



# Vanguard

For an Independent Australia and Socialism

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## Throw out the corporate parasites – Not the refugees!

by Alice M.

**The exploitation of refugees by the two main parliamentary parties is a shameful disgrace.**

The equally repressive policies of both the Labor government and the Liberal Party in targeting refugees seeking asylum has infuriated many Australians.

The two main parliamentary parties, the media, and standing behind them the corporate monopolies, foment and incite fear against refugees arriving in decrepit boats.

Scapegoats are put up to divert attention from the real causes for the difficulties of the people – the economic system of capitalism, imperialist globalisation and wars.

This has always been the case in times of capitalist economic crisis when working people face attacks on their economic conditions, unemployment and job insecurity, government cuts to public and community services, pensions and benefits.

Big business demands governments divert more public funds to their profit making. They demand infrastructure such as freeways to improve the productivity (profits) in freight transportation and billions of dollars in hand-outs to multinational car corporations.

Big business demands cuts to their taxes, and the mining corporations demand a miniscule tax or no tax at all on their super profits extracted from Australian resources and the labour of workers. Rio Tinto has announced that it will not pay any tax at all for the June quarter.

Yet, the refugees are treated by the Labor government and the Liberal opposition as cheats, liars, queue jumpers and a burden on Australian society.

In this capitalist economic crisis, corporate monopolies don't want public funds spent on support for asylum seekers and refugees. There is



already an abundance of cheap migrant labour around the world. The two main parliamentary parties and media monopolies do the bidding for the monopoly corporations.

This is outrageous. Australia is an industrially developed country with an abundance of wealth in our natural resources, diverse and large food production industries, and until recently, minerals processing, technological and manufacturing industries. Imperialist globalisation is decimating our manufacturing industries.

We could be well placed to provide a secure and decent standard of living, not only for the people residing in Australia, but also for asylum seekers and refugees fleeing wars of aggression, foreign military occupations, repression and poverty created by the brutality of imperialism.

So who are the real parasites in Australia? It's not the asylum seekers who want a secure life, secure work and contribute their share to the well-being of the whole of society.

The real parasites and cheats are the local and foreign owned mining monopolies; it's the foreign owned Ford, Holden, Toyota who have pocketed more than a billion dollars in

hand-outs from people's taxes and then sacked thousands of workers anyway. Most of their profits are shipped out of Australia to their overseas corporate head offices.

It's also the big banks who've made mega profits from swindling working people.

Australia behaves like a mini colonial power. Both Labor and Liberals have resorted to the colonial policies of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Labor government is dumping

desperate refugees on the deeply impoverished people of Papua New Guinea.

The Liberals are promising a naval armada to blast the refugees out of the water all together.

They're trying to outdo each other in their jingoism and inhumanity.

The treatment of refugees by the two main parliamentary parties exposes the decadence of Australia's bourgeois parliament as administering the country in the interests of capital.

### In This Issue

Electricity market rip-off	p4
Crisis in fruit and vegetable industry	p5
Commemorating 50 years of Vanguard - Unions	p6
Australia democracy? Young people not convinced	p7
Income management	p8
Stop imperialist espionage against the people	p10
Egypt: The fall of Morsi	p11
Tecoma residents tell McDonalds to 'Burgeroff'	p12

# Fourteen years of struggle for Woolies' workers

-Contributed-

**For the workers at the Woolworths Hume Distribution Centre in the northern Melbourne suburb of Broadmeadows, 2013 presents an opportunity to further improve wages and conditions, with the current Enterprise Agreement set to expire on September 1<sup>st</sup>.**

Through fourteen years of struggle, the Hume Distribution Centre workers, members of the National Union of Workers, enjoy some of the best wages and conditions in the logistics industry across Australia.

In the face of campaigns by Woolworths at the Brisbane Liquor and Wodonga Regional Distribution Centres to attack penalty rates, workers who are

the highest paid across the Woolworths supply chain are set to mount a defence in order to protect current standards and improve our wages and conditions in a campaign titled *United for Our Future*.

The Broadmeadows Distribution Centre emerged from a Greenfields site in 2003, with the workers winning their first Enterprise Agreement.

A major gain resulting from the inaugural agreement was a provision for part time workers winning the right to greater access to weekly hours, thus providing more secure employment, allowing transition into full-time employment and placing a restraint on the ever increasing casualisation issue.

First implemented at the Broadmeadows site, this condition has since flowed through the entire Woolworths supply and retail chain.

2005 witnessed the site's first strike, with the workers mounting a two day period of industrial action, resulting in the company backing down on its attempt to remove directly employed casuals, and place those workers with a third party provider.

Permanent workers stood in solidarity, with their casual comrades, winning close to one hundred permanent jobs through the life of that agreement.

At the height of Howard's WorkChoices in 2008, the Broadmeadows workers, fighting off an attack by Woolworths to have the Enterprise Agreement removed, protected all conditions for a further two years.

With the ink barely drying on the balance sheet in 2010 following a \$2 billion record profit at the time, and a fourteenth consecutive year of record surplus, Woolworths announced a vicious attack, planning to wash away previously hard fought and won conditions, and ignoring the workers' quest for a decent wage increase and to maintain job security.

A bitter round of negotiations unfolded, and with Woolworths unwilling to negotiate, the 600 strong work force embarked on industrial action, withdrawing their labour for a period of one week.

It was a successful week of mounting protests at the Broadmeadows site, along with Corrigan's Qube warehouse in which a scab workforce was operating, and Woolworth's stores. Woolworths Liquor Laverton shed was completely closed for one day.

Returning to work victorious, the NUW members had won, among numerous items, protections around roster changes and the right to a redundancy package upon the site's closure.

A 3.4% wage increase for each year of the agreement was also guaranteed following the company's vindictive threat that no wage rise would be granted.

Gearing towards another tough battle through the 2013 campaign, delegates recently won an additional forty permanent jobs for casual workers, going some small way in reversing the recent trend in Australia which currently sees 40% of the total workforce placed in insecure casual employment.

Workers at the Broadmeadows warehouse are currently pitched in a battle with Woolworths management in a struggle to have the company recognise agency casual workers as members of the union, recognise their right to representation, and recognise the elected agency casual delegate with full rights.

Permanent workers have stood up for their casual comrades, demanding they be treated on the same terms and conditions.

Kicking off the current campaign, a union publication was recently sent to the site's members, highlighting that the company has recorded no fewer than nine major breaches of the Enterprise Agreement in a mere two year period.

The report concluded by stating '*with four months of the current Enterprise Agreement before the date of expiry, it now appears that Woolworths are attempting to break every clause in the book before re-negotiation*'

The National Union of Workers have been prominent in recent times through successful industrial campaigns against Baiada, Coles and Toll Logistics, and the Hume Distributions Centre workers can add to that history through a united struggle against one of the nation's largest and most profitable corporations.

## Vanguard

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

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

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

The cost of producing a national newspaper is considerable. Readers are encouraged to contribute whatever they can by sending donations to the above address.

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

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## Rudd's return to the two horse race

by Ned K.

A few years ago Rudd wrote a paper in which he saw himself as a warrior to "save capitalism from itself".

With Gillard as Labor leader, the opinion polls forecast a wipe-out for Labor, with an Abbott-led government likely to control both upper and lower houses.

A gutted Labor has advantages for big business, but also a danger in that people look for other alternatives if they perceive that Labor has lost any of its pretence or electoral capacity to be a party representing the interests of working people.

Hence the mass media of Murdoch and Fairfax both applaud that with Rudd there is again 'a contest', which they hope will steer people back to satisfaction with the two party parliamentary road. If this occurs, the big business rulers can continue to rule in the 'old way' of the parliamentary two party circus.

Opinion polls in the very early days of Rudd's return as Prime Minister and leader of the ALP indicate that the illusion of the Labor Party as a party for the people is far from dead, and the old trick of just blaming the leader (in this case Gillard) is working again.

Given this scenario, what is the best option for the progressive movement in Australia in the coming federal election?

