoch makes huge profits from it. Tony Abbott helped convince a key leader that Aboriginal kids must "think in English".

Aboriginal languages were deleted from N.T. schools and a U.S. product imposed. Like many corporate promises, it was a profitable lie.

And, just like Andrew Bolt and Allan Jones, a tiny number of high profile First Nations' 'leaders' sell themselves for the fame, the flattery and the money.

The fire of resistance

Before British invasion, First Nations

had no jails, no ruling class. Language, Law and Ceremony ensured survival, for they read the land, strengthened relationships, settled disputes.

Again, against disunity, grassroots' Peoples are rising. Their resistance has never been extinguished.

Language is the heart of culture. Across the continent, young First Nations immerse themselves in it, for it tells them who they are and where they belong. It decolonises their minds.

The young SEED mob work with Elders saying 'Water is life'. They stand against fracking.

In Alice Springs Tangentyere Council Womens Family Safety Group builds community protection, resistance and resilience against domestic violence.

The Gweagal commemorate their ancestor Cooman who resisted Cook and Banks' landing at Kamay, Botany Bay.

Djap Wurrung gain huge support to protect sacred birthing trees.

Clans across western NSW, from the Murray River into southern Queensland, are rebuilding unity through treaties

with each other, nearly 50 so far.

Sovereignty, Land, Law

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples never have and never will give away sovereignty. It comes from their Land and the ancient living Law that arises from it.

They know the needs of grassroots peoples can't be reconciled with invasion or corporate imperialism.

They demand Aboriginal control of Aboriginal affairs. They create their own leaders. They assert sovereignty in the way they live their lives each day.

The ruling class tells First Nations they're only three percent of the population. But that's 800,000 people.

Across the land, grassroots' peoples are creating unity and winning allies against common enemies. That's real empowerment. United, they can build an unbeatable force.

This concludes a series investigating ruptures in pro-corporate support among First Nations.

E.F.Hill website honours the life and works of the CPA (M-L) founding Chairman



We are pleased to announce the launch of a new website on the life and works of Ted Hill, founding Chairman of Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist).

The website has been compiled by a group of family members, the legal profession, comrades and friends who decided it was important to make an official resource for those interested in the life and work of Edward Fowler Hill.

The administrators of the website invite people to send in articles, photos, tributes, testimonials, videos, personal anecdotes, pamphlets, digitalised works and any additional information.

<http://www.efhill.com>

Venezuela's Maduro: "...we are preparing for the popular resistance of the whole people"

By Nick G.

(www.cpaml.org 8 April 2019)

Experiencing social and technological destabilisation and subversion, and facing threats of imminent invasion by US imperialism, the people and government of Venezuela are preparing for all-out resistance in defence of national independence, social reform and democracy.

The CPA (M-L) has participated in pro-Venezuela rallies and demonstrations. Members will support whatever actions are called for should the imperialists carry out their war threats.

US imperialism has attempted to choke the Venezuelan economy and people through sanctions and other forms of economic disruption.

They then made a show of trying to deliver medical aid through the puppet territory of Colombia. If they were genuine, they would have delivered aid through Caracas to the elected government as President Hugo Chavez offered to do with aid to the US in the wake of 2005's Hurricane Katrina disaster.

Chavez offered the United States one million barrels of oil and 5 million dollars in aid and the state-owned Petroleos de Venezuela also pledged a \$2 million donation for Hurricane relief.

The Simon Bolivar Humanitarian Response Team also offered \$1 million and 120 specialist personnel. After 2017's Hurricane Harvey, President Maduro offered \$5 million worth of aid to deluged stricken US communities through its subsidiary company Citgo Petroleum Corp. "We express our solidarity with the Americans affected by the hurricane," Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza said.

So, a poor country suffering food and medical shortages through sanctions imposed by the world's No. 1 imperialist power nevertheless has such compassion towards the ordinary people of the US that it stands in solidarity with them and offers aid.

Cyberwarfare targets the people

Imperialism is devoid of compassion. Everything it does is dictated by the desire for domination even if it means interference, bullying and control of sovereign states.

It is prepared to unleash war to achieve its aims. So long as imperialism exists, so too will the danger of war.

New technologies have given rise to new methods of creating instability



People's militia prepare for prolonged resistance to imperialist invasion

and dissension in target countries. Imperialism has the cyberwar capacity to disrupt infrastructure and computerised weapons systems.

According to US author Alfred W. McCoy the US Cyber Command, headquartered at Fort Meade and a cyberwar centre at Lackland Air Base staffed by seven thousand air force employees, has been put to use "in the computer viruses it unleashed against Iran's nuclear facilities from 2006 to 2010, destroying 20 percent of that country's critical centrifuges.

