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#87Reactionary Rudd! Racist attacks against Asylum Seekers!

Rudd is under pressure, the boats just keep coming. When he was elected, Rudd promised a more humanitarian approach to refugees. For example he promised that children would not be forced to live in detention centres. But he also promised to defend Australia. What he figured was that the pressure of mass immigration by boat people would die down as Iraq eventually stabilised. He didn't count on a mass migration of asylum seekers from Sri Lanka.

The right, especially the Liberal opposition are claiming that Rudd's more humane image made Australia a magnet for refugees and people smugglers.

Now, the gloves are off! No longer is Mr. Rudd the nice guy. These new measures which he has introduced delay the processing of refugees from Afghanistan and Sri Lanka for three months and a reduction in those accepted after that period. The government is prolonging the agony

Rudd rationalizes these measures by claiming that things have improved. No! In no way are former Tamil Tigers safe in Sri Lanka. Afghanistan is also an extremely dangerous place. Rudd is trying to appear humane whilst at the same time taking a strong stand against boat people. Rudd is lying!

His measures may deter boat people but it will also make it more difficult to people to leave the country. This means they may be tortured or even lose their lives.

Revolutionary communists welcome all those who want to live whether they are "real refugees" or not. We believe though that the overwhelming majority of those coming here by boat are refugees as the term is officially defined..

Rudd seems to be more interested in his image as a protector of Australia than the lives of victims of brutal regimes. Australia is not really under threat from hoards coming down from the north. Rudd is merely succumbing to Liberal and red neck propaganda

There has been much vilification of "people smugglers". Yes these people should be attacked for unsafe, cramped and unhygienic conditions on the boats used to transport people. They also probably charge too much money. But the point is that they are the only way to safety for thousands

on the island of Sri Lanka who are in genuine fear for their safety. It is either the people smugglers, or alternatively, death or torture!

What the campaign against people smugglers is all about is avoiding attacking refugees directly but attacking their only way out!

There is a Federal election this year. No doubt Rudd's strong reactionary stand makes it difficult for Tony Abbott to expose him from the right.

Abbott has tried to tactically intervene by declaring war on all migrants, limiting their ability to stay here. Yes he got support from Liberal and National voters, and perhaps some Labor supporters. But he received strong opposition from the bourgeoisie who want more immigrant labour. He was forced to retreat.

Rudd is also under attack from the Sri Lankan Government. The Sri Lankans fear that the Tamils might use Australia to reorganize their struggle. No doubt Rudd will succumb to their pressure. It is though in breach of international law to reject anyone who flees their country in fear of their life. Rudd must obey international law.

Revolutionary communists gave military support to the Tamil Tigers. We therefore welcome their attempts to organize in Australia.

Rudd's practice on refugees is not fundamentally different to that of Howard. Rudd is using Indonesia and Christmas Island instead of the Pacific solution hell holes such as Womerah. We must organize just as effectively as we did against Howard's camps. Indeed we must be more effective.

The fascists are using the refugee issue to recruit fellow racists. But the initial attempt of the Australian Protectionist Party fell flat. Their demo at Villawood only drew fifteen people after a concerted leafleting of Villawood. The left mobilized over one fifty after three days contacting supporters. It was attended by Refugee Action Committee, Socialist Alternative, Socialist Alliance, Arab and Tamil community groupings.

Unfortunately the demo, organized at short notice, had no visible union presence. It is our job to educate unionists and unions in order to take a stand in defence of refugees. The power of the organised working class is also decisive in the fight against fascism.

For organised workers defence against fascists!

The fascists letterboxed their propaganda to ordinary residents of Villawood and Chester Hill. They hardly mobilised anyone but no doubt some of the reactionary propaganda would have influenced a few. The left has treated working people in these areas with contempt. Under Howard when the Refugee Action committee was mobilising, they consistently failed to put up posters rallying the locals to their pickets or demos.

We have noticed a slight change. The Solidarity group (formerly International Socialist Organisation) put up a few posters in Biaxiand Ave which is mainly industrial. The posters whose aim was no doubt to confront the fascists ideologically as well as physically as the posters were stuck up on route to the proposed demo. They were though, a long way from where anyone lived.

But they don't seem to consider countering fascist propaganda within the working class communities of Villawood and Chester H to be high priority.

The Solidarity Group, Socialist Alternative Socialist Alliance and other radical leftist want a movement of politically correct students as opposed to a workers movement against racism.

