



POLICY-INDUCED VIOLENCE

Anna Pha

At least one child is killed by a parent every month; one woman is murdered every week by a partner or former partner; another hospitalised every three hours. These statistics are now well publicised, but a recently published study reveals the shocking extent of domestic violence suffered by women who are now single mothers. The women were faced with a choice of violence or poverty.

The study found that sixty per cent of women who are now single mothers with kids under eighteen experienced violence (physical and/or sexual) from a previous partner – 185,700 women with children. That was in 2016. Other research shows that domestic and family violence (DFV) increased during COVID-19 lockdowns.

The study, *The Choice: Violence or Poverty*, by well-known feminist, researcher, and author Professor Ann Summers points to the need for urgent support for single mothers facing extreme financial hardship escaping violence. Summers undertook the research at UTS on a Ramsay Foundation Fellowship.

Summers based her research on an unpublished, customised dataset drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey (PSS) in 2016. The data covers women in single parent families with all children in the household aged under eighteen.

"Rather than continuing to look through all the familiar lenses, rehashing all the known data, and continuing to reinforce our existing findings and convictions, I thought it was necessary to seek a fresh perspective. This might, I hoped, yield new knowledge which can, in turn, suggest new ways of tackling our twin objectives: reducing domestic violence, and providing better support for the women who escape it," Summers says. Hence the focus on single mothers.

GOLD HARD FACTS

The study found that 1.6 million Australian women aged eighteen or over had experienced partner violence since the age of fifteen. That equates to 17.3 per cent of all women or 40.3 per cent of women who previously had a partner.

"[...] for seventy-five per cent of these women, their former partner's assaults, threats, or controlling or emotionally harmful behaviour were the main reason the



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relationship ended. In other words, these now single mothers left because of the violence," Summers reports.

Summers points out: "We take note of deaths due to domestic violence. We count dead women, but we have overlooked other consequences of the violence. We do not count the physical and emotional injuries, the hospitalisations, the permanent disabilities resulting from domestic violence, the often-lifelong injuries to mental health or psychological well-being. And we have not taken into the account the most frequent, and the most obvious, consequence of all: that if women who have children leave violent relationships they become single mothers – and all that results from that.

"We ignore the fact that these single mothers include Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, LGBTQI, cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds and women from rural or remote areas. And that not only are there often tough economic consequences, health risks and other problematic outcomes for single mothers who have left violent

relationships, but single mothers are themselves often at risk of continuing to endure violence – especially from previous partners."

The PSS data does not include disability status at the time of experiencing the violence, so it was not possible to identify whether disability is a risk factor or an outcome of physical and/or sexual violence.

The report goes into detail of the lives of these women and the health and other consequences for them and their children.

CHILDREN

"We know that being exposed to violence against one's parents, especially one's mother, as a child increases the likelihood of growing up to be either a victim or a perpetrator of violence." This is confirmed by the finding that one third of the single mothers had witnessed domestic violence when they were kids.

Just over half of the single mothers said the violence was seen or heard by their children – that is about 88,600 women. Children also pick up on tension, anxiety and physical signs of DFV in a household.

Each statistic is a human being, living all too often in the most tragic and tenuous of circumstances.

POLICY-INDUCED POVERTY

A quarter of those wanting to leave their partners felt unable to do so and gave the main reason as lack of money or financial support.

Half of the women who left their partners rely on government payments as their main source of income. This means that they are forced to live in "policy-induced poverty."

"Rather than providing security or even much of a safety net for single mothers, the system creates, and then perpetuates, poverty and disadvantage," Summers says. "This in turn makes women more vulnerable to domestic violence, and also puts their children in a physically and developmentally dangerous situation with repercussions for the rest of their lives."

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SAVE OUR ABC!

2022 is the ABC's 90th anniversary; however, for many, it won't be one to celebrate. The ABC stated last month – the month of its anniversary – that it would cut seventy-five jobs. Fifty-eight permanent positions and seventeen contractors face the axe on a move that was announced on National Archive Day.

According to the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), “these cuts will lead to over 1200 hours a week of key archival work simply stopping or being pushed onto program makers and journalist who are already overworked and dealing with chronic staff shortages.”

According to *The Guardian (UK)*, the cut to fifty-eight permanent positions would mean that journalists research and archive their own stories”, with the cut to seventeen positions would mean archive staff would be affected in areas “outside Sydney and Melbourne, including three in Western Australia, Tasmania, Queensland and the Northern Territory, four in South Australia and five in the ACT.”

This isn't the first time funding cuts have been made to the ABC archives, as CPSU ABC Section Secretary, Sinddy Ealy states:

“The last time the ABC took a knife to its library services in 2019, it promised there would no more loss of specialist work, yet here we are. ABC staff are at the frontline of digitisation and the early uptake of technology. They always have been, but not at the expense of dumbing down content or quality like this change could see.”

While no journalist jobs are being cut, Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance media director, Adam Portelli spoke to the “dramatic downstream effects” the cuts would have on other staff and the quality, stating:

“Research services will no longer be available for same-day stories for programs such as 7.30, News Channel, *The Drum*, iView and online stories, so journalists and producers will be expected to shoulder this burden on top of their current workloads.

“Journalists and producers will be expected to decide which raw camera footage needs to be kept and add the metadata in the system on top of their daily workloads. There is a very real danger that with this added workload, valuable archival footage could be lost.”

The Australian Library and Information Association, the Australian Society of Archivists, and other media and archival organisations have signed an open letter against the cuts stating their “significant concern about the announced reduction” and “the lack of a clear and public plan for the future of the ABC archives, library and information services,” further stating:

“The growth of digital collections, including born-digital and digitised materials, brings with it challenges such as limits on digital storage, unstable file formats, and the risk of permanent loss when content has not been properly stored or described and so cannot later be found. Journalists, while having many skills, do not have skills in digital collection management and preservation. Professional archivists and librarians do.”

With a new Labor government, it is important to reserve the near-decade of cost cuts to the ABC and start refunding our ABC. It is important that we have a national broadcaster that is free from the financial considerations that privately-owned broadcasters face. In this instance, we cannot forget the role the ABC played during the 2019-20 Australian bushfires, providing crucial information for many rural regions. It has also played a significant role in developing Australian talent and showcasing Australia's diverse cultural backgrounds. Where will the ABC be by its 100th anniversary if these cuts continue?

POLICY-INDUCED VIOLENCE

Continued from page 1

Summers outlines the decades of punitive cuts to payments for single mothers and their children. These date back to the Howard Coalition government in 2006 which introduced the Welfare to Work scheme that removed mothers from the Parenting Payment Single (PPS) when their youngest child turned eight, forcing them onto the much lower-paid NewStart (now called JobSeeker) allowance for the unemployed. The gap between the PPS and JobSeeker and other government payments (eg age pension) has widened since then.

Labor changed the method of indexing JobSeeker resulting in a further widening of the gap. As a result, many single parents and their children are expected to survive on an amount well below the poverty line.

“All this means that thousands of women and children who have escaped from violent families have been forced by the government to live in policy-induced poverty,” Summers notes.

TEMPORARY SEPARATIONS

The ABS data shows that of the 168,000 single mothers who experienced violence while living with their most recently violent previous partner, 92,600 (fifty-five per cent) had temporarily separated on one or more occasions. More than one third of them returned to a violent partner because they had no money or nowhere else to go.

Other reasons for returning included a promise to stop assaults, wanting to work things out, concern for children's safety, concern for own safety.

On leaving their violent partner, almost twelve per cent (5,000) women reported they had slept rough (eg on the street, in a car, in a tent, or squatted in an abandoned building).

“The period immediately after leaving a violent relationship can be the most dangerous time for a woman and her children. This period – and it can last a year or longer – is when they may face increases in violence, sometimes experiencing physical violence for the first time, and – tragically – the risk of being murdered.”

MISOGYNY

Apart from facing poverty, fleeing brings new hurdles such as how to escape a controlling relationship, where to flee, where to seek legal advice, financial assistance, or emergency accommodation, possibly looking for a new school, and so on. As a result, faced with the choice of poverty or remaining

in a violent situation many women decide to avoid poverty at a high risk to their own safety and mental health.

Many of the services women could draw on had their funding cut by the Abbott/Turnbull/Morrison governments. Like the Howard government, the recently-departed Coalition not only saw single mothers as an area of cost-cutting, but also had misogynistic and backward religious motives behind their actions – “love, honour and obey you and serve” your husband and “until death do us part” (bride's vows).

Capitalism has historically treated women as men's chattels and men as the breadwinner. In 1912 women's minimum wage was set at fifty-four per cent of a male's wage. Since then, there have been great leaps forward through the struggles of the women's movement and the trade unions but equal pay for work of equal value continues to be elusive.

COERCIVE CONTROL

“Domestic violence can be physically brutal or more hidden in its various non-physical forms. It is usually inflicted on someone the perpetrator claims to love. The violence is essentially about exerting power over and controlling the victim. It is not gender-specified, but the overwhelming majority of perpetrators are men, and their victims are women,” (*Guardian, Workers' Weekly*, #1952, “Domestic violence and its systemic perpetration”)

One of the most insidious, sometimes less visible forms is emotional and coercive control where the partner uses a range of methods to terrorise a woman and in many cases her children.

