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SMASH ALL IMMIGRATION CONTROLS!FREE THE REFUGEES!

Phillip Ruddock and John Howard are receiving all sorts of criticism about the barbaric treatment of refugees forced to live in detention centres at Port Hedland, Woomerah and Villawood. The latest comes from a Joint Standing committee of Federal Parliament which even had participating members of the Howard Government. This committee criticised the use of handcuffs and batons, that some detainees were denied use of the phone, poor sanitation and some had spent 13 days in an isolation cell. They recommended that detainees spend no more than 14 weeks in detention. The Committee did not fundamentally oppose the use of detention centres. They merely want them run a bit more humanely.

All this is of course totally unsatisfactory. Being stuck up in Port Hedland or Woomerah, in the desert, many hundreds of kilometers from the nearest capital cities Perth or Adelaide respectively, is in itself a serious penalty. They are a long way from their local national community be they Iranian Afghan or Kurdish. Basically they are stuck in prison camps. They are forced to wait for a considerable time to find out whether a bureaucracy determines whether or not they are "legitimate refugees" or alternatively be sent home to barbaric regimes where their lives may be endangered.

Anyway the attempt of certain MP's to make their lives a bit more bearable even in prison conditions was decisively rejected by Ruddock and Howard who dismissed their report as "ignorant" Howard was backed by Western Australian Labor Premier Richard Gallop and Kim Beazley's Federal Labor "opposition".

Technically these prison camps are illegal under international law. It is supposedly legal for anyone to enter a country seeking refuge and illegal for governments to treat such a person as a criminal. But don't count on any legal authority coming to help. Basically international law is only used when the lawbreakers inconvenience or threaten imperialism. Friends like Australia are exempt. The fact of illegality may be used to embarrass Australia in some quarters. But fundamentally it won't achieve any

thing. Mr. Ruddock does not want Australia to be seen as a soft touch for all those victims of brutal regimes who may need a home. So he makes life hell for those who arrive here, And he has bi-partisan support from the ALP who Initiated these barbaric centres.

The point should not be to civilize or humanize. No one should be forced to live in these barbaric concentration camps. We reject totally the division between "legitimate refugees" and others. We reject totally the idea of "illegal immigrants". No one should be prevented from coming to live in Australia. We revolutionary Communists welcome all from whatever country who want to live here whether it is because of repression or whether it is because they just like the weather. Smash all immigration controls!

These barbaric centres expose blatantly that despite the fact that many from different races and nationalities live in this country, Australia is still basically a racist state. The ruling class allow people to come and live in this country on their terms - the terms of profit and profitability. White Australia was only abandoned when it was decided that bosses in Australia needed Asian labour which they thought would be more compliant We must have a different perspective Our must be the right of every proletarian to live in any country they choose for whatever reason We must reject the artificial ruling class created division between legitimate refugees` and `illegal immigrants` No one should have to live in those barbaric conditions

Given this situation, the question posed is what is the left and labour movement doing about it? Well there have been campaigns and protests organised. In Sydney there has been many marches from Villawood station to the camp there. These have mainly been attended by the radical student from the Socialist Alliance including the International Socialist Organisation and Democratic Socialist Party have been prominent. The Workers Communist Party of Iran and Iraq has been present and this has meant that the protests have had some migrant content. But, overwhelmingly, whilst the demos are spirited, the active movement has made inroads outside the radical left and student milieu.

It is nice to know that Sharan Burrow opposes the government on this issue. She said so at Politics in the Pub. Vic Slater from MUA attended the last demo. But from the union movement there has been no visible opposition There is a reflection both on the organisers of the protest and on the unions. for the last demo there were no posters stuck up in Chester Hill or Villawood yet National Action have been posterizing "Deport them now".

In the Sun Herald, Sydney journalist, Miranda Devine attacked the demonstrators as merely being M1. What she is saying is that the demonstrators have no social base and merely like demonstrating for the sake of it. Deliberately she is trying to create a gulf between the demonstrators and working class people. Well we must overcome the gulf. Workers in Australia have an interest in fighting the racist capitalist state and to do this we must fight to free the refugees. This is the message which must come over to ordinary working people and not just to the "politically correct" student left.