It is clear that that the 2007 to 2013 experience of Labor 'in government' demonstrates the primacy of building a broad social movement led by the working class, with an independent political and economic agenda and independent organisational capacity in workplaces and the community.

A secondary need is further exposure of Labor 'in government' so that even more people learn through experience that the problem with Labor is not who the leader is, but that it is one of the main political props of 'free market' multinational dominated capitalism in Australia.

## Opposition to US war preparations



US marines swarm over Shoalwater Bay in Queensland

by Bill F.

Across the Pacific region, there is growing opposition to the build-up of US military bases and war games exercises. National and international connections are coming together to forge a united campaign to roll back the threat of war.

In Melbourne on 25 July, a public meeting, organised by the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN), was held at the Victorian Trades Hall, to hear from two international guests active in the struggle against imperialist war.

Bruce Gagnon is co-founder and current co-ordinator of the Global Network against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, and a senior fellow of the Nuclear Policy Research Institute.

He is a leading expert on the issue of weapons in space.

His talk featured the US military's "pivot" to Asia, the militarisation of space and the environmental impact of

military expansion.

This expansion of US military forces in the Pacific is designed to consolidate and increase the domination of US corporate interests over the wealth and resources of the Pacific region.

It is not simply a reaction to China's growing naval power, but is a proactive, offensive move to control the sea-lanes that China depends on for the resources it needs.

Furthermore, it boosts the profits of the military-industrial complex which feeds on war and the threat of war.

Because the costs of this expansion are so great at a time when the US government has a financial crisis as well as an economic one, the US is pressuring its 'allies' to contribute more and more.

Hence, the US is establishing more bases and outposts across the Pacific, with much of the infrastructure costs carried by the hosts - Australia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, etc.

For quick offensive purposes, the US is pre-positioning military supplies

and equipment, vehicles, planes and weapons in these so-called 'lily-pad bases'. The troops can then fly in at short notice, as required.

There is a lot of pressure on these 'allies' of the US. The key words used are "inter-operability" and "modernisation".

The US wants its 'allies' to become dependent on US technology and their military forces integrated under US command.

US military technology is increasingly shifting to space warfare, with more than 100 US military satellites spying on the whole world and directing intelligence to submarines, Aegis missile destroyers, planes and troops.

Pine Gap in central Australia is one of the major collection and transmission points for this intelligence - scooping up telephone calls, emails, economic data, as well as monitoring government and military communications of other countries, including Australia.

Pine Gap has a major role in directing signals for drone attacks and missile interception. The US is geared to a 'first strike' capability and its so-called 'missile defence' system is really to counter any retaliation.

Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero is a Chamorro, the people who are indigenous to Guam.

She is a writer and award-winning investigative journalist who testified on behalf of her people to the UN Decolonisation Committee in 2006 and currently writes for local and US press and hosts a radio show in Guam.

She detailed the expansion of the US military bases on Guam, which already cover 30% of the island, and its effects on the 160,000 local people on the island.

Adding to the 3000 troops already in Guam, the US intends to transfer a further 8600 with 9000 dependents from Okinawa in Japan.

As a US territory (colony), the local people are not consulted about the takeover of their farmland, the dredging of the coral reefs or access to ancestral sites.

With less farmland available, the population is even more dependent on the US for imported food, fuel and other traded goods.

US government officials also determine what infrastructure and services will be provided, and this is minimal.

Nevertheless, there is an active movement among the people for self-determination and political independence. This movement has delayed the time-tabled expansion of the bases, but it is still on the Pentagon's agenda.

The local people are very mindful of the fact that Guam would be a prime target in any outbreak of war between the US and China. The same is true for the people of Okinawa in Japan and Jeju Island in Sth. Korea, where there are fierce battles against US military bases and virtual occupation.

The information provided by the two speakers accurately described the true nature of imperialism, even though that particular word was not mentioned.

## Editorial

### Supporting Vanguard

Next month it will be fifty years since the very first *Vanguard* was published. By any measure *Vanguard* is the longest continuously published revolutionary newspaper in Australia.

It is a tribute to the dedication and loyalty of many comrades who have generously given their time and effort to the tasks that contribute to bringing revolutionary ideas, analysis and news to the working class.

These comrades include the writers, both regular and occasional, editors, proof-readers, comrades who do the lay-out, fold the wrappers, and do the mailing and distribution.

The *Vanguard* team greatly appreciates all those readers who have supported the paper over the years with their comments and criticisms, their subscriptions and donations.

In the period ahead, the Australian people will face harsh times. US imperialism is tightening its grip on the Pacific region. There is the threat of war. The economy is stagnating, jobs are drying up, casualisation and off-shoring are undermining hard-won conditions for the working class, and social services and benefits are being wound back. Austerity measures and further anti-union attacks are in the pipeline.

The political line of *Vanguard* on many of these issues strikes a chord with people, but needs to reach many more. Readers and subscribers are urged to find ways to increase the distribution of *Vanguard*, and contribute articles, comments and whatever financial assistance they can afford.

# The electricity market is a complete rip-off

by Max O.

**People know that electricity prices are exploitative but when the former boss of ETSA (Electricity Trust of SA), Bruce Dinham comes out publicly against electricity privatisation it shows that the internal contradictions of the capitalist mode of production are coming to a head!**

Bureaucrats such as Dinham don't lightly put their reputation on the line and criticise energy corporations and the state apparatus for flagrant swindling.

The goose that once laid the golden egg (ETSA - which came about as a result when the Liberal Premier, Playford in 1946 nationalised the privately run Adelaide Electric Company for the purpose of nation building) is now a destructive Medusa (A multitude of privately run and often foreign owned electricity businesses and the National Electricity Market bureaucracy) where monopolising capitals are a fetter on the productive forces, in particular areas of production that are undertaken by small and medium businesses in South Australia.

In other words the electricity market is pricing consumers and small/medium industries out of existence.

Below is an analysis by Dinham that was reported in *The Advertiser*, July 9. It gives a sobering examination of the real purpose of the privatised electricity market - to maximise the profits of power suppliers!

*"We complain about high electricity prices but ignore one of the main causes - the so-called National Electricity Market.*

*It is not a market at all but more of an arrangement for maximising profits rather than reducing costs - and it is seriously flawed.*

*When this arrangement was introduced, key features of electricity supply systems seem to have been ignored or not understood.*

*Features of such systems are that they are:*

- 1) inherently vertically integrated with a style of management control united by a common owner;*
- 2) have several essential operating features;*
- 3) cannot be run in separately managed parts.*

**The old Electricity Trust (ETSA) was an integrated organisation.**

*Splitting it into a number of separately owned parts created problems, the effects of which are now manifest as flaws in the present arrangement.*



*To deal with the number of separately owned generators, a system of bidding was introduced to derive what is called a spot price, which determines the amount generators are paid.*

**The theory is that bidding is competitive and produces lower prices. The reality is that it does the opposite.**

*There is normally no competition and the bidding system simply allows generators to manipulate prices for their own benefit.*

*There is no competition, nor should there be. This is because a properly managed electricity supply system would aim to have enough firm generating plant available (wind and solar-voltaic are not firm) to meet the likely maximum demand, plus a margin for maintenance and breakdown.*

*There would be little or no spare capacity for competition.*

*A competent system operator would or should know the relative efficiencies and costs of generators and schedule them accordingly, with prices set from known and proven cost factors, not sham bids from profit seekers and speculators.*

*Effects of the flawed bidding system are aggravated by a ridiculously high bid ceiling set at \$12.50/kWh, CPI indexed. For comparison, the final selling price to consumers is about 30 cents/kWh.*

*The \$12.50 amount is said to be needed to enable generators to recover fixed costs.*

*However, with the range of factors involved, together with the fact that generators can manipulate prices, a definite figure is indeterminate. The \$12.50 is arbitrary and questionable and in itself shows that the bidding system is a farce and easily manipulated.*

*This extreme amount also applies automatically if there is a breakdown or shortage of generators.*

*As well as being open to exploitation with questionable shortages and breakdowns, it also introduces an*

