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Afghanistan: At least four more years of Australian troops.

The recent death of the eleventh Australian soldier serving in Afghanistan was a time for reflection. Was this war worth fighting? When will there be victory? What will victory look like? How much longer will Australian troops be stationed there? Both Rudd Labor and Turnbull were in thorough agreement over Australia's continued commitment. They argue that if Australian's leave El Qaida would be moral boost and would be able to utilize the territory occupied for the purposes of terrorism. The withdrawal, they claim will be a boost to terrorists internationally and inspire bombings similar to the recent Jakarta bombing.

Well to a certain degree this is true. But El Qaida does not need Afghanistan when they can organize in Pakistan. More will probably die from the Australian and allied occupation than from any increased terrorist attack. What has been exposed is the total lack of exit strategy by the imperialists. The imperialists are redefining "victory" in terms of merely restricting El Qaida. Major General Angus Houston has finally answered the question "When will Australian troops be leaving?" He says another four years.

Revolutionary communists opposed Australia's intervention in the first place. The Taliban are certainly a ruthless bunch of counter-revolutionaries. Imperialism supported their rise to power. They were not responsible for the September eleven terror raids on New York. Osama Bin Laden was probably in Afghanistan before the invasion. The imperialists had a responsibility to negotiate before invading. Understandably, the Taliban demanded proof before co-operating. The US sent the troops in...

The US felt it had to invade Afghanistan to save face. Australia joined the war effort out loyalty to US imperialism. Howard was loyal to Bush. Rudd is loyal to Obama, who has a more co-operative approach but has the same strategic objective as Bush – US control of the Middle East

Workers in this country must not accept this situation. The troops must be forced back home immediately. The only way to guarantee this is class struggle. For workers action against the war! This means strike action! This means black bans on all shipping which is directly or indirectly part of the war effort!

Rudd has made it crystal clear what side he is on. We are on the other side. We are for military victory to the resistance. Workers must break from the social-imperialist Labor Party and forge a new workers party, a revolutionary communist party. Four more years of imperialist occupation of Afghanistan is too long!

President Obama has just asked Australia for more troops. We are confident that the Rudd Government will oblige.

Obama speaks to the Middle East

Barak Obama is the most left wing president since the Second World War and perhaps in the nation's history. Even though he supports the fundamentals of the system, he offers a more tolerant and inclusive image. The Republicans ignored ordinary people. Obama wants to include them. Normally the powers that be would prevent such a man from becoming president but the fact that he was elected shows their utter desperation. Even Republican rival John Mc Cain acknowledged that Obama was restoring ordinary people's faith in the system.

A liberal is what the ruling class needed. The fact that he is black is an added advantage.

Both at home and abroad, US imperialists are on the nose. In the US it is clear that free market methods are unable to raise the US out of recession. Big spending was necessary to save the capitalists. Obama has effectively nationalized General Motors. Obama has assured everyone that this is only an interim measure and that all will be back to normal as soon as the company is on sound footing. In no way is Obama really a socialist. Bush lost a lot of credibility with his refusal to assist New Orleans recover from Hurricane Katrina.

Of course, US imperialism is really on the nose in the Middle East. You can say that the US was successful in removing Saddam but the price of this has been to destroy that country. Everyone knows that Iraq is a disgusting mess and the US and allies are to blame. The rationale for the invasion, the claim that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction has now been totally discredited. Obama has been committed to US withdrawal from Iraq, but he has done so with the minimum inconvenience to imperialism's war effort.

Bush's "war on terror" not only failed, it has understandably been perceived as both a war on Arab people and the Moslem religion.

The recent address to the Arab world is one which he had to make --- for the sake of America's interests. The US imperialist ruling class know that unless there is an olive branch offered, billions of dollars stand to be lost in investments especially in oil.

Well Obama stressed that America was not at war with Islam and he quoted the Quran. This gained him the respect of many Moslems. Obama called for "a new beginning" after "years of distrust" He said "Just as Moslems do not fit a crude stereotype, America is not the stereotype of a self interested empire" Well that is not a stereotype. It is a fact America has behaved like a "self interested empire" We think it will continue to do so..