Coercive control revealed in the study covered the following behaviour by former partners:

- Yelling or verbal abuse to intimidate (for sixty-six per cent of these 220,200 single mothers)
- Threatening to take the children away (forty-four per cent)
- Cutting contact with family, friends or community (fifty-five per cent)
- - Electronic surveillance to track movements (thirty-three per cent)
- - Denying access to, or being able to make decisions about, household money (forty-nine per cent)
- Preventing them from working or earning money (thirty per cent)
- Threatening to harm (nine per cent) – or actually harming (six per cent) – the family pet

- Trying to prevent them from studying (twenty per cent)
- Constantly insulting them to make them feel ashamed, belittled or humiliated (sixty-eight per cent)
- Threatening to harm the children (twelve per cent).

Coercive control can have long-term mental impacts, result in loss of self-confidence and self-belief and affect the mental health and development of children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report's recommendations include:

- Make the Parenting Payment Single (PPS) allowance available to all single parents until their youngest reaches sixteen or is still in high school
- Increase the PPS to the same as the age pension single rate
- Abolish the Mutual Obligations requirements of the PPS once a child turns six
- Provide optional job-training and job-seeking opportunities for those who want them.

PAID FDV LEAVE

On 16th May 2022, the Fair Work Commission (FWC) handed down an in principal decision to grant full-time and part-time workers covered by industry awards ten days' paid family and domestic violence (FDV) leave per annum. This historic decision is the result of a case taken to the FWC by the Australian Council of Trade Unions. Prior to that there was an entitlement of only five days unpaid leave.

The details of the decision are still to be finalised. The decision does not cover workers employed on a casual basis or as contractors. It will cover more than two million workers. The FWC pointed out that ten days' paid leave is a trend in enterprise agreements.

Prior to the elections Labor promised it would legislate for ten days' paid FDV to be added to the National Employment Standards (NES). The NES already contains other minimum leave entitlements for workers.

Labor has also made a commitment to properly fund front-line services and create a national definition of domestic violence to include coercive control.

The report concludes with the words: “Women are leaving violence and reclaiming their lives. We need to acknowledge and honour those who choose to leave and help them in any way we can as they move towards hope and happiness.”

Support is available from the National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service at 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) or Lifeline on 13 11 14. ✪

Find out more about the
Communist Party of Australia

web www.cpa.org.au

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THE DEVIL IN THE DETAILS OF THE “HOUSING CRISIS”

Part two

Valentin Cartillier

In part one, we revealed that approximately one-fifth of households surveyed by the 2021 Census own nearly fifty per cent of the total amount of private dwellings in Australia. We then looked at some of the solutions proposed by the major parties to address this problem and the deficiencies of those approaches. In this part, we’ll be looking at some of the consequences of this housing distribution. It must be said from the outset: housing that is distributed according to financial gain rather than social need will always create and perpetuate these problems. The current “crisis” within the housing market is not an anomaly, it’s the rule.

The most glaring contradiction that this “housing crisis” presents is: how is it possible to have homelessness in a country with over one million empty houses? This can be answered in a relatively simple way, that is, as with all markets under the capitalist mode of production, housing is also subjected to an artificial scarcity. In this case, because houses can be owned as investments, those who purchase multiple houses do so with the idea of financial gain in mind. Thus, they will not allow people to live in those investment properties who are unable to at least cover the costs of it (mortgage repayments etc). Stagnating wages and the rising cost of living are increasingly shrinking the pool of people able to financially fill that role. There are myriad other factors which compound this problem but ultimately it all stems from the private ownership of property for financial gain.

According to the Census data, there were 116,427 people classified as “homeless,” the highest number since the data began being collected, at a steadily increasing rate since 2006. It is important to note the methodological difficulties in counting unhoused people as well as the varying definitions. The general definition of homelessness given by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), and used by other independent bodies such as Mission Australia, Homelessness Australia, and Street Smart, considers a person homeless “if they do not have suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable
- or does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

The largest increase in homelessness came under the first definition, where, between 2011 and 2016, persons living in “severely” crowded dwellings rose by a quarter. According to Mission Australia and the ABS, around seventy per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing homelessness live in such overcrowded dwellings. While the rate of homelessness amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been going down, they still remain a vastly overrepresented group accounting for twenty per cent of the total amount of homelessness in the country. Furthermore, homelessness has been increasingly affecting the young and the elderly, for the former



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“nearly sixty per cent of homeless people in 2016 were aged under thirty-five years, and forty-two per cent of the increase in homelessness was in the twenty-five to thirty-four years age group” and the latter, those older than fifty-five, encountering a twenty-eight per cent increase between 2011 and 2016, which has been rising steadily since 2006.

Housing is clearly a class issue. Street Smart: Action against Homeless reports that that fifty-four per cent of people become homeless because they are unable to afford housing, which sits at heart of the complex intersection of other possible factors such as suffering from mental illness (thirteen per cent), sudden loss of employment (fourteen per cent), and attempting to escape from domestic violence (thirty-four per cent). The reality of that final statistic is addressed in *Guardian* “The tragedy of inaccessible housing and domestic violence” #2014 which lays bare one amongst many examples of the devastating consequences of inaccessible housing. These are the material outcomes of the way our housing market is structured; this is the real housing crisis.

Homelessness isn’t the only social impact of this housing crisis. We saw in part one, the actual distribution of housing in Australia, where one fifth of households own nearly half of habitable dwellings, is hidden behind the innocuous figures given by the ABS. This has created an enormous class division between homeowners and renters. Research conducted by Everybody’s Home, a coalition of housing, homelessness and welfare organisations, found that to rent a single room in a two-bedroom apartment in any of Australia’s major cities requires over a third of a young hospitality or retail worker’s paycheck. Furthermore, they found that between half and three quarters of renters across fifteen of Australia’s eastern

seaboard electorates, both regional and metropolitan, are experiencing “rental stress.” The ABS defines rental stress as “housing that costs more than thirty per cent of the gross household income.” Renting creates a huge structural problem as more and more Australian households are forced to fork over more of their pay just to cover rent, let alone be in a position to be able to save up for a house deposit.

As housing becomes more expensive and rent takes up more of a renter’s pay, this creates a monopoly within the housing market, where renters increasingly subsidise the mortgages of investors. Ironically, this tendency towards monopoly creates a double-edged sword. More expensive housing means bigger mortgages, which means for first time investors getting their additional houses means charging more rent to cover themselves. An increasingly common tactic was to use investment properties as AirBnBs, where the owner could make far more from numerous short-term stays than from long-term renters, however this practice has obviously taken a massive hit during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The symbol for this crisis made national headlines in the form of a 25m² apartment in the inner-city suburb of North Adelaide. The one room rental was advertised at \$400 a week and has a glass-walled bathroom inside the kitchen, which doesn’t have a stove. Unsurprisingly, the apartment was formerly used as an AirBnB. An apartment in Sydney’s Surry Hills made headlines in 2020 with a similar design. When it comes to renting, if the rent keeps increasing to cover the mortgage repayments, renters become less able to keep up with the rising prices and are forced to move to more affordable locations. This process can only be maintained for so long. If an investor can’t make the mortgage repayments without

the renters, then they are forced to sell, but if there isn’t anyone with enough money to purchase the house, the investor will likely default on their mortgage repayments and the house then gets repossessed, typically by a bank. There are various ways this process can play out; for example, a property developer may purchase the land and build an apartment block on it, thus dividing it into smaller, more affordable properties which are then sold or rented out at enormous profits. However, even this outcome can only bring a temporary stability to the market. Rapidly rising house prices initially attract investors looking to buy cheap then sell at a profit but if too many of them do it at once then there’s no-one left to sell to. This process eventually leads to a housing bubble forming which has a tendency to collapse the market. Unsurprisingly, there is only one winner in this cyclical process: the biggest investors with the most capital who are able to weather the storm of the market that swallows smaller investors whole.

This brings us all the way back to the beginning: one million vacant properties in Australia where an enormous number of people either don’t have access to adequate housing at all or are struggling to make the rent to live in one. This state of affairs is the logical outcome of a system that is designed for profit not for need. “Social housing” is tautological, all housing is social, we don’t need to build more of it to address the immediacy of this “crisis,” the infrastructure already exists. Housing needs to first be distributed according to social need, not financial gain for, no matter how much a house costs on the market, particularly in the case of investment properties, ultimately this has no meaning, for, to conclude with Marx’s words in *Grundrisse*, “[...] a house where no one lives is in fact not a real house.” ☺

The most glaring contradiction that this “housing crisis” presents is: how is it possible to have homelessness in a country with over one million empty houses?

ACT SUPREME COURT ENDS PROSECUTION OF BERNARD COLLAERY

The prosecution of Bernard Collaery has been officially ended after the new federal Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus ordered the charges levelled at Collaery to be dropped. Collaery, human rights lawyer, former Attorney-General of the ACT and legal counsel to the government of Timor-Leste, has been embroiled in a four year-long legal battle with the Australian government.