*unnecessary and undesirable element of risk, leading to hedging and trading in financial derivatives by retailers, adding to costs passed on to consumers in retail prices.*

**Retailers themselves are an unnecessary cost.**

*They do not own or operate any part of the generation, transmission or distribution systems and contribute nothing to the production and delivery of electricity.*

*The argument that they give choice of supplier is spurious. The only choice they give is who sends your electricity bill.*

*The electricity you get comes from the same generator, through the same wires and the real cost, as distinct from some manipulated and inflated price, is the same regardless of who your retailer might be.*

*Retailers are essentially parasitic and there is no real need for them, other than for billing and account collection purposes, which could be done by the distributor.*

*The National Electricity Market is seriously flawed and an expensive shambles with a bloated attendant bureaucracy.*

*It is an empire builders' paradise, the extent of which can be judged from the string of acronyms of organisations with fingers now in the electricity pie - NEM, SCER, AEMO, AER, AEMC, NEL, NREL, ACCC, and ESCOSA.*

*Once upon a time in South Australia we had just one, ETSA. Now in SA there are, as well as this extensive bureaucracy, six separate generating companies (not counting wind and solar), two transmission, one distribution and 11 retailers, each with a main aim of maximum profits for their local and overseas shareholders.*

**It is no surprise that electricity prices have gone through the roof.**

*The question needs to be asked: Who*

*benefits from this arrangement? It is certainly not electricity consumers, so why would any responsible government promote it?*

*The Commonwealth has no constitutional authority or responsibility for electricity supply in the states so the arrangements under which this so-called national market operates derive from states' legislation.*

*It is up to the states, particularly South Australia, to take the lead in getting rid of this blatant and egregious rip-off of electricity consumers."*

Dinham hits the nail on the head when he points out the weakness of the Australian Constitution in dealing with the matter of nationalising electricity supply.

However there is no point looking to State Governments to nationalise this industry. History shows us that the cry of 'States' Rights' is in effect the voice of the imperialist class.

As *Vanguard* has repeatedly pointed out, the current Australian Constitution is a patchwork quilt of competing requirements of different sections of the imperialist dominated ruling class.

It and the current Australian States were designed to serve capitalism, in particular British Imperialism in the past and now US Imperialism, in the systematic economic exploitation of the working class.

The constitution is primarily concerned with finance and trade and gives no attention to citizens' rights.

It is an unworkable anachronism that needs to be replaced by an anti-imperialist one that enshrines the right of the state to run electricity supply for the good of the Australian people and a sustainable socialist society.

The people think so.

*The Advertiser* held an online poll asking the question: Should SA's electricity supply be brought back under State Government control, ending privatisation?

Response - Yes 95%, No 5%.

## Labor swindles Adelaide's western suburbs residents for developer's profiteering

by Max O.

**The Labor Party knows no bounds in how far it is prepared to stoop in carrying out the wishes of the big end of town.**

The western suburbs of Adelaide have in particular had a hard time with Labor local government councillors from the Charles Sturt Council selling out the communities of Cheltenham and Woodville.

The land of the old Cheltenham racecourse was lost to the local residents about 4 years ago and now a new housing estate is under construction by the developers, AV Jennings.

The Cheltenham Park Residents Association campaigned for the racecourse to be turned over to open space parklands and for a wetlands that could harvest storm water, thereby recycling water and mitigating flooding to which the area is prone.

Charles Sturt has one of the smallest percentages of open space (less than 7%) of any council area in Australia.

The South Australia Premier Weatherill, who is also the local MP for the state electorate of Cheltenham, pretended to be a white knight claiming that he would seek a commitment from the developers to leave 35% of open space, 15% affordable housing and promised a State Government funded \$20-million stormwater project at the site.

In contrast the Liberal held electorate of Adelaide, where local residents stopped the former Labor state treasurer Kevin Foley and his developer mates from turning over the old Victoria Park racecourse into a mega entertainment and racing car precinct, has now become an open-space parkland.

The old Cheltenham racecourse-cum-housing estate has cynically been renamed St Clair.

This renaming is cynical because the whole nefarious story doesn't stop there.

The next plot of land that the developers wanted to profit from was the St Clair reserve in Woodville.

Originally the developers had purchased the old Actil (Australian Cotton Textile Industries Limited) factory site, which is adjacent to the St Clair reserve, to build their housing estate.

The St Clair reserve was created as a result of a 1942 petition from local residents for a memorial park dedicated to war servicemen from the area, and the St Clair recreation reserve was kept in trust by the council until recently.

However once they became aware

that the Actil land was contaminated, the developers had no interest in building on this site and convinced their mates on the then Labor controlled Charles Sturt Council to swap the 4.7 hectares of Actil land for a similar amount of land from the St Clair reserve.

An almighty storm for the last 4 years then descended on this local council and the community as a result of this cosy bit of corrupt, insider trading.

The local community were so outraged by this land swap deal that they voted out the previous mayor, Harold Andersen and the save St Clair campaigner, Kirsten Alexander, became the new mayor.

Many of the old Labor councillors were also shown the door at the last local government elections and were replaced by the save St Clair campaigners who organised themselves under the banner of City of Charles Sturt Ratepayers and

Residents.

Unfortunately the struggle to save the St Clair reserve has been a bitter, slow rear-guard battle.

Even though the land swap was a done deal, it hasn't stopped the save St Clair campaigners from pursuing all avenues of blocking and reversing this scheming decision.

However the Labor Party has done its utmost to thwart the independents' attempts to save St Clair as open space.

They have 'worked over' some ward councillors to change sides (offering one councillor pre-selection for a state seat at the next 2014 state election and inducements to other councillors the community don't yet know about) and were able in May of this year to rescind an earlier decision to lobby the State Government to preserve the 4.7ha piece of St Clair Reserve earmarked for the housing development.

## Crisis in our fruit and vegetable industry

-Contributed-

**Growers can win if they organise and fight hard and don't rely solely on their politicians and so-called 'official' growers' organisations.**

Active many years ago, committees to demand jobs were involved in many struggles to save jobs and oppose factory closures.

Whenever the people united and fought hard they were successful. The campaign to oppose banana imports was an example and still holds good today.

One example of collusion and betrayal was the closure of the Letona factory in Leeton N.S.W. many years ago.

This factory employed hundreds of workers in the cannery and was grower controlled and had exports to 24 overseas markets.

Management, unions and the state Labor government did nothing to keep it alive. They blamed the bank.

This was far from the truth. In my discussion with the bank manager in Leeton, the company called it on.

After closure some managers went to work with SPC and SPC ended up with the export customers – without a doubt the enemy within at work.

Some years later the plan to import apples and pears into Australia was bitterly opposed by growers and workers, especially in the Goulburn Valley.

A town rally was organised and the town of Shepparton actually shut down

for half a day. To my knowledge it has never happened before anywhere in Australia.

The plans to import were set aside and defeated for the time being especially when unions agreed not to touch the cargo on the ships if farmers and workers came to the docks to support them.

Realising they could not win this round the foreign money and its lackeys decided to take over or buy SPC which they did after convincing the major

shareholders to sell.

The buyer, Coca-Cola Amital was successful.

This was the start of the demise of our processing industry thanks to the stupidity and greed of some shareholders. They have a lot to answer for.

The opportunity to build and organise another rally is alive and well.

People are angry and given leadership they will come forward, especially when workers take a leading role.

## Farmers facing debt crisis

by Duncan B.

**Many Victorian farmers are facing financial hardship.**

During July, hundreds of farmers contacted the Rural Finance Corporation when a new farm finance deal between the Federal and Victorian governments was announced.

The scheme will make concessional loans, up to \$650,000, available to farmers so that they can re-finance existing farm debt.

The loans will cover about 50% of a farmer's total debt at an interest rate of 4.5%.

There are strings attached to these loans however.

Farmers receiving the loans must demonstrate that over the next three to five years they will be able to resume profitable trading and be able to manage the debts. What a lot of hoops to jump through!

