



# Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

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## Change the Rules! Change the System!

Mike Willis

The Australian Unions' (ACTU) campaign to *Change the Rules* is deserving of the full support of all working Australians.

It is a comprehensive response to injustice and unfairness across a range of issues: social inequality, taxation, rights to industrial action and representation, wage theft, penalty rates, enterprise bargaining, insecure work, minimum wage, working women and working families, temporary visa workers and the construction "watchdog", the ABCC.

The campaign statement reads: *We all want a country that is fair, but right now the rules favour big business and the very rich.... Working people need more power to swing the pendulum back.*

It would indeed be a very great thing if the ACTU campaign succeeds in restoring the right to strike, abolishes the ABCC, wins substantial increases to the minimum wage and Newstart Allowance, restores full rights of entry provisions for unions, and restores penalty rates. The rights of temporary visa workers, insecure and part-time workers, working women and working families also need new rules.

As well, one third of the largest multinationals pay no tax in Australia. Exxon-Mobil hasn't paid for three years in a row. Others pay ridiculously small amounts. Changing rules to force them to pay would be great!

It's a massive agenda. It requires strength and defiance.

Major victories have always come on waves of struggle on the job, in the streets and communities.

Victories don't come from the so-called "independent umpires", the courts, politicians or parliaments.

### Has Australia ever been "fair"?

Even if all the ACTU demands were won, that can't be the end of it.

"The rules that made Australia fair are broken," says the ACTU.

This is a dangerous illusion for the people.

Rules and laws have always been



Esso workers at Longford, Victoria, in the front line of struggle against US imperialism in Australia

written by and for the ruling class of big business and corporations. They've always tried to make Australia "fair" for the super-rich and "not fair" for the majority, the working people.

A quick glance at Australian history will show that unions have always been subject to heavy fines, their leaders and members have been jailed for defending workers' rights, and that any improvements to wages and conditions have come by and large from action on the job rather than the benevolence of the so-called "independent umpire". It has never been a fair country for working Australians.

The very worthy demands now being put forward by the ACTU would provide

a breathing space for workers for a while, but pressure from big business to cut costs and remove conditions will always remain and intensify.

### Time to get off the treadmill

That is why the ACTU campaign *Change the Rules* is worthy of support, but the missing piece is that only when workers unite to *Change the Capitalist System* will fundamental sustainable improvements in workers' lives take place.

Given that the decisive sections of the economy are in foreign, and predominately, US hands, the first stage in Changing the System must be the

demand for a genuinely independent Australia—economically and politically.

Such an independent Australia must necessarily be a socialist Australia with all working people becoming owners of, and benefitting from, our natural resources and the enormous wealth created by the labour of workers.

Only the working class has the capacity to unite and lead the Australian people to Change the Rules and Change the System.

*It's time to unite, not just to Change the Rules, but also to Change the System!*



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# Eureka flag – more than just a union symbol

Danny O.

**In response to an outright attack on their democratic rights, workers are showing they are willing to fight to protect that most treasured symbol of Australian working class struggle.**

After the Turnbull government's building industry attack dog, the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), issued a directive explicitly banning the Eureka flag from construction sites in February this year, unions and workers have rallied together in defence of their democratic rights and are taking up the Eureka flag with enthusiasm not seen for years.

Construction workers are displaying the flag on job sites across the country in active defiance of the ABCC directive.

It is now not unusual to see it flying high from the many tower cranes that litter the skylines of our major cities even where it had been absent before.

The construction division of the CFMEU has been leading the way with its call to 'Break the Ban', and solidarity has been strong from across the union movement.

The Queensland Teachers Union notably came out in support saying that they would "make sure there are Eureka Stockade flags in every school in Queensland".

All of this is a very welcome development and should be encouraged. It is an opportunity for workers to rediscover the importance of the Eureka rebellion and its flag to the countless struggles of ordinary Australians.

However, it's also important to realise that the Eureka flag is attacked not just because it is a symbol used by the CFMEU, nor because it's just a union symbol, but because it stands for so much more.

At the time of its creation, the Eureka flag represented the struggle against the oppressive British colonial authority and growing calls by the Eureka rebels for an independent Australia.

Today it has become a powerful symbol of ordinary people's determination to stand up for justice, democratic rights, and liberties.

It is a flag of resistance and defiance that continues to inspire unity, solidarity, and courage in the collective struggles of Australia's working people against injustice and exploitation.

What it represents scared the ruling class when it was first raised in 1854, and it still scares them today.

## The flag of an independent Australia

Dave Noonan, the national secretary of the CFMEU's construction division, recently described the Eureka flag as



"an Australian flag which represents the struggle for democracy and national independence." He's quite right.

In 1854, the British Governor of Victoria, Charles Hotham called it "the flag of Australian independence" that "threatened British rule." The local newspapers echoed his words.

For generations, activists, workers and ordinary Australians have rallied under the Eureka flag fighting for workers' and democratic rights, and calling for national independence.

Despite having achieved a certain level of formal independence, Australia has never been truly independent and since WW2 has been a client state of US imperialism.

We see some examples of this in the giant US monopolies that dominate our economy and pillage our resources

without paying tax, like ExxonMobil and Chevron.

We see it politically when parliamentarians of both major parties fall over themselves to prove their loyalty to the US.

Militarily we see it with ever further integration of the Australian armed forces into the US war machine and an unswerving loyalty to the 'US-Australia Alliance' and a commitment to fight in its perpetual imperialist wars.

