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Ireland 25 years of British occupation

It was 1969 when the British Government first sent troops into Northern Ireland. They've been there for twenty-five years and there's been no talk of withdrawal. What has been talked about is peace but negotiations which have yet to eventuate. The Brits are at war with the bourgeois nationalist Irish Republican Army, a.k.a. the Provisional Sinn Fein. There has been no kid gloves in this war. British governments, Labour and Tory, know full well the issues at stake. That's why they have enacted vicious reactionary legislation such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act and built torture camps such as H Block Maze prison. A defeat would be a major blow to what's left of the British Empire and to the stability of "Great Britain" itself. So, a reign of terror has been maintained against the Irish nationalists. The roots of this war stem from the partition of Ireland in 1921. Whilst most of Ireland was given formal independence, a sectarian statelet was established in the north where the majority were Protestant. Britain has used religion to maintain control. In the North, the Protestants are known as Loyalists - because of their loyalty to British imperialism. For this they have been given political and economic privileges. They have better housing and better social amenities. They have higher wages and a lower rate of unemployment. They are 'statistically the majority. The proletariat, denied this largess, are overwhelmingly Catholic. It is the responsibility of revolutionaries internationally to do our utmost to remove Britain from Ireland. It is only when there is a united Ireland that the imperialist terror will be stopped. This is not a war about religious difference. It is a war against imperialist domination. Britain can play no progressive role in Ireland. Unfortunately many who oppose Protestant privilege supported the presence of British troops to give the Catholics a "breathing space". The Catholics and all proletarians have been suffocating ever since. *One* tendency who fell into this error is the International Socialists. In this war there can be no equivocation. Support for Britain's defeat must be unconditional. Whilst we cannot agree with the utopian minimalist programme of the IRA, Eire Nua, we must do our maximum to ensure their military victory over British imperialism..

The IRA programme is a fetter in the struggle. Whilst we must expose their inability to fight imperialism consistently, we must not oppose them for fighting imperialism. The IRA is fighting for radical nationalism in one third of a country. They are therefore isolated. Many of their controversial military tactics stem from this isolation. This isolation must be overcome by anti-imperialist working class action throughout Britain and internationally. Ireland is not merely a question of a colony struggling for liberation. The Irish question directly affects the internal politics of Britain. Northern Ireland is a centre of regroupment and organisation of the extreme right. It is no accident that the rabid Tory racist Enoch Powell chose to move there to find himself a safe seat. He knew that he would be backed by reactionary Protestants. The same military techniques used by the British armed forces against the Protestant communities are used against British workers on picket lines. "Anti-terrorist" measures, rationalised as required to counter the IRA, are used against the left in Britain.

Ireland has been an important issue in the political struggle to persuade workers to accept unemployment and austerity. Workers who support the imperialist state when it intervenes in Ireland cannot fight that state when it attacks them. The ruling class knows the importance of gaining consensus on Ireland to support British intervention, as part of their struggle to get working class people to accept the ruling class offensive at home. Traditionally, a large section of the working class, the labour aristocracy, have identified with imperialism. The revolutionary left's responsibility is to show these workers that their interests lie in the military defeat of British imperialism. In Britain, the construction of a real workers' movement, committed to direct workers action against the war, is urgent.

Self-determination for Ireland!
Smash the reactionary statelet!
Military victory to the republicans!
Bring the war to Britain!
Turn the imperialist war into a revolutionary war
against the imperialist British state!
For a socialist united states of Europe!

Squatters evicted in South Africa

Subzero temperatures have meant an extremely cold winter for South Africa with snow in major cities including Johannesburg and Soweto. Post-election South Africa still has thousands of homeless. 850 of them, attempted to squat in the Johannesburg suburb of Leifde en Vreide, were dealt with brutally by the Johannesburg City Council - their humble humpies were flattened. They were once again out in the cold --literally.