A combination of dry weather, low milk costs and high fodder costs has meant that many dairy farmers have had to borrow money to buy fodder and grain to feed their cows.

Dairy processors such as Fonterra and Murray Goulburn are owed many millions of dollars in loans by their farmer suppliers.

In Fonterra's case, their suppliers owe \$18 million dollars, up \$14 million from this time last year.

### What can farmers do?

Small farmers must realise that their real interests lie with the working class, not with the big farmers and agribusiness corporations.

It is essential that they unite with the working class and recognise that workers and farmers have the same enemies. Small farmers are part of the United Front of Australians against imperialism.

# Commemorating 50 Years of Vanguard

In this issue we continue our occasional series of reprints from across the 50 years of Vanguard's publication. These articles help trace the origin and development of the ideological foundations of our Party.

## More on the Role of Trade Unions (1)

(Vanguard Vol 5 No. 4 1968)

**In the present period of sharpening class struggle more and more workers are beginning to question the role of trade unions in capitalist society.**

Experience is revealing that the trade unions actually restrict class struggle. The trade unions have become a part of the establishment.

Their very acceptance by the capitalist class means that they have been adapted to capitalism.

The capitalist class is very skilled at hiding the real issues of class struggle.

For many years the class struggle has been channelled into the parliamentary ballot box. Parliament has been promoted as the centre of political struggle. If sufficient votes can be mustered for candidates who allegedly represent the working masses, then social change will be achieved.

This illusion is carefully fostered by the capitalist class. It is the main way in which the capitalist class gives "legitimacy" to exploitation.

It also gives "life" to the illusion of democracy, that is things can be changed through "legal processes".

The capitalist class must take this illusion right down the line.

All the organisations of the people are carefully dovetailed into the "legal processes" of society.

Trade unions are the biggest mass organisations of the working people. They came into existence through struggle. The trade union movement has traditions of struggle. All this is skilfully used by the capitalist class. They say that the trade unions fought for their existence and won out. Likewise they can fight for a change in society; the struggle may be longer, but finally it will win, providing the processes of the "law" are observed. The idea is "to take things gradually".

The capitalist class speaks thus with its tongue in its cheek for it knows full well that if the trade union movement can be contained "within the processes of the law" then these great mass organisations of the working class will remain harmless. They will not become a real challenge to the capitalist system.

The capitalist class fears the trade unions. It does not like any sort of working class organisation. It knows that it is a difficult job to keep the working class "within the processes

of the law" when that law demands servile obedience to ever-more intense exploitation.

Therefore the capitalist class pays much attention to the trade unions. It sees that it exercises control over them through the trade union bureaucracy.

This is the reality of today.



The capitalist class controls the trade union movement through its state apparatus. It has tied the trade unions to the arbitration system and thereby has skilfully ensnared trade union officials in "the processes of the law". (2)

When workers in a factory or any other workplace take direct action against the exploiters they are immediately bogged down with trade union "procedures". Executives and trades and labor councils, and finally the ACTU executive has to be consulted. There must be "unity of action".

Inevitably compromise solutions are reached. The recent postal dispute over the employment of scabs is a good example. A compromise was worked out by the trade union bureaucracy and the government.

And this will continue to be the case because the trade union bureaucracy does not challenge the system of capitalism. It works out "adjustments", "compromises" WITHIN capitalism.

directly, do not fundamentally solve their problems.

It is impossible to solve the fundamental problem of exploitation through the "processes" of capitalist law.

The reality in Australia today is that the working people are being exploited more intensely. Large sections of the middle classes are being forced closer and closer to the proletariat. This is the fundamental reason for the expansion of the white collar union organisation and the growing cooperation between the masses of white collar workers and the blue collar workers.

This reality is an objective fact despite years and years of negotiations. There must be a change.

And that change is gradually coming about. The Australian workers are very restive. They are challenging old concepts. They are beginning to see through the false cries of "unity". This was demonstrated by the Tram Union membership vote for disaffiliation from the Melbourne THC. (3)

The hard reality of life overcomes habit and tradition which is used falsely.

The working people of Australia want revolutionary change. They want to put an end to exploitation. They are beginning to realise that they trade unions, important as they are, cannot bring about a revolutionary change. This can only be brought about by the millions of masses acting in the light of revolutionary theory.

Without a revolutionary theory there cannot be a revolutionary movement. Once revolutionary theory is grasped by the masses it becomes an invincible material force.

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) is bringing revolutionary Marxism-Leninism, the thought of Mao Tse-tung, to the Australian people. Trade union leaders can assist this development. The masses of trade unionists can be a mighty force in the revolutionary movement.

The lifting of the political consciousness of the trade union members is the main task – not the winning of reforms, although this must be done. The winning of reforms can be used to heighten revolutionary class consciousness.

Let us place the emphasis on revolutionary theory in the trade union movement. A good practical step in this direction is to ensure the widest possible circulation of the booklet, "Looking Backward: Looking Forward" by E. F. Hill (4) which deals with the question of the struggle of revolutionary, socialist politics against trade union and parliamentary politics.

## Australian 'democracy'? Young people aren't convinced.

by *Louisa L.*

**The Lowy Institute's 2013 poll shows less than half of Australians aged 18-26 say they favour democracy, according to *Guardian Australia's* Helen Davidson.**

Lowy Institute executive director Michael Fullilove said it showed "a disturbing complacency when one looks at the other forms of government that exist in other countries."

But is it complacency or cynicism about a system loaded against the people?

Cynicism is dangerous and leads to passivity. But it's understandable.

### Rejecting the best of a bad lot

Democracy has class content: it's either power for the people or for the ruling class. And the ruling class are the giant foreign-owned corporations.

That class presents the right to vote in elections as the core of democracy.

This right was won here in bitter struggles. But loosely paraphrasing Lenin, capitalist 'democracy' is the right, every three or four years, to choose which section of the ruling class will hammer you.

Parliament isn't the answer to people's problems, and over 50% of young people sense it.

They mightn't know the way to overcome it. Many might be cynical, some might be immersed in capitalist trivia or able to be manipulated into the fascist alternatives that Fullilove is right to be concerned about. But capitalist democracy just doesn't cut it for them.

### Winning lost ground

Democracy for the people means having power in our daily lives.

As a young high school teacher 30 years ago, I was amazed that my head teacher was there to support me, unlike the factory foremen or charge hands I'd worked under, who squeezed more profit from me.

This support in schools didn't come from thin air. It came from the collective strength built in struggles, particularly from the late sixties, after the O'Shea victory unleashed the organised working class.

In 1980's Australian schools, workload was manageable. Most teachers felt empowered to speak out in lively staff meetings. Many decisions were democratically voted on.

Autocratic principals sometimes found themselves isolated and their decisions overturned by industrial threats. Of course these democratic rights were uneven, stronger in some places than others.

But capitalism itself was never challenged. The capitalist class still held state power and their agents continued to wage a systematic campaign to win

by *Jack D.*

**In remote towns around Australia and in the regional towns and big cities people want more say.**

We want more say over what happens in our lives at work, at play, in education, health, food supply (both quality and source), in health, from infancy right through to care of our aged and so on.

One morning at smoko some time ago in our small isolated remote town, we were talking about how little say we had in, and how little control we had over, our lives.

The mix of people at the kiosk was interesting; some workers from the council, from the electricity supply people, owner operators from small

back lost ground, aiming foremost at the working class.

### Beyond the spontaneous

Analysis of the attacks on teachers and public schools has often been covered in *Vanguard*. But there's a dangerous, less visible, undercurrent.

Insecure work has increased. Workload creeps higher each term, so people are often too busy to reflect and act.

Staff meetings where people speak up or vote about educational issues were a training ground for activism. They're disappearing.

Instead 'professional development' powerpoints and team meetings disempower or break unity.

Key decisions are often made by smaller groups of people and imposed after so-called consultation.

It's nationwide, well-planned though still uneven, and aims to promote compliance. It illustrates a trend across all sectors in Australia.

## We Want More Say

private businesses, retirees, the kiosk owners and a few tourists.

