

Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

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Oppose new imperialist war in the Middle East!

*Statement issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)
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Prime Minister Tony Abbott has committed an initial force of 400 air force personnel and 200 elite special forces troops to the service of US imperialism's latest war of aggression in the Middle East.

This comes days after President Obama's September 10 address to the nation and continues the successive Australian governments' naked function as puppets of US imperialism.

Ostensibly, US imperialism is on a humanitarian crusade to destroy the reactionary terrorist outfit variously known as ISIS, ISIL and IS (Islamic State).

IS atrocities have been given much publicity in recent months. Gut-churning images of beheadings, and mass slaughters of civilians and captured soldiers alike, have appalled people throughout the world.

IS is a disease nurtured by the US

But this is the same group that the Western media has described as "rebels" during the nearly four-year campaign to unseat President Assad of Syria.

When Assad spoke of fighting terrorists such as Al-Qaeda, the Al-Nusrah Front and IS he was either ignored or had his use of the word terrorist placed in quotation marks to show that he was lying.

For as long as it suited US imperialism, these terrorist organisations were cloaked in the respectability of being "freedom fighters".

We likewise use quotation marks because they were not freedom fighters at all.

They were reactionary and sectarian religious fascists who sought to destroy Assad's secular regime.

That was all that mattered to the US imperialists when CIA and Special



Forces command began training them at a secret camp in Jordan in 2012. This has been confirmed by Jordanian officials.

Nor did it matter to the Sunni fiefdoms of Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, close US allies all, when they provided the initial financial backing to IS.

The driving force behind the US imperialist wars of aggression in the region is the US and European economic imperialist domination and control of oil and economies of Middle Eastern countries.

The US and European imperialist wars against the people of Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria and the murderous oppression of Palestinians spawned the strong anti-imperialist sentiment in the Middle East and around

the world. The US backed vile ISIS is now seizing on this sentiment to recruit the marginalised and alienated to its

own version of imperialist fascism.

US hesitation emboldens IS

When the anti-Assad forces proved to be incapable of toppling him, and following Syrian government victories in which lost territory was recaptured, US imperialism proposed direct aerial bombing campaigns inside Syria against the government.

Both Obama and British leader David Cameron were rebuffed by their own legislatures.

This emboldened IS to come out from under the wings of the US and to more vigorously pursue its own dream of a Syrian-Iraqi caliphate.

They quickly pushed into and took control of north-western Iraq, capturing, in the process, some of the country's largest oilfields.

This gave them an additional source of income through illegal sales of oil to Turkey coming from the refineries of Deir al-Zor (800 million dollars annual trade!).

This large volume of trade cannot occur without the approval of Turkey's Erdogan government which has maintained close ties to IS through its captured region in Syria.

Turkey's reactionary government had sent hundreds of truckloads of supplies

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Oppose new imperialist war in the Middle East!

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to IS-controlled territory in Syria.

Breaking their close ties has been a special task of US Secretary of State John Kerry in the days following Obama's speech.

Australia complicit in US crimes

No doubt many people will applaud action against IS. The sooner it is stopped the better. However, it would be a mistake to pin our hopes for this on US imperialism and its coalition forces.

Imperialism is by its very nature opposed to the interests of humanity.

Capitalist media will never highlight the atrocities of US drone attacks in Pakistan, Yemen or Somalia where innocent civilians are torn apart by US bombs.

Gut-wrenching images of a father holding his young daughter's mangled body, desperately trying to stop her intestines from spilling from her wounds, would have the same effect as videos of IS beheadings.

How does such an agonising death over several hours compare to a beheading? They are both grisly, vile acts carried out by terrorists.

Even before he had committed Australian forces to Obama's war, Australia had been complicit in US crimes through the role of Pine Gap in defining targets for US drones.

The anti-Moslem terror campaign is

ramped up to justify the new imperialist wars and escalate more widely attacks on democratic rights.

Internationalism, not imperialist war!

US imperialism is adept at interfering in other countries, promoting their destabilisation, and relying on reactionary criminal organisations to create a crisis requiring "humanitarian" intervention.

It is inevitable that this latest US military adventure will lead to an illegal invasion of Syria and provocations and attacks on Syrian government troops and allied forces such as units of the Hezbollah, Iranian Revolutionary Guards and the Kurdistan Workers Party who are all fighting against the IS terrorists.

This will only further inflame the situation and add to the devastation and misery in Syria.

From Afghanistan to Iraq, Libya and Syria, US imperialism has created one cesspool of violence and horror after another.

In each of these cesspools of dismembered nations, groups like Al-Qaeda, Al-Nusrah and IS have outgrown their masters and turned on the hand that fed them.

Mao Zedong once said: "Make trouble, fail, make trouble again, fail again... till their doom; that is the logic of the imperialists and all reactionaries the world over in dealing with the people's cause, and they will never

go against this logic... When we say "imperialism is ferocious", we mean that its nature will never change, that the imperialists will never lay down their butcher knives, that they will never become Buddhas, till their doom."