Communist Left welcomes everyone to Australia who wants to live here, for whatever reason. You should not have to in fear of your life to come here. You should not have to be imprisoned in a refugee camp, anywhere until your credentials are established.

The working class knows no country. We should live in any country in which we please. These are the principles on which we should base our movement to free the refugees and let them into Australia — unconditionally!

South Africa. Troops fire on mineworkers

Last March thousands of workers at Aurora Mine in South Africa downed tools for an understandable reason. They hadn't been paid! In April they protested and were met with police firing rubber bullets and tear gas.

Nothing reveals so blatantly the class nature of the current regime led by the African National Congress who fought for a capitalist South Africa without apartheid.

Equally revealing is that the Managing director of Aurora Mines is Zandwa Mandela, grandson of Nelson Mandela. The Chairman is Kihulu Zuma cousin of President Jacob Zuma. These ANC supporters have obviously made it and have become part of South Africa's capitalist class. They make millions of Rand yet their employees are forced to suffer without pay.

The workers still suffer poverty and oppression. This is especially true when the workers are not even paid! In February they were paid only twenty five percent of what they were owed.

They have found living extremely difficult. Families have been broken apart because the food parcels they receive are barely enough for one let alone a family. Water in the hostel has been cut off.

The strike will shortly end by agreement as the bosses have finally agreed to pay the workers. What is clearly exposed is the oppression and exploitation of workers in the ANC's capitalist South Africa.

Greece. Workers fight austerity.

This year there have been two general strikes in Greece. These have shown the heroism and militancy of the class in that country. Make no mistake austerity is on the agenda. We salute the Greek working class for not taking serious threats to wages, conditions and jobs lying down.

The European Union seemed like a good idea. Why shouldn't European nations get together and co-operate with a single currency and free travel between countries?

The problem is that the global recession exposed inequality. Some countries are more economically viable under capitalism than others. Greece, Spain and Ireland have yet to come out of recession.

The question now is whether to bail Greece out. There are serious debates over this. There is the serious fear that bailing out might drag the rest of Europe down, and back to recession. Germany will not step in lightly.

Basically, Germany will only step in if the Greek Government imposes austerity. It is, of course, working people who will be forced to suffer. It is the so-called "socialist" government of PASOK who are imposing austerity.

PASOK received a nasty shock when achieving government. They found that the real economic situation was far worse than what was stated. They have pledged themselves to be economically responsible.

Some of the attacks they are imposing are vicious. For example they intend to increase the age Greeks receive their old age pension. by ten years

The working class (and others reject this "responsibility". In no way are working people responsible. Struggle changes consciousness. But workers only gain revolutionary consciousness through the intervention of a revolutionary communist party. It is this type of party the Greek working class need urgently!

Make no mistake! If we, the proletariat, don't win, then the system will enforce austerity. This will be enforced either by PASOK or by the European Union.

A serious problem for the working class in Greece is the fact that the union movement is on the whole affiliated to PASOK.

Two general strikes were very impressive. But the question is; what next? The general strike action will only lead somewhere if it is linked to a programme for workers power, a revolutionary programme to smash the capitalist state! This requires the workers of Greece to fight the state. It requires workers militia.

For a revolutionary workers and small farmers government!

Thailand. Not a revolution!

It all looks impressive. The masses in red are standing up to the state. They even stormed Parliament!. The masses in red are overwhelming working class and poor farmers. But what they are fighting for is not revolution, nor even reform. They want the return of the previous government deposed by a military coup. This government was led by Taksin Shinawatre. They will even accept a new election. They will do as their leader says. Shinawatre is a corrupt bourgeois multi- millionaire. His regime, before its overthrow did carry out minor but real reforms in favour of poor farmers. and working people. For these they are putting their bodies on the line. They are occupying the streets and fighting cops.

The red shirts have been met not just by the state but by supporters of the monarchy who wear yellow. The King of Thailand endorsed the military coup. The yellow shirts fear that the red shirts are

anti monarchy. Shinawatre is extremely careful not to attack the monarchy. In Thailand this is a crime and attracts a heavy jail sentence. It is even a crime to show the monarchy disrespect by not standing up for the national anthem!

The red side claim to be not in opposition to the monarchy .Some on their side are even pro Monarchy! But as the monarchy was party to the coup there is implicit criticism.

The occupation of the streets has cost Thailand millions of Baht. But the state has so-far been patient. They know that the red masses are playing with revolution and not really meaning it! Also there is sympathy for the red side within the armed forces.