Communist Left supports a workers movement to smash all immigration controls and free the refugees. The failure of the left to build such a movement is disgraceful. The student left are sectarian and elitist but at least they do something. And thinks to their visibility there has been some debate. The official workers movement does nothing. The Labor Party is even worse as it is in partnership with the government.

The issue of the refugees is a fundamental issue for workers in this country. The left must not only have a visible presence. They must win over working people to take direct action. If we don't have class force on our side, we won't have the force to free them!

George Bush. New cold war against China.

When George Bush defeated Bill Clinton in the US Presidential election, he promised a very different style of government. Clinton wanted the world statesman. Bush promised to be more parochial putting immediate US interests first. Well the first thing he did was to refuse to ratify the Kyoto Agreement on greenhouse gas emissions. He argued that US interests would suffer. This pleased the rednecks. At last the US was dictating terms again.

The other issue on which Bush was quick to show his hand was China. Whereas Clinton was a bit more conciliatory, realising the bureaucracy's counter-revolutionary role. Bush wants to beat the war drum. Basically it is cold war mark 2 USA needs a new baddy to show the world who is boss and therefore pressure other countries to tow the line. For Bush China fills the bill.

Just after he was sworn in an incident occurred in the South China Sea near Hainan Island. There was a collision between a US military aircraft and a Chinese one. The Chinese pilot was killed. The American aircraft was forced to crash land on Hainan Island, China.

Understandably, the Chinese Government seized both the crew and the aircraft. We agree with the Chinese government. Irrespective of the technicality of whether the crash occurred within international airspace or otherwise, a US plane flying so close to China was a provocation against the Peoples Republic. The Chinese had every right both to seize the plane and treat the crew as spies. Anyhow Bush saber rattling enhanced his credentials as a tough American imperialist.

Bush then assured his US puppets on the island of Taiwan he would give them military assistance against mainland China. The reactionary government on Taiwan is by its existence an imperialist provocation against China. It was formed by counter-revolutionaries. For decades it pretended to represent the Chinese people in the United Nations and elsewhere. By such an overt show of support, Bush is well aware of what he is doing. He is giving a message to Beijing that the kid gloves are off and the cold war is on.

No doubt there will be plenty of horror stories about China in terms of "human rights". Yes there is plenty wrong with the Chinese bureaucracy. It carries out many unwarranted and brutal acts against bourgeois, liberal left wing critics and religious mystics. It also represses the organised working class. However irrespective of the "correctness" of any single complaint the overall campaign has one purpose - to soften public opinion to facilitate overt counter-revolution in China. No doubt the campaign will intensify if there is any probability that China holds the Olympic Games. And it will certainly intensify if China wins them.

What the imperialists are out to conquer is the remaining gains of 1949 Chinese revolution. With the demise of the old Soviet Union, China is still some sort of symbol that revolution is possible. It still is the inspiration of national liberation struggles and uprisings in the "third world". The memory of revolution is what they want to remove from the worlds exploited and impoverished masses. They also look forward to planting the 'flag of freedom' read imperialism on Chinese territory. They will stop nothing short of total counter-revolution.

For the past twenty eight years the strategy of Mao, Hua and successors has been appeasement. This worked in a treacherous way when the USA considered the USSR the number one enemy. China assisted the imperialists by denouncing the USSR as "social-imperialist". Mao welcomed dictators such as Pinochet of Chile and Yahya Khan of Pakistan. They actively assisted counter-revolution in places such as Angola and Sri Lanka. And of course their "soviet social-imperialist" ideology helped blind many leftists against the imperialist war drive against the Soviet Union.

Well the days of collaboration are over. Now the imperialists are turning on China. And even the most gross and treacherous appeasement will not stop US imperialism. China thought it could survive by socialism in one country. Their version of "socialism in one country" even meant the selling out of other post capitalist states. They will be proved tragically wrong.

Communist Left is no friend of the barbaric reactionary Beijing bureaucrats. We seek their overthrow, but we seek their overthrow by only one means - the revolutionary mobilisation of Chinese workers and peasants behind the banner of proletarian dictatorship. We give no support to counter-revolution, especially US imperialist counter-revolution. We oppose unconditionally the new cold war against China.