The key to the resolution of contradictions between the reactionary spawn of US imperialism and the peoples of the Middle East is the emergence of the working classes as the organised, conscious leaders of a fight for the independence of their nations and the liberation of their peoples.

This does not mean leaving victims of IS – or of US imperialism – to their fate.

The basis of assistance to those carrying out a just struggle is proletarian internationalism. That means, in the first

place, building the secular, democratic and anti-imperialist revolutionary movement in one's own country. It also means finding ways of providing support to the front lines of resistance.

Only the people can provide assistance to each other without interfering, bullying, subverting, terrorising and in other ways seeking to control – all of which characterise imperialist intervention.

In Australia, our contribution to the international people's struggles against imperialist wars is to build an anti-imperialist independence movement that closes down US bases, sends US troops back home, withdraws Australia's support for imperialist wars of aggression and pulls out of the US led imperialist military alliance.



Do we want B-52s bombing Aboriginal land?

by Nick G.

Giant US B-52 bombers, the most aggressive symbol of the evil empire's war on the poor of the world, are set to carpet bomb a slice of the Northern Territory under an agreement signed between US and Australian representatives at the recent annual AUSMIN talks.

The 200,000 hectare Delamere Prohibited Area, around 120 km south of Katherine, is Aboriginal land made available to the Australian Air Force through an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA).

It has been used for bombing practice by Australian fighter jets, but will now be pounded by live ammunition from B-52s.

It follows an agreement signed by the US with the Philippines that will allow American troops to have access to military bases in that country for the next decade.

It is likely that the US imperialists will regain access to the giant Subic Naval Base and that they will gradually deploy combat ships, a squadron of F18s or F16s and maritime surveillance aircraft to the Philippines.

In Australia, the number of marines to be "rotated" through Darwin will increase to 2500. Over the next 25 years, further increases can be made, and other sites for their "rotation" can be agreed.

During the talks, where the overlords

issue orders and the puppets cravenly sell-out our sovereignty in cowardly and enthusiastic obedience, there was agreement to closer "cooperation" between special-forces and in cyber warfare operations and for greater access for US warships, including nuclear submarines, to ports around Australia.

The buzz word of "inter-operability" simply means that we get locked into any aggression the US imperialists decide to undertake.

The deal confirms the analysis made of the US-Australia relationship by former conservative Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser in his book *Dangerous Allies*.

It follows confirmation that Australian and US personnel based at Pine Gap are directing US drone aircraft to targets in Pakistan and Iraq.

Austerity for us, billions for the US

Talks also began on plans for Australia to become part of the US ballistic missile shield that allows warships and land based sites to take out enemy missiles well before they reach a target.

Converting Australian destroyers and systems to carry the interceptor missiles would cost billions of dollars.

It is no wonder that an austerity regime is being imposed on services to the people while plans are made to spend the lot on services to the imperialists.

Vanguard

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

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

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

Readers and subscribers should be aware that *Vanguard* is unlikely to be published in 2015, but will continue online at www.cpaml.org. As with a newspaper, there are costs involved and supporters are encouraged to contribute whatever they can by sending donations to the above address.

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

Email: cpaml@vanguard.net.au

No security for workers under capitalism



At retirement age, for example...

- 30 year old worker on \$50,000 p.a. will lose \$19,632
- 30 year old worker on \$80,000 p.a. will lose \$31,411
- 40 year old worker on \$50,000 p.a. will lose \$13,706
- 40 year old worker on \$80,000 p.a. will lose \$21,930

But that's not all.

Another part of the austerity budget sought to scrap the \$500 low income superannuation tax rebate for workers earning less than \$37,000 in a tax year.

With many workers in part-time and casual work or low-paying jobs, from 2017 when it commences, this measure will take a large chunk out of their expected retirement savings.

For a worker earning \$35,000 p.a. from 22 years old until retirement at 69 years, it will amount to a loss of 16.7% of their final lump sum.

Where does the money go?

In the case of the increase in employers' contributions being frozen and delayed, the money stays in the bosses' pockets!

The bosses and the bourgeois economists say that this will allow them to hire more workers and pay for future wage increases. Yeah, and pigs can fly?!

As for the low income superannuation tax rebate, that stays in the government coffers to shell out among favoured big business mates and expensive consultants and military adventures.

Socialism – secure work, secure retirement

In contrast to the system of class rule by a small core of exploiters and profiteers, socialism uses the wealth and energy of the nation to build a society that meets the needs and interests of the people, especially the working class.

In contrast to capitalism, socialism

Editorial

Never overlook the class nature of the state



The Australian ruling class is using the current circumstances of a raised level of alert in relation to domestic terrorism to strengthen the powers of the state.

A debate around "freedom" and "security" is occurring, namely, how much of the former should be surrendered in order to guarantee the latter.

Assurances are offered by supporters of newly increased ASIO and police powers that such measures will be "narrowly targeted" and "rarely used".

This was the line trotted out by Attorney-General George Brandis.