We warn, that patience will only go so far. The bourgeoisie can only afford to lose so many millions of baht before they decide that enough is enough. Then the troops will come in But we fear bloodshed, The coup against Shinawatre, which reflects the undemocratic nature of Thailand, was entirely unjustified. But workers should fight not for this reactionary but for workers revolution.

For a revolutionary workers and small farmers government!

Iceland. Down to zero!

At the beginning of 2007, Iceland was on top of the world. Here we are talking economically not geographically, All seemed rosy. Icelanders had the highest standard of living in the world. Unemployment was about one percent of the workforce and Iceland was importing workers.

Earlier this century, a right wing economic rationalist government was elected. This government worked hand in glove with some cowboy capitalists known as Vikings. Whereas the Vikings of old pillaged and plundered physically, so the legend goes, these new Vikings pillaged economically with shady investments in Britain and Europe.

What went wrong was, of course the economic crisis. The Vikings went bankrupt and so did the people of Britain declared Iceland a terrorist nation and using anti-terrorist laws, froze Icelandic assets. Iceland has now gone broke. Interest rates are now twenty percent. So is unemployment. Many upper middle class people such as bankers have a real fear of losing their home.

The country is on rations and Icelanders are angry. Ninety three percent of Icelanders reject the economic package imposed on them. Ordinary Icelanders may have been sucked in but they were not responsible for economic pillage. Yet the Vikings have left and they are being forced to pay.

How this will be resolved remains to be seen. The main opposition is Green The Greens believe in a humanized capitalism. Only through revolution can ordinary Icelanders escape a future of poverty. Building a revolutionary party is a matter of urgency.

No sympathy for Stern Hu! Rio Tinto rep jailed in China for corruption.

Stern Hu was , before his conviction a leading representative for Australian based multinational Rio Tinto formerly Conzinc Rio Tinto Australia CRA. This is an Anglo Australian company with 40% owned

by Australia. He has been jailed for ten years by the Chinese Government for corruption. His arrest and conviction have been controversial.

We are convinced that he is guilty as charged. The Australian government, though thinking his sentence harsh acknowledge that there is real evidence against him. The fact that Stern Hu has refused to appeal indicates that the case against him is strong.

His arrest has posed a challenge for the capitalist class and government in this country. It is a bad look to allow a leading capitalist to be jailed. But, on the other hand Australia knows that its prosperity lies with China importing its minerals. They don't dare bite the hand that feeds it!

Whilst the whole of Rio Tinto is corrupt and not just Stern Hu, we cannot feel sympathy for someone high up in their ranks who is paid millions. We can though support a full inquiry into this corrupt organization. Open the books!

The shareholder at their Californian AGM felt sorry for Hu. But there was no sympathy for the five hundred workers they locked out for failing to accept their "agreement". These workers from Boron USA picketed the AGM

For us though his real crime is the company he represents. Rio Tinto is truly an enemy of the worlds' people especially the working class. Multinationals like this should be done away with. So should the capitalist class.

Expropriate Rio Tinto!

Rio Tinto has been aligned with reactionary dictators such as General Pinochet of Chile and Suharto of Indonesia.

Viciously anti union, Rio Tinto has been at the vanguard of union smashing campaigns in Australia and elsewhere. They have been at the vanguard of the union smashing offensive which began under Hawke and Keating and continued under Howard.

For example they worked hand in glove with Reith in writing his notorious anti-union legislation. They imposed individual contracts on employees, refusing to give wage rises to union members.

Rio Tinto rips off the resources from indigenous people in Western Australia, Bougainville and elsewhere. The company makes billions, the people get a pittance.

Rio Tinto is directly responsible for starting the war on Bougainville. In 1969 Australian troops in the then colony of Papua New Guinea moved in to expropriate peasants so CRA could establish the Panguna Mine, the richest in the world.

Rio Tinto had offered the peasants a bit of compensation, a few thousand dollars each. Even in those days that was peanuts! The peasants understandably and correctly refused. The Australian armed forces moved in.

Gough Whitlam supported the Panguna Mine, claiming the mine was who were displaced so Comalco (then Rio Tinto subsidiary) could make billions ripping out bauxite and then refining it, The local Murri people got hardly anything.

Rio Tinto as used similar practices in both Indonesia and the Philippines. In both countries they are willingly assisted by the armed forces who assist by forcing people off their land with little or no compensation.