Blair New Labour rules Britannia. Unions fight back.

There can be no denying that in terms of bourgeois politics, Blair rules Britain. In the recently held election there his New Labour won by another landslide. Blair lost only one seat. The Liberals gained a bit. The Tories lost even more ground. However more important than statistics is the fact that he now controls the agenda of British politics. He is a loyal servant of the ruling class. Apart from a slight degree of political correctness is indistinguishable from a mainstream Tory. On international affairs he is a right wing hawk. On Iraq he is closer to Bush than to Clinton. He serves up the Labour Party to the ruling class on a platter.

The Tories are now marginalised. With Blair taking over the middle ground they have gone to the extreme even racist right.

Haig complained that with all these migrants Britain was "like another country." This facilitated the rise of the extreme right in Oldham. Given that the working class is no serious threat, the ruling class doesn't like such extremism. Legal methods are working quite nicely in keeping Britain overwhelmingly white. There is no need for the extreme right. Haig, the Tory leader enlisted the help of Margaret Thatcher to bring back some Tory nostalgia. Hague was a Thatcher protégé. This has only helped Blair with his credentials. He now has a victory over Thatcherism.

Thatcher played an extremely important role for the British ruling class. She totally tamed Labour. she smashed the welfare state. She took government intervention let alone nationalisation off the agenda of British politics. For this the British rulers give their heartfelt thanks. However, there was a price. and that price was social division and hatred. Also with her hard line ideology, she went a bit too far. The ruling class wants to be just a bit more flexible about state intervention. Blair is economic rationalist but a bit more adaptable.

Blair pursued a similar strategy to Thatcher namely make the yuppies feel good. Thatcher told the yuppies that they should enrich themselves. Blair said yuppies could not only enrich themselves but feel good with the token appearance of social concern and the appearance of political correctness. Blair's method worked quite nicely

Blair's victory over the Tory Party may seem impressive but far more significant is his victory over the Labour Party. For this he is indebted to Margaret Thatcher. Basically Thatcher threw down the gauntlet. And the Labour Party and the labour movement was posed with two decisive alternatives in relation to the ruling class - beat them or join them. Most of the labour movement had no interest in revolution so there was only one alternative -- to join them!

Of course making Labour palatable for the ruling class was a long process. It involved massive retreats and sell-outs. Principles, even minimalist and reformist ones were trampled on to get Labour fit to rule again (on behalf of capital). And there were many purges of embarrassing leftists such as Militant and even more moderate parliamentary socialists. Blair is indeed indebted to Neil Kinnock who bragged about scabbing on the British miners' strike. Kinnock whipped Labour into line. Blair finished it off by stacking the party with yuppies, isolating anyone with the slightest degree of labour principle. Now he has a party fit for the ruling class.

Blair Labour won this election by promising more money for health and education. No doubt he will deliver a bit more money. But what he didn't say so loudly is that he is also promising more private money. He calls this Private Finance Initiatives and Public Private Partnerships. What he wants is privatisation.

The labour and trade union movement is now finding its anger. The union movement is at least aware that all this means low pay, worse conditions and poorer service to the public. Stephen Byers, Blair's Secretary of State for Transport, Local government and the Regions tried to sell the virtue of privatisation to members of the public sector union UNISON. He was booed down. apart from Sir Ken Jackson of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, the TUC is totally opposed to privatisation and in support of action.

Whilst this all seems very encouraging, the TUC and affiliated unions are fighting a rearguard action. Politically

they have been defeated in the Labour Party. A balance sheet must be drawn about the failure of reformism - all variants. The idea that you could ride the Blair bandwagon, cash in on his electoral support and make a plea for a more humane approach regarding the public sector has proved suicidal. Harder and more principled tendencies have also been proved bankrupt.

Basically when Thatcher threw down the gauntlet, two alternatives were posed - revolution or capitulation. In Britain there have been many far left groups who have raised the banner of revolution. Some caved in to Labour. The better ones didn't but were unable to relate their revolutionary principles to the political development of the working class.