He restated his support for Israel stating that US had an unbreakable link with the reactionary racist state (indeed true) but he also acknowledged He also stated that the Palestinians deserve a separate state.

In Israel, Netanyahu hopes the speech will initiate a new acceptance of Israel within the Arab world.

Many Arabs were pleased with what they heard. But they want to see the practice Words are not enough. The fact is that the change Obama promises different tactics for imperialism. At home and abroad he wants a more inclusive and co-operative approach. But in no way does he challenge the fundamentals. In Palestine he opposes the settlers grabbing Palestinian land. He also opposes the way Israel behaved in Gaza.

US support for Israel was shown by his Deputy Joe Biden assuring Israel that it had the right to intervene against Iran's nuclear weapons. This would be a massive disaster especially for the Iranians. He is also exposing that imperialist line that those who are pro-US are allowed nuclear weapons but those who oppose US interests don't. We must oppose all imperialists including those with a human face. Obama is our enemy.

The Israeli court has just endorsed the right of Israelis to take over and occupy homes owned by Palestinians. The troops moved in and the Palestinians were turfed out of homes which they had lived in for generations. Obama may and will object. But Israelis realize that he will do nothing and they are free to dispossess with impunity.

Uighur uprisings in Xinjiang China

Xinjiang is a western province of China. It borders Pakistan and Afghanistan. The majority who live there are Uighurs, an ethnic majority. Their religion is Moslem. Recently there have been riots in the streets of the capital, Urumqi. The Chinese armed force responded brutally. Hundreds have been killed.

The Chinese authorities make no apologies for this brutal response. They promise "severe punishment for culprits" They blame the three evils of "extremism, terrorism and separatism" Basically they have no answer apart from brute force. Of course, they scapegoat overseas Uighurs who they claim to be responsible.

Actually the Uighur residents of Urumqi do not need agitators to respond angrily to vicious, racist attacks on Uighur workers in Guangdong. It is these attacks which stimulated the violence. It is crystal clear that the Chinese bureaucracy has failed to resolve the national question.

We are not interested in intrigues about who the Uighur people are conspiring with. The major fact is that the Uighur people do not enjoy national equality. Yes, the bureaucrats can point out that they fair better in Peoples China than elsewhere and in this we probably agree. But they are not equal. Essentially the bureaucrats in Beijing have deprived them of their right to national self-determination. It is blowing up in their face.

As Trotsky has pointed out "The national question does not exist for the benefit of communists, communists exist to resolve the national question" Essentially Trotsky understood that unless the national question was resolved, the issue would blow up in their faces. It could well blow up in the faces of Chinese bureaucrats.

The way the national question is resolved is by allowing the self-determination of nationalities. Trotskyists want unity between ethnic minorities and Han Chinese. But this unity must be voluntary. It is only voluntary if the Uighur people have the right to leave and form their own nation.

Self-determination to Uighur Xinjiang!

The Stalinists have tried to suppress the national question by military force. This is an essential part of why there is no Soviet Union today. The same applies to China.

The bureaucrats offer violence and state repression. This may work in the short term. Han chauvinism appears to be rampant and most Chinese will no doubt back the bureaucratic crack down. But if China doesn't watch out more national conflagrations will occur.

There is a lot at stake in Xinjiang. For a start the state is mineral rich. The greedy bureaucrats want to get their hands on the spoils and assist western capitalists to do likewise. But also there is a security issue. The Moslem Uighurs no doubt have allies in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey. The war on terror may spread to China.

El Quaida has already threatened Chinese workers in Algeria. There is a strong possibility of Uighurs getting backup from their Moslem neighbours. All this the Chinese bureaucrats fear.

What is clear is that the Stalinist bullies can only think in terms of force and repression. They are unable to think about how to resolve the situation politically.

What is required is political revolution. This means the revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucrats and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, a revolutionary workers and small farmers government.