"Four year later, Obama ordered cyberstrikes against North Korea's missile program, causing its rockets 'to explode, veer off course, disintegrate in mid-air and plunge into the sea'".

Venezuela believes that US imperialist cyberstrikes are the cause of

the massive disruptions of the country's electricity supply system in recent weeks.

All of this is a preparation by US imperialism for armed aggression against Venezuela.

People's militia

However, the people and government of Venezuela are building their capacity for prolonged resistance should such aggression occur.

The armed forces are remaining loyal to the people and government.

And a people's militia, established under Chavez and expanded under Maduro, will ensure that invaders will be unable to trust even their own shadows.

The militia is a special body composed of civilian men and women,

which is trained by the Bolivarian National Armed Forces and provides the opportunity for the people to empower and train themselves for the defence of the nation.

Maduro mobilises the masses

President Maduro has made a direct appeal to the people with a reference to Vietnam and its small army, which was able to defeat the United States.

"The people must learn, as the people of Vietnam did, to defend their land with a knife, with a stone, with a club, with a stick, with their own body, with what it is needed.

"We prepare ourselves for integral defense, for a moment of prolonged popular resistance.

"We know the enemy that we have, that stalks us, with all the military power of training, armament, everything that has to do with conventional warfare.

"We are aware of this and we are preparing for the popular resistance of the whole people.

"In that sense we have been developing our plans of resistance, of exhaustion, which are the strategic places and places from where we can strike to cause casualties, try to immobilize them as much as we can.

"We know that for a conventional war we are not trained, but for a prolonged resistance yes, a resistance in which they will not know who is going to hit them, because the militiamen are among the people, who are in any territory: the man, the woman, the housewife, the taxi driver, the biker, the one who sells empanadas, juice, ice cream, the one who is in the school, the student, the worker, the fisherman, etc."

U.S. imperialism is waging war on the environment

By Tony D.

Loss of life and devastation of infrastructure tend to be predominant in our conception of the costs of war.

However war and its accompanying activities weigh heavily on the widespread ecosystems of the planet, on soil, at sea and throughout the atmosphere, destroying the habitats of innumerable species.

The extensive environmental impact of such activities, which are not confined exclusively to acts of war but encompass also the routine drills, training exercises and munitions testing undertaken by militaries across the globe, leads to further detriment of human life and public infrastructure through contamination of air, soils, water supplies, etc.

Monopoly-stage capitalism, with its relentless pursuit of new markets, sources of profit, cheap labour, natural resources and raw materials, inherently tends towards a militaristic approach, particularly when other channels for their attainment have been exhausted.

Such developments have given rise to the aggressive and interventionist military campaigns waged by the United States of America since emerging as a major imperialist power over the course of the century. The United States military now maintains a presence over approximately half the globe.

Areas of Australia serve as the base for U.S. military operations such as drone warfare, training exercises and munition tests, compiling of intelligence and monitoring of certain key strategic locations.

Some of the environmental concerns stemming from U.S. military operations in Australia include contamination of groundwater and soils by pollutants, as well as the dumping of fuels, chemical munitions and other forms of waste at sea, distribution of radioactive and other hazardous materials such as plutonium, uranium, lead and mercury to name a few.

Aside from the pollution caused by such activities and their consequential endangerment of Australia's rich and unique biodiversity, the physical damage to the environment by munitions testing and military vehicles is also extensive. The destruction and ongoing degradation of traditional lands of First Nations peoples is also one of the outcomes of the U.S. Australia alliance.

Public Transport workers gearing for new battles

By Henry L.

(www.cpaml.org 12 february 2019)

2019 shapes up to be a critical year for public transport workers in Victoria, with the Enterprise Agreements (EA) for all three major operators (Metro Trains, Yarra Trams and state owned regional rail operator V/Line) up for expiration and renegotiation.

This piece will mainly attempt to provide an in focus look on the state of play at Metro Trains, but there are obvious parallels between the negotiating scenarios at all three major operators.

A bitter fight last time

The fight around the last EA in 2015 was by far the most bitter and protracted by rail workers against the network operator since the franchising out of the network occurred under the Kennett government.

The Metro consortium, which is majority owned by Hong Kong rail operator MTR, with minority stakes held by Chinese controlled infrastructure firm John Holland and Australian maintenance firm UGL, fought a bitter battle to strip rail workers of many conditions long hard fought for and won over many years around issues such as driver training, long standing overtime arrangements, staffing levels and in particular, trying to institute 24 hour running on weekends (a great change to the working routine and conditions to all workers involved), without anything near adequate compensation.