Sectarianism to the revisionists means raising revolutionary principles. Revisionists pose the need for revolution in the indefinite future. Irrespective of how far away a revolution is, the struggle for workers to understand that their interests lie in the overthrow of this system begins now.

In these elections there could be absolutely no support for Blair be it called critical or otherwise. For working people to fall in behind Blair is the recipe for defeat and disaster. Less than three weeks after victory, even reformist unions are fully aware that Blair stands for war against the public sector, the trade unions and working people. Their fight back is compromised by political affiliation. Some unions have suggested supporting the Liberal Democrats or Plaid Cymru (Welsh nationalist) workers need another bourgeois party like a hole in the head. Communist Left does not have sufficient data to determine for whom we would give electoral support. In general centrist parties and groupings deserve it if their programme raises actively the need for revolution. A workers break from Labour could also be considered depending on dynamic and circumstances. Blair Labour must be rejected, categorically and outright. But we must not forget that yesterday's Labour supported an anti working class incomes policy, the imperialist war against Ireland and reactionary immigration controls. Reject Blair. But its forward to revolution not backwards to reformism.

The Shorter Working Week Action Committee has been active since 1997 around the perspective of building united front around the principled demand of a reduction of the working week without loss of pay or conditions. SWWAC has been open to all individuals and organizations who agree with this fundamental principle even though there are differences on other issues. SWWAC has had a degree of influence. In 1999 a Wollongong Branch of SWWAC was established and remains active.

Communist Left has been active in SWWAC though we have had differences with some of the demands. SWWAC is correctly not democratically centralist and allows individuals and groupings to express difference. Despite shortcomings, SWWAC has played a useful role promoting the demand A Shorter Working Week Without Loss of Pay. SWWAC has rejected concepts such as "work sharing" which mean a reduced living standard for workers even if they also get shorter hours.

Communist Left fully acknowledges the role of Wayne Sonter, former Communist Left supporter in founding SWWAC. He deserves credit for some important analysis and ideas. Whilst credit is due we have been critical of a degree of adaptation to both trade union bureaucrats and the Greens.

Unfortunately a split has occurred which is not of our making. Wayne Sonter was not prepared to accept a decision made at the AGM in December which was ratified at the February meeting calling for Shorter working Week News to be run by committee as opposed to being handed down by Wayne Sonter.

Criticism was made at the December AGM concerning the conduct of SWWAC at various levels. Whilst the criticisms were not shared by all, came from different perspectives (both left and right), there was agreement that there should be more democratic participation in the formulation of SWWAC propaganda. This Wayne Sonter resisted.

Wayne Sonter was unable to attend the March nor April meetings due to illness. At the March meeting the decisions of December and February were enacted. Articles were presented and discussed. A special editorial meeting was called to produce the Bulletin. Wayne Sonter was kept fully informed of proceedings and was welcome to participate.

Wayne Sonter contacted Dave Blowers stating that he (DB) was welcome to contribute to his bulletin. When Bill Keats contacted him for information regarding the Bulletin WS informed him that the majority had "carried out a coup" and "formed a new SWWAC" and "stolen the Bulletin". The later accusation was repeated at May SWWAC meeting.

At the May meeting we were presented with a document supporting in general the principle of SWWAC network then demanding property be handed over to Wayne Sonter on behalf of the new SWWAC Network which apparently had its founding meeting April 25. behind our backs WS was apparently its executive officer. SWWACN is basically a maneuver for WS to sidestep democracy and maintain his personal power over SWWAC. In no way has he established a real work. He has made some scurrilous accusations claiming Dave Blowers stole shorterworkweek@hotmail. which is a total lie. Wayne Sonter is using the method of the labour bureaucracy. Such methods should have no place in the labour movement.

General strike in South Korea.

In RED 51 we reported the strike of Daewoo workers in South Korea against the threatened restructuring and take-over of their company by US giant General Motors. Well this has been only one of many militant class struggles going on there. Staff of the two major airlines KAL and Asiana have also been fighting So to have progressive journalists. So two have nurses and hospital workers. So too have progressive journalists. Extremely militant have been the petrochemical workers notably those involved in naphtha cracking.. In the southern city of Ulsen thousands of police stormed a petrochemical factory to end an occupation by workers fearing mass layoffs

Well, this month all these struggles galvanised into a general strike called by the KCTU on June 12 And over a hundred thousand obeyed the call Seventeen thousands packed the streets of Seoul They shouted "Down with President Kim Dae Jung" "Stop restructuring and suppressing labour unions" They were met by 2.500 paramilitary cops. Ten workers were injured. They were stopped from burning the President's effigy.