Speaking on ABC radio's AM program on Monday September 22, Brandis said: "The Coalition in its DNA has a suspicion of state power... I have approached it (new powers) in the manner of someone who is suspicious of state power."

This only makes sense by remembering that the state is an instrument for the suppression of one class by another.

The essential function of the capitalist state is to prolong the rule of the rich and protect them from any challenges to their wealth and privilege.

On the one hand, people like Brandis clamour for "small government" and "deregulation" and profess to have a "suspicion of state power".

But that is only when popular pressure forces the state to place minor constraints on the activities of the big corporations and their allies and servants.

Then they want limits on government activities and restrictions on the power of the state.

But when the interests of the capitalists and imperialists conflict with those of the people, *then* they want all the powers in the world to be given to state agencies so that they can curtail the struggles of the working class and its allies and servants. *Then* they no longer profess to be "suspicious of state power", but instead emerge as champions of the "rule of law" and of "tough measures" to combat "industrial lawlessness" and community campaigns that "interfere with and threaten the rights of businesses to operate".

The irreconcilability of the contradiction between the ruling class and the working people can get overlooked in a dispute around increased and "rarely used" powers to deal with a "narrow target".

We condemn terrorism.

But we condemn in the first place its causes – imperialist-created poverty and imperialist interference, bullying, armed aggression and invasions throughout the world.

Strengthening the repressive powers of the state, nominally directed at terrorists, is also increasing the power of the state to carry out its class function on behalf of the ruling class against the vast majority of working Australians.

guarantees secure and meaningful work, it guarantees decent healthcare and education, decent housing, efficient public transport and a good standard of living in retirement.

It guarantees participatory democracy in the decisions affecting people at work and in the community, in the formulation of public policies and in their implementation, and not just the election of (dud) representatives every so often.

It guarantees respect for the

environment and promotes clean and sustainable energy in place of the old polluting industries and profit-driven exploitation of the land, rivers, sea and air.

As the superannuation rip-off shows, whatever small gains workers can achieve in this system are soon taken back, the goal-posts keep moving and insecurity returns.

Capitalism cannot be reformed, regulated or resurrected, it must be abolished.

Government experiment in cutting wages

by Bill F.

The Northern Territory has become the preferred testing ground for reactionary social and political policies being trialled by both Labor and Liberal federal governments.

First was the racist ‘intervention’ and allied attempts to change Native Title land into freehold so it could be gobbled up by the mining companies.

Then there was the degrading ‘income management’ scheme with its humiliating BasicsCard which chained Indigenous people to one or two stores and denied them the right to manage their own lives.

This insidious scheme has since spread across the country to include other regions and non-Indigenous social welfare recipients. A classic example of how racism is used to pave the way for a broader attack on the working class.

Not to be forgotten is the proposal to establish a nuclear waste dump at Muckaty, finally defeated by the persistent campaign of local Indigenous activists and communities.

Still unfolding is the establishment of a permanent United States military presence, starting with the ‘rotation’ of US Marines through Darwin and US access to Australian military bases, ports and airfields. This, along with the expansion of Pine Gap and other spy bases will lead, inevitably, to more US bases in Western Australia and Queensland.

DAMA

The latest experiment in ‘social engineering’ comes courtesy of the Abbott government. It is called Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) and covers a deal between the Abbott federal government and the Country Liberal government based in Darwin.

DAMA allows nominated local employers to bring in 457 visa workers for up to four years, on 10% less pay and under fewer restrictions than those applying to 457 visa workers in other parts of Australia.

Employers using the scheme will be nominated by their mates in local government, councils and chambers of commerce. They will be able to employ 457 visa workers who do not meet the current English language standard test, nor have the current level of training and skill in the trade they are hired to perform. On other words, on the cheap and nasty.

Pressure for the scheme initially came from local employers who were losing skilled workers to the big gas projects



Darwin, Northern Territory

under construction in the region, including the Inpex LNG plant where 10,000 workers will be employed.

It was enthusiastically endorsed by the Abbott government, which sees it as a way of dividing the working class and pushing down the general level of wages. Indeed, Assistant Immigration Minister Michaelia Cash hopes to have the scheme up and running shortly and even extended to the Pilbara in Western Australia “by the end of the year”.

Unions react

Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) President Ged Kearney expressed concern that English language standards will be lower. “It risks the safety of the workers themselves, it risks the quality of the service provided and at the end of the day it risks the safety of Australians who use those services.”

In another statement the ACTU noted, “For example, Geelong has previously been mooted as a location for a regional migration agreement. This would be clearly unacceptable now given the major job losses, current and ongoing, from major employers in that region.

“Unions consider that such an analysis would conclude on the evidence there is no longer any need for regional migration agreements or designated area migration agreement, now or in the foreseeable future.

“These sorts of provisions in the draft guidelines only serve to confirm a view that the main purpose of designated area migration agreements is to provide a mechanism for employers to avoid obligations in the standard 457 visa program.”