There was remarkable consensus about issues like when big business and the 'establishment' institutions are talking this 'democracy' stuff. It is always seen by them as their ability to dominate society and manipulate things for their benefit.

We agreed the reality was different; reality is the dictatorship of big business, the very rich, the very powerful in society.

It was seen that we live under the heel of big businesses jackboot, like it or not. We have little or no say as small business people, and even less as workers, retirees or whatever.

One businessman said "If I tried to do

Different electoral results do affect our ability to fight. Abbott's sledgehammer will be bigger than Rudd's.

But more people understand that the only way we can protect ourselves is to organise and fight, no matter which of the two main parliamentary parties wins office.

While our ability to do so has been undermined, people haven't caved in. They search for the way forward and are learning that no right is ever secure under capitalism.

Communists must organise to sharpen these ideas into theory that lifts struggle beyond the spontaneous.

New times require detailed understanding and new methods of battle.

But behind it all, our people are still under the heel of giant foreign corporations.

Working people still have chains to break, and a country and a world to win.

the things some of these big businesses do, I'd be put in gaol" Another, a lady, said (quite bitterly), "When I sought some help I got nothing, but that f\*\*\*ing mining company got and gets massive grants and tax breaks over the years."

The different treatment of the various groups in society is the principal contradiction that clearly exposes the harsh reality of class dictatorship under the capitalist system.

Above all, the general consensus was **we want more say**; we want a **real** democratic process. We will have a long and difficult fight to get it.

Fundamental change in Australian society will only happen by people banding together and forcing the situation

### Notes

(1) For the newly formed CPA (M-L) the trade unions figured prominently in discussions about how to break ideologically, politically and organisationally from the revisionist policies and practices which had come to dominate the former Communist Party of Australia (CPA).

Some "left" mistakes were inevitably made in the process of drawing a clear line of demarcation between the CPA, where the capturing of union leadership positions and adhering to the "processes of the law" were the rule.

Nevertheless, some of the earliest

publicly acknowledged leaders of the CPA (M-L) were themselves trade union leaders – Paddy Malone and Norm Gallagher (Builders Laborers Federation), Ted Bull (Waterside Workers Federation) and Clarrie O'Shea (Tramways Union).

Over the years, the question of the relationship between the trade unions and the party of revolution continued to be a major focus of discussion within the CPA (M-L).

(2) Following the 1969 defeat of the penal powers of the Arbitration system, the ruling class turned to other legislation not originally designed to restrain unions – the Trade Practices Act for example – and then to new forms of

industrial relations legislation including Howard's WorkChoices and the ALP's Fair Work Act to ensure the right to strike was restricted by "the processes of the law".

It is a simple fact of life that trade unions by and large comply with these "laws" and therefore contain any real possibility of a break-out of mass working class struggle.

(3) In all, 27 unions broke with the right wing leadership of the Melbourne Trades Hall.

The CPA (M-L) assessment of the "restiveness" of the workers helped Hill, O'Shea and other Party leaders to decide that the time was ripe for a challenge to the penal powers.

In 1969 these 27 "rebel unions" decided to support O'Shea if he was prosecuted for observing decisions by his members that fines imposed on their union not be paid.

By deciding to lift the level of struggle against the penal powers, the Party led a movement away from opposition in words, but within the "processes of the law," which had been the position of the revisionists and social democrats, to opposition in deeds that defied and challenged the "law" and which were carried through to success by relying on the mass actions of the working class.

(4) See: <http://www.marxists.org/history/erol/australia/hill-looking/>

## More of the poor brought under income management

by Nick G.

**Following the introduction of compulsory income management (CIM) to 73 prescribed Aboriginal communities as part of the Howard government's racist Northern Territory "intervention", this paper warned that it would not be long before "repression directed at a minority may become generalised across the rest of society" (Vanguard February 2010).**

This followed the announcement that any area in Australia could become a "declared income management area" and that three types of welfare recipients would be targeted:

- "disengaged youth" between 15 and 25 years old who have been receiving Youth Allowance, Newstart, special benefits and parenting payments for 13 out

of 26 weeks

- "long-term recipients" for those over 25 but not yet old enough for the pension and who have been receiving the above payments for 52 out of 104 weeks
- "vulnerable welfare recipients" for anyone who is on a welfare payment who is considered "at risk".

Beginning July 1 last year, five very low SES communities around Australia were placed under CIM.

Since then the APY Lands in SA, the Ngaanyatjara Lands and Laverton Shire in WA, Perth and the Kimberleys have been added.

On the anniversary of that roll-out, a further two categories were identified for automatic inclusion on CIM as "vulnerable welfare recipients". They are:

- people aged under 16 years granted the Special Benefit

by a social worker or those aged 16 and over granted the Unreasonable to Live at Home payment by a social worker; and

- people under the age of 25 who receive crisis payment due to prison release.

This will apply to people living in the NT, in the five declared areas and in the APY Lands.

Those now automatically included will have 50% of their payments quarantined for the first year, in the case of released prisoners, and for at least a year and until a social worker declares them not to "need" CIM in the case of those in the first category.

The extension of CIM to new categories of persons continues the punitive and coercive approach taken by the bourgeoisie to the poor.

It continues to stigmatise, humiliate and demean many people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

It continues the approach to those on welfare that the wealthy know best, that they are socially superior people who are entitled to interfere in the domestic affairs of people who are poor because their poverty results from personal failings rather than the failings of the capitalist social system.

It continues despite the findings of a series of studies into CIM that conclude that it is an effective control mechanism (hence its appeal to the ruling class) but not effective in empowering people to escape from poverty and social marginalisation.

Great campaigns against CIM are occurring in the five declared areas, the NT and the APY Lands.

**Abolish CIM!**

Only anti-imperialist independence and socialism can alleviate poverty and empower the people!

## The NT Intervention - Six Years On

by Barbara Shaw

*We print below an edited extract from an article by Barbara Shaw, an Aboriginal woman from the Mt Nancy Town Camp near Alice Springs. It reveals the heartache imposed on communities in the NT by the imposition of income management.*

**Six years ago my family watched the TV in my living room as John Howard announced he would be sending in the military and taking control of our communities.**

I have never been more frightened in my life. I locked the gate of my town camp and kept the kids inside for two weeks for fear of them being taken. I worried constantly about my family out bush who didn't understand what was coming.

They said the Intervention was about stopping children from being abused, that it was going to stop the drinking and domestic violence. But all I have seen is racism and disempowerment of our people. It's the old assimilation policy back again, to control how we live.

The government and many non-Aboriginal NGOs have taken over the assets and responsibilities of our organisations, both in the major town centres and remote communities, forcing us to comply with their policies that take no account of Aboriginal culture and our obligations.

Take income management, which I have been on for five and a half years. I ran for parliament in 2010 and outpolled both Labor and Liberal candidates in Central Australian communities. I have represented my people at the United Nations. But the Government says I can't manage my money. On their own

estimations of \$6000 to \$8000 per person per year administrative cost for income management, the government has spent more than \$30,000 dollars just to control my small income.

This system has made it much harder for us to share and care for each other. I used to run an unofficial safe house here at Mt Nancy town camp. I'd get money off all the parents every week. If there was drinking and fighting and the kids needed somewhere to be, they knew they were safe here at "Big Mamma's" house and that I could buy meals for them. No one has the cash to chuck in any more. The Government has refused to fund a community centre here on our town camp.

The town camps of Alice Springs have seen a massive influx of people coming in from remote communities. Taking away Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) and Aboriginal Community Government Councils out bush means people have nothing to do there.

At the moment I have five families and four generations staying in my house, my little family and others from the bush, many trying to access services like respite care which should be available back in their home community. We are one family in each room and another in the lounge room. As always, I have given up my bed out of respect for older relatives.

Many who come into town to access the services just stay here, or others come in just to drink. I am witness on a daily basis to the increase in drinking and fighting on our camps that has come from this.

It makes me sick in my stomach when I hear Aboriginal MLA Bess Price attack me in Parliament as an anti-Intervention activist who does not care about the suffering of women and children.