Government prosecution of Collaery began in 2018, accusing him of conspiring with an ex-client and former member of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, known only as "Witness K," to reveal evidence of illegal spying operations by the Australian government in Timor-Leste before The Hague. The spying operations ran by the Australian government in Timor-Leste primarily involved the bugging of the cabinet offices of the Timor-Leste government during the negotiations for a petroleum and gas treaty in 2004, aimed at giving the Australian government the advantage in securing valuable oil and gas reserves in the area surrounding Timor-Leste. Collaery worked with Witness K as the former ASIS agent blew the whistle on the government's and agency's practices in Timor-Leste in 2013, both being pursued, harassed and indicted by ASIO to stop them delivering evidence at The Hague. Government action against

Collaery and Witness K remained minimal from 2014 until 2018 when both had criminal charges filed against them by the outgoing Turnbull government and incoming Morrison government, joining military whistle-blower David McBride with being charged for the theft of Commonwealth property. The case levelled against Collaery and Witness K cost millions of dollars (reported by the Attorney-General as being more than \$2 million in 2020), as well as having an enormous mental and emotional cost for both men, the almost eight years of government surveillance and harassment damaging Collaery's legal practice and greatly affecting the mental health of Witness K. Although charges against Collaery have now been dropped (the government never taking their case to court), Witness K remains convicted after accepting a guilty plea deal that suspended his sentence to three months. The decision to drop the case against Collaery while whistle-blowers like Julian Assange and David McBride still face legal persecution reflects the likelihood that the action was made to further political ends.

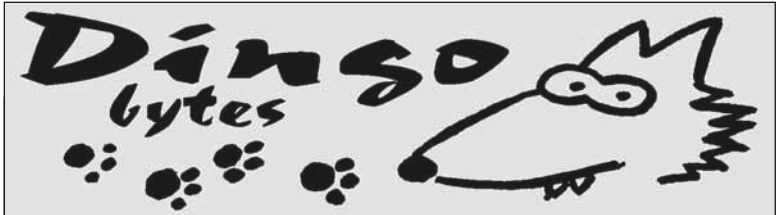
As the Albanese government makes attempts to strengthen its relationship with Asia-Pacific partners in an attempt to counter perceived Chinese influence in Australia's imperial sphere of influence. The decision to drop the Collaery case works to shore up the



Senator Nick Xenophon with Bernard Collaery and Nicholas Cowdery QC in 2015 calling for a royal commission into the Australia-East Timor spying scandal. Photo: Jack bulldog – commons.wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 4.0)

relationship between the Australian government and Timor-Leste, the government's persecution of Collaery and Witness K a major sticking point in international relations between the two states.

The dropping of charges against Collaery presents an opportunity to push for the end of government persecution of whistle-blowers, giving momentum to the push to reverse Witness K's conviction and end the persecution of other whistle-blowers like David McBride and Julian Assange. It is inexcusable to consider the reporting of criminal activity perpetrated by the government to be a crime itself, the persecution of whistle-blowers must end. ✪



Amid attempts to drag Australia into the nuclear cycle, news from France casts yet another pall over the non-future of nuclear fission. France gets about seventy per cent of its electricity from nuclear power, a fact highlighted when the French government announced it would renationalise its state-backed electricity giant EDF, the biggest nuclear energy program in Europe. Problem is, the system's 1980s' infrastructure is coming apart with a two-year backlog in maintenance work that includes faulty welding seals in the systems that cool the radioactive core.

In contrast to the outside focus on China, Pacific Island countries have increasingly used the Pacific Islands Forum in Suva to amplify their deepening concerns about climate change. At the top of the agenda this year is the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, which outlines a long-term path for the region with a focus on combatting the climate crisis and fostering sustainable development. The 2018 Biketawa Declaration designates climate change as the "single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific," and reflects the Pacific Islands' expanded concept of security beyond traditional concerns like regional stability and transnational crime. Pacific Island countries are experiencing the effects of climate change to a more extreme degree than most other countries. Natural disasters have destroyed large portions of the region's economies. Ocean acidification and reef erosion are destroying fish stocks, which are a key source of many people's livelihoods. And higher tides are displacing people from coastal areas and contaminating the groundwater, which in turn prevents crop growth. Thus, climate change not only exacerbates existing problems – such as food and water insecurity, migration, and economic development – but also creates new threats, as low-lying atoll nations worry that sea level rise could result in loss of sovereignty and eventual statelessness. Although China is a major CO2 emitter, some Pacific Island countries nevertheless see China as a helpful partner in tackling the climate crisis. In 2019, Kiribati President Taneti Maamau switched his country's position on Taiwan, recognising Beijing's claim over Taipei, in part because he judged that China is better equipped to help Kiribati combat climate change. Pacific Island countries are seeking assistance on climate adaptation and mitigation, and they will accept it from multiple sources. This dynamic presents a challenge for the United States and its partners, who have sought to frame China as a major culprit on climate issues. Pacific Island countries have contributed the least to climate change, and yet are disproportionately affected by it. So, to some in the region, the back-and-forth about which big country is to blame for climate change seems like meaningless political point-scoring rather than substantive action.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: Here's the Retailers' Association on workers and the rising COVID numbers: Get the fourth shot, take individual responsibility. Here's Anthony Albanese answering questions about his taking away the Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment, which will force people to work when they are sick: Get the fourth shot, take individual responsibility.

DANGERS OF SPACE LAUNCHES

Dr Hannah Middleton

A second NASA rocket was launched into space from Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory on 6th July. It follows the first NASA launch on 27th June. A third NASA rocket was launched on 12th July.

The launches happened from the newly constructed Arnhem Space Centre near Nhulunbuy. The space centre is privately owned and operated by Equatorial Launch Australia (ELA). ELA is now planning a big expansion for the spaceport.

The space centre is on the land owned by the Yolngu people.

Senior leader of the Gumatj clan and Gumatj Corporation Chairman, Djawa Yunupingu, said the launch was a new beginning for the region, creating jobs

and tourism opportunities for the Yolngu people.

IGNORING THE DANGERS

A flood of celebration cannot hide the dangers from the growing numbers of rocket launch sites around the world. Tens of thousands of launches are having major impacts on Earth's environment and a peaceful world.

Every rocket launch helps to punch a larger hole in the Earth's ozone layer

Making rocket fuels creates major amounts of carbon dioxide releases while rocket launch exhausts contaminate air and water, killing fish, birds and other wildlife.

Rocket fuel storage is leaking into local water supplies. A key ingredient called perchlorate

severely impacts the thyroid, especially in children.

When rocket parts fall back to Earth, burning up on re-entry, they drop a toxic stew of burned electronic parts into the air and water.

Every time a rocket crash-lands or explodes, the damage is tremendous – and crashes happen regularly. A 2013 study found that rockets had been crashing, consistently since 1975, between four to ten per cent of the time, at every spaceport in the world

Launch corporations like ELA promise lots of jobs, no environmental harm, and no military uses in order to worm their way into communities, But most launch facilities, sold to the public as civilian, are soon taken over by the military and Pentagon space missions are launched. ✪

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CURRY WITH COMRADES NIGHT – A CPA SA TRADITION

CPA Port Adelaide branch article



Tin Can Alley entertaining comrades at the Curry Night.

Through a close association with the Port Adelaide United Workers' Club, the CPA Port Adelaide branch has access to two fine venues for celebrations and Party activities. At the Semaphore Workers' Club – where a fine reputation of regular popular music has been established – there is a venue capable of catering for a hundred people or more with friendly bar facilities, and the welcoming possibility of combining delightful food, stimulating politics, and jovial camaraderie.

This enjoyable combination took place on the evening of Saturday 2nd July. The centrepiece was the internet link-up with comrade Eugene McCartan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland who reflected on recent elections in Ireland and useful strategies for communicating with people, especially with the working class.

Comrade McCartan detailed the significance of recent election outcomes, which revealed success for the more progressive parties such as Sinn Féin. Though Comrade McCartan suggested that elections, despite their perceived success, have been one of the mechanisms of control in society, they have become one part of the working-class struggle

in search of an ideological alternative. Elections or mass struggle was posed as a dilemma facing the Party.

As a result of an insightful question by comrade Michael Perth, the strategy of building alliances with the working class around the way people were suffering from capitalism was raised – especially regarding housing as part of the broader issue of the cost of living. Comrade McCartan drew attention to the issue of taxation versus private enterprise, particularly in the case of housing. Under the European Union, water could not become a state monopoly, whereas communists would see water, for example, resting in the hands of the people, just as housing should.

In challenging capitalism, comrade McCartan urged us to seek where the enemy is weakest. Consequently, he urged that we must understand capitalism thoroughly to succeed in the battle for socialism, especially when the working-class often appears to acquiesce with their exploitation.

In the case of the *British Industrial Relations Act* where workers' rights were tightly limited, McCartan explained that the Party had drafted their own legislation designed to restore the right to negotiate and, of course, to strike. Fortunately, these propositions

are now being supported by many politicians.

Eugene explained that successful trade unionism depended on effective communication with workers, using terms that people understand and speaking to workers as equals.

In considering Irish unity, Eugene preferred to view the two parts of Ireland – as the twenty-six counties on one side and six counties on the other as follows:

“Partition has been the major road block to the national democratic struggle of the Irish people [...]. The strategy of the Communist Party of Ireland is to develop maximum economic, political and social relations between North and South and to shrink the East-West controls from London [...].”