Such a government would offer self-determination to all minority nationalities. This will resolve the question politically. Its aim would be united soviet socialist republics of China!

Democratic Uprising in Iran

It is well known that an election has recently been held in Iran. It is universally acknowledged that the election was rigged! Supporters of opposition leader Mousavi have hit the streets. They have been met with state repression. Some demonstrators have been killed.

Since the 1979 overthrow of the Shah, Iran has not been a democracy. It's been a theocracy with real power been held by the Ayatollahs. On the whole since 1979, the Ayatollahs have had the support of most Iranians. On the whole the Ayatollahs have had the support of most Iranians. The recent elections have exposed a clear split in the Iranian population. The new bourgeois and petty bourgeois forces support opposition leader Mousavi.

The new bourgeois forces are angry. They have taken to the streets and the state has fought back – brutally. In these days of high technology, there is no place to hide. State brutality has been photographed on mobile phones and placed on the internet. We think the demonstrators have every right to be angry. They certainly have issues of justice which we can support. However, the decisive issue is their class position. In no way do we subordinate the interests of the proletariat behind the banner of the bourgeoisie

The working class in Iran must also oppose the status quo. In no way must we identify with the reactionary Mullahs who administer a capitalist Iran. The task in Iran is to mobilise the proletariat behind its own banner, and fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat. This requires the construction of a revolutionary communist party. This party must be secular and whilst defending the right to free religion, support the separation of church from state.

For a revolutionary workers and small farmers government! No to an Islamic regime!

Revolutionary communists identify with the proletariat as the decisive revolutionary force in any capitalist country. Mousavi and his rioters have one main agenda—to modernise Iranian capitalism so they can take advantage of close ties to America. This agenda we must oppose as it will mean increased exploitation. We also must not identify with the reactionary capitalist Iranian state..

South Africa Workers fight for decent wages; ANC fights the workers

Workers in South Africa are angry and desperate. The collapse of apartheid and the election of an ANC government may mean more dignity. But it has not meant any guarantee of a living wage nor of a decent home over ones head. On the contrary, workers are paid a pittance. Recently Municipal and other workers went on strike demanding a fifteen percent pay rise. They marched through townships in support of their claim. They well and truly deserve it. We think they deserve much more. But the ANC ruling government does not. They think workers should survive on less. Ten years after the end of apartheid, a million South Africans still live in flimsy shacks with no amenities such as electricity or running water. The strikers have been angry and militant. Their protests in Balfour Township have been met with tear gas, and rubber bullets. The crowd responded with bottles and stones. Their response is totally justified. Communist Left fully supports the right of exploited and oppressed South Africans to fight the reactionary capitalist state. ANC has chosen to administer that state in favour of the capitalist class. President Zuma, promised support for labour in his bid for presidency. He fully endorses armed force against the strikers. It is clear what side he on.

Workers in South Africa must break from the treacherous ANC and forge a revolutionary communist party. Since the defeat of apartheid the winners have been the Black middle classes. They have not been the proletariat.

This strike is now over with unions accepting an offer of a thirteen percent increase plus increased housing allowance. He claims that this is a victory. This small gain was achieved despite the ANC not because of it.

Queensland: Premier Bligh takes out the razor

Anna Bligh deserves credit for being the first woman to be elected Premier of any Australian state. Previous premiers such as Joan Kirner have had the position handed to them only for them to lose the next election.

Part of the reason for her victory was the Liberal National opposition. She faced a united opposition but people realised that effectively this opposition is National Party dominated. Their leader Springborg, came from the Nationals. The Nationals are extremely unpopular in South East Queensland where hundreds of thousands have

migrated from the southern states. Whereas in the past Nationals have held Gold Coast seats, their chance of winning them back does not look promising. .

Bligh has inherited a state with problems. One of the main ones being that its credit ranking had been demoted from AAA to AA+. This is not such a dramatic concern so long as the State Government can prove its "responsible". Bligh is proving her responsibility – to the system. Bligh is establishing her credentials.