This action graphically illustrates the ANC Government stance. The squatters appealed to the government, "their" government, for support. Their approaches were rejected by Mandela's Housing Minister Joe Slovo, the leader of the Communist Party of

South Africa. His response demonstrates how much both he and his government are apologists for the system. Slovo argued that the "land invasion did not contribute to alleviating the immense housing shortage and often created additional problems with authorities who are seriously trying to supply houses to the homeless. This democratic Government is expected to respect constitutional rights in land against unlawful infringement and unlawful occupation" Slovo, the "communist", is more concerned about defending the property of the rich than the shelter of homeless people. He was critical of the way in which the Johannesburg Council acted but not of the fact that they did evict. What does "dealing with squatters humanely" mean? Perhaps it means that the authorities knock and ask nicely before removing the occupants instead of tearing down the houses unannounced! The net result is that 850 Sowetans are once again sleeping in the chilly night air. There is nothing "humane" about forcing people out into the snow, no matter how it's done. Governments promise to spend money on housing. The Mandela Government has allocated money for that purpose How are the homeless going to have shelter in meantime? As one squatter put it, "I applied for a house in Soweto in 1972. I am still waiting". The humble shelters built on the land at Liefde en Vreide could mean the difference between death in the cold and surviving the winter. Slovo only concerns himself about the "constitutional rights" of land owners. RED has consistently made it clear that the Mandela government is a bosses' government, committed to maintaining the super-exploitation of the predominantly black working class. It is clearly committed to maintaining the land of the wealthy at the expense of the homeless. The first Mandela budget was a disgrace. The amount of money allocated to social services and housing for the Black people, deprived by racism and apartheid for centuries. There is no significant redistribution of wealth from rich to poor.

Many rank and file ANC supporters and communists are angry. Whilst we think Mandela's servitude to the system disgusting, in no way are we surprised. Mandela is showing, in action, the bankruptcy of nationalism. The political lesson to be learned is that is only a communist programme that can liberate the Black proletariat of South Africa. A revolutionary communist party needs to be built to challenge urgently the ANC

Liberals in the Communication Workers' Union

The Communication Workers' Union is one of those amalgamated unions. Unions like this tie workers to Keating's anti-working class agenda via the trade union bureaucracy. Typically, its leadership is loyal to Keating's Accord, Mark VII, with the usual opposition of a group of unionists (with aspiring bureaucrats), organised by the radical left. Here, Militant, the ALP enterist tendency, are backing Rank and File Action. What is remarkable is that the aspiring bureaucrats did a deal behind the back of Militant (and the radical rank and file) with... the Liberal Party! For the first time in Australian trade union history the Liberal Party has openly showed its face by standing for a union election in its own name. How did this happen? In this union, one can stand on two tickets. To confuse people, the leadership was also standing on an "independent" ticket. So the radical rank and fileists found that their candidates were also on the Liberal Party ticket as well as Rank and File Action.

The response from Militant was genuine embarrassment. Naturally, they had absolutely no intention of promoting Liberalism. After spending many thousands of dollars on how to vote cards for Rank and File Action, they had neither time nor resources to put out a different one supporting Labor Party candidates. Unionists can now validly accuse the radical left of bringing the Liberal Party into the union movement and Militant's only response is to embarrassingly point out that they were conned.

This was a Christmas present for the incumbent leadership: the bureaucratic Stalinist "left" and the right have always argued that the only alternative to Accord politics is the "law of the jungle" approach of the Liberals. They have often accused, by inference or directly, those unionists who don't want to be part of the Accord straight jacket, of co-operating with the Liberals. Here they have "proof" of radical left/Liberal co-operation. They can now use the Liberal threat as a smoke screen. Issues such as privatisation can be ignored by drawing workers' attention to the Liberal threat. "Keep politics out of the unions" is their slogan. In reality, politics is part and parcel of the union. The leadership is tying the union to the Keating Government. Those who want a consistent fight back must raise politics within the union -the politics of revolutionary communism as opposed to class collaboration. Workers must learn that the betrayals of the bureaucrats are not accidental nor merely a result of their bureaucratic positions and privileges (although this is a factor). The bureaucrats' betrayals result from their reformism. A revolutionary communist leadership must be built which not only takes up day-to-day questions but also shows that these can only be resolved by breaking from the capitalist state and supporting the overthrow of capitalism. This requires a political perspective and not a "rank and file" one. Even the most advanced trade union formations (such as the caucuses which have been supported by the Spartacist League) betray the struggle to break workers politically within the union movement. Of course the Militant, International Socialist and Workers' Power variants fare worse as they hardly raise any advanced demands.