## Our Party logo and the strategy of a two-stage Australia revolution

The logo of our Party is the Eureka flag flying in front of the red star of socialism. This is a symbolic representation of our strategy of a two-stage continuous revolution in

Australia.

In analysing the concrete conditions of society in this country, the CPA (M-L) puts forward the position that the current stage of Australia's revolutionary struggle for socialism is the struggle against the imperialist interests that dominate this country economically, politically and militarily and for a truly independent Australia under the leadership of the working class. This struggle will continue to flow into the second stage of socialist development.

We unashamedly raise the Eureka flag as a powerful symbol in this revolutionary struggle for real independence and encourage the people of Australia to understand its significance and fight for everything it represents.

# Slave labour - First Nations fight back

Lindy Nolan



**How'd you like \$10.40 a week on top of the dole for working 760 hours more per year than other dole recipients?**

No basic safety gear, unlike your supervisor on full wages next to you.

No cash. Just a welfare card. No compo if injured. And the law says you can't join a union.

Slave labour? Yep. It's the Community "Development" Program for remote Aboriginal communities.

If you unintentionally breach the

rules, you lose your family's income.

Remote Aboriginal communities carry 80 per cent of eight-week losses of unemployment "benefits" nationwide.

Remote housing was gutted by \$98 million to pay for it.

Malnutrition in previously well-nourished remote communities is now widespread. Nurses say many diseases are untreatable, because medication can't be taken on empty stomachs.

Meanwhile, the recommendations of EVERY royal commission into

human rights abuses against Aboriginal Peoples are routinely ignored.

Deaths in custody, forced removals of children, deaths from preventable causes – you name it, the human statistics are worse than ever.

Governments manage capitalism for corporations who are after First Nations' land, waters and resources.

The CDP was Twigg Forrest's idea. As Fortescue CEO, he was a Business Council member till 2011.

Rupert Murdoch's mouthpieces at Fox, Sky and the Daily Telecrap reckon Twigg's a good mate to Aboriginal Peoples. Some friend!

First Nations Workers' Alliance leads the fight against CDP, while groups like Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance, Fighting in Resistance Equally and many more focus on other key issues.

They face the same enemy as workers, our corporate ruling class. **Corporations try to divide us, but unity grows in struggle.**

## KARL MARX: MAN AND FIGHTER

Humphrey McQueen

**If sculpture aspires to the condition of music then Marx's memorial in Highgate Cemetery hits a bum note.**

The bust focuses on the mighty thinker about whom his lifelong comrade, Frederick Engels, began his graveside oration on 17 March 1883.

Marx was far from a disembodied brain. 'Nothing human is alien to me' was one of his two mottoes. His three heroes were a defier of the gods (Prometheus), a rebel slave (Spartacus) and the mathematician who overturned our picture of the heavens (Kepler).

### *Das Kapital*

The Karl Heinrich Marx who was born on 5 May 1818 was not the Marx who writes *Capital*. Through 25 years of study and struggle, he had to learn how to compose his masterpiece.

Marx's achievements were possible because of the strength of his wife, Jenny, their three daughters, and their housekeeper and comrade, Helen Demuth.

His second motto was 'Question everything'. He criticises even his understanding of surplus-value when he finds a case which does not quite fit his concept.

No one size fits all. To argue otherwise 'is a very impressive method,' Marx writes, 'for swaggering, sham-scientific, bombastic ignorance and intellectual laziness.' For instance, India, China and Japan in the 1860s are subject to colonisers. They resisted differently, Marx shows, because of the relative strength of their state machinery.

Marx taught himself Russian to gauge whether the collective labour of the Russian village (*mir*) could open a path onto socialism. Lenin provided the answer in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (1899) as volume five of *Capital*.

### Dialectics

As a dialectician, Marx sought the two-sidedness in practices and in ideas.

He celebrates capitalism for its revolutionising of every realm of life and reviles it for crippling workers physically and intellectually. He acknowledges religion as 'the heart of a heartless world' and despises the servility of its organised representatives.

As an historical materialist, he rejoices that our species is part of nature to the wealth of which we apply our labours. Equally, he condemns capital for plundering that wealth to survive by relentless expansion.

### Militant

The 30 volumes of Marx's collected

writings are enough work for one lifetime. Yet he organised a succession of international working-class associations. His energies poured into independence for Poland, Ireland and India. Mourners read messages from Russia, France, Spain and Germany. His defence of the Communards in 1871 made him the best-hated man in Europe.

*Capital* is the finest work of labour history ever penned. Some of its power comes from chapters about the working-day and co-operation. Even more significant is Marx's revealing the dual nature of both capital and labour. Once we are forced to sell our capacities, labour becomes the pivotal form of capital by adding more value than goes into its own production.

Marx accepts greed as one more human characteristic. But it is exacerbated by capital's relentless need to realise a profit by inculcating wants to absorb more of its over-production.

By contrast, capitalists are caught in a Faustian bargain between pleasure and accumulation. Too much fun and they lose their right to live off our labour.

### Science

Writing about the past becomes a science only from the 1840s when Marx and Engels initiate historical materialism. They welcome Darwin for putting paid to claims that the world has been created to fulfill some purpose outside itself.

Marx keeps *Capital* a work of science by penetrating surfaces to derive critical analyses of inner dynamics.

Change is the sole constant. Hence, concepts must be jettisoned along with the social practices to which they had approximated.