The demands raised by the KCTU for the general strike were, as follows.

Stop structural adjustments focused on mass lay-offs Regularise employment conditions and abolish discrimination against contingent workers. Implement the five day working week win public sector health care
Pass legislative reform related to people's right to live, maternity leave

The call for a shorter working week is progressive. What it means is a reduction from 50 hours to forty hours.

Whilst we recognise the heroism of the workers, the list of demands shows their political weakness. They do not understand state power. As Trotsky points out the general strike poses the question of state power but it doesn't resolve it. This means preparation for force This means a programme which unites all sections of the middle class especially small farmers around the banner of proletarian dictatorship. It means a revolutionary communist programme.

There is no denying that the class enemy knows about force. And that enemy is led by President Kim Dae Jung. Kim was a key dissident jailed for fighting for democracy. He won an award for peace. In no way is he peaceful in dealing with Korea's working class. Kim's approach has been intransigent support for both the capitalists and the full force of the state apparatus for him restructuring is "the painful and inevitable recharge for the economy" Using the same old bosses rhetoric "for Korea to remain competitive, the restructuring plans will have to succeed. " He then warned "If unions act illegally and if they act violently then it will invite police action." He certainly meant his words.

Well many thousands of Korea workers took part. 55.000 on the first day from 125 unions followed by others. And the strikes

certainly hurt. Action slackened where Asiana (Korea's second airline) employees made a deal. The airline strikes particularly hurt as many companies depend on airfreight for their components. Whilst at last report strike action was tapering off, action is still continuing in five university hospitals. The KCTU is planning more action based on chemical and metal workers.

Meanwhile the state is striking. Warrants have been issued to arrest DAN Byony-ho and other leaders of the KCTU such as Le Heng-Woo General secretary. Also leaders of KPSU and hospital union officers. Four leaders of the KAL Pilots union have been arrested.

Make no mistake. The Korean state will not go away. It will fight for the interests of imperialist capitalism to the death. Korean workers have shown their preparedness to fight the cops physically, arms in hand. But this is not a political strategy which takes on the state in its totality. This they lack. Kim Dae Jung tried to make a division between workers and small farmers urging workers to ease off because of the drought. This failed. But workers lack a principled perspective of worker-farmer unity.

The Korean working class has glaring political weakness. But we must respect their heroism. We also must through international solidarity, maximise the force on their side. Black bans must be introduced against Daewoo, Hyundae and all Korean companies who sack workers, attack unions and are party to state repression. We in Australia have every interest in the success of the Korean working class. The way to fight boss' internationalism is workers internationalism. And that is urgently needed.

Socialist Alliance. Is it the answer?

The Socialist Alliance has been assembled by the two largest parties on the far left, namely the Democratic socialist Party and the International socialist Organisation. It is modeled on the SA in Britain. It is a bit to the left of their British counterparts basically because it has yet to have significant ties to the trade union bureaucracy. Craig Johnston leader of a contending faction within the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union is their star draw card. Included in the Alliance are Freedom Socialist Party, Workers Communist Party of Iraq and Iran. Socialist Democracy, Workers Liberty, Workers Power and the Workers League.

All of the above make statements about the limitations of parliament, the need for socialism etc. The problem is that despite abstract propaganda, none of the demands included in their shopping list are revolutionary. Yes they raise some good demands. They support a shorter working week without loss of pay. They are for closing the refugee camps and for open borders. They support Gay rights and women's rights. All this is well and good.

Unfortunately whilst they oppose some oppressive conditions for unemployed known as "mutual obligation" and work for the dole, they only support an increase in levels of social security. They don't talk about a living wage. This means poverty. They don't talk about the right to work.