I have to deal with these issues every day and I see them getting worse because of the policies she has supported. The massive influx of her own constituents from bush communities that have been robbed of jobs and assets is a major driving factor.

Bess Price promised on ABC radio after being elected to the Northern Territory Parliament last year that she would put back the Yuendumu community council. Where is that promise now?

Her Country Liberal Government has made it clear they will not be bringing back the Councils. Her Government has cut funding for our youth programs, has cut funding for domestic violence workers in NT Hospitals. These are all things we have been campaigning for.

The \$1 billion that has been budgeted since the Intervention for the income management system Bess Price supports — but has never had to live under — could fund the support and services that we actually need to deal with these issues.

Many more police are employed

now in Alice Springs, supposedly to deal with the social problems. But the relationship with Aboriginal people has seriously broken down. We live in fear of the police, always hearing stories about them bashing our relatives, or taking them 20km out of town so they have to walk back. We are scared what happened to Kwementyaye Briscoe, who died last year after being taken into "protective custody" by the police.

The Intervention gave police the power to enter our homes without a warrant to search for alcohol, along with "star-chamber" powers that treat us as terrorists. I have heard that this week in a case brought by Palm Island residents, the High Court ruled that alcohol laws which target Aboriginal people are "special measures" under the Racial Discrimination Act because they are for our own good.

Let me explain what this means for my life. Earlier this year there was a massive police raid here on my camp which they said was a "routine operation" to search for alcohol. There were paddy wagons, squad cars, four wheel drives, a surveillance van and police officers on dirt bikes circling every yard, going in to search every house.

I was shaking in my shoes. I had many children in the house who are already scared of police and I didn't want them coming through. I was breaking the law that day. I had three cans left over from a six pack of beer in the house. I was worried I was going to be arrested and taken away with all these children in my



# Refugee 'crisis' hides the real invasion of Australia

by Ned K.

The latest United Nations report on the movement of people defined as refugees or asylum seekers claims that 45.2 million people were 'displaced' last year.

Of these, 15.4 million were refugees, 937,000 were asylum seekers and another 28.8 million were 'internally displaced people', those forced to find refuge within their own country.

In Australia, there is an attempt by politicians and the corporate media barons to create a picture of Australia on the brink of invasion by hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers in leaky boats, while their multinational finance capitalist masters continue the real invasion of every aspect of the Australian economy.

(see article in winter edition of Journal of Australian Political Economy, "Restructuring of Corporate Ownership In Australia through the Global Financial Crisis").

According to the Parliament of Australia web site, in 2011-12 there were 14,415 asylum seeker arrivals in Australia. 48.6% arrived by air and 51.2% arrived by boat. More asylum seekers arriving by boat than by plane are granted refugee status due to persecution in their country of origin.



Australia is a developed country with far greater infrastructure and a far more complex level of economic activity than developing countries.

Yet where are the vast majority of refugees hosted?

In developing countries according to the UN.

Pakistan hosts 1.6 million, followed by Iran with 868,200.

81% (8.5 million) of refugees are hosted by developing countries.

## Where do most refugees come from?

The three largest sources of refugees in 2012 were Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq; war ravaged countries where US imperialism and its allies (including Australia) have either invaded or interfered to the detriment of those countries' national sovereignty and their people's wellbeing.

## What happens when they get here?

Many recent refugees once in Australia live a precarious existence on various forms of working visas.

The worst form of visas requires refugees to find continuous employment for two years to progress their visa status or face the real possibility of being turfed out of the country.

This makes them an easy target for economic exploitation.

It is not uncommon to find recent arrivals to Australia being classed as 'self-employed' in service industries for as little as \$10 to \$14 per hour.

These workers usually have a sham employment arrangement (in terms of industrial law of the capitalists) where they are three or even four times removed in contractual arrangements from the big corporations who benefit most from their exploited labour power.

## What should be done?

These new workers in Australia are looking for people who they can trust and who can work with them appropriately to overcome their exploitative situation without placing unrealistic demands on them which leave them open to deportation.

They are forced to tolerate poor conditions of work not because they enjoy this situation but because they know they cannot win on their own.

They want to join with more established workers in this country and often have stories of struggle and endurance to tell that many of us will find unimaginable.

They are an important element of the working class and of the future of the struggle for independence and socialism, just as were migrant workers in previous periods of our history.

house. I gave it to the police and asked them not to come through because of the children. But they said they had to. They walked through making comments like they were a landlord doing an inspection, "this is a nice house, not like those other ones".

So many more of our people are going to prison. There are twice as many people locked up now than before the Intervention and three times as many women. Close relatives of mine, men, women and teenagers, are all currently in prison. I'm giving support to my brother in law looking after a baby and young child while his wife is in prison.

The house I live in is just one year younger than me. My father fought for funding to build houses on our town camps.

We used to manage them ourselves before we were forced to sign over our leases to the Commonwealth government. Now I am paying next to market rent to the NT Housing agency on a house I have lived in for much of my life.

We have so many problems with NT Housing. We used to get repairs and maintenance done through our Aboriginal council Tangentyere, but now we have to wait and wait for shoddy

work from NT Housing. We used to be able to have people making trouble on our town camp dealt with straight away through Tangentyere. now we don't have that power and can't do anything about problem visitors.

I sit at my front door and see Public Housing Officers, toy coppers who just cruise around our camps watching for trouble and calling the police.

It used to be our Night Patrol — our own people who would actually get out of the car, engage with us, try and solve problems where they could without police. Our Night Patrol is still active, but are being pushed aside out of their role.

Living under Territory Housing rules and regulations is not culturally appropriate.

For example, in Aboriginal society when somebody passes away, the family moves out of that house and another moves in. We swap houses.

Or if a young fella comes out of ceremony camp, he has to stay in a house with other young men. We can't take our own initiatives to make these changes any more. There is a real ignorance and a hostile mentality towards Aboriginal people within the NT Housing department.

I have fought the Intervention from day one. We built a massive amount of support from people and organisations right across Australia to try and stop the government from continuing the Intervention for another 10 years through the "Stronger Futures" laws. But they refused to listen to us.

I will keep fighting. Self-determination is the key to getting us out of the social problems that we face today. It is the only way to do this. It is just disgusting how much money has been wasted on bureaucrats to control us, or on ineffective non-Aboriginal services that cannot engage with our people.

Whether it's in a remote community or here in a town camp — services must be delivered by our people. We must be given the power and resources to take control.

We have the language, we have the communication, we can relate to one another. And there must be proper funding to our organisations, on a scale that can actually help lift us out of shocking living conditions. Not just peppercorn short term grants that set us up to fail.

I want to appeal to all the supporters I know are out there to keep fighting

alongside me. Income management is not just in my backyard, now it's coming to yours. Today, 21 June, there will be a press conference in Playford South Australia of a new coalition that has formed there to fight the expansion of income management into their community. Tomorrow on 22 June there will be a rally in Bankstown in Sydney which is also facing income management.

We are all staring down the barrel of a Tony Abbott government. The Opposition Leader has said that income management should apply to all people on Centrelink across Australia.

I truly believe he will be even worse for Aboriginal people than John Howard. I encourage everyone to vote for progressive parties other than the two major parties which have kept us under this Intervention.

But most importantly we must continue to stand together and to struggle, to fight for Aboriginal self-determination and to fight for jobs and services for all struggling communities — not the punishment of the Intervention.

**Black and White unite!**

# Catholic Nun exposes Syrian “rebels”

by Nick G.

**Mother Agnès-Mariam de la Croix, superior of a Carmelite convent near Qara, 90 kilometres from Damascus, has recently toured Australia to speak on events in Syria.**

All of her meetings were very well attended. Her audiences included many members of the Syrian community in Australia.

Mother Agnes-Mariam said that she was not a supporter of President Assad and had viewed the first demonstrations against his regime as “beautiful” and peaceful.

## Foreign provocateurs

However, she said, she had noticed that as the demonstrations progressed there began to be faces of people she did not recognise, and who were not known to the people attending her monastery.