Marx was fascinated with the calculus: how could an aggregation of quantitative changes result in a qualitative transformation. His most favoured term is 'metamorphosis'.

### Struggle

*Capital* can help us to understand UBER and Wall Street; robots and the Building and Construction Commission; global warming and the surge in Fundamentalisms. We can gain those insights only by uncovering 'how exactly?' in each case.

Marx ties his concepts to immediate demands as with the ten points in the *Manifesto*. Australian revolutionaries do so around the five pillars of everyday life: housing, transport, work, health and education.

The four volumes of *Capital* are a quest for the mechanisms behind systemic crises. They are inevitable.

## Editorial

# Change the Rulers! Change the system!

**For the Australian working class and working people, the downward spiral into debt, insecure jobs, frozen wages and increasing repression of dissent has continued under both Liberal and Labor governments.**

While governments come and go, the real rulers remain: the Business Council of Australia and the Institute of Public Affairs and similar think-tanks that promote the interests of monopoly capitalism/imperialism and implement its policies.

By far the most powerful section of this ruling class in Australia is US imperialism which dominates key sections of the economy, as well as parliamentary politics, the military forces and popular culture.

Nevertheless, US imperialism is staggering towards its own economic crisis and threatens to launch nuclear war, dragging Australia along as a subservient client state, while the country is bled dry by tax-avoiding multinational monopolies, and the people suffer falling living standards and increasing loss of rights and liberties. Imperialism is the core pillar of capitalism in Australia.

### Fundamental change is needed!

Fundamental change, revolutionary change, only ever happens when the vision for change is embraced by the masses, the working class and working people, and when there is little alternative to standing up and fighting against exploitation, war and repression. While rebellion is a starting point, other elements are also required for rebellion to be sustained and the working class and working people to become the new rulers of society.

The struggle for revolutionary change, for socialism, needs leadership and organisation to empower the working class with the right strategies and tactics for every stage of the struggle. If a thorough analysis of the actual social, economic and political circumstances is made, and the main allies and enemies are clearly identified, strategy can be developed to "broaden the base, and narrow the target" as Mao Zedong said.

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) has promoted the strategy of revolution by stages; the current stage being the building of a broad united front, led by the working class, to expel US imperialism and other imperialists from our country. As this victory is being consolidated the working class and its allies will continue revolutionary change into the next stage, building socialism and leading society forward.

This is a mighty task, requiring staunch and dedicated comrades to develop the tactical implementation of this strategy in the practice of struggle over long periods of time. There is no quick fix for capitalism/imperialism in Australia, but building revolutionary organisation is critical.

The CPA (M-L) welcomes enquiries: [info@cpaml.org](mailto:info@cpaml.org)

### Change the Rules? Change the Rulers!

Capitalism will never collapse of its own accord. That demands revolutionary action. Only living breathing human beings can make and re-make our possible futures.

### Revolution

Marx learnt that a revolution needs more than a rise in the price of bread. The past 250 years show that challenges to state power are rare. Even less common is success at smashing the previous state apparatuses.

Russia and China demonstrate that carrying a successful revolution through to socialism is several times harder. We must learn from those failures as Marx did from the fate of the Commune.

Capitalism is haunted not by

the spectre of Marx but by its own conflicting drives. He provides us with the means to understand them. With Engels, he developed a science which situates the prospects for a far better world on more than wish-fulfillment.

A cable of his death appeared in the Australian press. The 1887 English translation of *Capital* sparked a spat among the local bourgeoisie about the exploitative nature of the wage-labour relationship. By 1907, that truth had gripped militants. With the formation of a Communist Party in 1920, the International to which Marx gave so much of his life flourished as never before.

The movement stands Marx's true memorial.



## Marxism Today

### New Pamphlet on imperialism in Australia

#### From the Introduction

This pamphlet exposes the basic economic workings of Australian society and looks at the ownership of the key sectors of the Australian economy by foreign multinational corporations and financial institutions who control the power in this country. They are the imperialist ruling class in Australia.

We hope that this new publication will help the Australian people in their struggles against the harmful effects of the multinationals' domination and plunder of our country and for an independent and socialist Australia.

The economic domination by multinational corporations and financial institutions penetrates into all levels of Australian society—politically, economically, industrially, culturally and militarily.

For example, Australia's taxation system heavily favours big corporations avoiding paying taxes at the same time as wide-reaching cuts to community and welfare services are continuously rolled out.

Big corporations like Glencore, Chevron, John Holland, and CIMIC are driving the oppressive anti-worker laws.

Australia's indigenous people continue to be denied rights to ownership and control of their lands.

Manufacturing industries are re-structured to accommodate multinational weapons corporations and Australia's "defence" policies and military are more deeply integrated into the US war machine.

US stealth bombers and thousands of US troops rotate through Darwin and Australia continues to play host to US bases such as Pine Gap, which controls US spy satellites and is integral to its drone warfare program.



Both booklets can be ordered from Vanguard, P.O. Box 196 Fitzroy, Vic. 3065

**However, this small pamphlet will mainly concentrate on the economic domination.**

Key sections of Australia's economy such as banking and finance, mining and resources, construction, media, and agriculture are in the hands of foreign corporate interests, predominately US owned. They exercise great influence over compliant federal and state governments through organisations such as the Business Council of Australia.

#### Business Council of Australia

The Business Council of Australia (BCA) is the peak body of corporate power in Australia.