Also their programme statement says nothing about tariffs and protectionism. Support for these reactionary measures is rampant amongst Australian workers. One Nation is picking up support showing that they are the most consistent protectionists. Indeed they are. The groups around Socialist Alliance, on the whole oppose protection. But they don't mention it for fear of alienating the trade union bureaucracy and those workers under its influence.

But the main point is that when revolutionaries stand for parliament they do so to pose the need for revolution, to expose parliament as not the way forward, to counterpose the direct organisation of the working class through soviet power, for proletarian dictatorship. Demands for democratic rights are important. But they must be placed in the context of revolution. Unless you are showing workers that their interests lie in the overthrow of the system than you are reinforcing the system. Unfortunately, that is what Socialist Alliance amounts to.

So why are they doing it? Well basically they lack faith in revolutionary principles. some have big appetites and want to get out of their fringe group status.

The statement by John Tully on behalf of Socialist Democracy gives an insight.

"Trotsky once wrote 'Only the truth is revolutionary' If we take that as our catchword we have to admit that the left is minuscule" He goes on to point out that the left's performance in the WA State elections was "so small as to be embarrassing". The answer apparently lies in huddling together, burying or playing down differences.

The small size of the left is of consequence. A materialist analysis must be made, a balance sheet must be drawn as to how the left failed, to deal with stalinism, to confront Hawke and the Accord, to deal with protectionism and the collapse of manufacturing. We need such an analysis, we need to make a balance sheet. From there we must draw the programmatic conclusions.

The differences between the groupings should be of consequence to class struggle. For example if Freedom Socialists think that Women, Black people, Gays are the vanguard of class struggle then they are entering a block dominated by the labour aristocracy, despite some "support for demands of oppressed". Workers Liberty has attacked Green Left for taking up the

demands of dairy farmers. Shouldn't the differences between the groups be debated openly in front of the working class? It's time we took our differences seriously.

Communist Left cannot support this block because it is not putting revolution on the political agenda for working people. Basically workers either support the capitalist state or they don't. And if they do they join the boss's offensive which attacks the oppressed and ultimately their own interests. Breaking workers from this allegiance is the point of standing for parliament. Raising other demands is secondary. For this reason communist Left can only give critical support to propaganda groups which actively through demands raise the question of revolution. Socialist Alliance does not.

Free Mumia Abu Jamal. Heroic Black class war prisoner on death row USA

There has been much attention paid to the death penalty in the USA. There is currently a growing movement against it because through dna testing It has been established that many innocent people have been put to death. One person who was put to death just recently was the Oklahoma bomber, Timothy MacVeigh. MacVeigh is unusual as compared to others facing the death penalty. He is white and he is a right wing fascist. Many on death row are Black and are victims of the white racist attack on Black people there.

Every decent person hates MacVeigh. however we must oppose the capitalist state putting him to death. For starters, he might be seen as a martyr for the extreme right. However the main reason is that the death penalty must be opposed totally. We have no faith in the US state behaving in a principled way The fact is that despite the odd fascist picked up under extreme circumstances, the death penalty plays a political role - in the war against the exploited And oppressed and Black people.

This is made crystal clear by the frame up and arrest of Mumia Abu Jamal. Jamal has a long and heroic record fighting and exposing the racist US state, Despite the threat of death he is still fighting. Jamal refuses to budge from his stand that he is the victim of a frame-up. And he has sacked lawyers who recommend compromise.

Communist Left defends all victims of racist state repression in USA and Australia, unconditionally. This means irrespective of whether they are guilty or innocent. However, the stakes in the Jamal case are extremely high. The message the racist state wants to put over is that if you speak out, if you challenge the system, we will arrange to kill you legally, by manufacturing evidence through the legal system. Mumia's death would no doubt inhibit many who would be understandably afraid of exposing the truth.

The frame-up of Jamal must become an issue for the working class. If working people tacitly accept or worse overtly support the racist state terror machine which attacks black people then they are reconciled with the class enemy. The ruling class will free Jamal when they are faced with force - a working class prepared to threaten their profits and take on the state.

It is vitally important that working people take up the cause of Jamal not just in the USA but everywhere. His freedom will mean not just the life of one innocent man. It will be a victory in the fight against racist oppression in the USA.

FREE JAMAL!
SMASH THE RACIST DEATH PENALTY!