The Militant tendency, is very apologetic, genuinely so. It however, learned no political lessons. It will continue making its blocs, with its eyes just a little more widely open. Apolitical minimalist blocs lend themselves to political sell-outs. For revolutionary communists, class consciousness is not merely, defined as fighting for better wages and conditions against the boss, but fighting the capitalist system. Workers who support militant unionism can have a conservative political framework. Supporting the Liberals is very unusual. But not so unusual is the support given to some variant of racist or protectionist politics. Racism is the logic of reformism in imperialist countries or a colony with a mini-imperialist terrain like Australia, Fighting chauvinism is not a moral struggle. Workers Power in Britain, for example, claim to fight it by bringing Gay's and black people to the picket line. It is fought showing workers that they have an interest in fighting the capitalist state. Chauvinism, when taken to its logical conclusion means selling-out the trade union struggle. This line can and must be drawn - not by avoiding revolutionary politics and concentrating on trade unionism -but by driving out the more extreme chauvinists and fascists. There is no room to debate with that scum.

Financial Review has claimed that John Howard has been embarrassed by associating with the left. One unionist on the Liberal ticket definitely has a radical record. Howard is very clever. He knows that eleven years of the Accord has produced frustration and anger. He can cash in on this making it appear that some sectors might be better off with this variant of enterprise bargaining. He knows that some will suck in. Putting a known leftist on the ticket can help the Liberals. The fact that the Liberals dare to show their face is a sign of just how much the Hawke/Keating Accord agenda, has demobilised and demoralised class struggle in this country. The emergence of the Liberals should be an important lesson for the radical left. Just how little has been learned can be shown by the fact that in the building industry some members of this Back on Track rank and file ticket are quite willing to welcome Liberal unionists as supporters on their ticket.

No tears for Kim III Sung

The great helmsman of North Korea, Kim Il Sung, is dead. We're not weeping. North Korea took socialism in one country to a greater extreme than Joseph Stalin. Kim actually considered his philosophy of extreme national self-sufficiency "transcended Marxism-Leninism". Actually it is a more extreme variant of Stalinism which has nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism. Lenin realised that socialism couldn't be built in one country. It is even more absurd to attempt to build it in half a country. Which is what Kim has tried to do. His "method" involved a greater emphasis on cult of personality than even Mao or Stalin. Statues of Kim are everywhere. North Korea has one of the most rigid and controlled societies in the world. It has its variant of Stalinist thought police. Radios are adjusted so listeners can only listen to two stations which are controlled strictly by the bureaucracy. The only information North Koreans receive promotes the cult of Kim Il Sung. Kim's idea of defending North Korea has been mobilising a massive army and arming it with nuclear weapons. When the Soviet Union existed, it gave North Korea economic and military assistance. However, now it's collapsed, North Korea remains totally dependent on China. The United States will not tolerate any society that defies its dictates. "The cold war isn't over for North Korea" said one U.S. State Department official recently. Too right it ain't! The US is prepared to do its utmost to see that North Korea is disarmed. It claims it's afraid that North Korea might aid Libya or some other unfriendly force. Irrespective of the truth of this, revolutionaries have an obligation to defend North Korea. It is only the revolutionary working class to whom we can entrust the removal of the malignant Kim clique. The US does not oppose countries having nuclear weapons, as long as they support US imperialist control. The malignant state of Israel, armed to the teeth, has regularly carried out murderous raids on the Palestinians and neighbouring countries including Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. The US sometimes criticises but, fundamentally, Israel is an acceptable nation. North Korea isn't. Its very existence shows that there is some alternative to imperialist slavery for the third world. It is acknowledged that this has been a totally artificial crisis, manufactured by the USA. Other imperialist powers have their reservations. They too want to smash North Korea and open it up to imperialist super-exploitation. But Britain and Japan would prefer slower economic pressure rather than direct provocation. All imperialist measures, whether apparently peaceful or direct brute force, must be opposed unconditionally.