Entertainment throughout the evening from the Tin Can Ally duo included a rousing version of *Guantanamo* to the delight of all those who support the brave Cuban people in confronting a protracted but unsuccessful six-decade-long illegal US economic blockade. Sri Lankan comrades from the JVP, along with Australia Cuba Friendship Society members and committed unionists joined Party comrades to experience a gastronomic and political feast. ✪

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Are we “piling-on” our politicians? Who has a “mandate” in parliament? Are people “virtue signalling” too much these days? Well it depends on who you ask in this fortnight’s edition of Weasel Words!

PILE-ON

/paɪl/ /ɒn/

In wrestling, a pile-on is a fun exercise in which a group of gigantic professional wrestlers form a pile with one opponent underneath. Like everything about pro-wrestling it's non-serious fun in which nobody is hurt.

In online culture, a pile-on is yet another synonym for criticism you don't like (see also “cancelled” and “attacked”). A pile-on is meaningful – people see that somebody is being criticised, and then they join in on the criticism, hoping to catch a bit of the righteous glory. However, it's a weasel word because pile-on is often used to deflect the question of *why* somebody is being criticised in the first place.

The most recent weasely usage of pile-on involved the very weasely Scott Morrison's candidate for the seat of Warringah, Katherine Deves. Deves seems to have only one subject – her dislike of trans people and the terrible peril this minority poses to the rest of us.

“I'm not going to join the pile-on,” announced our un-lamented former PM, the moment some reasonable person pointed out that Deves was a bigot, as though a pile-on had been announced and Morrison had received a formal invitation to it but was standing aside because he had principles and didn't like bullying.

MANDATE

/ˈmænd.ət/

It's mandate time again! No, we're not all off to a nightclub to watch male strippers! I'm talking about the mandate political parties get from promising to do something and then winning power so they're in a position to do it. This kind of mandate has a very special existence. It's not in the Australian Constitution, any of the rules policed by the Australian Electoral Commission, or parliamentary procedures. Once a party has government in this country, they can do anything they like* – as long as the Constitution doesn't rule it out. The mandate mainly exists when the Senate (also elected) won't let the government do something it wants to. The government complains about having a mandate to do that thing, the Senators feel that *they* have a mandate to stop them from doing it, and the whole discussion is about as useful as telling an excited puppy to take it easy.

* Other than opting out of our “alliance” with the US. There are no rules saying we have to have that either, but we have to, it's one of those things we don't get to be democratic about here, and if any party ever got to power with a mandate to change our relationship to the US, they'd be unmandated pretty quickly.

VIRTUE SIGNALLING

/ˈvɜː.tʃuː.ˌsɪɡ.nəl.ɪŋ/

Like “woke,” this has a meaning but is awfully misused. Sure it isn't very pleasant if someone does a good thing not because it's good, or because they might encourage others to do it, but solely because they want everyone else to admire them. Nobody likes a show pony. Mind you, even if the signaller is a smug show-off, they might still encourage people to do the good thing, so it's not a complete loss.

However, virtue signalling is used not to target the smug but as a way for people who don't like *anyone* doing some good things to vent their dislike of the good things without being too obvious. Rather than having the guts to come out in favour of racism, catastrophic climate change, or against workers' rights, the accusers describe everyone who cares about those things as “virtue signalling.” I don't know about you, but I think we need drastic action on climate change, on workers' rights, and against racism, and if anyone is against those things, they can go and signal to themselves.



**Something to say?
Write to the Editor!**

editor@cpa.org.au

“INSPIRATION AND HOPE” – HOW THE LOWER-NORTHERN QLD TOUR REIGNITED THE CLASS FIGHT IN ME

Kyle M

The morning of 23rd June came with a blustery cold wind to the town of Childers in Queensland. Particularly felt by myself and my fellow sub-contractors working tirelessly from the early hours to prepare and enact our duties for the day.

Sat upon the top of a hill like the proverbial dog on the tuckerbox, Childers is a town of red-dirt, hardworking people and history of tragedy that cannot be overstated. Just last month, on 23rd June was the anniversary of the terrible Childers Palace Backpackers Hostel fire that claimed the lives of several workers. With this in mind, I took a small smoko break to brush up on some theory. On that anniversary, I was to meet with the representatives of the CPA coming through town on their Lower-Northern tour, and I was determined to represent myself well to these comrades from the big smoke. Up until this point in time my only interaction with my fellow Marxists was limited strictly to the somewhat impersonal Zoom meetings and occasional texts and emails. So to say I was nervous would be like saying the October Revolution was a small gathering of dissatisfied workers.

Our meeting was set to occur at lunchtime at the local bowls club. So it was that I set aside my roller tray and informed my friends and colleagues that I would soon be off to a meeting that was of some import, and I would likely not be back for an hour or two. In truth, I wasn't expecting much but to discuss some theory, perhaps some updates on events coming up in the cities. How wrong I was.

Upon entering the bowls club, I was immediately greeted by the sight of what I was sure were my comrades. Though I had never met Comrade David or Graham until this moment, the red colour scheme of their manner of dress was immediately conspicuous to me. I was greeted by both with hearty welcomes and warm handshakes and promptly escorted to a table to meet another member of the Party named Louise, who I had likely passed in the street several times without knowing of her revolutionary inclinations. Louise, I soon discovered, had lived quite an exciting life, and her passion for progressive issues was immediately apparent.

Once the introductions and niceties had been observed, we got to what I perceived to be the true purpose of this meeting. These were not gentlemen who were in my small town to bandy crooked words or engaged in some sort of big-city adventurism in the working-class rural centres of Queensland. These were men who knew their business and were keen to be about it. The main

topics at hand were the local issues, namely the exploitation and mistreatment of the migrant workers and issues of the cashless debit card that, up until the recent rollback, was to be the fate of many welfare recipients of the greater Wide-Bay Burnett region. Most importantly, and somewhat surprisingly, I found both David and Graham to be attentive and quick to offer the support of the Brisbane branch of the Party in matters of local issues that Louise and I brought up.

The effect on myself and Louise (who I have now met several times to discuss organising and these local issues further) was immense and immediate. Here we sat, two comrades so isolated in the seemingly endless sea of conservatism that pervades small towns, who had up until this meeting been unaware that there was even another Communist living within 100 KM let alone just up the street from one another. And we were fired up! Plans of solidarity events for migrant workers, open letters to the Prime Minister, and even the picketing of the local MP Keith Pitt's office were suddenly flowing into the collective imaginations of all present.

In a meeting that lasted only a few scant hours I had found that the fire in my belly for action that had hence been dormant beneath a thick crust of semi-defeatism and apathy had once again been reignited. I could see that this was the same for both comrades of the Brisbane branch. These men were here not just to build *the* Party, but to help us to build *our* Party.

And herein lies the true victory of the Lower-Northern QLD tour. Inspiration and hope through comradely discussion and planning as well as pledges of support for us more isolated members to tackle issues that may seem minuscule but are nonetheless issues that we perceive and interact with daily. True enough, we are thin on the ground in these smaller rural areas and regional centres but our direct interaction and solidarity with the (often heavily exploited) populations can be invaluable in shaping and moulding the Communist Party of Australia and its future with the working class of all areas of this great southern land.

I would encourage all comrades of the Party and supporters of the movement everywhere to take a leaf from the book of comrades David and Graham. Leave your bubbles and spheres of influence, connect with your more isolated comrades, and discuss the similar issues they are facing in their small, out of the way parts of the country. For in towns such as Childers you may find that some citizens are as politically red as the soil that feeds our agricultural home. ✪



Leave your bubbles and spheres of influence, connect with your more isolated comrades, and discuss the similar issues they are facing in their small, out of the way parts of the country.

OP-ED: CHINA'S PRINCIPLED POSITION ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE

By C T Ryan

Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states has been the express foundation of China's response to the war in Ukraine. On that basis, China has recognised that the achievement of peace is ultimately conditional on the territorial security of both Ukraine and Russia being guaranteed. To this end, China has consistently advocated for a negotiated resolution to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine through the implementation of the principle of indivisible security – including in a broad European peace settlement.

CHINA'S STARTING POINT

Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations stipulates that the United Nations (UN) "is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all [states]" and (in Art 2(4)) that states shall not use force "against the territorial integrity" of any state.

China's adherence to these foundational principles has been repeatedly made clear in its statements on the war in Ukraine. In February, China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, outlined China's position on the conflict in conversations with representatives of Britain, France, and the European Union. The starting point was: "China maintains that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected and protected and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter abided by in real earnest."

In March, at the UN General Assembly Special Emergency Session on Ukraine, China's Ambassador to the UN, Zhang Jun, said: "On Ukraine, China has always maintained that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected, that the purposes and principles of the UN Charter should be upheld [...]"

China's approach is not mere formalistic statements of principle. It is imbued with a recognition that for the principles to have effect – and peace to be achieved and maintained – there needs to be, as expressed in Article 1(1) of the UN Charter, "effective collective measures [...]". Accordingly, and notably in the context of the Ukraine conflict, China has called for "common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security".

A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR PEACE IN EUROPE

China has repeatedly spoken of the need for negotiations between the European Union and Russia to achieve a peaceful settlement to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, including advocating for the establishment of a new framework for the maintenance of collective security in Europe.