Electrical Trades Union national secretary Allen Hicks pointed to the poor

wages” by excluding the Northern Territory from national labour laws. He said young unemployed people in the Northern Territory would be competing with foreign workers. “These young people at the moment are going to be told, ‘If you don’t find a job you have to spend six months without any income because we’re taking away your dole,’ but on the other hand are any employers going to give young people a job when they can employ someone from overseas for half the wages?”

The Labor party hasn’t been as vocal, with Opposition Leader Bill Shorten merely asking the government to “explain” and hoping that people will forget that it was Labor who introduced ‘regional migration and enterprise migration agreements’ in 2012 for Gina Rinehart’s Roy Hill iron ore project.

We said earlier that it is no coincidence that the NT with its relatively high proportion of Aboriginal citizens has emerged as the front line for attacks on wages, working conditions and welfare. It is also the nation’s “open door” for the entry of the US imperialist war machine.

Aboriginal demands for self-determination are loud and clear. They must be supported by corresponding demands by the great majority of Australians for Australian self-determination, namely, for anti-imperialist independence and an end to the so-called US “alliance”; and for socialism and an end to the exploitation of labour by capital.

Dreamtime with Tony



Never mind if I can’t shake your hand now, sonny, but the journo has me lined up for a good shot, so just stand back a bit.

Maybe by the time you’re my age, you’ll be able to vote in a referendum to recognise your mob in the Constitution?

Then again, by the time you’re my age maybe Australia will have undergone massive and significant change, and colonial relics and imperial collaborators like me will only be found in museums.

Book review: Corporate Corruption!

What happens when we turn a blind eye to bribery, fraud and greed in corporate Australia.

-Contributed-

Outgoing Victorian Trades Hall Council Secretary Brian Boyd has recently put together a timely book covering the malfeasance and dirty tricks of the corporate world operating in Australia.

The publication entails a mixture of targeted commentary and purposefully selected media reports on big business fraud and corrupt practices (proven and currently alleged) that paint a damning picture about the big end of town.

While the capitalist media has run for decade after decade regular, negative banner headlines and endless editorial attacks on the activities of selected unions, in the main, the coverage of scandals involving the corporate sector is patchy at best.

More often than not these latter reports are only found in the back pages of the newspaper. TV News bulletins hardly ever do a story on corruption charges against a company.

This reality goes to the nub of Boyd's book.

That is, he insists the imbalance in both the reporting of corporate wrong-doing and the placing of proper regulatory weight on the crimes that have received at least some publicity to date, deserve greater exposure.

The book pulls together over 30 illustrations of both proven and ongoing alleged corporate crimes ranging from corruption, fraud, bribery, rorting, rip-offs, forgery and standover tactics that involve many millions of dollars.

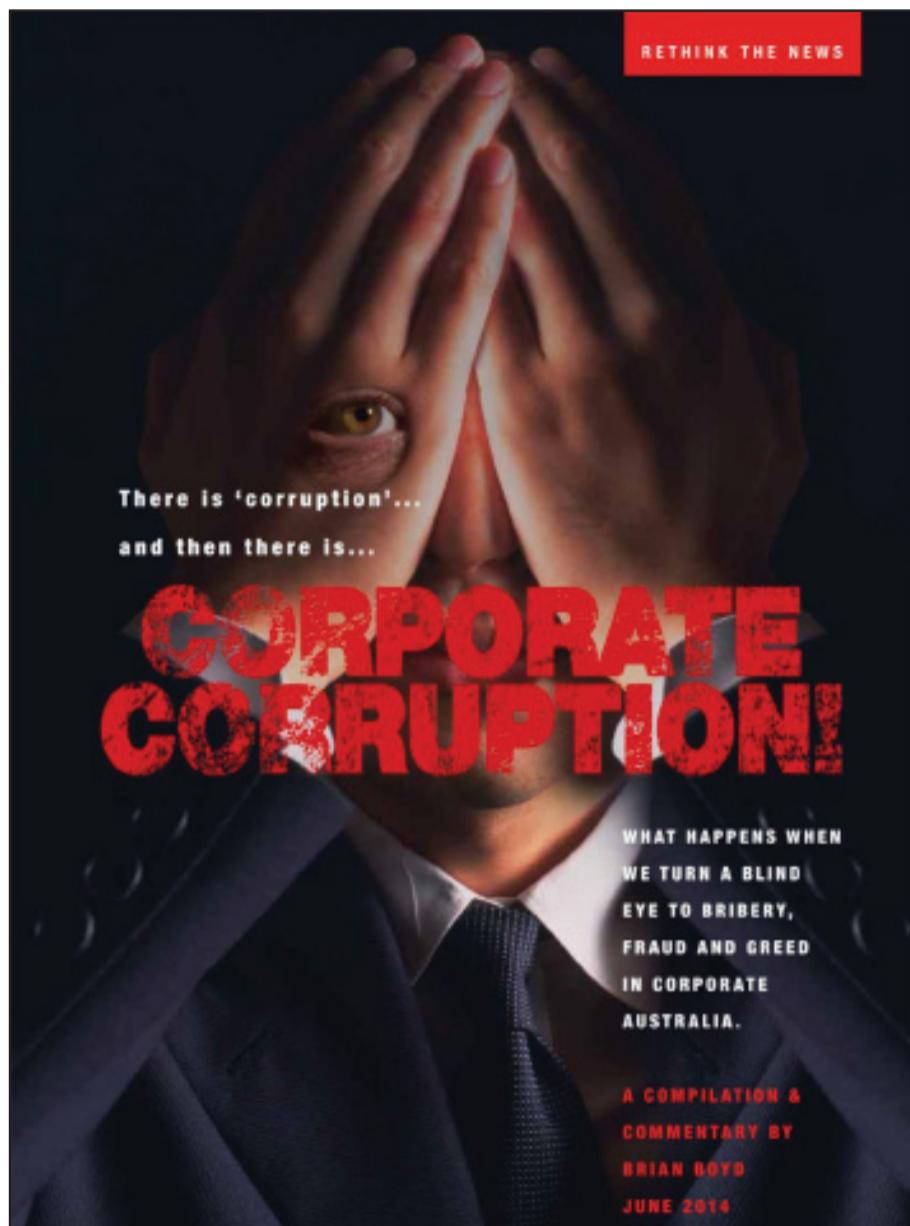
Some of the stories are amazing. Each story is outlined by lining up chronologically disparate media reports that when pulled together show how slack the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC) have been in bringing key businesses in Australia to book.