There's nothing revolutionary about North Korea's nuclear arsenal. It puts its own interest before that of the international working class. It has repudiated revolution internationally which would be a threat to the Kim clique. Even a genuine socialist country would require international revolution for socialism in North Korea to survive. When we spread the revolution internationally, we will also undermine the Kim regime.

We repeat, it is only the international working class that we can entrust to remove the Kim bureaucracy. The imperialists sponsor many brutal regimes throughout the world. We urge workers not to take their rhetoric about "human right," seriously. What they mean is the right to plunder and the right to super-exploit. They only oppose breaches in human rights when a state interferes with their right to plunder. Therefore we must defend North Korea from imperialist attack. A consistent revolutionary defense will also remove the clique which is strangling the North Korean revolution.

White Paper on Unemployment

It has been 49 years since the previous White Paper for Full Employment was drawn up by the then Chifley Federal Labor government. In its first sentence this paper made it clear that "full employment is the fundamental aim of the Federal Government". Times have changed and the ambitions of Federal Labor are today much more modest. If the measures of the Keating white paper, Working Australia, are actually carried out, five percent will be unemployed. One worker in twenty would be deprived of a decent income. This figure is considered to be a bit too ambitious for the National Australia Bank. Its minimum percentage unemployed is over seven percent.

The change in attitude is clear: Labor of the forties wanted jobs for all. Today's Labor would be pleased if only one in twenty were barely subsisting. This attitude change is a reflection of two factors -the changing needs of Australian capitalism and the political defeat of reformist Keynesianism. The 1945 White Paper was drawn up in a totally different economic context. The war had just finished. The returning troops required jobs. They demanded adequate social services including unemployment security and pensions. The Second World War had exposed Australia as a vulnerable nation whose defense depended on the whim of the United States. Populate or perish was a popular belief. Massive immigration was essential but people would only come here if there were jobs.

After the Second World War, there was a temporary growth in the productive forces known as the long boom. In Australia it meant growth in manufacturing. For the next fifteen years (apart from the '53 and '61 credit squeezes) about two percent unemployment was considered the norm. Over three percent was considered a disaster- it almost brought down the Menzies' government in 1961. Australian manufacturing developed, protected by tariffs. Under Chifley, the U.S. multinational General Motors started manufacturing the Holden car, backed up by government protection. Tariffs and protection maintained it in a state of weakness. It was undercapitalised, poorly equipped and suffered from a poor local market. The ruling class supported a manufacturing industry to attract migrants to help defend Australia for U.S. against Japanese imperialism. They also needed roads, shipping and rail transportation.

The Chifley government migration programme set out to attract European migrants. Asians were still not welcome. White Australia remained as official policy until the Whitlam Government formally abolished it. A racist bias still remained. 1971 saw the re-emergence of unemployment. It was used, in part, by the bosses to keep wages down. It also marked the end of the long boom and the wholesale collapse of manufacturing. This was an important factor in the MacMahon Liberal government collapse. Under Whitlam unemployment was to intensify. Initially there was a slight drop because of massive inflation and a drop in migration. In 1973 followed with both unemployment and massive inflation. In addition there was the wholesale collapse of manufacturing. Leyland's car plant in Waterloo, Sydney, closed. As did Evans Deakin shipbuilders, Kangaroo Point, Brisbane. Many other factories also closed. Whitlam had no answers, save to blame the working class and attack the unemployed. It was under Whitlam that the government and the media promoted the dolebludger myth.