In expounding China's position on the war, Foreign Minister Wang Yi made it clear China recognised that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) "five consecutive rounds of eastward expansion" had raised legitimate security concerns for Russia. This impact of NATO's expansion in destabilising the security settlement in Europe, pointed to the necessity for establishing "a balanced, effective and sustainable European security mechanism" to guarantee peace in Europe, in China's view.

Again, speaking with the French President and German Chancellor in March, China's President, Xi Jinping, said: "China supports France and Germany in promoting a balanced, effective and sustainable European security framework for the interests and lasting security of Europe."

For China, it is the principle of indivisible security which should inform the construction of this new framework. Implementation of

the principle would involve addressing the security concerns of Russia that have arisen from NATO's eastwards expansion.

Speaking at a UN Security Council briefing by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe in March, China's UN Ambassador, Zhang Jun, said: "the world is indivisible, and security is indivisible" and highlighted that the principle of indivisible security carried "special significance under the current circumstances." Similarly, Director of China's Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, Yang Jiechi, spoke of the need for the parties concerned to engage in dialogue which seeks "to put in place a balanced, effective and sustainable European security architecture in line with the principle of indivisibility of security".

In April, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that: "a balanced, effective and sustainable European security architecture should be rebuilt on the basis of the principle of indivisible security. Only by doing so can Europe truly achieve lasting peace and stability."

SECURITY IS INDIVISIBLE

The principle of indivisible security was elaborated in the Helsinki Act of 1975 and has since been endorsed and accepted in a range of international treaties and agreements, to which the west, including the United States, have acceded, including the European Security Charter, signed in Istanbul in November 1999, and the Astana Declaration of December 2010.

Essentially, the principle of indivisible security recognises the reality that states stand in relationships of interdependence with each other – so that movement by a state/s in a particular direction necessarily implies a commensurate consequence for its neighbours. Seeking to minimise the chances of such consequences manifesting in war, the principle of indivisible security upholds the maxim that states "will not strengthen their security at the expense of the security of other states" (as expressed in the European Security Charter, for example).

In the months leading up to the war, Russia had argued in international forums for the principle of "indivisible security" to prevail as the basis for ensuring peace in Europe.

ECHOES OF HISTORY

In considering the causes of the war in Ukraine, the actions of the United States-led imperialist powers over recent decades cannot be discounted. The expansionist policies pursued by these powers through NATO pushing ever closer to the borders of the Russian Federation, ostensibly to enhance the west's security, created a threat to Russia impossible to ignore.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and collapse of the socialist states of eastern Europe, the door had been opened to intensified predatory activity by, and competition between, different segments of the capitalist world, including now Russia itself, for markets, resources, and spheres of influence.

These developments were exacerbated by a range of other factors, including: the rise of China as an economic superpower; inter-imperialist rivalry between the US and the European Union; economic crises within capitalism. Contributing to the increasingly febrile atmosphere were efforts to respond to and take advantage of the challenges and opportunities presented by the global climate crisis.

On this general background, the western imperialists set their sights on Ukraine. The US and its allies invested billions in military aid to Ukraine, as a counterweight to, and possibly potential spearhead for assault on, Russia. The strategy involved the rehabilitation and integration of fascist elements



Photo: Dennis Jarvis – flickr.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

into the Ukrainian state infrastructure and military.

By any objective analysis, the imminent incorporation of Ukraine in NATO, meaning the military alliance's advance to Russia's borders, constituted a serious threat to Russia's security. It would have provoked Russia perceiving dangers to its existence, not unreasonably given its history (particularly the invasion of the Soviet Union during the Second World War), and would have fuelled nationalist, empire-building, or militarist agendas of the Russian government. It also effectively amounted to the more complete dismemberment of the former union between Ukraine and Russia, severing historical, cultural, economic, institutional, and even familial, bonds between the Russian and Ukrainian peoples. War became inevitable.

In outlining China's position on the war in February, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, highlighted, in effect, how the principle of indivisible security might be applied in negotiations to bring about peace:

"China believes that the security of one country should not come at the expense of the security of other countries, still less should regional security be guaranteed by strengthening or even expanding military blocs. The Cold War mentality should be discarded completely. [And with reference to the impact of NATO's eastwards expansion] [...] **Russia's legitimate security demands ought to be taken seriously and properly addressed.**" (emphasis added)

THE "RULES-BASED-ORDER" AND CHINA

The use of force by states against other states is illegal under international law, as enshrined in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. China's position on the war in Ukraine has been characterised by adherence to the "rules-based international order". It is **real, meaningful** adherence, recognising that a necessary pre-condition for peaceful relations between states is their mutual confidence in their security. It understands that for the prohibition on the use of force by states against other states in Article 2(4) to be effective, it is essential that material

realities which may be productive of conflict be eliminated or minimised.

The approach taken by the United States and its allies is in stark contrast. Historically, they have paid lip service to international law while repeatedly flouting it: think of the illegal invasion of Iraq as just one instance. It is without doubt that their efforts to consolidate and strengthen NATO, to bring other states, such as Ukraine, within its orbit, contributed significantly to undermining peaceful relations between Russia and Ukraine. Now the US-led bloc is continuing to stoke the fires of the present conflict by dispatching thousands of more troops to eastern Europe, and spending additional hundreds of millions in providing sophisticated weaponry to Ukraine, including long-range artillery.

There is another way. Surely essential to cutting the ground from under chauvinist and militarist elements in Russia and Ukraine and to providing a basis for restoration of fraternal relations between the peoples of the region, is by guaranteeing in the first place these peoples' right to, and sense of, security in their own territory?

Most immediately, this outcome would seem to require guarantees of both Ukraine's neutrality and no further expansion of NATO – thus ensuring Russia's security – as part of a peace settlement.

And now NATO is turning its focus towards China. At its June Summit in Madrid, NATO adopted the position that China challenges its "interests, security and values", and was critical of China on a number of levels including in its defence and economic policies and technological progress. It is a provocative and potentially dangerous course, and utterly antithetical to the promise of a peaceful world contained in Article 2(4).

China's response has been to call on NATO to abandon its provocative rhetoric, Cold War mentality, and blind faith in military force. And, remembering the principle that security is indivisible, China has also called on NATO to renounce its "misguided practice of seeking absolute security, halt the dangerous attempt to destabilise Europe and the Asia-Pacific, and act in the interest of security and stability in Europe and beyond." ✪

CANADA: DIGNITY IN DEATH IS NO CURE FOR INDIGNITY IN LIFE

At the end of April, CTV published a news item about a 31-year-old Toronto woman who was nearing final approval for a medically assisted death. CTV reported that the woman has a number of chronic illnesses and uses a wheelchair, and that she had been trying to find affordable housing that was accessible and that would not aggravate her illnesses. Unable to find appropriate housing after months of searching and struggling to live on a poverty-level \$1200 monthly income through Ontario's Disability Support Program (ODSP), she determined that dying was better.

This story is one of several that have been reported on in recent months, about people living in poverty or with disabilities or illnesses who have concluded that Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) offers them a level of dignity in death that they have been denied in life.

These reports have aroused a renewed condemnation of MAID, which was expanded through legislation passed in March 2021. But really, this is a condemnation of capitalism which has proven time and again that it cannot provide a decent quality of life for the majority of the world's people.

Like abortion, MAID is a health issue that is, first and foremost, about people's right to control their own bodies. As such, it is a decision best left to individual people. Clearly, however, the decisions made are greatly affected by the supports – or lack thereof – which would make extending life and postponing death a reasonable option. In that sense, MAID is a health issue that immediately involves questions like affordable housing, adequate income, strong health and social supports – all of which need to be universally and accessibly guaranteed by the government.

No person should feel compelled, including by social or cultural pressures, to continuing living in pain or suffering. But just as people should not be compelled to continuing living, they must not feel compelled to die due



Photo: pxhere.com (CC0 Public Domain)

to lack of services or supports. Many people face desperate hardships – personal, health, social or economic – during their lives, and it is unfortunate that much of the public discussion about MAID avoids addressing the urgent need for radical reforms that can help confront these hardships.

In no way is dignity in death a cure for the indignity of poverty, isolation or oppression based on racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia or transphobia. Nor is it a cure for capitalist policies that are responsible for deep cuts to health and social programs. We must oppose every attempt to counter pose MAID to the urgent need for the expansion, increased funding and wider accessibility to these programs.

So, the solution is not to dial back MAID rights. Rather, the way forward is to

dramatically increase state supports and to eliminate poverty and homelessness.

This means immediate action for a full employment policy to create jobs with good wages, and reforms to Employment Insurance to make it non-contributory and to provide 90 percent of previous earnings to all unemployed workers for the duration of unemployment. It means a universal public pension which guarantees a livable retirement income for all. It means expanded universal healthcare to include pharmacare, vision, dental, mental health and long-term care. And it means a federal housing strategy to build one million units of social housing, roll back rents and ensure rent control for all tenants.

It also means income supports for people with disabilities and their caregivers, and for

retrofit programs to ensure accessibility in the home and in society. These and all government programs must give particular attention to Indigenous and racialised people and people with disabilities, starting by involving members of those communities in program development and implementation.