One example involving the Commonwealth Bank of Australia affected thousands of Australian retirees being ripped off millions of dollars from their retirement savings.

The scandal has been running for years and led to a Senate inquiry in June this year calling for a Royal Commission into the affair.

The Abbott Government refused to consider the proposition, with the federal Treasurer and federal Finance Minister saying publicly that the bank should be allowed to "correct" the situation within the market framework!

Similarly, another long running



example has been the serious multi-million dollar bribery allegations against multinational construction company Leighton. These matters have been around for years and involve paying to 'win' contracts in Indonesia, Iraq, India, Malaysia and other locations, worth billions of dollars.

The investigations by the AFP have been sporadic and rarely commented on. In that time the company has been taken over and carved up by Spanish and German interests. In particular many of the personnel involved in Leighton during the alleged corruption period are long gone.

The AFP and ASIC have occasionally complained of lack of funds and resources to chase bribery charges.

Where were and are the politicians over the years insisting such crimes are pursued and finalised in the courts?

Last September the authorities announced they were putting together a brief for the public prosecutor with respect to the outstanding Leighton corruption allegations, to be ready by early 2015! This has been announced before.

Other corporates mentioned in Boyd's exposé include household names like – Lend Lease, Rupert Murdoch's

News Ltd, Gina Reinhart, Alcoa, BHP, Flight Centre, Avon ("calling"), Coles Supermarkets, The Reserve Bank, The NSW and Federal Liberal Party and even the Australian Egg Corporation.

In his introduction to the book Boyd says:

"This compilation of publicly available material only covers a relatively small percentage of wrong-doing within the corporate and business sectors in the Australian economy."

"The pulling together of about 30 stories of malfeasance by the 'big end-of-town' was not embarked upon as an exercise in itself.

"The idea was born out of frustration at watching the mainstream media roll-out selected stories, over the last few years ad-nausea, about the likes of bent ex-politicians like Craig Thomson and Peter Slipper and ex-union official Michael Williamson, over a few thousand dollars being misappropriated.

"In turn, a biased selection of these exposés was blatantly used by the Abbott government to justify setting up a Royal Commission into the whole union movement!"

"No *prima facie* case was put to show that union governance wrong-doing was

rife. The greed of a few individuals was magnified to smear the many.

"The media coverage is scant and inconsistent. Only now and again does a corruption or mal-practice story of such magnitude (e.g. Leighton, Thiess, Tenix, Note Printing Australia, Commonwealth Bank) reach the front pages, only to disappear, very quickly. In contrast, the coverage of Peter Slipper's escapade and Craig Thomson's pathetic rorting was obsessive..."

Corporate Corruption is therefore not just about big business mal-practice of the highest order but also it is as much about the media itself. Boyd makes a strong case that much of the media treat corporations in general with "kid gloves".

As an example he cites one report in *The Australian* of 16/4/13 regarding one of the Leighton scandals – an alleged multi-million dollar bribe in Iraq aimed at securing a \$US 1.3 billion oil contract.

The article, under the heading "Bribery scandal hurt but Leighton is on the mend", reported the infrastructure company was allowed to "remove" the head of its offshore business sector over "failure to meet governance standards". No explanation by the authorities demanded. Boyd's blunt comment is: "Why is the big corporate allowed to be "on the mend" while lesser crimes are pursued to the limit?"

Boyd concludes that any reading of the material he has collated overwhelmingly suggests "that not only is a blind eye being turned to corporate wrong-doing in Australia but that 'open for business' really means 'open slather' and 'anything goes'!"