Made up of the chief executives of over 120 of the largest companies operating in this country across every sector of the economy, it can quite rightly be described as the "Central Committee of the Bourgeoisie" in Australia.

Its purpose is to exert influence and pressure on government agendas and the formulation of public and legal policies. The BCA systematically uses its members' vast corporate resources towards their realisation.

BCA's policies and agendas penetrate into every economic, political and social aspect of society.

There isn't much that the BCA hasn't demanded, interfered in or tried to influence since its formation in 1983.

From calls for corporate tax cuts, privatisation of water resources, setting wages, changes to industrial relations laws that severely restrict the rights of workers and benefit big business.

It has also through its mining interests, sought to oppose land rights claims by Australia's indigenous people.

A quick analysis of the list of businesses that are members of the BCA provides an insightful snap shot in to the question of who owns Australia in 2018.

Just over 50% are foreign owned companies, with approximately a further 10% being jointly Australian and foreign owned. The remaining 40% are Australian companies.

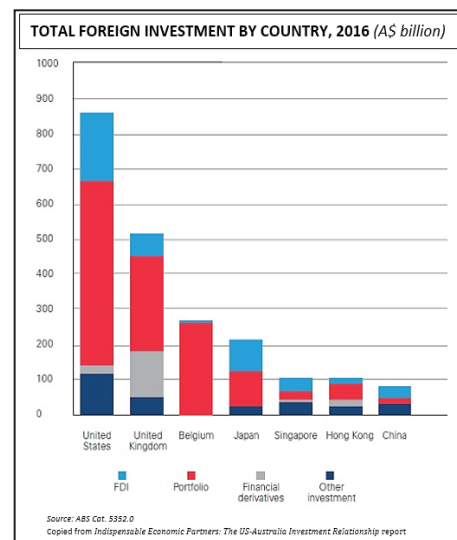
Furthermore, there is a noticeable qualitative difference between the foreign and Australian owned

companies that sit on the BCA. For example, 10 of the 22 banks/ financial services providers on the list are Australian owned and includes the 'Big 4', Macquarie Group, and AMP, but also includes much smaller players such as Bendigo Bank, Suncorp, and Perpetual.

On the other hand, the 12 foreign owned banks are a who's who of US, European and Japanese finance capital including JP Morgan, Citigroup, HSBC, Mitsubishi UFG, Deutsche Bank, and Credit Suisse, just to name a few.

With the exception of a handful of local monopolies including Wesfarmers, Woolworths, Lendlease, and Incitec Pivot, the largest and most influential members of the BCA are some of the world's largest multinational corporations including four of the six so called 'oil super majors' (BP, Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron), General Electric, Siemens, Unilever, Google, Boeing, Engie - the list goes on.

It is primarily these large foreign multinationals that not only dominate the Australian economy, but influence and shape the direction of government economic, industrial relations and social policy through bodies like the BCA, for their own ends and to the detriment of the Australian working people.



TOTAL FDI STOCK IN AUSTRALIA 2016			
Total: A\$796.1 billion			
RANKING BY COUNTRY		A\$ BILLION	% SHARE
1	USA	195.0	24.5
2	JAPAN	90.9	11.4
3	UK	67.9	8.5
4	NETHERLANDS	50.4	6.3
5	CHINA (EXC. HONG KONG)	41.9	5.3
6	SINGAPORE	31.2	3.9
7	CANADA	29.1	3.6

\*Source: ABS Cat. 5352.0; Austrade

#### Extract from the Conclusion

The Australian people will only be able to implement policies that safeguard the needs and wellbeing of working people by expelling US and other imperialist interests and achieving genuine independence by nationalising the key areas of the economy.

Only protracted revolutionary struggle led by the working class can resist, roll back, and finally defeat this imperialist stranglehold.

In this struggle the biggest and most powerful class, the working class, and

its allies will be empowered to build and defend socialism, the only possible alternative to imperialist war and exploitation.

- Nationalise public transport, ports, power, health care, education, essential services!

- Nationalise the multinational corporations!

- Nationalise mining and energy resources!

- Independence from US and all imperialist powers!

# Parliamentarism as the illusion of democracy

Alex M.

Over the years, *Vanguard* and other Party publications have critically examined the class nature of parliament in Australian society.

These analyses have shed light on the role of parliamentary elections and bourgeois political parties in circumscribing and channelling people's hopes and aspirations for a better society into the dead end of parliamentarism.

Starkly revealed by these Party publications is the limited and class specific nature of bourgeois democracy.

The last pamphlet to be produced on parliament and associated matters, *Parliament and Elections – a superficial democracy* was published by the Party in July 2016 and has just been updated and amended. It is therefore not necessary to go to great lengths to cover the same ground that has been covered by previous articles and by the pamphlets. A relatively short overview of some of the insights about parliamentarism found in *Parliament and Elections – a superficial democracy* will be sufficient here.

## Colonial and Dependent

The Australian Federal and State parliaments are modelled on the British Parliament at Westminster.

There is also the added influence of US parliamentary processes, hence the term 'Washminster', which is used to describe the hybrid nature of the Australian parliamentary system.

Such detail highlights how Australian parliaments grew out of the colonial and dependent status that was an integral part of the European settlement of this country. The dependent status continues to the present, with Australian governments content to play the 'client state', the junior partner, to US imperial power.