From the point of view of public policy, then, the debate should not be over a miserable life versus a quick death, but on how to secure a qualitatively better life from cradle to grave, which the state is on the hook to provide.


Dignity in death is important. But it is inseparable from dignity in life, and capitalism can guarantee neither.

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ON TRANSPHOBIA

Miranda Lynch

Recently, right-wing and liberal media have been attacking trans people in increasingly vicious ways. How can we analyse this from a left-wing viewpoint?

In 1919 Lenin said the following in a speech on anti-Semitism:

“The hate of the workers and peasants, the landowners and capitalists tried to divert against the Jews. In other countries, too, we often see the capitalists fomenting hatred against the Jews, in order to blind the workers, to divert their attention from the real enemy of the working people: capital.”

In *Labour in Irish History*, Connolly wrote the following:

“Hence the bourgeois press and politicians incessantly strive to inflame the working-class mind to fever heat upon questions outside the range of their own class interests. War, religion, race, language, political reform, patriotism – apart from whatever intrinsic merits they may possess – all serve in the hands of the possessing class as counter-irritants, whose function it is to avert the catastrophe of social revolution by engendering heat in such parts of the body politic as are the farthest removed from the seat of economic enquiry, and

consequently of class consciousness on the part of the proletariat.”

While anti-Semitism, racism, sexism, transphobia, sectarianism, hatred against refugees etc. are unique struggles that should certainly not be compared directly, the tactics of the ruling class are far from unique each time. Again and again we see the ruling classes exploit bigotry and prejudice, to divide the working class and to distract workers so they don't examine their place in society and become class-conscious.

The goal is to divide the working class, by positioning trans people as outside the working class, and claiming that the interests of trans people are somehow opposed to working-class interests. We can see in the areas of housing, health, and employment that this could not be further from the truth.

According to research by Stonewall, one in four trans people in Britain have experienced homelessness. Trans people are also likely to be living in a precarious or unsafe housing situation because of discrimination by family members or flatmates.

The waiting-list for trans health care in Ireland at the National Gender Service in Loughlinstown is at present between 2.5 and 3 years. This is a symptom of an

underfunded HSE but also of a “gatekeeping” protocol which requires trans people to prove their transness and increases waiting-lists further.

On the employment side, precarious work has become increasingly common, especially among young people. Flexible or temporary contracts and bogus self-employment constructions put trans and LGBT people at risk of employment discrimination, as their bosses can easily reduce their hours or fire them.

For housing, health, and employment we can thus see that trans people are hit by the double whammy of discrimination and economic issues. As socialists we should use our strength in this area and push for public housing, better public health, and an end to precarious employment contracts.

However, we must not limit ourselves to strict economism. Nor should we accuse trans people of dividing the movement when they stand against their own oppression. We should stand with the trans and LGBT community against cynical attacks on them from right-wing media and politicians. Most importantly, we must bring the working class together and unite against all forms of oppression.

Socialist Voice 🌟

CHILE'S NEW CONSTITUTION RECOGNISES INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Graham Holton

Chile's new constitution will make it the third plurinational country in South America, after Ecuador and Bolivia. It is part of the sweeping reforms of President Gabriel Boric Font, whose broad coalition of Left-wing parties, including Chile's Communist Party, came to power on 19th November 2021, ousting President Sebastián Piñera, a conservative billionaire. It will replace the 1980 constitution of the Pinochet dictatorship. If allowed to reach fruition, the government may pave the way for a second revolution in South America, after the Bolivian Revolution of 1952.

On the 4th July 2022, Elisa Loncón held up before the international press, the final draft of the constitutional proposal, during its presentation at the National Congress in Santiago. Loncón is Mapuche, the largest Chilean Indigenous nation. She was elected the first president of Chile's constitutional assembly, the body charged with writing the new constitution with the assistance of the UN Human Rights Regional Office for South America project. Chile: human rights at the centre of the new Constitution.

"Never before have the Indigenous communities of Chile been invited to help draft a new constitution," said Loncón. She used to support her family by selling vegetables at a local market and went on to become a linguist and professor at the University of Santiago, having obtained two doctorate degrees. "For the first time in our history," Loncón added, "Chileans from all walks of life and from all political factions are participating in a democratic dialogue."

The new constitution is one of the longest in the world, at 388 articles in length. Compared to the restrictive Pinochet-era constitution, it is wide-ranging and enshrines in law a host of social rights, including the right to free speech, abortion, clean air and water, and a publicly-funded national health service. To address historical inequalities and to protect minority groups, the constitution will protect the plurinational, intercultural, and ecological values of modern Chile. These nations are represented by seven Mapuche, two Aymara, and one representative for each remaining ethnic group: Diaguita, Quechua, Atacameño, Colla, Yagan, Kawesqar, Chango, and Rapa Nui (Easter Island).

The new constitution was adopted with 106 votes, accepting land restitution as a preferential reparation mechanism, which was celebrated by the seventeen constituents who occupy seats reserved for Indigenous peoples in the Convention. "Indigenous peoples have rights to the resources they have traditionally used or occupied," said Rosa Catrileo, "which are found in their territories and are essential for their collective existence. Today the Constitutional Convention paves the way to the solution of historical conflicts related to the dispossession that Indigenous peoples have suffered." Catrileo is Mapuche.

The Pinochet-era constitution and Decree

Law 2568, promulgated in 1979, state that after the land was measured and divided, its inhabitants would no longer be classified as indigenous. This legislation hit the Mapuche hard, as the government attempted to deny their existence, diminishing any sense of identity and community. These brutal policies were meant to nullify any attempt to claim indigenous land rights.

The Chicago School of Economics used Chile as a massive experiment to inflict neoliberalism upon the Chilean economy and its people. Neoliberalism is enshrined in the 1980 constitution, in which under neoliberalism's "morals of the market," the free market and private property ownership are defined as human rights. This was central to the Pinochet government's re-privatising foreign and Chilean-owned assets that the Allende government had nationalised between 1970 and 1973.

The social disaster brought about by neoliberalism created a tsunami of popular protests in October 2019, known as the *estallido social* (Social Upheaval). The protests revealed the outrage felt after years of social injustice, the lack of dignity towards Chile's indigenous peoples, and the country's deep economic and social inequities. In 2021 millions of Chileans filled the country's streets and public squares to demand change. One year after the protests started, Chileans voted overwhelmingly in favour of drafting a new constitution.

In May 2022, the Constitutional Convention approved provisions related to the Indigenous peoples' right to their territories and resources. The constitutional process results from a broad national agreement among political parties in Chile to end inequality and poor public services. Many Chileans blame the old constitution for the creation of one of the most unequal countries in the world. It led to acts of violence in the south of the country, where forestry and agricultural companies occupy, without Indigenous permission, territories that Indigenous peoples have inhabited for centuries. The intruders were met with arson attacks on machinery and property, fatal shootouts, and hunger strikes by Indigenous prisoners.

Chile's new constitution will replace the free-market-centric economic system of the Pinochet period (1973-1990). Environmental democracy and consultative resource management with the indigenous people hold an important part of this constitution, as does mining, which is central to Chilean economic dependence on its export of natural resources.

The new government has already begun the nationalisation of the country's biggest copper and lithium mines. Chile, is the world's largest copper producer and has two important lithium mines. The "Lithium Triangle" constitutes Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina. At 8.6 million tonnes, Chile's lithium reserves are the largest in the world, followed by Australia. Lithium mining takes an environmental toll as the refining process is water-intensive. Between 2000 and 2015,



lithium mining in the Atacama Desert greatly depleted the local water table.

In 2021 Chile produced 5.6 million tonnes of copper, nearly twenty-five per cent of the world's total. The government is about to spend US\$70 billion in new mining projects, once it has nationalised the nation's mineral resources. A new mining royalty bill will raise tariffs on companies based on gross sales and profitability. FTI Consulting reports in its *Mining Royalties, the Elections and the Constitution in Chile (2022)* that tax rates will increase to as much as eighty per cent and profit margins will consequently drop by more than fifty per cent, at current copper prices. "Chile would become the nation with the highest tax burden on copper mining, forcing companies to revisit the viability of their current and future investments." These are the same arguments used by the CIA in the 1970s to discredit the Allende government, leading up to the infamous coup of 11th September 1973.

The neoliberalism experiment, introduced under Pinochet, has been a massive failure in Chile, as witnessed by the increasing concentration of wealth by a few families and the growing level of poverty and homelessness, as evidenced by the increase in size of the slums. Private property as a human right did not have a positive impact during the Pinochet, nor under the democratic period that followed. It failed to improve human rights, deemed worse than dismal by the international human rights organisations, resulting in the massive failure of social justice and increased poverty. Nor did it attract FDIs (Foreign Direct Investments) after its widespread privatisations. The economy continued to fail. Even after the end of the dictatorship, unemployment levels increased. The State-Owned Enterprises would have produced greater wealth for the Chilean people and have had a better impact on Chilean society, than by privatising them.

The International Property Rights Index is a measure created to offer a comprehensive insight into the international status of property rights. In 2021 Chile ranked thirty-one, the highest in Latin America, compared to the UK at fifteen, Australia at eleven, and the USA at six. Despite the country exhibiting some of the largest measures of financial market depth among emerging market economies, Chile still suffered from significant social and political problems.