These strangers to the community then began acting provocatively. They were often armed and fired on the Syrian security forces who, in turn, began shooting at the demonstrators.

Reports from other parts of Syria

confirmed this as part of a nation-wide pattern.

None of this was reported accurately by the media.

## Eye-witness to “rebel” atrocities

She had personally seen unidentified “rebel” forces killing people indiscriminately, including security forces personnel.

She had gone with a French reporter to the Free Syrian Army (FSA) “rebels” and asked them to arrange for her to meet some of the people the “rebels” had claimed to have been victims of the regime – people who had been shot or tortured by the security forces.

She and the French reporter had waited for hours but the “rebels” could not produce one person to verify their claims against Assad’s forces.

On a visit to Homs she saw and heard evidence of women being abducted by the FSA.

She presented photos of a man thrown from a top floor window and killed by the “rebels”. There was also a shop owner who had been killed by the “rebels” because he defied their orders to close his shop. She described



*Al-Nusra Front ‘rebels’ prepare another execution*

beheadings by the “rebels”, including those of a whole group of around one hundred women and children.

She claimed that “rebels” had freed common criminals from the jails to create havoc, to destroy property and sow divisions amongst the people.

She reported on the rape of Christian women and the killing of priests and moderate Muslims.

She said the French and the Americans were aware that the FSA was faction-ridden but dominated by Al Qaeda, but that they were prepared to support these “rebels” for the sake of achieving regime change.

She said the “rebels” were coming from all over the globe, pursuing their own extreme religious agendas whilst serving as proxies for the Western

powers. She said that CIA estimates had suggested that if elections were held today, as many as 70% of the population would support the current government and that was why foreigners and criminals were being promoted and supported by the big Western powers as “freedom fighters”.

Syria, she said, had once been peaceful, much like Australia. In 18 years she had never seen a beggar in the streets.

Now, 9 million people had been reduced to poverty and hunger and were more or less begging for aid.

She called for the ending of outside interference in Syrian affairs, for Australian neutrality, and for humanitarian aid to victims on both sides of the conflict.

## Stop imperialist espionage against the people!



by Nick G.

**Edward Snowden, the former employee of the CIA and defence contractors at the US National Security Agency (NSA), has performed a great service to the people of the world.**

In exposing the secret electronic surveillance regime, PRISM, operated by the NSA since 2007, he has lifted the lid on routine violations of privacy involving millions of citizens of the US and of countries like Australia.

Multinational corporations such as Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, YouTube, Skype and Apple collaborated with the NSA to provide details of all electronic data flowing through their systems.

This has very little to do with combatting “terrorism” - after all, it is the world’s No. 1 terrorist - the US

imperialist state - that operates PRISM.

Rather, it is a violation of democratic rights and liberties for the purpose of “full spectrum domination” by US imperialism.

## Imperialism has feet of clay

The imperialists look strong, but the reality is that they still need people to run their system. Some are happy to be bought off and to play their despicable anti-people role.

But others see the oppression, the fascism, the great threats to ordinary people and they choose the path of defiance, of rebellion, of whistleblowing. They have the honour of being part of the clay feet of the colossus.

Snowden came to realise that he was working for a surveillance organisation whose all-consuming intent, he told the *Guardian*’s Glenn Greenwald, was “on

making every conversation and every form of behaviour in the world known to them.”

When the US imperialists made clear their intention to get Julian Assange, the CPA (M-L) unequivocally called for solidarity. “Hands off Assange!” we said. “The US imperialists must not control our sources of information!”

Now we say, “Hands off Snowden!” “The US imperialists must stop their espionage against the people!”

We salute Snowden’s courage and demand that he be granted asylum and be protected against the fascist reach of US imperialism.

He is right to flee the US. Daniel Ellsberg of Pentagon Papers fame supports his right to avoid returning to the US.

“I hope that he finds a haven,” he said, “as safe as possible from kidnapping or assassination by U.S.



Special Operations forces, preferably where he can speak freely.”

He does not want to see Snowden subjected to the same treatment as Bradley Manning, the US soldier who is alleged to have given Wikileaks its US embassy files. The United Nations Special Rapporteur for Torture described Manning’s conditions as “cruel, inhuman and degrading.”

## Avoiding surveillance

We call on progressive Australians to take practical measures to weaken the US imperialist surveillance regime, such as boycotting Google, Hotmail, Yahoo and so on.

Search engines such as Ixquick, which claims to encrypt Internet search enquires and to protect users from surveillance, DuckDuckGo and Startpage can be used. Email services such as the Russian Yandex, which are under no obligation to provide data to the US, can be used.

But the best form of evasion of imperialist surveillance is to have a life of rich contact with the people, to be a fish in their water.

Whilst being conscious of security, progressive people will not be cowed and must increase their level of political activity and work for the overthrow of capitalism and imperialism.

# Egypt: Fall of Morsi is a setback for US imperialism

by Nick G.

**The removal of Egyptian President Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood government is a setback for US imperialism and its plans to impose a stable environment for its plunder of North Africa and the Middle East.**

The events of late June and early July represented an attempt by the Egyptian people to revive their agenda for democratic rights, for improved wages and living conditions and for breaking free of the IMF and World Bank austerity measures designed to only benefit the US and European imperialist powers.

Lacking a strong centre of revolutionary leadership, the working masses have been unable to take power into their own hands. They have not yet been able to smash the old state apparatus, the core of which is the armed forces and the police.

## Morsi acceptable to US imperialists

The mass movement against former President Hosni Mubarak that erupted in January 2011 had been anticipated by the US. Wikileaks and other sources revealed a careful nurturing of "opposition" leaders by the US, including amongst the Muslim Brotherhood.

Capital is its own God and cares not what religious cloak is worn by its devoted worshippers. It merely demands stability for its own expansion and growth. And this was promised by Morsi and Co. who persevered with its neoliberal agenda of privatisation, removal of price controls, refusal of wage rises and continued outlawing of unions, and sale and disposal of Egyptian financial assets.

They also lined up with the US and its terrorist thugs in support of the war against the Syrian government.

This led to demands for the recall of the government. Such a right is as much a condition of democracy as the casting of votes. It was declared as such by the victorious proletariat at the time of the Paris Commune (1871).

In all, 22 million voters hand-signed a petition for Morsi's removal, complete with their national ID numbers. When he refused to budge, 27 million took to the streets over a four-day period beginning June 30.

The Egyptian armed forces, long associated at the senior level with big local and foreign corporations, saw the people's movement as a chance to again place themselves at the centre of state authority. The army's actions to remove Morsi temporarily coincided with the demands of the people. There were



*Egyptian military has close links to US imperialism*

wild scenes of rejoicing as the army and the people stood as one.

## The working class cannot rely on an army of the rich and powerful

Lack of clarity on the role of the state and its key institutions allowed the army of Egypt's rich and powerful to pose as "friends of the people".

The revisionist Communist Party of Egypt even went so far as to claim: "Our valiant armed forces reaffirmed their deep devotion, absolute loyalty to their people and their right to live a free dignified life, therefore, they responded to their demands, interacted with their revolutionary struggle, stood by them as a protector shield and a force to execute their demands and objectives."

This is the same army that has for years crushed the Egyptian people in the interests of the government and its US backers. It is the same army that sent tanks to clear Tahrir Square in April 2011 and massacred people outside the Maspero building that October. This is the army of "deep devotion" that finger-raped detained protesting women in callous "virginity tests" and beat and kicked the "woman in the blue bra".

This was how they stood by Egyptian women as a "protective shield"!

## US imperialists move to impose agenda on new government

When Morsi was deposed, the US weighed in with denunciations of a "coup", concerns for the "rule of law" and expressions of support for the "legitimacy" of the Muslim Brotherhood government.

Never known for not sacrificing principle for profit, the tune quickly changed as the imperialists adjusted to the new reality. The US sent its No. 2 diplomat in the State Department, William Burns, to Cairo to meet with interim government officials as well as civil society and business leaders during his two-day visit.