## Limited scope for working class

As pointed out in the *Parliament and Elections* pamphlet, the British Parliament was important for the upcoming class, the bourgeoisie, in its struggles against the Monarchy and the feudal aristocracy. The struggle over whose class interests would prevail in Westminster and the subsequent triumph of the bourgeoisie did have some positive aspects, namely the eventual extension (after years of struggle) of the franchise to working class people, enabling the limited scope for working class interests to be put on the political agenda.

In Australia, one of the progressive consequences that flowed from parliamentary democracy was the



establishment of a parliament whose remit was national.

In comparison, the separate colonial State parliaments operated principally to further the narrow interests of their respective state based bourgeoisies.

The *Parliament and Elections* pamphlet puts it succinctly: 'Parliamentary democracy was instrumental in uniting the separate colonies into a single nation'

The progressive elements associated with parliamentary politics, the pamphlet states, have 'largely receded'. What remains is the central core of parliamentarism, namely its promotion of capitalism and the reinforcing of ruling class interests.

## Deception

Many people in Australia and in other advanced capitalist countries are disillusioned by politicians and are disenchanted with mainstream political parties. Yet despite this disillusionment and disenchantment, the belief in parliamentarism still holds sway amongst many people.

In Greece, for example, despite the economic crisis that started in late 2009 (and the ensuing attacks on working conditions, wages and pensions which resulted in impoverishment and high levels of unemployment), large numbers of the Greek populace looked to Syriza and the Greek parliament to address their woes.

What accounts for this belief in parliamentary politics given that parliamentarism is a key component of bourgeois class rule? Deception. According to *Parliament and Elections*:

"Currently deception is the predominant means by which the ruling class maintains its position, and at the centre of the deception is parliamentary democracy. The equating of elections and Parliament to democracy is a

fallacy. Its [parliament's] main role now is that of an administrative management or a 'talking shop' which enforces the supremacy and rule of capital, but does not control the workings of capitalism."

A quote from Ted Hill's book *Revolution and the Australian State* highlights the limited power of parliament in Australia and elsewhere:

"The real business of government is done and its continuity is ensured by the public service. It is backed by the army, the police, the courts and gaols. Governments come and go in competition with each other for the spoils of office: they call it power but it is a very limited idea of power and is based on power in the hands of the monopoly capitalists."

## The voting ritual

The battle for the spoils of office, with its ritual of elections when the people get to cast a vote and then leave the 'official' politics to their elected representatives for four or so years, is largely a charade. The electoral process is predicated on and helps perpetuate the political passivity of the masses of people; vote on a particular day, then go home and leave the politics to the politicians.

The 'theatres of the absurd' in Canberra and in the various State and Territory capitals are not there to seriously reform an unjust and inequitable social system.

Expecting that with elections and a change of personnel sitting on the benches in the various houses of parliaments, that policies beneficial to the working class and detrimental to the ruling class would be legislated is delusional.

Bourgeois parliaments exist to help facilitate ruling class agendas. Those agendas are set by groups such as the Business Council of Australia; thrashed out in the boardrooms of the multinational corporations and financial conglomerates.

Astutely, Lenin pointed out in a letter to Sylvia Pankhurst, written in 1919, that placing faith in bourgeois parliaments was dangerous:

"The bourgeoisie in the old parliamentary countries has mastered superbly the art of hypocrisy and of fooling the people in a thousand ways, passing off bourgeois parliamentarism as 'democracy in general' or 'pure democracy', and so on, and cunningly concealing the million threads which bind parliament to the stock exchange and the capitalists, utilising a venal, mercenary press and exercising the power of money, the power of capital, in every way."

## For real democracy

Bourgeois parliamentarism is the illusion of democracy.

Real democracy is based on the active participation in decision making about political, economic, social and cultural policies by the majority of the populace, led by the working class.

Rather than implementing a ruling class agenda, an independent working class agenda would be the guiding programme for a really democratic working body.

Such a decision making body would need to draw more and more people from the working class and its allies into the day to day running of the country, helping build socialism. That way lies real democracy.





# Save Sydney Coalition launched to fight developers

Louisa L.

A coalition of organisations opposing the destruction of Sydney by developers was launched under the Tree of Knowledge, behind NSW Parliament in Sydney's Domain on Thursday, April 12.

Actor Michael Caton, famed for his role as a suburbanite galvanised into action to save his home in the film 'The Castle', began the launch of Save Sydney Coalition with a reference to Barcaldine's Tree of Knowledge.

At Barcaldine in 1891, striking Queensland shearers swore the Eureka Oath, 'to stand truly by each other and defend our rights and liberties'.

Michael Caton said he saw the Tree



## Five year picket

Windsor is part of Greater Sydney but 50 years ago was still country town, 56 kilometres northwest of Sydney centre. Now it's an outer suburb.

The Battle for Thompson Square and Windsor Bridge broke the Guinness Book record with a five-year picket against development.

The square was established in 1795 and named Thompson Square in 1811.

Jan Sparks, from Community Action for Windsor Bridge, told the gathering, "There's four-hour shifts, 24 hours a day, rain hail or shine."

Residents are fighting a proposal that will "replace our historic bridge and cut a path through the oldest public square in Australia. Currently we have approximately 3000 trucks a day."

These are B-doubles or bigger, and with numbers predicted to rise to 5000 daily she stated.

"It's like a road going through The Rocks [an historic area beside Sydney Harbour] with 5000 trucks a day" bringing sand from sand mines, for all Sydney's developments, Jan Sparks said.