"The material clearly shows that the policing of anti-bribery, anti-corruption and anti-rorting laws in this country pertaining to the business sector leave a lot to be desired.

"It is obvious that, even when media revelations occurred with *prima facie* evidence being referred to, the authorities were slow to act and investigate or did nothing at all."

Finally the Boyd exposé illustrates the class system in Australia is alive and well. There is one law for the rich and one law for ordinary people.

The parliamentary system does not deliver a fair and equal rule of law as so often claimed by nearly every politician.

Corporate Corruption is being published by a group of progressive unions for wider distribution in organised labour circles.

It will help in the ongoing public debate that is currently lop-sided with the way the daily news is peddled by the monopoly media.

South Australia reconstructed - for whose benefit?

by Ned K.

In the last two weeks of winter, two food manufacturing plants announced the loss of permanent full time jobs.

The USA owned Arnott's Biscuits said it was moving production from its Adelaide plant to the eastern states at a cost of approximately 120 full time jobs.

A few days later Inghams announced that it was closing its turkey processing plant at McLaren Vale south of Adelaide with about 75 full time jobs going.

Jobs in local car component factories continue to be eroded in the lead up to the complete closure of General Motors, Ford and Toyota.

Uncertainty surrounds the future of the naval defence industry at Osborne near Port Adelaide as well.

Such is the concern among working people in Adelaide about the loss of 'blue collar' full time jobs in this state that it is even discussed at the football as people sit at their seats waiting for the first bounce of the ball!

State government response

The South Australian Government response to this looming jobs crisis is to shift as much of the blame onto the federal government austerity measures as possible, pin its hopes on an expansion of the mining industry and introduce austerity measures of its own.

In the mining industry there are twelve substantial mines in the state either operating currently or in the near future.

The main one is Olympic Dam owned by BHP Billiton. Although this multinational corporation shelved its expansion of the mine for the time being, the existing extraction of uranium, copper and gold provided revenue of \$1.8 billion in 2013-14.

The company says the mine will have a life of 200 years.

The other eleven mines are owned by large corporations, either overseas owned or linked to overseas interests.

These are Prominent Hill copper and gold mine owned by OZ Minerals, Southern Iron Ore and Middleback Ranges owned by Arrium, Carrapateena copper and gold mine owned by OZ Minerals, Four Mile Uranium owned by a joint venture between Alliance Resources and General Atomics, Braemar province iron ore mine owned by eight companies including Havilah, Carpentaria and Minotaur, Mindarie Mineral Sands owned by Guandong Orient Zirconic, Kanmantoo Copper owned by Hillgrove Resources, Hillside Copper owned by Rex Minerals, Central Eyre Iron Ore Project owned by Iron



Road and Jacinth-Ambrosia Mineral Sands, owned by Iluka.

The combined profit for the combined lives of these 12 mines is enormous.

For example the OZ Minerals copper and gold mine north of Woomera is expected to make \$8.5 billion profit over its life of 24 years, \$354 million per year.

Arrium's iron ore mines in the far north and north west of Whyalla is already making \$686 million profit in 2013-14.

The state government will get royalties from these companies which the people in South Australia will demand are well spent in the interests of the people, indigenous people in particular on whose land the mining takes place.

However mining in the 21st Century is not a labour intensive industry on the same scale as the manufacturing base that spanned the period 1950 to the hundreds of closures of large, medium and small factories from the 1970s until this present day.

The other problem with mining jobs is that the mining companies go for the cheap option of fly-in, fly-out workforces with all the social dislocation that entails, which has been well documented by mainstream commentators.

Workers at these mining sites also face the problem of being employed by contractors who are forced in a race to the bottom to compete for contracts from the mine owners to maximise profits for the major mining company shareholders.

Workplace injuries and attacks on Workers' Compensation entitlements

Mining jobs, perhaps less than in the coal mines of a former era, have their fair share of work related injuries. So

of the Business Council of Australia and the multinational corporations it represents.

When rank and file workers experience the impact of the cuts to Work Cover, they will be asking their union leaders for answers and an explanation.

With a jobs crisis looming in the state, there will be extraordinary pressure on injured workers to hobble back to work before they are really fit to do so, just so they can keep some income coming in to feed their families and pay the bills.

Attack On Job Security

The second significant austerity measure by the state government is to further undermine the job security of public sector workers.

On 30 June 2014 the government's "No Forced Redundancy" policy came to an end, to be replaced by a redeployment policy with forced redundancy as a last resort.

Removal of this policy will accelerate privatisation and outsourcing of public sector jobs, but more importantly reduce union membership in one of the few areas where workers have maintained unionism at average of about 50% or more in some areas of the public sector.

The attack on job security will remove one of the main reasons why public sector workers have remained union members while the private sector union membership in Australia careers towards the USA figure of 12% of the total workforce.

Young people want a future too

At a recent demonstration at University of Adelaide on the occasion of a visit by Tony Abbott, one of the chants from the crowd was something along the lines of "... you Abbott, we need a future too".