When elected, Malcolm Fraser promised to bring back the stability of Menzies. What we got was more unemployment and with it serious attacks on the unemployed. The late seventies saw the continued collapse of the shipbuilding, the motor car, manufacturing, and the building industries. There was also wholesale lay-offs in BHP, steel plants in Wollongong and Newcastle. The metal workers initiated their campaign for a thirty-five hour week. This was not a significant enough decrease in the working week to

make any marked change in the number out of work. Often the shorter working week was absorbed by overtime or negotiated in the context of productivity deals. Continued unemployment has forced the metal workers union into the camp of overt class-collaboration. Laurie Carmichael began promoting his "transitional programmes" of class-collaboration in glossy publication Australia Uprooted and Australia Undermined. The programmes have become more and more minimalist as the crisis has intensified.

To carry out these programmes, Carmichael required the support of a capitalist government. This could be achieved only through the sellout of workers' wages and conditions. He initiated an agreement between the unions and the Hawke leadership of the Federal ALP called the Prices and Incomes Accord. This became Bob Hawke's election programme. There had been a wages explosion linked to the mining boom which Fraser was unable to control. Hawke was able to persuade the ruling class that he could tame the unions by getting their agreement. After he was elected it took less than two months for the full employment promise to be dumped. Hawke and Keating have no solutions to the wholesale collapse of manufacturing. In fact they have endorsed and initiated economic restructuring. Their "solutions" lie in using the unemployed to undermine trade union awards with short term cheap labour schemes. These have taken many forms. For young people there are "training schemes" and "apprenticeship schemes". These schemes do not mean more jobs. They mean that employers can employ young workers at a lower rate of pay for a short period instead of paying full-time workers. Hawke and Keating have increased harassment of the unemployed and significantly undermined the social security system. They have initiated the notorious "dole squad" to hassle and remove unemployed from the dole. They have initiated Newstart. Here unemployment benefits are not received as a right but only subject to agreement. Working Australia proudly associates with the government's agenda of monetarism, privatisation and award restructuring. It acknowledges the role of the Accord in keeping down wage levels. To make industry "competitive" and flexible means, of course, making it easier for the bosses to lay off workers. The government is fully committed to undermining trade union awards with the help of the trade union bureaucracy. This doesn't provide jobs. On the contrary. The White Paper actually boasts about how the government has reduced the number employed on the waterfront. The main strategy presented by Working Australia is training - especially youth training. The Government is offering employers a "training wage". The level of this "minimal" wage was disputed. Employers initially complained that the level proposed was too high as young people would be paid more to be trained than the current youth wage. The White Paper sets a figure of \$120 per week. What a pittance! It's scarcely enough for food rent and clothing. Training is work! It is the boss who benefits from the knowledge gained by the trainee. Many of the training schemes aren't real. They are a cover for providing cheap labour for the bosses. Trainees and apprentices are asked to do shit work like changing light bulbs for electricians. Part of the "training" is to get unemployed to accept the boss's propaganda to compete with each other and further undermine award conditions. Unemployed are told that being unemployed is their fault and they should shape up and meet the demands of the bosses. Apart from attacking youth, Working Australia attacks older unemployed. With the introduction of Newstart, the Hawke Government "reformed" social security. The dole became subject to agreement, an oppressive agreement, since the alternative, starvation, made it very difficult for an unemployed person not to "agree". Some have been forced to report to the CES every day. Working Australia develops this further. Unemployed are forced to agree to a "compact". Part of this "compact" involves the unemployed person being forced to take short term work for "experience". If an unemployed person does not comply, increased penalties such as being cut off the dole, apply.