## People power

RIPA (Residents Infrastructure and Planning Alliance) is an alliance of 16 community groups on the north and north west fringes of Sydney, including some very affluent areas.

RIPA rep, Ray Sloss, said, "We are happy to join Save our Sydney, because we need to be strong and we need to have people power."

He outlined three struggles. In south Dural, a proposal had over 6000 objections.

600 people also joined a community meeting to stop 240 hectares of land being destroyed, with massive houses to be built.

RIPA is now fighting Mirvac's plans for the IBM site next to Cumberland State Forest, with 3,500 objections, he continued.

The forest, where the National Trust and community replanted over 40,000 indigenous plants beginning 30 years ago, is some of the last blue gum forest in Sydney. The development cuts into the forest, including Powerful Owl habitat.

## 'Be humble and listen'

Save Sydney is aiming to systematically broaden its membership, with affordable housing a key demand.

Attempts have been made to link up with those fighting public housing evictions.

Speakers echoed Michael Caton's words, "It's time for the people to take their power back."

He had important advice, "You're going to have to think a bit bigger, and you're going to have to be humble and listen and understand the other folks' point of view in terms of what you push and how hard."

## Farmers and Workers Are Natural Allies Against Imperialism

Duncan B.

**Workers and farmers are natural allies in the struggle against the domination of Australia by foreign, mainly US, corporations.**

Workers are exploited in the mines and factories of the multinationals. Farmers are exploited by agribusiness corporations, supermarkets, banks, and insurance companies.

Workers in the cities are facing rising house prices and rents and worsening public transport and education services.

Farmers and other country people often suffer second rate medical facilities, transport, education, communications and other public services.

Farmers are experiencing the disastrous effects of climate change: extreme weather events such as cyclones and bushfires are wreaking destruction on Australian crops.

Drought, flood and mice plagues led to reductions in the 2017-18 Victorian wheat and barley crops of over 30% each, compared with 2016-17. In a report released in December 2017, the Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, predicted that the value of Australia's farm production for 2017-18 would be \$59 billion, a



when it was gradually dying after being poisoned. He called it a good metaphor for Sydney because, he said, "we're being poisoned by over-development, by people being in bed with developers."

## Total disregard

Barbara Khoury, spokesperson for the Save Sydney Coalition, stated, "Our group has been formed because of the frustrations of ordinary Sydney-siders, who are seeing the heart and soul of this city being ripped out by unprecedented development."

She spoke of "a total disregard for heritage, maintenance of character, preservation of community ... and infrastructure requirements."

She said, "Whole suburbs, that have been in existence for over one hundred years, with the subdivisions dating back to the 1800s and early 20th century," are being destroyed.

Barbara Khoury said, "Today marks the beginning of the good citizens of this city taking back control of their own city. We, as the peak body, demand a seat at the table with government on these important issues."

"The Save Sydney Coalition seeks to protect local character of the entire Sydney region".

drop of 7% over the previous year due to the poor conditions in the grain-growing areas.

Farmers and workers are both affected by the problems of an adequate water supply. Both want to see the problems surrounding the Murray-Darling Basin sorted out. The water for the Murray-Darling system needs to go to those who desperately need water for their crops and businesses, not the big irrigators who corruptly manipulate the system.

Workers and farmers are both being hit by higher food, electricity and gas prices. Irrigators and dairy farmers, who are reliant on electricity for their operations are especially hard hit.

Workers and farmers are both burdened with so-called "leaders" trying to divert their struggles.

The workers have the ALP and some union leaders who mislead them and try

to divert their struggles into the dead end of parliament.

Farmers are burdened with mis-leaders who advocate more foreign investment in Australian agriculture and foreign ownership of Australian farm land or are in the ranks of climate-change deniers. Some farm leaders try to drive a wedge between farmers and workers, turning them against one another.

The National Party serves the interests of miners and big pastoralists, rather than the small farmers. One Nation and other conservative groups try to spread racism and other reactionary ideas.

Farmers need to say a resounding "NO!" to their mis-leaders and join with their allies among the workers to kick out the US corporations and build a democratic Australia where the country's resources will be used for the benefit of ALL Australians.



# Mobilised and United, workers can win

Shirley Winton

**For the first time in 10 years, not since the enormous national *Your Rights at Work* mass campaign against WorkChoices in 2006-2007, the union movement is mobilising working people and communities again.**

Under the ACTU slogan *Change the Rules*, 12 days of events and mass rallies are being held across the country.

The first stage of the nationally co-ordinated fight to win back hard fought for rights and conditions was launched at the Victorian unions mass delegates' meeting on 17 April in Melbourne.

More than 1600 highly spirited and defiant union delegates packed into the Melbourne Town Hall. Another 200 had to be turned away from the overflowing meeting.

The meeting unanimously passed 2 resolutions endorsing the *Change the Rules* campaign and committed to organising and mobilising rank and file workers for a mass rally in Melbourne on 9 May. Thousands of workers will walk off the job to attend.

ACTU President, Sally McManus, outlined demands of the national campaign, including job security, equal rights at work, pay rises, reinstatement of penalty rates, closing the loop holes in Fair Work legislation that favour big business, and flexible leave provisions. The campaign will also oppose Free Trade Agreements that undermine Australian workers' wages and conditions, savagely exploit overseas workers and empower foreign corporations to sue sovereign governments.