This is by no means a complete dossier. We have not analysed Rio Tinto crimes against working people in South Africa and Namibia. We are just making the point that the whole record of this company is reactionary and sinister. We salute the Chinese government for putting in prison this corrupt capitalist This is where he belongs!

The continuing war against unemployed people

Before his election, Rudd promised to be Howard Lite and on the whole he has kept his promise. This is true on virtually every issue including industrial relations, foreign affairs, immigration and refugees, Black rights (maintaining the Intervention) and of course unemployment.

The advantage of Rudd for the ruling class is that these attacks could be swept under the carpet and carried out with minimal opposition. This has been proved a success.

This is especially true in relation to unemployment. The main “reforms” of Howard remain. These include work for the dole and private job network agencies.

There has been raise in the dole under Rudd. But even though the rate of inflation has been relatively low, it still eats into meagre payments. Rents have skyrocketed but the rent allowance remains minimal. Hardship has increased.

Under Rudd, private job network agencies have been investigated. It has been found that most have favoured the employable unemployed. This meant those who need assistance most get minimal assistance. Private job network agencies are paid by results, meaning placing unemployed people in jobs or breaching them. This reform is minor. The system of private ownership and profit remains.

Breaching remains. On the whole the period is eight weeks without payment. A minor reform has been made where if you do something minor such as miss an appointment you only lose one day's pay.

Work for the dole remains also. Rudd has made one positive change. Work for the dole is not now compulsory for those over fifty. Some still do it to satisfy mutual obligation demands or because they like it.

A major change concerns the Northern Territory intervention. The Black work for the dole CDEP has been abolished and Black unemployed forced onto Newstart and thence mainstream work for the dole. This is so they can quarantine their payments. This means dividing their payment into two. Half goes into an account where the unemployed person can spend as he or she pleases. The other half goes into an account which can only be spent at Coles or Woolworths.

Many settlements are tens or even hundreds of kilometers from the nearest Coles or Woolworths. The net result is extreme hardship as Blacks in communities have to pay to get to Alice Springs.

As the government is opposed to discrimination, they are now promising to quarantine all unemployed and sole pensioner payments. this will mean hardship as it does in the Northern

Territory. In small country towns it will mean a long trip to a bigger town such as Wagga Wagga. In Sydney, it may be a mere ten kilometers to Coles or Woolworths but it is still difficult to get to one. You can't spend at your local store.

This amounts to a serious attack on unemployed and pensioners. Of course we oppose quarantining on black communities. No-one should have their pay quarantined!

There are some who suggest that caving in to the right agenda heads off the right wing offensive. The record of Tony Abbott suggests that it doesn't Tony is now on the offensive. He has called for all unemployed to be cut off benefits if they don't go to Western Australia and mine. The mines need work but there are thousands out of work. So he figures that this is the solution.

Well the mines themselves have said explicitly that they don't want anyone. They want skilled and experienced. Most young suburban unemployed will simply be going across the continent for nothing. Also it will mean social hardship being away from friends and family. There is no suitable entertainment.

The other Abbott proposal is to limit the time spent on the dole. This will lead to homelessness and hunger. Abbott basically doesn't care about practicalities. He wants to stick the boot in, and pressure Rudd to follow suit. We fear this might happen.

Communist Left is concerned about attacks on the unemployed. No-one should be forced to live in poverty and hardship. But more than this, the attacks on the unemployed are part of the offensive against the whole working class.

In defending Workchoices, Howard argued that an individual worker could bargain for something better. But if you are unemployed you have to accept what is offered. If you refuse acceptable work you may be breached. So bosses get away without overtime pay, penalty rates and holiday pay which should be the right of all workers.

Work for the dole is a disincentive to employ. Why should councils, schools or community centres pay for builders teachers aids or nurses aids when unemployed people are forced to do the work for nothing!

It is on this basis that we urge a united union and unemployed campaign to defend unemployed people and oppose cheap scab labour schemes such as work for the dole

Smash work for the dole!

The ACTU has policy against work for the dole. It is a disgrace that this policy is rarely enacted. All work for the dole schemes should be declared black!

Communist Left supports a united union and unemployed campaign to fight unemployment, for the right to work at full union rates and conditions. Centre Link staff must actively black ban breaching and all attacks.

The failure to fight these attacks is a reflection of the politics of the trade union leadership which is the politics of reformism and Stalinism. Revolutionary leadership is needed.

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