Yet whilst the government is committed to abusing the unemployed, the amount of jobs that it is committed to create is minimal. There are some supportable projects such as the airport at Badgery's Creek and an irrigation project in the Goulburn Valley, Victoria. The extent of jobs offered, however, will be minimal, even if these projects actually go ahead. The real way to increase jobs is to continually shorten the working week until everyone is employed. This must be linked to wage rises. The rises must be greater than the level of inflation otherwise it's the workers who pay for the bosses crisis. Of course, the boss's government, the Keating government, will reject this. That is why we need strong organisations on the shop floor to enforce it. We need factory committees which will defend every job through direct action. If they take our jobs, expropriate their factories! The Keating Government administers the system for the bosses. We need political power to workers, unemployed, all exploited and oppressed. We need a revolutionary workers' and small farmers' government based, not on parliament but on our own organisation. We need an internationalist perspective which unites workers internationally. Supporting "Aussie jobs" as opposed to the jobs of workers overseas only plays into the hands of the bosses.

The Keating Government strategy amounts to banking on a more efficient capitalism as well as attacking unemployed people, making them available for the bosses as cheap labour. Another part of this strategy is a minimal programme

of works. Even according to them, their programme, if implemented will only mean 5% out of work. This is a disgrace. But Keating's commitment to economic efficiency will only help the bosses sack more. Keating's White Paper is a paper for cheap wages and unemployment. It must be rejected and fought by every class-conscious worker.

No to Privatisation!

The question of privatisation is still on the national agenda. The last Federal budget was attacked by the Liberals for its "opportunism" and "electioneering". What the Government offered was no new taxes and a few crumbs, such as some money, though not enough, for breast cancer research. The Liberals see this as outrageous opportunism. For them the government is supposed to privatise for the bankers' benefit and give the public nothing. Keating isn't giving us much. But the fact that the public receive something, although minor, will mean his government will still be preferred to the Liberals. Keating Labor is merely the same poison as the Liberals, sugar coated.

One Labor left-wing backbencher asked recently: "How are we going to pay for welfare when the silver is all sold off?" He has a point. Labor will shortly be faced with a situation where it will either be forced to make massive cuts or tax the wealthy. The ruling class will not allow Keating to do anything which interferes with them - even if he wanted to. So more massive attacks are on the agenda. The public sector is the boss's public sector. It exists to promote the stability of the system. However privatisation must be fought. Capitalism is a system dominated by the laws of private profitability. Money is invested to make more money. Under capitalism the laws of profitability determine social relations such as forms of government, religion and the degree of government intervention. The bourgeoisie are also aware that they have to not only make profit but maintain social stability. They need a system of repression namely the police and armed forces. They need to educate and train workers. The state is a drain on profits. Yet under some circumstances the ruling class support its expansion. Sometimes transport and amenities are needed which no individual capitalist can afford to run at a profit. If there is no rail service, or education or health services, in, for example, a mining town, a company like CRA cannot make its profits out of the mine as no worker would be prepared to live in a town like Mount Morgan. The ruling class need public

transport because workers have to be moved to get to work. This has to be affordable. No private firm could afford to run CityRail. It would mean absorbing tremendous losses - even if fares were doubled! Often the state is expanded to buy off sections of the working class. The ruling class has used reforms to stall the threat of revolution.

After the Second World War ex-soldiers demanded some reward for putting their lives on the line. They were given the right to squat under some circumstances. Rent control, introduced initially as a war time measure, was also maintained. However, the main expansion of the state is when the ruling class prepares for war. The ruling class never risk their own security. So the main part of the public sector which is under attack is that part which benefits ordinary people - the welfare sector. The ruling class want efficiency. But we should be wary of what this efficiency actually means. Because it is funded out of taxation the public sector does not respond immediately to the demands of profitability. Therefore the public sector is less efficient at cutting back services and laying off workers. This campaign for privatisation is part of the ruling class offensive to make working class people and the poor pay for the crisis of capitalism. "Responding to market forces" is another way of saying that it the bosses can't make a profit, ordinary people can't have basic services like health, transport and education or even water! In Britain, with privatised water people suffer from diseases because they can't afford the high water rates demanded by the private owners of the water supply. Private enterprise is more efficient - cut attacking trade union awards, laying off workers and cutting services. During the long boom, capitalism could expand the welfare sector. But now, with the system in crisis, the laws of profitability demand that the welfare sector be cut back to the bone.