Every delegate received a *Change the Rules* kit. On the right to strike, the kit states "workers' rights to withdraw their labour must be aligned with the ILO standards". On the draconian IR laws used against the construction unions, the delegates' kit states "The Turnbull Government's use of taxpayers' money to harass working people with the ABCC and the ROC must stop."

Sally McManus' pledge to fight for working people received a standing ovation.

## Longford ExxonMobil workers leading from the front

But the strongest inspiration and leadership came from the courageous Longford ExxonMobil-UGL workers.

To the thunderous applause and a standing ovation, Troy Carter, one of the 3 sacked ExxonMobil-UGL shop stewards spoke on behalf of the 230 sacked maintenance workers and their families.

He opened his talk by paying special tribute to the solidarity, discipline and



the collective spirit of the 230 workers and their families.

For more than 300 days the workers have continued to maintain a well organised and tightly disciplined picket line in very difficult conditions. From day one, these workers took firm control of their own struggle and made sure that every worker was involved in every detail of their fight.

These workers clearly understand the importance of their long fight and the sacrifices their families are making in standing up against one of the world's biggest multinationals.

Troy made a powerful speech condemning the multinational ExxonMobil for ripping out Australia's natural resources, crushing workers' wages and conditions and sending huge profits overseas while refusing to pay any tax on the profits.

He pledged the commitment of 230 sacked workers on the picket line to continue the fight against the multinational's plunder, and their support for the *Change the Rules* campaign.

ExxonMobil maintenance workers have criss-crossed the country giving

talks to many union and community groups around Australia. Their talks and discussions always stress the reason they won't give up is because they know this fight against the multinational ExxonMobil is not just for them and their families, but for all of Australia's working people.

Troy's passionate account of hardships on the picket line for 43 weeks and the distress the company has inflicted on the families of 230 workers, deeply moved and inspired everyone at the Melbourne Town Hall.

**ExxonMobil workers embody the selflessness, the discipline and the collective spirit of working class solidarity in struggle. They fly the Eureka flag and wear Eureka badges with pride and honour.**

At the conclusion of the delegates' mass meeting 1,000 delegates marched with ExxonMobil workers to the head offices of ExxonMobil. Outside the head offices Sally McMahon spoke again, "These guys had the guts to stand up and say no. They are the front line of the *Change the Rules* campaign, they

are the bravest, the most courageous rank and file members and their families we have around the country who are prepared to put their lives and their families on the line to fight for justice, to fight for fairness, to fight for the next generation."

Standing on the back of a ute, Troy turned to face the ExxonMobil head office on the top floors of the building, sending them a strong message "How dare a multinational company come into our backyard and rape our natural resources and not put back into our country and our families what belongs to us. We're proud Australian workers and if you're not going to stop ripping us off and not pay any taxes, well you can get out of here."

## Independent working class agenda

The call for mass mobilisations, the readiness to take on and fight the government and big business, and signs of Sally McManus' courageous leadership, are giving hope and confidence to the working class.

It is the hope and expectation that the mobilisation of working people is not channelled solely into bumping Labor into office.

It is the hope that Labor will deliver. It is the hope that the battle will continue beyond the coming parliamentary elections, whoever wins the office.

And there's a hope that working people will not be used, manipulated and sold out again.

There's hope that the 2007 dismantling of the *Your Rights at Work* campaign won't be repeated.

While the ACTU campaign is focusing on kicking out the Turnbull government, for workers it is only the beginning, or the first stage of a much bigger and longer battle.

The working class has its own independent agenda and struggle that extends beyond the parliamentary elections.

Under capitalism there's no such thing as an even balance of power between the working class and big business. No matter how much tinkering there is to make capitalism fairer, its entire existence depends on the dominant power of the tiny exploiting minority – big business – over the majority, the exploited working class.

The harsh reality is that monopoly capitalism and its rules and laws can't be fundamentally changed to make it less greedy and a bit more fairer for workers.

This important mobilisation will assist in building the foundations for a movement to get rid of the entire exploitative system of capitalism.



# Sovereignty is key to First Nations' unity

Lindy Nolan

**January 26, 1988 saw the biggest ever gathering of First Nations' Peoples in their millenniums of history.**

United, they announced their survival in the face of what Tent Embassy Firekeeper, Gumbainggir man, Roxley Foley calls "the strongest and most consolidated genocide pogrom in history".

By 2000, a million mainstream Australians marched to support First Nations. This Aboriginal-led movement posed a massive threat to corporate rule and access to land.

The Business Council of Australia organises the country's 125 biggest, mostly foreign-owned, corporations.

Responding, it began manufacturing consent among hand-picked Indigenous individuals.

The price? Land and resources, and acceptance that invasion and capitalist rule are permanent.

Corporations find cracks in community and deliberately widen them.

Take constitutional recognition. For First Nations Peoples, only Native Title has been more divisive.

31 years ago, Uncle Kevin Gilbert first wrote of Treaty. Anaiwan/Kamilaroi man, Adrian Atkins, says "His vision was for Sovereignty, under a pan-Aboriginal confederacy, a nation within nations". This vision "spread like wildfire in the lead up to 1988".

Labor PM Hawke promised Treaty, then dumped it.

Later, instead of Treaty, BCA members pumped massive resources into constitutional recognition, initiated by PM Howard after advice from a mining company-founded think tank. It was top down, hand-picked, and "shoved down our throats". (Lidia Thorpe 17/3/18).