Those students could arguably apply this chant to the state government too unless it reverses its latest austerity measures.



Climate action rally in Melbourne

Obama's Africa summit: expanding US strategic reach into the African continent

by Max O.

In early August a “US Africa Leaders Summit” was held in Washington by the Obama administration, where some 50 African heads of state and the chair of the African Union attended.

The summit was the Washington’s frantic attempt to dictate the political, economic and military direction for this continent.

It is one amongst many initiatives the US has undertaken in recent times, in the scramble for African resources and markets. Presently it is desperately trying to counter China’s growing influence in trade and economic business with Africa.

No favours just military dominance

Whilst the US announced \$33 billion in new investments to suborn African states, the emphasis of the summit was on “human rights” and the so-called “war on terrorism.” Aid and debt reduction was dismissed by Washington officials; instead they stressed the promotion of deals for US corporations, a practice employed by the US to subject client countries to its interests.

Soon after African leaders headed home Obama announced that it would finance French military operations in West Africa. The US is contributing \$10 million in supposed “foreign aid” to France to help out with the alleged “counterterrorism operations” on the African continent.

Under the guise of “human rights”

and “war on terrorism” the US was in effect declaring its military hegemony on the continent. This was the raison d’être for George W Bush creating the US Africa Command (Africom) in 2007.

Africom’s role is to consolidate US presence in the region through a proposed chain of military bases around the African continent. Presently, the US conducts joint military operations with 36 African countries.

Clearly this militarism is aimed to oppose and eventually cut off Chinese economic power in the region.

Two-way trade between Africa and China in 2013 amounted to \$170 billion; this is twice the volume of trade than that of the US. China surpassed the US in trade with the Africa 5 years ago.

From just \$10 billion in 2000, China’s trade with Africa increased 17 fold. In an endeavour to secure supplies of energy and a host of strategic resources, 80% of China’s trade with Africa is in raw materials.

However, the two-way trade between the European Union, in particular the old colonial powers of Britain, Belgium and France is still the largest at \$200 billion in 2013.

Militarism comes before trade for the US

The Summit’s focus on “security issues” illustrates the fact that there is nothing the US can offer Africa other than military interference and excessive exploitation by corporate energy and mining giants along with predatory financial dealings of their banks.



Countries such as the Central African Republic, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, South Sudan and Uganda have considerable Central Intelligence Agency and Pentagon operations; such as troops, intelligence field stations and drones.

The US Africom now deploys around 5000 troops in 38 African countries at any one time.

They are involved in numerous interventions, military training missions and exercises. The African countries who host these types of military bases have gained no economic benefit at all; in fact they continue to suffer from underdevelopment and political instability.

The US is losing respect and influence in Africa

The founder of the Constituency for Africa (a group promoting African interests in Washington), Melvin Foot points out: “Africans say ‘why do we

need the United States?’ ‘When I travel around Africa, I’ve seen airports, I’ve seen roads, I’ve seen railroads, I’ve seen ports, I’ve seen all kinds of things that are really impressive built by China, that you have to say the United States refused to build.’”

The US has refused to build infrastructure in Africa because they see no money in it for them and because they’re obsessed with military dominance.

The British *Guardian* notes in contrast that Beijing’s influence has grown due to the large numbers of Chinese living and working in Africa, from factory managers to traders, and by the big construction projects that have been built across the continent.

No doubt China is extracting a big benefit for themselves out of its dealings with Africa. However it is in contrast to decades of western aid that has often been directed to propping up authoritarian cold war allies and not development.

Farm leaders supporting mining companies

by Duncan B.

The leaders of some Australian farmer organisations appear to have joined with mining companies to promote the interests of miners over those of farmers.

The President of the National Farmers’ Federation, Brent Finlay has come out in support of coal-seam gas mining.

He urged rural communities to be open-minded about coal-seam gas mining and not turn their backs on its potential benefits. He also attacked the Lock The Gate group, accusing it of running “scare campaigns” in rural areas and “not being completely transparent” in its motives.

In August the NFF hosted a meeting with the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association



for “interested parties.” Brent Finlay made no apology for forming a working relationship between the NFF and the APPEA.

The NFF President’s views are at odds with many farmers and environment groups who fear that CSG development will cause irreparable damage to valuable farmland and water resources.

The Victorian Farmers’ Federation wants the Victorian Government to grant farmers the right of veto over mining activity on their land.

Premier Napthine has already ruled

this out.

The chief operating officer of the APPEA said that agriculture and gas production are working “side by side” despite “misinformation” from “professional protesters intent on stopping resource production and the growth of jobs and additional income streams for farmers.”

Meanwhile, the Victorian Farmers’ Federation has called for the Renewable Energy Target to be scrapped, describing it as “high cost approach to reducing emissions.”

Environmental groups and farmers seeking to have wind turbines on their farms have criticised the VFF. Hosting wind turbines generates a return of \$10,000 per year for each turbine. Many farmers are keen to have this extra drought-proof source of income.