The army's "absolute loyalty to the people" was revealed in its selection of personnel to lead the post-Morsi government.

The new interim prime minister is Hazem El-Beblawi, an economist and former finance minister "respected" by the US.

The new finance minister is US-trained Ahmed Galal, managing director

of the Cairo-based Economic Research Forum since 2007 and for 18 years a researcher at the World Bank.

Nabil Fahmy, who served as Egypt's former ambassador to the United States for over a decade under Hosni Mubarak, is likely to be foreign minister, while Mohamed ElBaradei, former head of the UN Atomic Energy Agency was sworn in as Egypt's interim vice president for international relations.

With these willing servants in place, US imperialism began demanding that Egypt embrace policies that the IMF requires as a condition for releasing \$4.8 billion in aid, such as increasing the sales tax to 12.5% from 10% and lowering the country's enormous energy subsidies. US and other foreign investors are waiting to pounce.

## People learning through experience

Events in Egypt are a rich school for the country's working class. They can be expected to demand the right to freedom of organisation, the right to have unions, to reject austerity measures and IMF "loans", to demand independence from the US and other imperialisms, to have equality between the sexes and to end religious and other discrimination.

Growing numbers will repudiate reliance on the army of the rich and powerful and call for new state institutions under working class leadership.

Australian Communists salute the great Egyptian people and wish them well in further advancing their revolutionary cause.

## Yanks stuff up – again

by Jack D.

**Two US Harrier AV8b aircraft involved in the Talisman Sabre joint military exercise at Shoalwater Bay, central Queensland, have jettisoned four bombs after a live fire mission was cancelled.**

It is the height of stupidity to allow such exercises at all, let alone on a world heritage area. The Australian Defence Force says the weapons were not armed, the US 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet has ruled out any risk to the public or the environment.

A lot of cold comfort that is. The ADF PR corps are experts at using the age old unofficial military motto BBB; "Bullshit Baffles Brains". They will say whatever it is opportune to say at the time as decades of dealing with them and many enquiries show.

The Yanks, on the other hand, treat the Australian government and the

Australian people with utter contempt and expect us to believe bombs used in live firing exercises are safe just because they say so. What a load of clap-trap.

Live firing means just what it says. Living in Townsville for years, I can tell you that Rattlesnake Island which has been the target area for such activities by the RAAF has felt the repercussions for decades. House foundations and other damage of homes along the northern beaches is well documented.

Do the Yanks think we will accept their B/S that four jettisoned bombs in 60 metres or so of water in a channel through the Great Barrier Reef off Yeppoon are harmless? They have potential to corrode and do massive environmental damage with the contents (explosives, metals and so on) getting loose.

What is the risk if cyclonic action bangs them about as the sea rages in

such conditions?

The Yanks should have to remove them and take them home to the USA. They don't want to do that. Maybe they are too scared to try, after all, many of us say "They couldn't pour piss out of a boot – even if the directions were wrote on the sole".

## Yankee go home!

We need to put a stop to these so-called Joint Exercises.

We need to kick out all Yank troops and bases, and especially Pine Gap which snoops on us all and pinpoints targets for illegal and murderous drone attacks.

We demand a genuinely independent Australia with our military used to defend Australian interests, not used as an appendage of these foreign troops and at the service of foreign governments.

# Tecoma residents tell McDonalds to “Burgeroff”

by Bill F.

Since 2011, residents in the small Dandenong Ranges township of Tecoma have been fighting a fierce battle against the US monopoly junk-food giant McDonalds.

They have banded together to oppose McDonalds’ plans to build a 24 hour outlet with drive-through on the main road through Tecoma opposite a primary school.

The site is the old Hazel Vale Dairy building.

The Dandenong Ranges surrounding Tecoma, with a population of less than 3000 residents, is a temperate rainforest region with National Parks and dense ferny undergrowth through the hills and valleys.

It attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists and day-trippers. Its natural beauty is one of the main attractions close to Melbourne.

McDonalds’ initial planning application met with 1170 written objections from people concerned with traffic flow, litter, noise, crime, the impact on existing businesses, proximity to schools and especially the fact that such a venture was out of character with the area.

There are no 24 hour fast food outlets with drive-through in the whole of the Dandenong Ranges.

The Shire of Yarra Ranges Council met in October 2011 and, supported by the 650 local residents in attendance, voted unanimously to reject McDonalds’ application.

## The state looks after capitalist class interests

Undeterred by hostile residents and the Council ruling, McDonalds then trotted off to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) which sat on things for a year and then, in October 2012, overruled the Council’s decision, and further insulted the residents by classing their objections as “irrelevant”.

VCAT is an agency of the state government and seemingly an



independent body to arbitrate on the legality of planning issues.

In reality its major function is to override objections from residents, small businesses and others affected by the schemes of the big developers and monopoly business interests.

Taking the side of a foreign multinational like McDonalds is only to be expected.

Ideas of fairness and consideration of residents, etc. mean little against the class interests of capitalist private enterprise and profit-making.

## Fearless and determined campaign

A few days later, nearly 600 residents met and organised a ‘Community Garden’ at the proposed site and maintained a 24 hour vigil until evicted by the police in November 2012. Again, the forces of the state were used to enforce the ‘legal rights’ of monopoly capitalist business.

The avenue of seeking a Supreme Court appeal against the VCAT ruling was investigated by the community, but on this occasion a majority of the Yarra Ranges Councillors baulked at the likely expense.

Seeking justice and legal redress is really only for the rich and powerful, and is designed that way by the rich and powerful.

A delegation directly appealed to the Minister for Planning Matthew Guy, but their arguments changed nothing.

Having exhausted all the legal window-dressing the system has to offer, the residents set about a determined policy of building wide support and confronting the McDonalds

juggernaut.

They door-knocked every household and conducted a survey, which asked, “Are you for or against the proposed McDonald’s development in Tecoma?”

Those against totalled 1085 households (88%), with 86 (7%) who didn’t know or didn’t care, and only 59 (4.8%) in favour.

The campaign was attracting support from all over Australia and overseas, as social media spread the news.

In February this year, even the local gnomes left the forest and staged a “Gnomeageddon” outside McDonalds’ headquarters in Melbourne!

And on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, a massive crowd of 3000 Hills residents and supporters from all over Melbourne marched from Belgrave to Tecoma to show their opposition.

All this time, a number of courageous volunteers had been huddled on the roof of the dairy building, preventing its demolition – huddled because it’s freezing cold in the Dandenongs during winter!

One of these hardy souls, Janine Watson, celebrated her 50th birthday on the roof and offered some birthday cake to McDonald’s security guards.

In a shocking display of thuggery, they pulled her down, hitting the top of the fence, and causing cuts and bruises and two broken fingers. Yet another (private) arm of state going about its “lawful” business!

## Union support

With the support of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, building workers then walked off the site altogether. The VTHC released a statement which read in part...

*The Building Industry Group meeting today convened by the Victorian Trades Hall Council resolved to support the rights of the Tecoma community to protest against what they believe inappropriate development.*

*Building workers in Victoria have a proud tradition of protecting those things that make this state great. All Victorians are able to enjoy the City Baths, the Melbourne Market and the magnificent Regent Theatre because*

*building workers refused to demolish these treasures.*

*In Tecoma, passionate local protesters are committed to preventing what they see as inappropriate development.*

*Further, we do not believe that it is reasonable to put building workers in the middle of such a heated debate.*

*We seek that the Victorian Government take a proactive approach to resolving this dispute. All of the parties should be working towards a resolution, and we commit ourselves to participate constructively in that process.*

## The latest

With all preparatory work stopped and protesters on the roof day and night, McDonalds has gone back to the Supreme Court for an injunction against the “trespassers” and damages for delays in the work.

No doubt this will soon be backed up with armed police and a busload of scabs – business as usual.

If McDonalds hopes that the local residents will give in to these threats, they are dreaming. The hills are alive with the sound of “Burgeroff!”



The Gnomes confront McDonalds



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