The police were even called to remove First Nations Peoples, including Gunnai/Gunditjmara woman Lidia Thorpe (now the first Aboriginal parliamentarian in Victoria), from a Referendum Council meeting.

By 2014 recognition seemed unstoppable.

But grassroots' Peoples were organising, with Treaty and Sovereignty their battle cry.

Attempts to silence them failed, and even compromised constitutional change proved too much for the Coalition Government.

Struggle deepens understanding. Some First Nations Peoples still look to Treaty with governments, but growing numbers reject this.

Instead they systematically rebuild unity through Treaty between



Adrian Atkins, Nathan Leslie, Cameron Manning-Brown and Roxley Foley at Stop the Intervention Collective's Sydney's "Treaty: Young men speak out"

neighbouring mobs, based on informed prior consent.

Sovereignty was the heart of Kevin Gilbert's vision and is still the key today.

Roxley Foley says, "Each one of us...holds part of the story, and the memory of Country. Once you know that, you can't stop fighting."

FISTT (Fighting in Solidarity Toward Treaty) representative Gomeroi man Cameron Manning-Brown, says, "Treaty sets the foundation for us, the Sovereign First Nations peoples of this

## We Condemn Imperialist Aggression Against Syria!

*Central Committee, Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) April 15, 2018*

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) unequivocally condemns the outrageous so-called "precision strikes" against Syrian government facilities by the US-British-French imperialists. The strikes are a gross violation of Syria's sovereignty and a clear breach of International Law that the imperialists hypocritically claim to uphold.

We also condemn the Australian Prime Minister Malcom Turnbull for his obsequious support of the US-led strikes. The continuing slavish support for the so-called "US-Australia Alliance" by both the LNP and the ALP and Australia's unflinching subservience to US imperialism risks dragging us into yet another US war of aggression.

Recent claims against the Syrian government over the use of nerve gas remain nothing but allegations. Until independently verified, we believe there are good reasons why they may be fabrications. Meanwhile, the US-led imperialist coalition prefers to "shoot first and ask questions later."

The US, UK, France, and other countries vetoed Russia's proposal to send an investigation team from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to Syria on April 10, 2018. That team has nevertheless arrived in Damascus at the

land, to determine our own futures, on our own terms, in all aspects of our lives."

Gamilaraay man Nathan Leslie says he looks to Elders for decisions. "We had pre-existing Treaties... We have to have a Treaty with our own mob... So it's with our fellow Black mob first that we have these yarns."

He asks, "Are we going into an agreement with the same bastards that killed our people, that run us down, that slaughtered our old people, that murdered and raped our women?"

invitation of Syrian President Assad and has been given unrestricted access to sites around Douma where it is alleged that Assad had gassed his own people.

Why do we say that there are good reasons for disbelieving the allegations? There exists no strategic advantage to the Syrian government to use chemical weapons at this time when its army, with Russian support, has won one victory after another and recovered much of the terrorist-held territory. If the government was to use nerve gas, why use it against non-combatant civilians rather than terrorist fighters?

We note that this is not the first time such allegations have been levelled at the Assad government. In 2013, it was alleged that Assad had used chemical weapons against civilians at East Ghouta. The Syrian government provided access to a team of UN investigators. Carla del Ponte, a senior member of the team said that testimony gathered from casualties at East Ghouta and medical staff indicated that the nerve agent sarin had been used by rebel fighters.

Syria undoubtedly had chemical weapons. They agreed to destroy these in 2013. Yet much of Syria has been under the control of terrorist "rebels" and weapons of all sorts have been seized by them. The rebels are not freedom-fighters but feudal-minded terrorists affiliated with ISIS and al-Qaeda. They have used inhuman methods of torture and execution.

Cameron Manning-Brown agrees, "I will not be talking Treaty with a corporate government until it severs ties with Britain," he says.

Roxley Foley says, "People all around the country are finding ways to fight back. The trick is, how do we weave these different groups in, and how do we get the conversations happening where we can help each other and work out where we've succeeded and where we've failed? So we don't try to homogenise our own movement."

He says, "Don't let them think we're coming to the table alone and to surrender. It's their throat we're looking for. And when we come, not only will we come together with our mob, but we'll come with the vast majority of the Australia people backing us up as well."

Adrian Atkins says, "Uncle Kevin Gilbert drew our gaze to the distant promised land."

First Nations Peoples, taking forward the experience of their Elders, organising in new ways, in new groups, now mobilise tens of thousands. Rejecting division and despair, they are building that promised land.

It is far more likely that the terrorists used chemical weapons to create an "incident" to justify US military aggression against Syria. They understand the tremendous propaganda effect of women and children being presented as victims of a government nerve gas attack. The US, which has killed more innocent people than any regime in history, weeps over the "mass murder of innocents" and parades as the protectors of "Assad's victims".

The ongoing political and military conflict over Syria is underpinned by the rivalries of the big powers as they vie for control of the region's natural resources, markets, and political influence. Assad, like Gaddafi in Libya, and Hussein in Iraq, has become a target for regime change because he will not bow to the interests and dictates of US imperialism.

In this context, it remains to be seen what further developments may flow from the US-British-French missile attacks. But after 7 years of courageous and stubborn resistance by the Syrians to the proxy war waged in their country and instigated by the US imperialists, it is obvious the war drums are beating louder and louder as US hegemony and economic interests across the globe are challenged.

**Hands off Syria!  
Imperialists out of the Middle East!  
Australian independence – end the US-Australia Alliance – no slavish backing of US provocations!**