Even though economic growth had rebounded to 5.5 per cent with a GDP at US\$252.9 billion, poverty increased from 8.1 per cent to 12.2 per cent, with more than 30 per cent of the population being economically vulnerable, suffering from the consequences of high-income inequality. This culminated in months of widespread social unrest, met with savage repression by the *Carabineros* (police), who shot people in the face, blinding them, or firing shotguns at journalists' legs, crippling them. This technique of crowd control was taught to them by the Israelis.

Under such social hardship the 2021 election saw Gabriel Boric Font win fifty-six per cent of the votes, compared with forty-four per cent for his conservative opponent, José Antonio Kast. Boric was a student leader in the Chilean capital, Santiago, who rallied against the country's privatised education system, and led a broad coalition that included Chile's Communist Party.

On 4th September, Chileans will participate in a referendum to approve the new constitution. If approved, it will replace the hated 1980 constitution. Whether the US State Department and the CIA will interfere in the referendum and support the far right as it did leading up to the violent coup against Allende, with its concentration camps and mass graves, we will have to wait and see. 🌱

"For the first time in our history," Loncón added, "Chileans from all walks of life and from all political factions are participating in a democratic dialogue."

IMF AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS URGED TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY IN TACKLING SRI LANKAN CRISIS TO PREVENT FURTHER CRISES

As political leaders of Sri Lanka discussed the way forward for the country following the announced resignation of both the country's President and Prime Minister amid the worst economic crisis in decades in the country, Chinese observers called on global financial organisations to coordinate creditors to speed up debt restructuring, avoid putting politics first and establish an emergency response mechanism to prevent more sovereign debt defaults as countries like Zimbabwe and Argentina may follow Sri Lanka into economic crisis.

Sri Lanka's economy is highly dependent on foreign trade with limited resilience to shocks. The pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine conflict as well as US' unilateral sanctions against Russia have combined to precipitate a crisis, observers stressed. They said it was not directly related to China-funded infrastructure investment, and blaming China's projects is purely driven by malicious geopolitical motives.

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa officially informed Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe that he will continue with his resignation as previously announced, the Prime Minister's Office said after protesters stormed the residences of the two leaders, *Xinhua News Agency* reported.

A senior government official told *Xinhua* that Wickremesinghe called for an urgent meeting with his cabinet and will also meet leaders of all political parties to discuss the way forward. Wickremesinghe has also agreed to resign.

Wang Wenbin, spokesperson of China's Foreign Ministry, said at a routine media briefing that China is closely following the latest developments in Sri Lanka. As a friendly neighbour and cooperation partner, we sincerely hope that all sectors in Sri Lanka could bear in mind the fundamental interests of their country and people and work together in solidarity to overcome the current difficulties and strive to restore stability, revitalise the economy, and improve people's livelihoods at an early date, Wang said.

China has provided emergency humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka in the past months, and will continue to provide support and assistance to Sri Lanka within its capacity to help the country's economic recovery and ordinary people, but Chinese observers said professional finance organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, should be largely responsible for addressing the crisis based on effective coordination with all creditors, as commercial creditors and multilateral financial institutions are the major lenders behind Sri Lanka's foreign debt.

Meanwhile, although the US dominates the current global financial safety net, it conducts financial assistance more in its own interests than in the interests of the world. Some US-led small groups have constrained the effectiveness of global governance and the functioning of international organisations, which has exacerbated the Sri Lanka crisis, observers said.

Some major powers, in pursuit of their own interests, have formed small groups based on the so-called common values, used global governance as a tool for geopolitical games, and downplayed the real value of global governance, Xu Liping, a research fellow on Southeast Asian studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, told the *Global Times*.

For instance, the Quad, in the name of setting up a foreign aid group to jointly



Hambantota Port, Sri Lanka. Photo: Dinesh De Alwis – commons.wikimedia.org (CC BY-SA 4.0)

respond to the Sri Lanka crisis, actually has the true purpose of taking advantage of the crisis to exclude China and contain China's role in Sri Lanka, according to Xu.

Xu suggested major countries and international organisations establish an emergency response mechanism to prevent more countries from facing a catastrophic debt crisis like Sri Lanka.

He said Sri Lanka's crisis was mainly due to a foreign exchange shortage – a result of many external reasons including the impact of the coronavirus, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and a single economic structure which makes it more fragile in the face of external shocks. Xu reiterated that the crisis was not directly related to China-funded infrastructure investment in Sri Lanka.

Under the impact, all its pillar industries, such as tourism, textile and tea planting, are incapable of "making money" and thus leading to severe consequences, Xu said.

Thus, the ongoing Sri Lanka crisis reflects a common challenge faced by many developing economies, especially those which have a single economic structure and are deeply affected by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and other South Asian countries like Nepal and Maldives should be on the alert, observers noted. They also warned that globally African countries like Zimbabwe and Latin American countries like Argentina and Brazil are all at risk of following Sri Lanka into major economic crisis.

While for Sri Lanka, external assistance can only provide temporary help, and the South Asian nation must follow through on radical reforms if it wants to really get out of the crisis, Long Xingchun, President of the Chengdu Institute of World Affairs, told the *Global Times*.

Sri Lanka's crisis reflects the mismatch between the country's development strategy and actual economic capacity, and between its long-term goals and the reality on the ground, according to Long. He said it is necessary for Sri Lanka to formulate a development strategy suitable for its national conditions

based on its own situation rather than copying Western modes.

INDIAN MEDIA SMEAR THE BRI

As a close neighbour of Sri Lanka, India has beefed up surveillance along the Sri Lankan maritime borders by deploying additional hovercrafts and patrol boats to prevent an influx of illegal immigrants, *India Today* reported.

Hu Zhiyong, a research fellow at the Institute of International Relations at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, told the *Global Times* that India may help Sri Lanka although the assistance may not be significant due to its own economic situation, as India needs to ensure that possible refugee issue of Sri Lanka will not result in security risks for India.

But aside from protecting its own safety, some Indian media outlets have largely seen Sri Lankan crisis as a geopolitical tool to counter China's influence.

The Times of India ran an article entitled "How India hopes to counter China with 'unprecedented' support to crisis-hit Sri Lanka," and the *Print*, another Indian media, smeared the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by claiming that more South Asian countries, which borrowed from China for infrastructure projects, "face balance of payments challenges."

Qian Feng, director of the research department at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University, told the *Global Times* that the deteriorating China-India relations over the last two years have created more spaces for the Indian media to smear and attack China, and Indian media outlets have grabbed the opportunity of the current Sri Lanka crisis to try to influence Indian government decisions so that India may one day dominate South Asia.

Meanwhile India often takes a strong hand on Sri Lankan issues with a long-standing condescending attitude, which can

only cause a negative response in Sri Lanka, analysts said.

In comparison, the BRI projects such as Hambantota Port has developed into an important comprehensive port for the region, and it is China's loans and participation that have helped Sri Lanka revitalise its important assets, and provided a key driving force for the sustainable development of Sri Lanka, analysts said.

Maya Majueran, who's currently serving as a director of Belt&Road Initiative Sri Lanka (BRISL), a Sri Lanka-based organisation that specialises in BRI cooperation, refuted the so-called debt-trap diplomacy hyped by some in the US and Indian media.

"Someone's hyping that Sri Lanka's debt burden was a result of BRI projects like Hambantota Port. However, there is no evidence supporting the claim. Furthermore Chinese loans are concessional and taken for infrastructure and eco-social development," Majueran told the *Global Times*.

In fact, in partnership with BRI, Sri Lanka commenced a series of developmental projects, leading to a huge overhaul of Sri Lankan infrastructure which had been lagging behind for generations. Improving infrastructure and creating jobs have immensely benefited the Sri Lankan people, Majueran said.

However, political and economic turmoil in Sri Lanka will definitely have an impact on the progress of some large-scale BRI projects such as Hambantota Port and Colombo City, but the impact is short-term, Zhou Yuyuan, senior research fellow at the Center for West Asian and African Studies under the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, told the *Global Times*.

In the long run, these projects are actually important developments that were and will be critical in contributing to the economic construction of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government is also fully aware of this and also attaches great importance to the BRI, Zhou said.

Global Times ✪

SHINZO ABE, JAPAN'S RIGHT-WING MILITARIST FORMER PRIME MINISTER, ASSASSINATED

CJ Atkins

Shinzo Abe, who ruled Japan as prime minister for a year in 2006 and then again from 2012 to 2020, was shot and killed Friday during a campaign rally in the town of Nara. Japan is holding elections for the upper house of its legislature on Sunday, and Abe was addressing a meeting of his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) outside a train station.

Public broadcaster NHK reports that the assailant, Tetsuya Yamagami, forty-one, is a former member of the naval branch of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces. The motive is not yet known. The perpetrator shot Abe twice from behind, using what the media referred to as a "homemade gun."

Japan has strict gun control laws, and gun violence is almost non-existent in the country. In 2021, it saw only one recorded gun violence death. The murder was immediately condemned by leaders of all of Japan's major political parties and many world leaders.

Shii Kazuo, chair of the opposition Japanese Communist Party (JCP), called the assassination an "absolutely unforgivable" act of "barbarism" and "terrorism." Shii said, "The violent killing of speech is the most hateful act of destroying democracy."