The public sector must be defended. But it must be defended critically. We oppose cutbacks to the spending on mental health. We do not support the way mental hospitals have acted as torture centres and prison camps for poor unfortunate victims of the system. We must oppose the Department of Housing when it bureaucratically harasses tenants. We must oppose Social Security workers when they cut unemployed off the dole. We must oppose the way the CES cooperates in providing the bosses with cheap labour. We must oppose the hierarchical control within the bureaucracies. All these reactionary features must be countered with workers control. Workers' control of one factory or one government can only be a temporary measure. The demand must be linked to a transitional programme -for a society based on working class power.

Split in Back on Track

As reported in RED 26, Back on Track was a minimalist rank and file group within the building industry uniting aspiring Stalinist bureaucrats such as former BLF leaders, aspiring reformist bureaucrats including Paul True of Militant, with an assortment of rank and file militants, on the basis of a militant economist programme. We pointed out these aspiring bureaucrats and militants avoided a struggle against the politics that dominate the leadership, reformist and Stalinist, by a struggle for democracy and for trade union issues. The consequence of avoiding this struggle is to adapt to the leadership's politics.

A group of the more militant Back on Track members have learned this by experience and have resigned from Back on Track. Those resigned included former members of the now defunct Committee for a Workers' League Greg Walsh, Julie Walsh and Chris Peers. Included in the group is former unemployed and single parents activist Frances Docherty who has also been an employed typist for the BWIU (now part of CFMEU) and union militant "Jacko" Brown who has been bureaucratically excluded.

Their resignations were sparked by a secret meeting of the Executive which was called at Gerry McDonald's private home. It was decided there that a militant Roy "Jacko" Brown be expelled for "unacceptable" behavior. This expulsion was carried out behind Jacko's back. They decided women who were not CFMEU members were not allowed to vote. They decided that Militant leading member Paul True would have control over policy in the Back on Track Bulletin. Women had been involved since Back on Track was established. What this means is that women can do shit work like fund raising and secretarial work but have no say in what Back on Track actually does. Wives of unionists are affected when a union goes on strike and should have some say if they work hard on the picket line as they often do. The decision to make Paul True in charge of the bulletin means that, on the whole, the bulletin will be politically compatible with the Labor Party. It is totally undemocratic that one person should have so much power. But the True's role is clear. He will signatories it so reformists and Stalinists won't be offended. The Back on Track Bulletin will remain totally within the frame work of reformism.

Their expulsion of "Jacko" was in stark contrast with their kid gloves treatment of bureaucrat John Caruthers. Caruthers was a scab on the BWIU secretaries' dispute. He was only removed under the pressure of militants. Yet "Jacko" a union militant was removed for "unacceptable behaviour", meaning telling the truth about bureaucratic practices within Back on Track - without even having the right to defend himself. As those who have resigned are aware, these breaches are not accidental. They reflect a desire on the part of the Back on Track Executive to placate those who agree fundamentally with the CFMEU leadership but have secondary criticisms about undemocratic practices and share the leadership's Stalinist framework. These aspiring bureaucrats would be frightened away by real militants who raise questions of principle like Jacko. So Back on Track Executive remove the militants by organisational means. This accommodation means that Back on Track can offer no alternative to the right Stalinist politics which dominate the union. To their credit, those who resigned support the need for a political alternative to the leadership. Unfortunately they just generally state the need for an alternative. Communist Left supports the building of a revolutionary communist party to fight for leadership of the basis of a principled revolutionary programme. This means fighting on the basis of opposition to the capitalist state and not just in opposition to the many betrayals on the trade union level.