Spurred on by strong fighting sentiment from rank and file workers and delegates, the RTBU went on to call the first public rail strike action in Victoria since 1997.

Despite attempts by management to isolate and divide different sectors of the workforce, the rank and file stood united, as did their colleagues from Yarra Trams, who in the face of similar attacks from their management stood tall and fought back.

Both operators were forced back to the table and much more satisfactory agreements were eventually agreed covering the next four years.

Labor rewards the corporate privateers

A lot has changed in the intervening years since the 2015 agreement was ratified however.

In spite of what was quite honestly a half hearted campaign by the RTBU for the return of the rail franchise to public hands, MTR were awarded the right to run the system until 2024.

This fact in itself presents an interesting truth; many expected a



Labor government to seriously consider the return of the system to public hands, not to a foreign company running the system for profit.

The fact that it was never even considered is just another prime example of the 'progressive' Victorian ALP operating as a business as usual government for their foreign capital cronies.

Emboldened by the sweeping mandate to operate the system for almost a decade, it didn't take long for MTR to test the resolve of the rank and file workers on the ground.

In a test case in early 2018, without consultation, management announced the removal of all control desks on the Clifton Hill group, rationalising

this safety critical equipment and role to one operator out of the city control centre. This would have resulted in the shedding of at least 20 jobs alone.

After a concerted campaign by rank and file frontline workers and delegates, the company was forced to back down on this blatant attack on it's workforce.

"Flexibility" for the bosses

The official negotiating period for the EA for the period 2020 and beyond has begun and the statement of intent from the company has been very clear.

The direct communications from the management to employees have brazenly set the scene for what is to come. Constant references to the need for the business to 'manage costs' and

No free rides – build the collective power of workers



By Ned K.

(www.cpaml.org 5 April 2019)

A Report from the Reserve Bank shows that despite a decline in union membership generally in Australia over a long period, the involvement of unions in enterprise agreement negotiations results in considerably higher wages than non-union involvement Agreements due to the compound effect of wage increases.

The Report calculates that Agreements with union involvement over a long period since 1991 have averaged about 0.4% above Agreements without any union involvement.

However, the report also notes that only 41% of employees on collective agreements were union members in

2017, down from 47% in 2009.

Imagine if all Agreements with union involvement increased union membership to 75% density, the power relationship between workers and employers would change substantially, increasing the organisational capacity to win higher wage increases and reverse the trend of a lowering percentage share of wages to GDP and a decrease in the profit share.

The Reserve Bank report notes that "an increasing share of employees find it optional to 'free ride' on the union membership of other employees."

This is a big problem and calls for a re-think on how progressive workers within their unions organise in preparing for enterprise agreement campaigns where real wage increases are a key issue for the majority of workers.

Union Officials are spread thin and will want to take the quick fix approach to an Agreement negotiation and "settle" for a moderate wage outcome and no increase in collective strength of the workplace.

This perpetuates the trend of more workers in workplaces that have less than majority union membership, of union involvement in Agreement negotiations but members dropping out of their union. Over time, the collective power of workers reduces.

provide greater 'flexibility' within the workforce to meet the 'requirements of running a modern railway'.

As has been obvious for a while, this language is referring to an attempted erosion of the rights that have been held onto so long, as well as the introduction of a wave of casualisation across an industry that has so far been largely insulated from that particular scourge.

Opportunity to build alliances

The same pushes are occurring at Yarra Trams and V/Line.

Whilst V/Line is state owned enterprise, it operates on much the same terms as the private operators and will be seeking the same objectives.

As much as there is a challenge on the hands of workers across the industry, with all three agreements expiring at the same time, it is imperative that workers across all three businesses form links and look to coordinate their actions as much as possible, something that has been lacking in the past.

If proper coordination of both strategy and action is achieved, this challenge can be met head on and turned into an opportunity to not just defend the gains of the past for workers in the industry, but in fact get on the front foot and forge forward new advantages.

The Change the Rules campaign of the ACTU envisages multi-employer or industry wide collective agreements.

This may be better than the current single workplace/employer agreements.

However, it will not contribute to building a powerful working class unless there is a campaign plan to involve the majority of workers in collective organisation and action.

The trend identified in the Reserve Bank Report of more workers opting for a "free ride" must and can be reversed if the great organising capacity of workers is unleashed.

Meet the CPA (M-L)

Whether you're interested in joining or just want to discuss ideological and political issues, we welcome your enquiries.

Email info@cpaml.org with name, location and mobile phone number to arrange a discussion with one of our comrades.