Bligh like Rees in NSW is supposed to be "of the Left faction" Yet she is showing even more so than Rees how little these labels mean. In practice she is worse than her predecessor Peter Beattie "of the Right faction" Bligh Labor is behaving like any economically rationalist government.

Right wing pundits like Rupert Murdoch's Australian are praising her efforts but caution she should proceed with a bit more tact. In Queensland motorists have had subsidised petrol. The rural communities argue that because of the large distances they are forced to cover, more petrol is needed to be consumed and it therefore should be subsidised. This has been abolished.

Bligh has also embarked on a programme of privatisation. Certain railway lines which carry raw materials are to be sold off so too are port facilities and state owned forests. Unions claim that Bligh's privatisation may cost up to ten thousand jobs. It will certainly cost many. Privatisation benefits the bosses and not the workers or the consumers. Privatisation is "more efficient" because it makes ordinary people suffer more efficiently.

Anna Bligh has absolutely no mandate for her agenda. She didn't mention privatisation during her election campaign. Some suggest that she would have lost the election if she did!

She is getting pats on the back from fellow Queenslanders Wayne Swan and Kevin Rudd for "taking the hard economic decisions."

She also does not let a small trifle like Labor Party democracy get in her way .She informed Labor supporters that the decision had already been made. So it is bad luck if the majority disagree,. Capitalist interests take priority. ALP members are treated with contempt. Anna is member for South Brisbane, which is an electorate and an area dominated by the Left. A branch meeting carried a resolution unanimously to expel her from the party. This is what she deserves. The rank and file are angry and are holding meetings in protest. No doubt Anna Bligh will tough these out.

More serious opposition comes from the trade union movement. Both the MUA and the ETU have made strong statements. It is more serious because unions can actually threaten direct action. More than protest is needed.

There is nothing new about Labor governments treating both party democracy and democracy in general with contempt. For example both lemma and Costa intended to go full steam ahead with electricity privatisation with neither an electoral mandate nor party support. In fact party policy was strongly opposed to the reactionary measure.

In NSW Rees was previously of "the Left faction" (he resigned on being appointed premier) but he is threatening to privatise ferries and prisons. So it is clear that Rees does not oppose privatisation on principle.

Bligh's reactionary attacks pose the question: whither the Labor Party? It is clear that right wingers can run rough shot over the rank and file who are treated as fodder to hand out leaflets and how to vote tickets. This situation is no accident. The Labor Left has been shown to be bankrupt as have even moderate reforming elements. The only way Labor gets in power is if it obeys the dictates of the system. We must draw the conclusion that the only way we can get power is if we stand for a programme to overthrow the system. Otherwise the rightwing agenda will continue.

Britain: Gordon Brown to the black abyss

Gordon Brown is one of the least popular elected leaders of any parliamentary government. Recently public opinion polls estimated his support for prime minister at twenty five percent! This is an all time low.

Brown inherited his position from Tony Blair. He has a dour image and lacks the charisma. Blair had the knack of presenting conservative policies with a politically correct feel good image which appealed to yuppies. Brown has no such appeal. Working class people also realise that Brown is not one of them and his policies represent the ruling class. He gives them no cause for optimism. If in the unlikely possibility that Labour will be re-elected, Brown has made it clear that ordinary people will continue to suffer. Currently Brown means nothing to nobody.

He is even unpopular amongst Labour parliamentarians in fear of losing their seats. They want him to resign for the sake of the party. But Brown stays firm and as yet, no one dares to challenge.

There are many reasons for Brown's unpopularity. Labour has played a reactionary role as lapdog to Bush in his "war on terror". It was Tony Blair who did the hard yards in the United Nations trying to persuade the world that Iraq led by Saddam had "weapons of mass destruction". The Blair Dossier was thoroughly and utterly discredited. So has the war on Iraq.

Britain is now thoroughly involved in Afghanistan. As hundreds of British soldiers are being brought home in body bags, people are asking what for? Some point out that this war is thoroughly and utterly immoral, totally unjustified. Others such as the Tories argue that Brown is not committing enough. If Britain had more helicopters in operation, troops would be protected and less would die. Brown is in the difficult position, backing the status quo.