The reduction or scrapping of the Renewable Energy Target benefits the owners of coal-fired power stations and the coal mining companies that supply them.

Farmers should be asking themselves why their representatives in the VFF and NFF are siding with mining companies. Whose interests are they really representing?

Farmers need to get rid of misleaders and ally themselves with the working class. A true alliance of workers and farmers would be an important step in ridding Australia of imperialism and building an independent Australia.

Maxine's mob takes on NSW Inc.

by Louisa L.

This time last year despair was growing in NSW TAFE colleges. Sackings, course and college closures, fee hikes and rampant privatisation were taking a heavy psychological toll.

1200 TAFE staff positions have disappeared in a year. And the 'Smart and Skilled' agenda that decimated TAFE in Victoria and South Australia (where it is called 'Skills for All') isn't due in NSW till 2015!

'Smart and Skilled', with bipartisan support, emerged under Labor. Now in Victoria only 27 per cent of non-university higher education is offered by TAFE.

According to former senior Victorian TAFE executive, Virginia Simmons, the resulting corporate bonanza led to over-servicing, "a scandalous waste of government money, in the order of \$200 million". (*The Australian, September 15*)

She cites aged or disability care with 18,800 enrolments, equivalent to half the total numbers of workers in the entire industry and nine times the annual intake of new employees, as just one example.

Ms Simmons said that "as a result of this use of the training market for profit-making purposes, expensive, resource-intensive and technical training was being pushed onto TAFEs as for-profit colleges colonised low-cost areas such as transport, warehousing, retail and administration."

In a happy coincidence for capitalism, flooding markets with potential workers also drives down the price of labour power, increasing profits proportionally.

Market led recovery

But in NSW, TAFE teachers have had time to organise, and the mood is gradually shifting.

Maxine Sharkey, who heads the NSW Teachers Federation TAFE section, says of her organisers and activists, "I have to tell them to take a day off. They work seven days a week, long hours. I've told them they have to take a week's holiday, because they refuse to take two."

The song "I've been everywhere man" was clearly written in anticipation of Maxine's mob.

Every market in NSW sees a TAFE crew arrive with their stall and information. Maxine reckons she should be paid a markets' allowance. "I've bought so many handmade soaps and bottles of olive oil when I've been talking to stall holders and asking them



to sign our petition."

From the Big Day Out to local forums engendering wide publicity, or hounding Premier Baird in local shopping centres, it's been non-stop. There have been 42 stalls or protests since last September.

But smaller events in schools and TAFEs, plus National TAFE Day in June and September's 'Do Your Block for TAFE' week of local leafleting, spread the message even further.

Behind the scenes work supporting

members has engendered hope and greater commitment to repay that support by campaigning.

Taking on corporate giants

On July 15 Federation organiser Kathy Nicholson posted on Facebook, "John Robertson ALP Opposition leader visited Meadowbank TAFE this morning with the Ryde ALP candidate

Jerome Laxale. John did his electrical apprenticeship at Meadowbank.

He categorically stated today that if Labor is returned at March 2015 NSW election Labor will cancel Smart and Skilled and end the privatisation and destruction of TAFE."

While getting a politician to make a promise before an election might seem easy, breaking bipartisan support for the dismemberment of TAFE has been a huge achievement.

The union believes there's massive opposition to the corporate takeover of TAFE. Polling, using the ALP's preferred company, will deliver the proof and hammer details into Robertson's promise.

But if struggle dies down corporations will cannibalise TAFE. They run our country, no matter which party has the parliamentary numbers. Getting anything out of them requires skill in mobilising people.

It also raises the question, is this the way things have to be? Is the constant battle of capitalism as good as it gets? Or do we need an alternative?

Build strong unions through collective action

by Ned K.

This year Paul Howes resigned as Australian Workers Union national secretary and then became part of the multinational KPMG business consultancy company.

Howes was heavily promoted by the Murdoch press when 'leader' of the AWU. Howes is not the first nor will he be the last union secretary to take up a job with big business.

That someone like Howes could ever become a national secretary of a union in the first place shows to what extent acceptance of capitalism is present within trade union leadership.

However there are much more deceptive forces at work within the official trade union leaderships than Paul Howes who, after all, openly preached class collaboration and consensus with business as the way forward for workers!

More sinister are some union leaderships who promote unions as primarily as service providers rather than as groups of workers joining together in collective actions to win a common cause with strong organisation in workplaces and across industries they cover.

Research by NSW researcher David Peetz demonstrated that across all industries, union membership remained strongest where there was the presence of active workplace leaders (delegates



or shop stewards) in the workplace.

Any resort for a quick fix to increase union membership through union as a third party 'delivering' a service to passive members is doomed to fail and continue union membership on its slippery slide towards only 10% of the total working class, which is about 80% of the population.

On the other hand, strong leadership to mobilise members and workers generally to win in their workplace on local issues, and to build a strong grass roots movement independent of parliamentary election cycles, is sure

to see union membership grow and develop in all aspects.

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