Shii expressed his condolences to Abe's family but nonetheless emphasised that the JCP "had a

very different political position from Shinzo Abe."

As a politician, Abe's reputation included a preference for neoliberal economics favouring big business. And when it came to foreign policy, he was known as a right-wing militarist who sought to revive the country's armed might and whitewash the brutality of Japanese imperialism's past.

Abe came to office pledging to make Japan "the most business-friendly country in the world" by repealing corporate regulations and worker protections, while reducing corporate taxes and raising taxes on everyone else. Following the neoliberal free trade handbook, Abe sought to make it easier for companies to fire workers, to take Japan into the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and revive nuclear technology as an export product after the Fukushima reactor disaster.

Dismissed by the JCP, unions, and the left, but celebrated by the business class, "Abenomics" was supposedly aimed at boosting "productivity" and "flexibility" — code words in capitalist ideology for squeezing more out of workers and making it easier to get rid of them whenever an employer wants.

Abe's heavy-handed push for the TPP trade deal was met with resistance from workers and labour groups. The proposed agreement prioritised the interests of multinational corporations in Japan and the US over those of the people and would have eliminated protections

for Japan's health care, employment, insurance, and public procurement systems.

Even more than his economic policies, though, it was Abe's nationalistic military and foreign policies which shape the legacy he leaves behind. He was a revisionist when it came to Japan's history of imperialist aggression and atrocities and an advocate for making Japan a strong military power once again.

Abe's attitude on Japan's role during World War II — including denial of the sex slavery that the Japanese army forced on tens of thousands of women, minimising or ignoring mass murders committed across China and Korea, the promotion of school textbooks covering up Japan's crimes, and his frequent visits to a shrine honouring Japanese war criminals — put him at odds with much of the Japanese population.

One of Abe's main goals, which thanks to public pressure remains unfulfilled, was to repeal Article 9, the so-called "peace clause" of Japan's constitution. Part of the charter imposed by occupying US forces after the end of the war, Article 9 sought to outlaw war and forbid Japan from ever again becoming an aggressor.

It states "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes." Further provisions limit Japan to only maintaining a limited



Shinzo Abe. Photo: Japan Official commons.wikimedia.org (CC BY 4.0)

"Self-Defence Force" (SDF) and ban the development of a large military with offensive capabilities. Over time, it became a key part of Japanese national identity, much to the dismay of militarists. It has been credited with keeping Japan out of the Iraq War.

Abe's push to throw out Article 9 was a family tradition. His grandfather, former Prime Minister Nouseke Kishi, also sought to undermine the document when he was in power from 1957 to 1960. During the 1930s, Kishi was known for his inhuman rule of the Japanese Empire's puppet state of Manchukuo in northeastern China.

Expressing admiration for the techniques of Japan's Nazi allies in Germany, Kishi oversaw Japan's colonial exploitation in Manchuria, which saw tens of thousands die as slave labourers in mines and factories. More were killed in chemical warfare experiments. He earned the nickname "Monster of Manchukuo."

Wang Qingxiang, a researcher at the Jilin Academy of Social Sciences and one of China's top researchers of Japanese atrocities in Manchuria, said that Kishi's "crimes pile up to the heavens."

After the war, Kishi spent three years in prison before being freed during the Cold War when the US determined that technocrats like him were needed to rebuild Japan

so it could join the anti-Soviet effort in Asia.

Abe saw his efforts to grow Japan's military as a continuation of his grandfather's work and regularly arranged his policy announcements and actions around important anniversaries related to Kishi's rule and life. Abe praised his grandfather in a 2007 essay for "pressing forward no matter how many people were opposed because his was the only path."

Hemmed in by public opposition to his anti-Article 9 efforts, Abe nevertheless rammed through defense budget increases and worked to make the SDF into an army in fact if not in name. Following the lead of US President Donald Trump, he urged a greater weapons build-up to target China and brought Japan into the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (known as the Quad), a military alliance with the US, Australia, and India.

Citing health reasons, Abe resigned from office in 2020, having become Japan's longest-serving prime minister. He remained a powerful figure in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, however, controlling its leading faction. Current Prime Minister Fumio Kishida was Abe's anointed successor and is seen as a pliable tool of the party establishment that was run by Abe.

People's World 🌐

**COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA
PAMPHLET LAUNCH**

JACK McPHILLIPS
COMMUNISTS and the TRADE UNIONS
2022 edition

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COMMUNIST PARTY OF UKRAINE BANNED: ALL ASSETS SEIZED BY STATE

Steven Sweeney

The Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU) has been permanently banned after a Lviv court ruling which turned over all its assets, including party buildings and funds, to the state.

In a statement, the Eighth Administrative Appeal Court said that it had satisfied the claims of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine and ordered the party's closure.

"The activity of the Communist Party of Ukraine is prohibited; the property, funds and other assets of the party, its regional, city, district organisations, primary centres and other structural entities have been transferred to the state," the court reported.

The KPU is the latest opposition party to be banned by the Ukrainian authorities.

A list of others including the Opposition Platform – For Life party, Left Opposition, Union of Left Forces, Socialist Party of Ukraine and other left-wing organisations have also been prohibited.

This followed a decree signed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky outlawing all political parties deemed to be "pro-Russian" on 14th May.

No far-right or neonazi organisations have been placed under similar restrictions despite responsibility for a string of atrocities and alleged war crimes in eastern Ukraine.

Authorities have been seeking to close the KPU for more than seven years, using "decommunisation" laws banning communist symbols to block party activities, including barring it from standing in elections, and shut down its newspaper.

In the last general election in which it was allowed to stand, in 2012, the KPU won 2.6 million votes or thirteen per cent of the total.

Kiev views the party's call since 2014 for a peaceful negotiated solution to the civil war in the Donbass that began that year as treasonous. Moves had already been made to ban the KPU but it had

been subject to a number of court cases and appeals.

The Lviv court made the final decision today.

Two communist youth leaders, Alexander and Mikhail Kononovich, face life in prison on charges of spying for Russian and Belarus after being hauled in on March 3.

Their trial continued today and they remain banned from the courtroom in a case they insist was "fabricated from start to finish."

They are accused of "actions aimed at forcibly changing the political system or seizing state power" under Article 109 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

According to prosecutors the brothers belonged to an "organised group," consisting only of themselves.

Intelligence services claim that the Kononovich brothers planned to seize one of the country's district administrations, although they have not identified which one or when the capture was to happen.



It cited statements on their social media platforms as evidence and says they pose a risk to the state if they are released.

Last week the brothers appealed for international support and called on MEPs and European media organisations to attend their hearings "so the whole world can see the true face of the Zelensky regime."

The trial continues.

Morning Star ✪

In the last election it was allowed to stand in, the KPU won 2.6 million votes.

STATEMENT ON THE CONDEMNABLE PRACTICES OF THE AFL-CIO World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) Secretariat

The World Federation of Trade Unions unequivocally condemns blackmail practices employed by the AFL-CIO and the United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers, and Allied Workers against the WFTU and the class trade union movement. The United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers, and Allied Workers is attempting with an ultimatum to enforce the revocation of the affiliation to the WFTU of Local 36, a local union in Los Angeles, with a strict prohibition of future re-affiliation.

The workers-members of the trade union Local 36 decided in 2016, with free and democratic procedures and after a vote, to rejoin

the WFTU, the most historic and class-oriented international trade union organisation. Local 36 with its important decision became the first WFTU affiliate from the USA since 1949 when, after government intervention, the CIO withdrew from the WFTU and aligned itself with the policy of imperialist governments and yellow trade unions to split the world trade union movement.

We denounce before the eyes of workers in the USA and all over the world the violation of the clear, conscious, and democratically expressed will of the worker-members of Local 36 to join the ranks of the World Federation of Trade Unions and the international class-oriented trade

union movement. We denounce the timeless anti-democratic practices of silencing workers and falsifying their will in order to align the trade union movement with the line of submission and reformism.

Their efforts to erase the class pole and to proclaim the universal alignment of the trade union movement with the perception of integration and assimilation into the imperialist new order, with blackmail and exclusions, are totally in vain.

Blackmail and such methods cannot strangle the objective need of workers in the base, the workplaces, and the society to fight against exploitation to meet their contemporary needs. Despite the countless, well-orchestrated efforts

of capital and imperialist states to undermine the WFTU, they did not manage to dissolve, silence, or assimilate it. Nowadays, the WFTU represents hundreds of trade unions with more than 105 million members from 133 countries of the five continents, holding high the banner of class struggle.

Moreover, the WFTU collective leadership, the Presidential Council, is composed of trade unionists from all regions of the globe including Cliff Smith, Business Manager of Roofers and Waterproofers Local 36. In addition, the WFTU has permanent representation and consultative status in various International Organisations including the International Labour Organisation in Geneva and the Economic

and Social Council of the United Nations in New York City. The WFTU and its affiliates all over the world support the leadership and militants of the Los Angeles Roofers and Waterproofers Local 36 in this challenge.

The WFTU following the guidelines of the historic 18th World Trade Union Congress and the militant tradition of the international class-oriented trade union movement continues unwaveringly and with determination to follow the path of struggles and unity of the workers based on their own class goals. ✪



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