Recently in Britain there has been a massive exposure of politician's rorting their electoral allowances. Some of the more serious rorters have been Tory. One has been caught out building moat at the electorate's expense. But the problem for Brown is that all parties have been exposed. Labour may have been less guilty, but they are still a guilty Party. The electorate is taking out its anger on both parties. Labour has more to lose because it has more seats.

But the major factor is the economic crisis, the massive recession which has hit the capitalist world. Britain has suffered immensely. Labour has been in office a long time. Voters have every right to point the finger at Labour as a party responsible for this mess. It has no answers apart from bailing out big business. In Brown's Britain, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. .

Gordon Brown has admitted that he didn't foresee the recession. This makes him appear incompetent, which he is, even though the Tories didn't foresee it also. He is also exposed for making a blunder by claiming the world was in depression and not merely recession.

Britain faces mass unemployment. Brown promises a programme of public works which he claims will deliver 200,000 jobs on projects such as improving public housing. The problem is that it is predicted that next year 2010 unemployment will reach three million. Brown's efforts are therefore insignificant

Like Rudd in Australia, Brown has increased the pension age. This will mean more suffering.

The suffering has been immense. To quote The Guardian "Britain under Gordon Brown is a more unequal country than at any time since modern records began in the early sixties, after the incomes of the poor fell and those of the rich rose after the 2005 general election. Deprivation and inequality rose in the UK rose for the third successive year in 2007-08" Is it any wonder that currently according to opinion polls, Labour's support is down to eighteen percent!

Well to be fair, the 2009 Budget does mainly attack the wealthy. However, this is probably a case of too little too late. Everyone expects the Tories to win. They have been handed power on a platter. Partly this is due to the British left's failure to build a political alternative to Labour.

The Liberal Democrat support is on the increase. Their support is now 18% which is the same as Labour

Another party making headway is the British National Party who won two seats in the European parliament. This is an ominous sign. The BNP is, of course, fascist. Which means it is a potentially deadly threat to the workers movement. They have a degree of limited success because the workers movement has been exposed as bankrupt and weak. The threat will remain unless we deal with them physically and nip it in the bud. There must be no platform for fascists. Workers defence is urgently needed.

ALP /ACTU Unity! Workers pay the price!

There is no denying that the Rudd Labor Government is a right wing government. Rudd would object if you suggested otherwise! Rudd himself boasts his "economic conservative" credentials.

Of course, the far right point out inconsistencies. They point out his high spending solution to the recession. They point out that this will lead to debt which generations will be forced to pay. Rudd counters by claiming his stimulus saved Australia from recession. He says that these measures are for exceptional times when government intervention was needed to save the system. But basically, on every issue, Rudd passes the test.

Rudd goes all the way with Barak Obama. In the war in Afghanistan. They agree on other issues such as Israel. Rudd has continued the Federal intervention into the Northern Territory effectively placing communities under martial law. He opposes the right of gay people to marry. He has continued work for the dole. He has continued the private job network agency system.

Whilst work choices has been abolished Julia Gillard ensure building workers that they would be met "with the full force of the law" if they attempted industrial action to win back what was lost under Howard!

All this is thoroughly and utterly horrendous. Rudd threatens to jail workers yet the ACTU remains loyal! Worker pay money for their union to be affiliated to this reactionary party. They are hardly getting anything for it. Very much to the contrary! Rudd is committed to make the workers pay. The ACTU is committed to discipline so Rudd can stay in office,

There was only one issue which caused any serious dispute. The unions demand preference for Australian companies. This Rudd objected to this complaining that protection maintained inefficiency. But a compromise was worked out. Rudd promised to subsidise Australian companies to make them competitive.

So all became rosy. All this reflects the thorough and utter degeneration of the so-called Labor "Left" and the trade union bureaucracy.

Federal Labor administers Australian capitalism at the expense of working people. The trade union bureaucracy co-operates fully. Unionists suffer.